

Oakley Countryside Walks

Walk 8: Bernwood - forest and field walk (5.3 km, 3.3 miles, approx. 80 to 100 minutes)

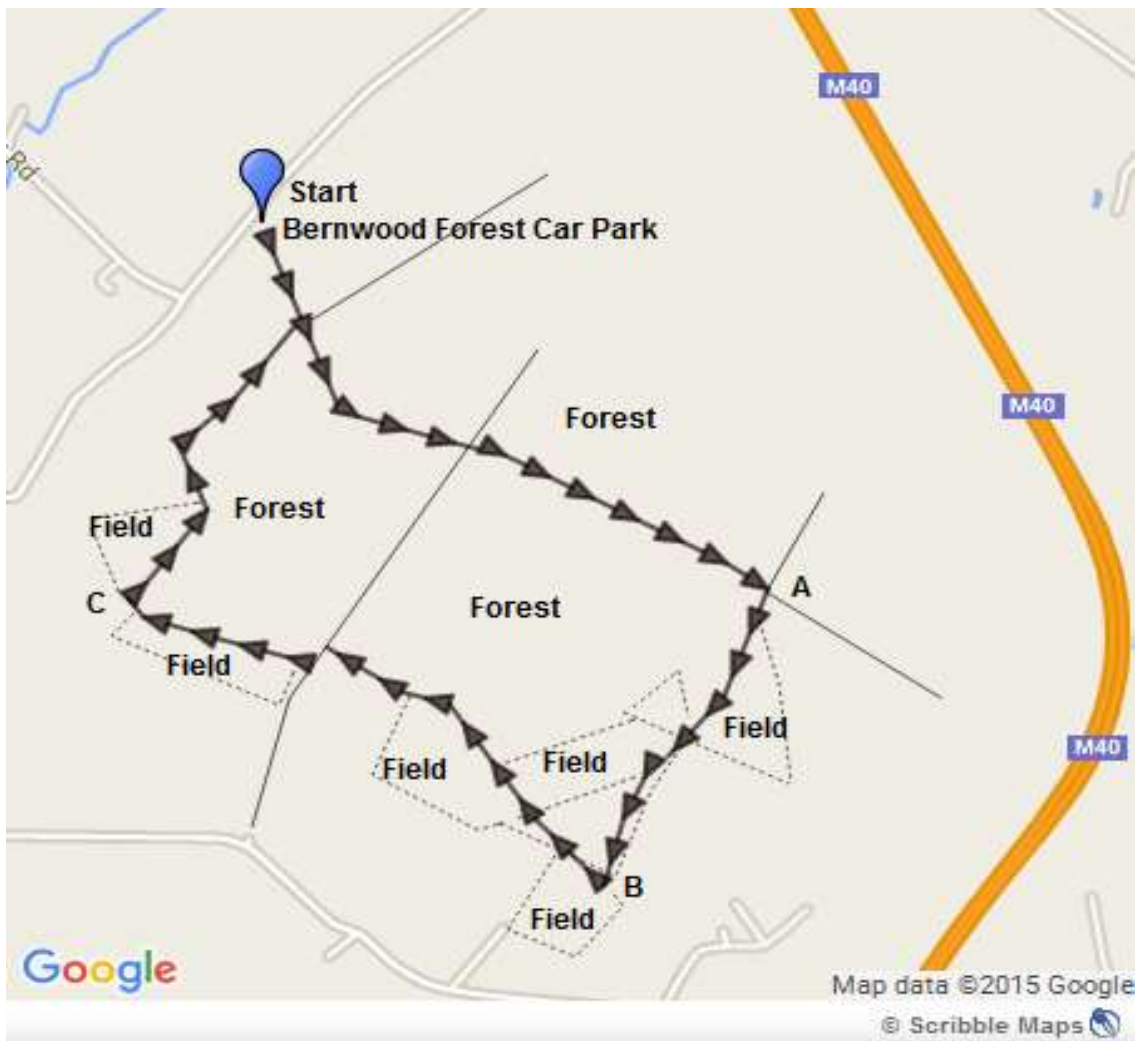
This circular walk in Bernwood combines a mixture of forest and open field sections. It is especially beautiful in autumn as the leaves change colour. The field sections of the walk tend to be very muddy hence it is advisable to use walking boots or gumboots.

The walk starts at Bernwood Forest car park on the road between Oakley and Horton-cum-Studley. Exit the bottom of the car park and walk down the main avenue leading into the forest. Continue along the main avenue for 1500 metres (m). The avenue descends gently, does a slight "S" and then climbs up gently. After the "S" there is a track leading to the left with a wooden post with a no horse riding sign, a footpath sign and a Bernwood Jubilee Way sign (point A on the map). Do not take this track – look instead for a small footpath starting on the right hand side of the avenue, approximately 10m before the wooden post. Proceed along the footpath for 40m through a wooded area and arrive at a stile with a footpath marker. Pass by the stile into a large field. Walk straight ahead down the grass verge on the right hand side of the field. After 300m pass over a stile in a gap in the hedge and continue down the right hand side of the next field. On arriving in a third field turn left and follow the grass verge along the left hand side of the field beside a small wood. After 400m one arrives at a stile in a hedge (point B on the map).

Climb over the stile, turn right and walk along the edge of the field (often very muddy) aiming for a footpath marker post 80m away. Pass the post and follow the grass verge around the left hand side of next field for 250m until a wide gap is reached in the hedge also with a footpath marker post. Proceed straight ahead along the grass verge on the right hand side of the very large field with the forest on the right. After 400m one arrives at the apex of the field with another footpath marker post. Enter the forest and proceed straight ahead along a wide grass way through the forest. After 300m one reaches a vehicle track. Turn left onto the track and then after 25m pass over a stile on the right and proceed into a large grass field. Follow along the right hand side of the field for 500m with the forest on the right. At the far end of the field the footpath enters a section of scrubland. After 50m turn right over a small bridge made from two wooden sleepers. Continue along the footpath that passes over a larger bridge and arrives at kissing gate leading into the Bernwood Meadows Nature Reserve (point C on the map). Enter the large field (that in May and June is covered with a carpet of orchids) and walk along the right hand side of the field for 250m. At the far end there is a display board that provided information about the meadows.

Behind the display board pass through a kissing gate and turn left into a track. Continue up the track for 200m and on arriving at a wooden bench turn right into a grass track. After 250m the grass track joins the main avenue that leads back to the car park.

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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 or Martins in Thame). This provides clearer mapping than the mini-map accompanying the text above.