

# Living Landscape Wild Walk Two

Berkshire  
Buckinghamshire  
Oxfordshire



## Walk along the meandering River Enborne, through woodland and pastures

Starting at Thatcham railway station, this 6-mile circular walk takes in the eastern edge of Greenham and Crookham Commons, which are managed by the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) on behalf of West Berkshire Council.

- 9.7 km/6 miles (allow 3–4 hours)
- The Nature Discovery Centre is approximately 1 mile from the start of this walk. It is managed by BBOWT on behalf of West Berks Council, has parking, a shop, toilets and café. Visit [bbowt.org.uk/nature-discovery-centre](http://bbowt.org.uk/nature-discovery-centre) for opening times.
- Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 158 1:25,000 scale, covers the area of this walk.

### How to get to the start

Postcode: RG19 4PP Grid ref: SU 528 664

**By bus:** Check [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info) for information about local buses.

**By train:** This walk starts and finishes at Thatcham railway station.

**By car:** There is parking at Thatcham railway station and also at Greenham and Crookham Commons.

**By bike:** There is cycle storage at the railway station.



Please help us look after wildlife by keeping dogs on a lead when in nature reserves and under close control at all other times.

## West Berkshire Living Landscape

Living Landscapes are big and bold; they create space for wildlife and people, reconnect isolated habitats and give wildlife room to adapt and thrive.

The West Berkshire Living Landscape is on the edge of Newbury and Thatcham. It covers 27 km<sup>2</sup> and is a mosaic of land rich with history and wildlife; a place for people and wildlife to thrive side by side.

### Walking past history

- The earliest mention of a mill at Chamberhouse Mill dates from c.1390. The millers were always tenants – the last were the Smith family, who ran the mill for 83 years, up to the end of its working life in 1965.
- Greenham Common airfield was constructed in 1942. It was mainly a troop carrier base and home to four squadrons of the 438th Troop Carrier Group in 1944. There is still an empty underground fuel tank by the main gate; each tank held one million gallons of fuel.
- Dating from 1723, Monkey Marsh Lock was one of the original turf-sided locks of the Kennet Navigation. The canal opened from Reading to Bath in 1810 but was derelict by the 1950s. Monkey Marsh Lock was rebuilt in 1989–90.

### 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 Greenham and Crookham Commons. [Join us today!](#)

## NATURE NOTES



**Heathland** is a rare habitat in Berkshire but one that is

important for many species. Ground-nesting birds such as nightjar nest here and reptiles such as adders live here all year round, basking in the sun on patches of bare ground. In late summer the heath at **Greenham and Crookham Commons** is covered with the pink and purple blooms of flowering heather; contrasted by the bright yellow gorse.



**Reedbeds** are among the most important habitats in the UK for birds. Some species,

such as reed warblers, will nest here while wildfowl like tufted ducks and gadwall feed in the shallows.

The habitat is also important for insects such as dragonflies and damselflies, which can be seen flying over the reeds. **Thatcham Reedbeds** are home to the very rare and tiny Desmoulin's whorl snail which is no bigger than 2 mm.



**Woodland** This walk passes near **Bowdown Woods**, the

Trust's biggest woodland reserve in Berkshire. The woodland is made up of hidden valleys, sunny glades and patches of heathland which are all rich in wildlife. In spring, wild flowers such as bluebells carpet the woodland floor, and birds, including treecreepers, nest in the branches up above. Later in the year a vast array of fungi emerge from the leaf litter.



**Farmland** is one of the most extensive habitats in the UK and

can be a very important link between other habitats for wildlife. The hedgerows, flower-filled field margins, seed-filled stubble and ponds are home to small mammals, birds such as yellowhammers, and insects. These insects can be essential pollinators for the crops that farmers grow. We're working with farmers so that farmland is managed in the best way for wildlife.

## STAGE 7

Soon after a fence line starts on your left, go through gate on the right, cross the road and down the gravel bridleway. Bear left at the Tarmac track and cross the River Kennet to Chamberhouse Farm. Continue ahead to the canal and over the swing-bridge. Turn right on to the towpath to Monkey Marsh Lock. When you reach the road you will see Thatcham Station.

## STAGE 1

From Thatcham Station walk south over the Kennet and Avon Canal. Turn left into Chamberhouse Mill Lane. Bear left at Crookham Willows. At the paddock fence of Crookham Manor turn right following footpath skirting the manor grounds.

## STAGE 2

At a white brick outbuilding turn right. Go along field-edge track into the woodlands. After the path bends left, go right uphill to an old concrete road. Follow road past Limberlost Farm on right, then mobile home park on left. Just before main road, turn right onto the wooded path parallel to road. Note: this is a permissive path and may at times be quite overgrown and muddy.

## STAGE 6

Turn right and follow the fence line to main gate on right. Go straight ahead keeping the lakes on your left and running track on your right.

## STAGE 3

After crossing three private access tracks, turn left onto Tarmac lane, cross main road onto another Tarmac lane. Follow this past George's Farm and downhill between pine trees. When track bends right, go into field on left and downhill. Keep tight to hedgerow on right, steeply downhill.

## STAGE 5




At the road go through a gate and turn right. Cross the ford using the footbridge. Walk up to main road, turn left, cross road and head up Old Thornford Road. 100 m after first house on left, go through a small gate on left on to Crookham Common.

## STAGE 4

In the next field, follow the footpath diagonally across the field and over a wooden footbridge into Hampshire. Turn right and follow the path keeping close to the meandering river.



### KEY

-  BBOWT Nature Reserve
-  Railway station
-  Parking