

Henley Wild Walk

Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Oxfordshire



Explore Henley: this varied walk through the Chilterns takes in parkland, farmland and woodland

Starting in Henley, this 21 km circular walk includes the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust's (BBOWT) Warburg Nature Reserve.

- 21 km/13 miles (about 5 hours)
- There is a shorter 8 km/5 mile circular section which can start from Nettlebed or Warburg Nature Reserve
- There are additional paths through the reserve to explore further, including a Wildlife Walk; and also a visitor centre and picnic area

How to get to the start

Postcode: RG9 1AY **Grid ref:** SU 764 823

By bus: Check www.traveline.info for information about local buses

By train: This walk starts at Henley-on-Thames railway station. Check www.nationalrail.co.uk for train times

By car: There are car parks at Henley railway station and Warburg Nature Reserve and street parking in Nettlebed and Bix

By bike: There is cycle storage at Henley railway station and a bike rack at the reserve



Please help us look after wildlife by keeping dogs on short leads at Warburg Nature Reserve and picking up after them.

Warburg Nature Reserve

Spectacular is a word often used to describe this reserve, which is set in a charming patchwork of woods, scrub and flower-rich grassland in a secluded dry valley. With a huge range of plants, fungi and invertebrates, it's easy to see why.

Beech trees stretch high above an open forest floor to form a peaceful, cathedral-like space. Coppice woods provide a sea of bluebells and chorus of birdsong in spring. Cowslips begin the annual sequence of flowering herbs that provide a carpet of changing colour in the sheltered glades.

Stars of this floral display are the orchids such as fly, bee and pyramidal. Fifteen species can be found here. Some of the rarer orchids, such as narrow-lipped and violet helleborines, prefer the shadier woodland.

The wide, sunny rides and open glades with chalk grassland are full of wild flowers in summer, including the Chiltern gentian and aromatic marjoram and thyme. The flowers attract numerous butterflies and other insects before the woodland turns a glorious gold, orange and brown in autumn.

Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)

BBOWT relies on the support of our members to help us look after local wildlife. By joining BBOWT you can help to secure the future of special landscapes like Warburg Nature Reserve. [Join us today!](#)

NATURE NOTES



Orchid flowers have evolved in shape to attract

specific insect pollinators. The lower petal or lip is usually the most elaborate. In some cases, such as the bee orchid, it mimics a female insect to attract a male to visit the flower. Orchids also rely on specific soil fungi for nutrition. This specialisation makes many orchids extremely rare.



Silver-washed fritillaries are large orange butterflies

with black markings, which are found in woodland and occasionally the neighbouring grassland. Their name comes from the silver streaks on the underside of their wings. Look for them feeding on bramble in the sunny woodland rides. Their caterpillars feed on violets, particularly common dog-violets.



Red kites are large tree-nesting raptors feeding mainly

on dead animals and occasionally small mammals. They can be distinguished from the similar-sized buzzards by their forked tail and reddish-brown colour. Look for them soaring overhead, often in pairs or groups. Following a re-introduction programme there's now a large population in the Chilterns.



Fungi emerge from the soil mainly in autumn. There is a

great variety of them in all sorts of shapes, sizes and colours. The parts we see above ground are the reproductive bodies of the fungi: their gills or pores release millions of spores that are carried by the breeze to germinate elsewhere. Below them is a web of microscopic filaments, or mycelium, in the soil that aids decomposition of dead material.



STAGE 1

Start to Henley Park

From Henley-on-Thames railway station, turn right on to Station Road and follow Thameside beside the river, then bear left on to New Street. Turn right on to Bell Street and at the double mini roundabout, bear left on to the A4130 Northfield End. After 350 metres, take the footpath to the right next to the school playing fields, climbing through wood, then across parkland to Henley Park.

Look for evergreen box trees in the wood, and green woodpeckers in the parkland.

STAGE 2

Henley Park to Middle Assendon

Carry straight on past Henley Park and on to Pond Cottage; cross the road and continue over pasture, between paddocks, then through a gap in the hawthorn hedge before descending over pasture to a wooded path. Turn left at the lane and follow it to the B480 at Middle Assendon.

Look for whitebeam in the lane.

STAGE 3

Middle Assendon to Warburg Nature Reserve

Turn right, past the Rainbow Inn and take the second road on the left. Follow the road along the valley bottom for 2 miles passing Little Bix Bottom Farm and Valley Farm. On the left the remains of St James Church are worth a stop. The ruined church dates from the 12th century and was abandoned in 1875. It is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade II listed building. Continue up the lane to WARBURG NATURE RESERVE.

Listen for red kites calling while soaring over the tree covered ridge, and look for the many orchids on 'The Range' at WARBURG NATURE RESERVE in summer.

STAGE 4

Warburg Nature Reserve to Nettlebed

From the visitor centre, take the road back out towards Bix and after 100 metres turn right beside Pages Farm on to the restricted byway. Follow this flinty track uphill, keeping left as the track forks, past Soundness House. Continue past the turn for Crocker End to the next road junction under the large oak. Bear right for Nettlebed village, or straight over (half left) to continue on the route.

Listen for drumming woodpeckers in spring, and look for animal footprints in the soil beside the track.

WILDLIFE HIGHLIGHTS

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Orchids on the chalk grassland at Warburg Nature Reserve					✓	✓	✓	✓				
Dawn chorus of woodland birdsong				✓	✓							
Silver-washed fritillary gliding around sunny glades						✓	✓	✓				
Majestic trees at Henley Park	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Beech woods and fungi in autumn colour									✓	✓	✓	

STAGE 7

Lambridge Lane to Henley railway station

Follow the lane round to the right and turn left on to Gravel Hill, which leads down to the Market Place in Henley town centre. Turn right on to Reading Road, then left on to Station Road to the railway station.

STAGE 6

Bix to Lambridge Lane

Turn right on to Rectory Lane, past the church, carefully cross the A4130, go past Bix Manor and continue to the road junction. Take the bridleway in to Lambridge Wood, turn right on to footpath. Follow the footpath, beside an earth bank, down through beech wood. Go straight on at the cross-paths and at the next path junction. Just before the main path starts to descend steeply, take the smaller path to the right down to a large depression, then up following the edge of the wood, through a small plantation. Go straight across the golf course on to Lambridge Lane.

Look for evergreen holly and, in spring, helleborines growing in the wood.

STAGE 5

Nettlebed to Bix

Take the track (Catslip) on the left beside the houses, then straight over the road (to Crocker End) on to the bridleway. Follow the bridleway straight on through the planted woodland and across the field to Bix village.

Listen for chiffchaff and willow warbler singing from the woodland canopy in spring and summer.

Nettlebed – Warburg circular section

Starting in Nettlebed, follow the main route (section 5) through Catslip, then as you cross the field approaching Bix, turn left after 200 metres on to the footpath to wood. Follow the footpath arrows down to Valley Farm at Bix Bottom. Then follow the main route to Warburg Nature Reserve and back to Nettlebed (sections 3–4).

KEY

- BBOWT Nature Reserve
- Railway station
- Bus stop
- Parking