

Oakley Countryside Walks

Walk 9: Oakley motorway and power line walk (3.5 km, 2.2 miles, approx. 50 to 70 minutes)

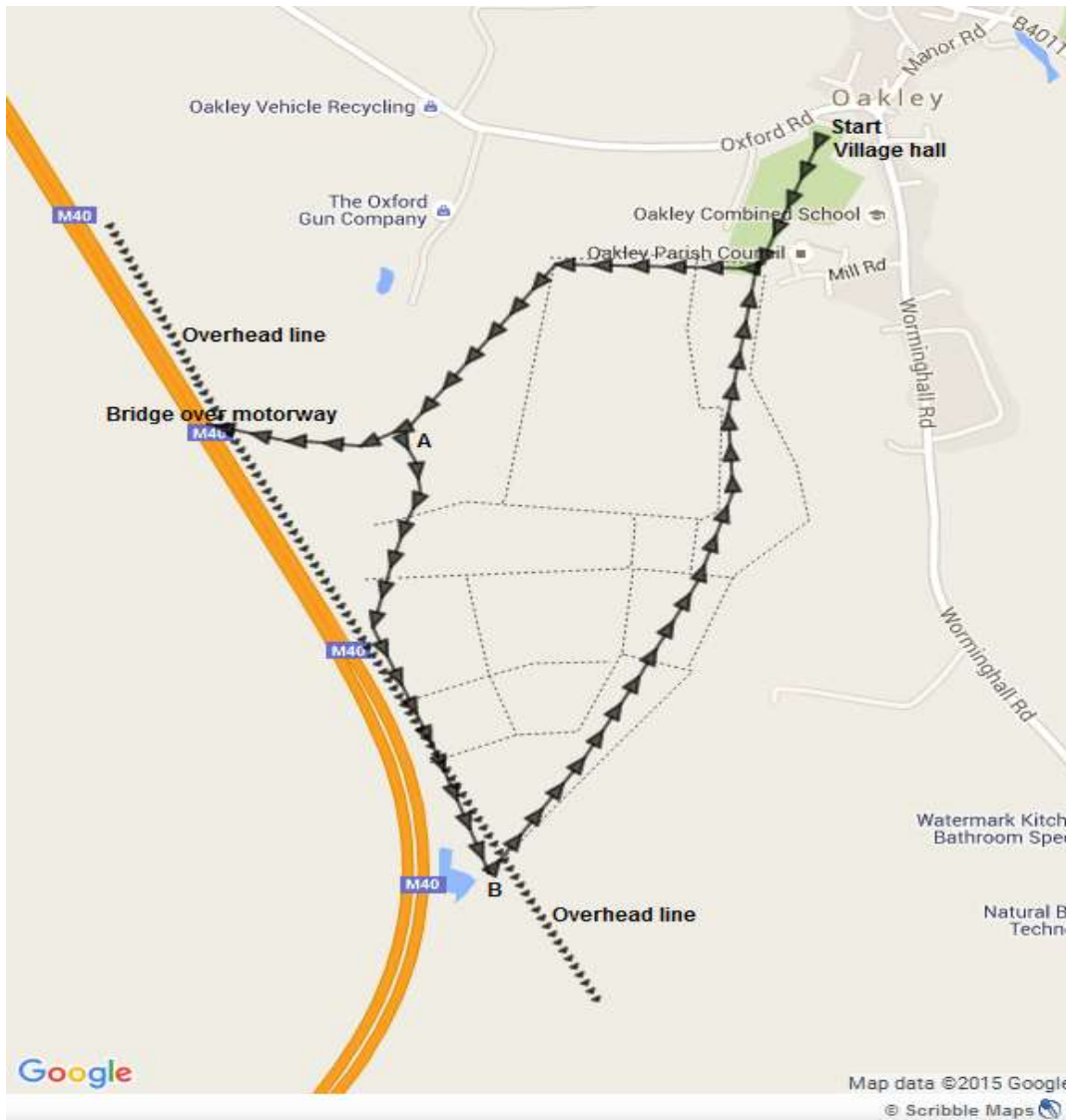
Oakley sits in beautiful countryside but we cannot completely hide the fact that the M40 motorway and a high voltage overhead power line pass by to the west of the village. Since we all depend on transport and electricity it is best to think positively about the juxtaposition of modernity and the natural world in Oakley. The Oakley section of the M40 was opened on 16 January 1991 and on average 70,000 vehicles pass by Oakley on the motorway each day. The M40 is part of European Route E05 that runs from Gibraltar to Greenock in Scotland. The overhead electricity pylons carry 132 kV transmission lines that, as part of the National Grid, link Sandford Bridge sub-station by Blackbird Leys in Oxford and East Claydon sub-station behind Quainton.

Walk 9 gives one an opportunity to see the motorway and overhead line close-up. It is an interesting and pleasant walk especially when the wind is blowing from the north or east (reducing the noise of the motorway). Sections of the walk are muddy and gumboots or walking boots are essential. The walk passes through three sheep fields where any dogs must be on leads.

Starting at Oakley village hall walk across the playing fields to the far corner by the Mill Road housing. Go over the large stile (with Bernwood Way marker) in the corner and turn sharp right. Proceed for 100 metres (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 and fence on the left. 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 path joins a second track coming down from the left. This is Point A on the map where there is a wooden post with two public footpath arrows, one pointing straight forward and one pointing to the left. To see the motorway at close hand continue straight down the track that crosses a small water course. 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.

Having viewed the motorway return back to Point A and turn right down a **faint** track through young woodland. Continue down the track for 200m following to the right hand side of a large earth bund. Continue straight on and cross two wooden sleepers over a ditch and enter a large field. Proceed along the grass edge around the bottom of the field. On arriving at a hedge pass over two further wooden sleepers into a second field. Continue along the grass edge at the bottom of the field (underneath the power lines) to a further hedge, passing over a single sleeper and enter a third field. Proceed around the bottom edge of the field. On arriving at a gap in yet another hedge climb over a stile into a fourth field. Walk along the bottom of this grass field (still underneath the power lines) until a metal kissing gate is reached (Point B on the map). Do not go through the kissing gate. Instead turn left and walk up the side of the grass field with the wire fence on the right hand side (and Brill Hill straight ahead). At the far side of the grass field pass through a kissing gate and continue straight ahead across a second grass field and then through a further kissing gate into a third grass field. Cross this field aiming for Brill Hill at the back. On reaching a hedge pass over two wooden sleepers and two stiles into a fourth grass field. Follow beside the hedge on the left hand side and nearing the Mill Road housing cross the field so that the last section is walked with the hedge on the right hand side. Pass over the large stile, enter the Oakley playing fields and return to the starting point.

December 2015



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.