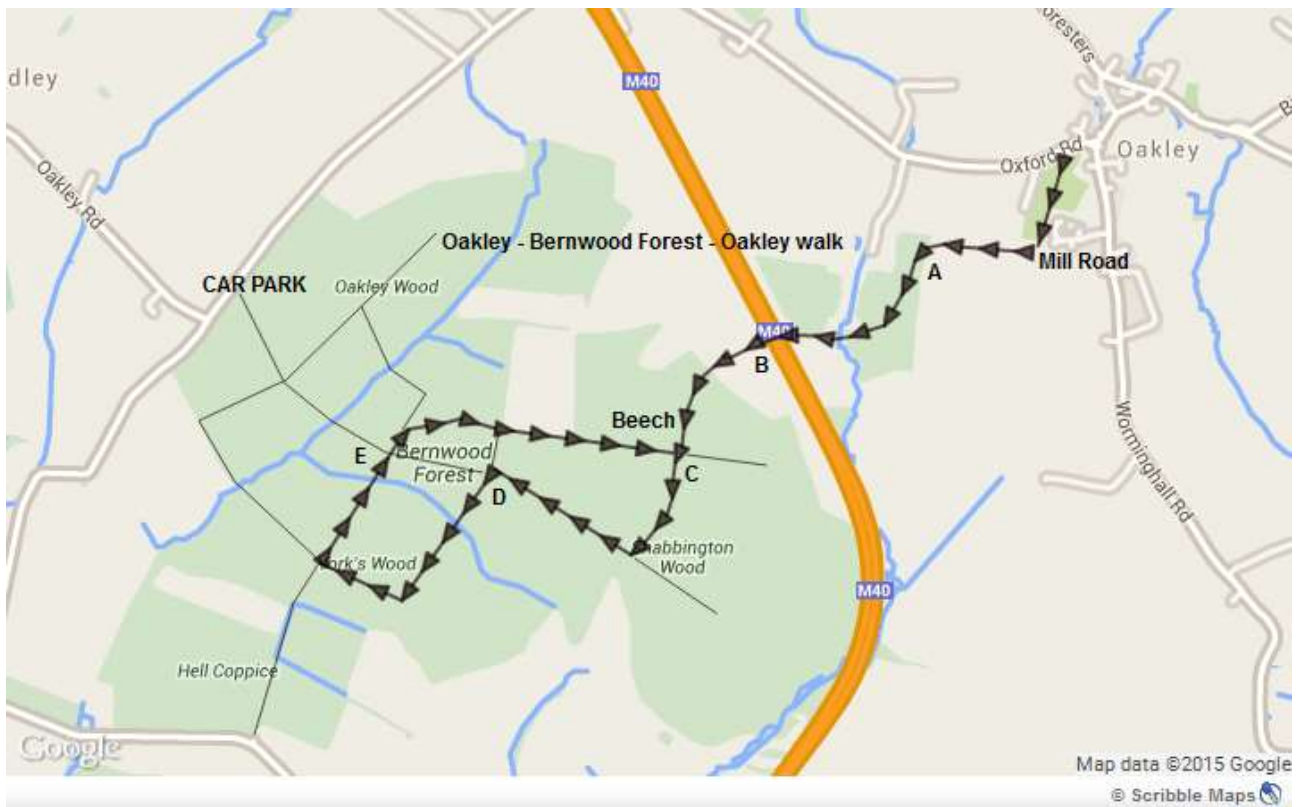


Countryside Walk 2 – walk Oakley to Bernwood Forest, circular walk in the forest and then return to Oakley (7.0 km, 4.3 miles, approx. 90-120 minutes)

The walk starts in Oakley, crosses the motorway and enters Bernwood Forest. The forest is “open access land” meaning that one can walk anywhere within it and there is no requirement to keep to the tracks or official footpaths. In practice, however, it is best to use the main tracks as walking under the forest canopy is difficult due to the rough ground and many of the side tracks are dead-ends. Walk 2 has a circular section along tracks within the forest and includes part of the Bernwood Butterfly Trail marked with 1 meter (m) high or 2m high wooden posts with a yellow band at the top. The return section of the walk from the forest to Oakley follows the same path as the way in. Parts of this walk are muddy so gum boots or walking boots are essential except in very dry weather.

Starting at Oakley village hall walk across the playing fields to the far corner by the Mill Road housing. Go over the large stile in the corner and turn sharp right. Proceed for 100 m and pass over a stile in a gap in the hedge. Continue straight forward following the path up the slope with the hedge on the right. Pass over a stile at the top of the field and cross the track with the “Caution Lorries Crossing” sign. On reaching a second sign “Strictly Private No Entry Shooting in Progress” (Point A on the map) turn left down the footpath through woodland. After 500m the footpath joins a track. Continue straight down the track that crosses a small watercourse on the right hand side. The track veers right - continue along this for 30m until it reaches a gate. Before the gate the continuing footpath is visible on the left hand side. Proceed along this, through a small wooded area, over a footbridge and up the slope to the bridge over the motorway. The bridge is left grassed so wildlife can pass over. Cross the motorway bridge (Point B on the map), walk down the slope and cross a stile at the bottom. Then follow the footpath that runs beside a ditch on the left hand side. After 100m pass through a gap in a hedge on the left and continue beside a hedge on the right towards the forest.

On reaching the forest go through a wooden door frame and follow the path into the forest. The path traverses a 250m section of pine forest then emerges onto a track with beech trees on the right hand side. Continue down the track for 100m at which point a wooden door frame is reached (Point C on the map). Go through the door frame, cross a wide grass track (do not turn left or right) and proceed straight forward down the track in front. After 300m one reaches the main earth roadway that runs through the centre of Bernwood Forest. Turn right onto the earth roadway and continue down this for 600m. At this point the surface of the road changes from brown to grey in colour and shortly after (Point D on the map) there is grass track to the right and left marked with posts with a horseshoe and red line symbol prohibiting entry by horseriders. Take the wide grass track on the left and continue down this grassy track for 300m. On reaching a crossroad of tracks proceed straight forward (do not turn left or right) and continue for another 200m, passing over a wooden platform across an area of wetland. Shortly after the platform another crossroad is reached. Turn right and take the grass track marked with a post with a yellow band at the top (Butterfly Trail). Continue 300m down this track until a major crossroads is reached with crossed-out horseshoe and butterfly trail straight ahead. Turn right onto the earth track and proceed along this for 500m. (Ignore another set of crossroads (with a pond on your right) about half way along this track, and continue straight on, past the post with yellow band denoting the Butterfly trail again). Thereupon one arrives at the major crossroad in the centre of Bernwood Forest that has a bench on the left hand side (Point E on the map). Proceed straight forward down the grass track in front. After 125m the grass track splits into a section that goes straight and a section that veers to the right. Take the right hand section and continue down this for 750m - for a while it passes by an open field on the left hand side. At the end of the 750m stretch one arrives back at Point C (with the beech trees on the left, and the wooden door frame). Turn left through the wooden door frame and return to Oakley following the same path as the way in.



The Countryside Code (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code>) must be observed when walking:

Respect other people:

- consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

Protect the natural environment:

- leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
- keep dogs under effective control

Enjoy the outdoors:

- be safe, plan ahead and be prepared
- follow advice and local signs

For all the walks it is best to use Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 180 (can be purchased at the Book House and Martins in Thame). This provides clearer mapping than the mini-map accompanying the text above.