







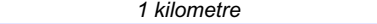


-  Main route 6.7 km
-  alternative route 8.5 km
-  options
-  railway (to Abbey Wood 700 m)
-  connection with another walk
-  view point
-  steep steps
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- 1** Bostall Wood can be confusing. Be sure to follow green link signs. Keep to the right (southern) side of the ridge and exit by the bowling green.
- 2** After crossing Longleigh Lane follow the far edge of the clearing round (marked by trees) to end up on Bostall Hill. Cross over and turn right. Shortly after a signed track bears off to the left.

IMPORTANT
Part of green way temporarily diverted at this point. Alternative route is indicated

This walk follows the green chain walk and is well indicated by way markers. The wooded parts can be a bit muddy and the last part is hilly. Note that there is a diversion around one of the prettiest parts of the walk with no indication as to when the route will be restored

Falconwood to Lesnes Abbey

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This walk takes two alternative routes linking green spaces and forming part of the Green Chain Link. There are hilly parts and muddy parts and a temporary diversion. Both routes converge in Bostall Woods to pass through the ancient woodlands of Abbey Wood.

The Green Chain

The Green Chain is a network of over 300 open spaces in South East London stretching from Erith Riverside to the urban green spaces of Peckham; included are a wide variety of open spaces - from ancient woodlands and wild nature reserves to playing fields and golf courses. Much of the Green Chain is on the urban fringe - so called because the open spaces are located on the edge of town. The Green Chain Walk is the name of the sign-posted network of footpaths that link these open spaces together. The walk is 50 miles long and split into 11 sections.

Oxleas Wood

I can remember visiting Oxleas Wood and Meadow in 1933 when they were threatened by a motorway scheme. Originally part of the Royal manor of Eltham they are now owned and maintained by the London Borough of Greenwich for recreation and constitute a Site of Special Scientific Interest called Oxleas Woodlands, covering 72 hectares with oak, silver birch, hornbeam, coppice

hazel, and a great number of fine samples of the Wild Service Tree.

East Wickham Open Space

East Wickham Open Space is a large open park, with mown paths through natural grassland, short grassy areas and two small copses of young trees. It provides a vital grassland corridor between the two ancient woodlands of Bostall and Oxleas. Managed in large part to encourage wildlife, in summer the wild flowers attract multitudes of butterflies. Notable tree species include spindle, rowan and flowers include chicory, red and white campion and field scabious.

The site was previously part of the East Wickham Farm and grounds to East Wickham House. During the late 1950s part of the area was used as a landfill site consisting of green waste and bomb damage rubble. Later the area was levelled and grassed over to become a public open space and the streams flowing west to east across the site were culverted.

Bostall Woods

This site is a mixture of woodland, grassland and heathland, lying on a ridge of high land running east-west. The steep slopes, deep ravines and flat land on top of the ridge support a swathe of dense woodland, along with grassy and heathy habitats.

Flora: sessile oak, pedunculate oak, silver birch, sweet chestnut, sycamore, beech,

Scots pine, hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple, elder, wild rose, holly, hazel, cherry, rowan, hairy woodrush, greater stitchwort, bramble, bracken, wood melick, bluebell, lesser celandine, ivy, old man's beard, honeysuckle

In the 19th century the Heath was nearly built over, but it was taken over in 1878 by the Metropolitan Board of Works in order to keep it as public open space.

Abbey Wood

Part of the Woods are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The fossil bed found at Lesnes Abbey Wood contains many types of fossils from the Eocene epoch of about 54.5 million years ago. The main fossils found today are sharks' teeth and seashells and the bed is still worked.

Lesnes Abbey

After the Norman Conquest of 1066, the area of Lesnes passed into the possession of Bishop Odo and is mentioned in the Domesday Survey. The year 1178 saw the foundation of the Abbey of St Mary and St Thomas the Martyr at Lesnes, founded by Richard de Luci, Chief Justiciar of England, in 1178. It was closed by Cardinal Wolsey in 1525, under a licence to suppress monasteries of less than seven inmates. It was one of the first monasteries to be closed during the Dissolution of the Monasteries, and the monastic buildings were all pulled down, except for the Abbott's Lodging.