

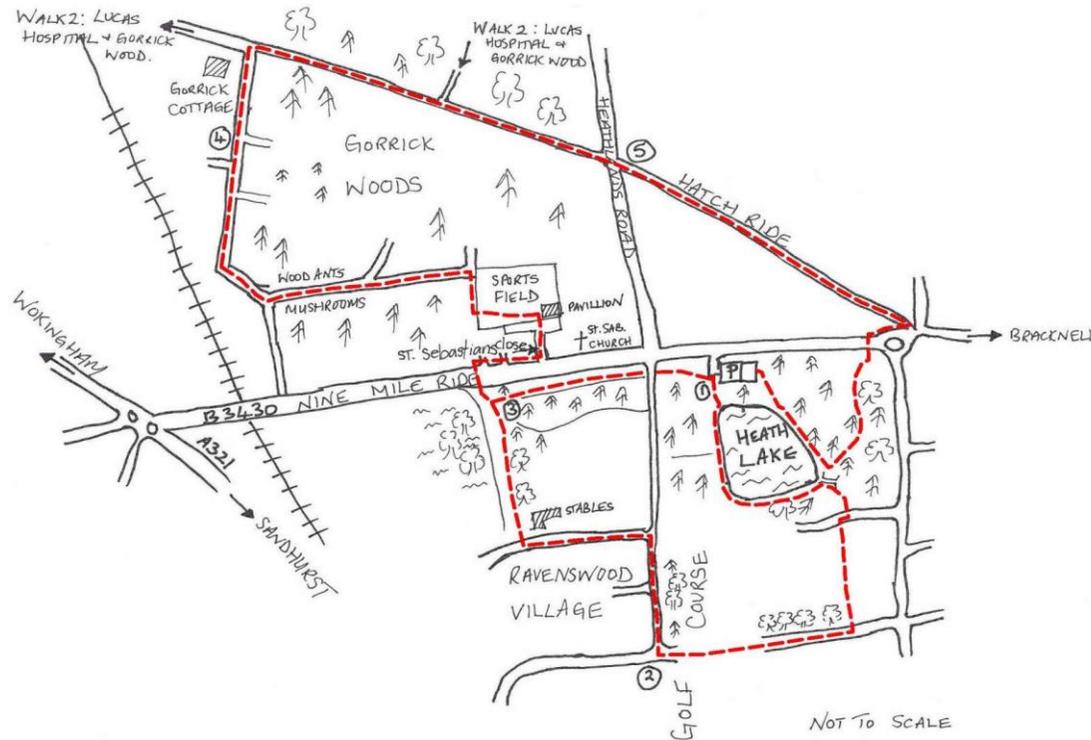
Walk 1: Sources of the Emm Brook-Heathlake & Gorrick Woods

FRIENDS OF THE EMM BROOK



Walk 1 Heathlake and Gorrick Woods – 4 miles – Easy Circular walk or 2 mile option – usually muddy, walking boots advised.

Map:



Britain and Heath Lake is the only example of an acid lake in Berkshire which still retains its characteristic flora including some uncommon and rare aquatic plant species including Water-milfoil and the 6 Stemmed water crowfoot. This flora supports a range of aquatic insects such as Dragon and Damselflies. A small island is used by some of the lake's breeding birds, which include Great crested grebe, Canada Geese and several nesting pairs of Heron.

The lake is manmade and was originally dug for the Palmer family of Huntley and Palmer biscuit fame, who lived in nearby Heathlands. The surrounding ditches are part of the drainage system from those works.

1. Leave the car park through the vehicle gate and head straight on towards the lake, turn right keeping lake on your left. Do not cross the footbridge but turn right, along path which becomes a wide grass path and continue past access to road. About 60 metres behind houses turn right onto the estate path between gardens. At end, cross road turn right and left and along footpath to right of no.24 continuing in the same direction to T-junction. Turn right along broad tree-lined path, Oaklands Lane. When you reach the golf course carefully cross the fairway into tree-lined path ahead. Look for right turn at the end of the woods just before the school. The footpath sign can be a bit overgrown, turn right.
2. Walk toward Ravenswood Village - a charitable foundation caring for adults and children with learning difficulties. Please keep dogs on leads through this area.

Start: Car Park at Heathlake, Nine Mile Drive, Crowthorne, Berkshire. - B3430

Grid Ref: SU 828653.

Heath Lake is a shallow 7 acre lake, designated a SSSI, situated on a sandy alluvial deposit overlying the Bracklesham Beds. The lake is generally less than 1m deep and is stream and spring-fed and influenced by the nutrient-poor substrate and surrounding soils. 'Acid lakes' are rare in lowland

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On reaching the tarmac road continue straight on till you swing round to the main drive. Turn left and keep to the marked pedestrian areas. You will pass a building with a small clock pinnacle on the left. Where the road divides, fork right and turn right onto a narrow path behind the stables. At the end of the grass path bear left to the road.

For shorter walk turn right at the end of the grass path along woodland path back to car park at start.

3. For longer walk carefully cross road and turn right along pavement to St Sebastian's Close, turn left to playing field. Pass through metal gate at the end of the pavilion and turn left across the field to any stile on fence ahead. Turn right along path at edge of wood, Gorrick Wood, till broad track joins from the left. Turn left along track and keep straight ignoring 1st junction. (As you approach the T-junction, to the left of the track in Autumn are Fly Agaric Mushrooms and to the right of the track in summer there are wood ant nests which can be seen on their large leaf litter nest mounds.) At T-junction turn right still on broad track which gently descends to valley bottom then rises again. As you walk through the woodland Roe Deer are a common sight.

4. At earth bank that crosses track continue onto narrower path. Soon Gorrick Cottage will come into view through the trees on the left, go past buildings and turn right at T-junction through metal gate. Stay on track till leave Gorrick Wood.

5. At road cross over Heathlands Road onto Hatch Ride opposite and continue passing stables on right.

Soon the road turns into a track which reaches the busy road near the roundabout. Turn right along pavement. Where this joins the road cross carefully to re-enter Heathlake Park through a gap in the fence. Continue straight ignoring the clear track that crosses your path. On path parallel to main track turn right and after 25 metres turn left onto path through trees. At T-junction turn right and within a few metres turn left onto wider path. Path soon descends gently at bottom of slope on meeting path junction turn right and follow path through trees with lake on left. Follow path back to car park at start.

Gorrick plantation is a 64.9 acre area of lowland heath managed by the forestry commission. It is part of the bigger Bramshill Forest and on generally acidic soils with a sandy surface over a fine loamy and slowly permeable clay layer below which can cause low lying areas to give rise to wet heathland habitat. The forest is mostly planted with Corsican and Scots pine. The Corsican pine is susceptible to frost damage but the slower growing Scots pine is more hardy. Birch readily colonises open ground as a pioneer species, with oak along woodland boundaries and roadsides.

The majority of the woods were first planted during the 1920's and 1930's. As a result of the mineral workings that started in the 1970's and the clearance of fallen trees after the storm in

1987, a significant increase in replanting occurred in the 1990's.

The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) comprises 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), over 8,000 hectares of land. This complex of heath and woodland sites is of international importance because of the presence of two rare ground nesting birds, the Nightjar and the Woodlark. There are also sightings of the Common Crossbill.

The woodland is managed to ensure continual availability of ground nesting bird habitat.

More information on the local history and wildlife can be found on: www.foteb.org.uk