



Walk 7: Sol Joel Park and High Wood

A flat walk which links Sol Joel Park with High Wood. Some walking on pavements is required. The route may be lengthened by one mile (1.6km) at point **12** to include a circuit of South Lake.

Length

2.5 miles (4 km). Allow 1 hour 15 mins plus stops.

Starting Point(s)

- Car:** **Sol Joel Car Park**, 8 Church Rd, Earley, RG6 7DG (adjacent Earley St Peters Church).
OS Grid Ref: SU 7455 7208. w3w: [///follow.librarian.vouch](#)
Note the time that the car park gates will be locked before you start your walk.
Kingfisher Drive, Woodley, RG5 3LH, (start/finish point **13**)
OS Grid Ref: SU 7533 7246. w3w: [///become.body.grand](#)
- Train** **Earley Station**, Station Road, Earley, RG6 7DY (start/finish point **10**),
OS Grid Ref: SU 7527 7203, w3w [///other.using.these](#)
- Bus:** **No 19a** **St Peters Church stop** (next to park entrance, walk along entrance road to point **(1)**), or
No 4/X4 **May's Lane**: Wokingham Rd, (walk along May's Lane and join the walk at point **(2)**), or
No 17 **Three Tuns stop**, Wokingham Road. (Walk towards the traffic lights, turn left at Co-op, then, just before the church, turn right into the entrance road to the park to point **(1)**.)

Refreshments

Three Tuns Pub, 191 Wokingham Road, Earley. RG6 1LT

Route Instructions (See map attached for numbered points)

1



With your back to the church yard and the pavilion on your left, walk to the right and then anticlockwise around the edge of the field (passing the skateboard area and the overflow car park) to come to the hedge on the far side. Keep the hedge on your right until you reach a small gap in the fence by a litter bin. This is point **(2)** below.

2



Pass through the gate, cross the road and turn left along Mays Lane. Go over the railway bridge keeping well to the right-hand side of the road until you reach a point where the road bends sharply to the left, with the entrance to the cemetery on the right. This is point **(3)** below.

3



Follow the pavement to the left. The road eventually narrows to a cycle path and the houses on the right give way to the A3290. You will reach a bollard at the end of the cycle track where it meets Church Road. This is point **(4)** below.

4



At the bollard at the end of the cycle track turn right onto Church Road and, keeping on the pavement, continue over the A3290 and past the end of Mays Close to reach a bus shelter. This is point **(5)** below.

- 5  Immediately before the bus shelter turn right and then **immediately** bear left on to the narrow path under the trees. (Do not go straight on). Continue forward with the houses of High Tree Drive on your left until you reach a footbridge into High Wood Nature Reserve, *the last remaining remnant of the once extensive Bullmarsh / Earley Heath which extended over much of what is now north Earley and Woodley*. This is point **(6)** below.
- 6  Cross the footbridge and continue along the winding path until you come to a T-junction with a wider path. This is point **(7)** below. *High Wood is mainly high forest with a few areas of coppice and a small area of dry and wet heathland. In places you can see remnants of the arboretum (rhododendrons, giant redwoods) created for Thomas Wheble of Woodley Lodge by the horticulturist J.C Loudon in the early 19th Cent*
- 7  At the junction turn right and continue forward keeping to the main wide path, ignoring offshoots to the left. After bearing right, pass over a dry shallow ditch and trees in the centre of the path, you will eventually come to a large tree (80cm in diameter) in the centre of the path and a number of paths branching. This is point **(8)** below.
- 8  Take the most right-hand (narrow) path, past a concrete post on the right, and continue forward through woodland which gradually opens out to grass and brambles and then takes you into the trees, where the path bears to the left. This is point **(9)** below.
- 9  Follow the path to the left and continue, with the woodland on the left and the fence to the A3290 on the right. Keep the fence on your right until the path opens onto the road. The footbridge to Earley Station is on your right. This is point **(10)** below. If you join from Earley Station you will cross the footbridge from the Station Road side of the track. *The original Reading to Reigate line opened in 1849. Earley station opened in 1863.*
- 10  Turn left on to the tarmac footpath and continue on the path, keeping the woodland on your left and the fence and houses on your right – ignore paths on your right through to an estate. After 350m you reach an open area of grass are on your right. This is point **(11)** below.
- 11  Continue forward keeping the wood on your left and the open area on the right. After 80m come to a crossing point, with an entrance to the wood on the left and a path leading to a children's play area and South Lake on your right. This is point **(12)** below. *Southlake is an artificial lake created in the 19th Century, from an ancient fishpond on the Bulmershe estate.*
- 12  *If you wish to visit the lake turn right here and walk past the play area (see map 'South Lake loop').* If not, continue forward for about 10m until you reach some wooden posts, with Kingfisher Drive on your right and a road into the wood, with a green barrier on your left. This is point **(13)** below. If parking on Kingfisher Drive you will join the walk at this point.

13



Turn left past the green barrier to enter the wood. Go forward for only about 10m to the first junction on your right. This is point **(14)** below.

14



Turn right onto a narrow path and continue straight on on the main gravelled path, ignoring the narrow path on your right. You will eventually reach an enclosed area of heath land on your left with a path to the left and a small gate into the corner of the heath land. This is point **(15)** below.

15



Do not go through the gate. Continue forward keeping the fence to the heathland on your left until you reach a T junction, with the university playing fields in front of you. This is point **(16)** below. *Parklands, the housing development to the left of the playing fields, is built on the site of the Bulmershe Teachers' Training College, which in turn was built, in the early 1960s, on the site of Woodley Lodge, the home of Henry Addington, Prime Minister 1801 – 1804.*

16



Turn left and follow the path along the edge of the wood keeping the playing fields and ditch on your right until you reach the end of the playing fields. This is point **(17)** below.

17



Follow the path which bears left then keep to the right. After 90m, come to a white-barked, silver birch tree on your right. Do not go straight on. Turn right and, after **only 10m**, you will reach a junction with a thin tree in the centre of the path. This is point **(18)** below (easily missed !!!!!).

18



At the junction with the tree in the centre turn right onto the wider path, then bear left to reach a large tree at a T-junction with a crossing path. This is point **(19)** below.

19



Turn right. You will soon see the houses of the Parklands development through the trees on your right. At the tree seat, keep left following the main path which gradually bears left and then makes a sharp left-hand turn (by four tall distinctive, redwood trees) through the woods. Ignore small paths to the left until you reach a triangular junction. This is point **(20)** below.

20



Take the slightly narrower path to the right. It winds to the right and eventually you will see wire netting and corrugated metal fencing to the left. The path brings you to the footbridge by which you entered the wood earlier. Go across the bridge and retrace your steps back to Church Road. This is point **(21)** below.

21



Turn left, cross Mays Close and the A3290 and take the footpath over the railway. Continue on the pavement, past St Peter’s School and the Church on your left. The entrance to Sol Joel Park is on your left at the end of the churchyard. This is point (22) below. *St Peters Church was built in 1844 and extended in 1882/3. The Porter Institute (built 1896), now the school reception, was the Working Men’s Club and named after Thomas Porter (Whiteknights Park) its founder.*

22



Walk carefully along the path at the side of the entrance to the park. You should now be back where you started! *The park is named after Soloman Barnato Joel, a self-made man and diamond dealer, who owned the Maiden Erlegh Estate from 1903 to 1931. In 1927 he donated £10,000 and 20 acres of land to the National Playing Fields Association. The land was developed into a park for the recreational use of families from Reading.*

