

A Walk to Rapley Lake

This is a pleasant stroll of about 4.5 km (3 mile) or a mile further if you start from the village-centre car park. The paths used are not public rights of way but are in woods for which the Crown Estates have granted permissive access. There are no hills, the paths are often muddy in places. Allow at least 1 1/2 hours.

The walk starts in Vicarage Road just beyond the houses on the right and opposite Connaught Rd. The nearest free public car park is in the centre of Bagshot behind the Somerfield supermarket. If you park on-street please have regard for local residents and do not cause any obstruction.

Continue along Vicarage Road to the end of the surfacing, then go through the new kissing gate on your right. Turn right on the track the other side of the gate (ie doubling back on yourself) and follow it to the end (about 15m) and turn left.

The path goes forward for about 100m then swings left. You will have a field on your right. Continue for about 250m to the end of the field and turn right to keep the field on your right. The path may be a little indistinct but keep going for about 150m when the path distinctly turns left.

Shortly you cross a little stream which is ducted under the path. Keep going and in about 200m this path ends at a T-junction (at the time of writing there was a 6" square oak post at the junction which looked as though it ought to have a finger board sign on it). Observe a wide grassy avenue through the wood on your left. Don't take this but turn right. In less than 50m the path turns left and takes a somewhat meandering route, from time to time you will see the infant Windle Brook stream to your right.

After about 200m the path turns right and crosses the stream.

Continue forward for another 200m until you approach the edge of the wood. The reducing density of trees gives more opportunity for other plants to grow and at times the path may become a little overgrown with bracken.

As you approach the edge of the wood you will get a glimpse of Bagshot Park ahead of you. The path turns left and runs parallel with the edge of the field. Follow thus until you come into another wide grassy avenue on your left (though not as wide as the first one we passed).

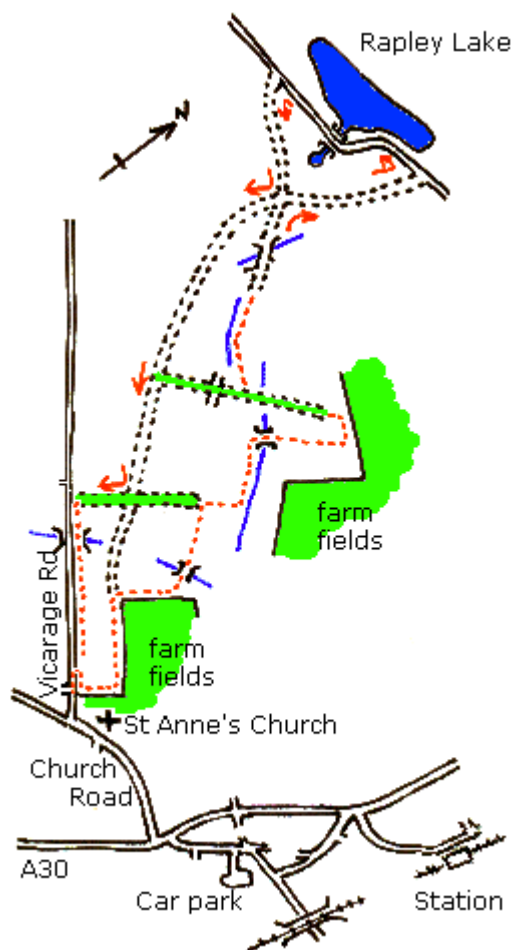
Turn left into this avenue which runs gently downwards and after about 200m a stream crosses (this area can be particularly muddy) and starts to rise again.

About 20m after the lowest point there is a small path running off at an angle on your right. Follow this as it wends its way further to the right and opens out into a wider track. You will catch occasional glimpses of a stream on your left.

The widened track crosses a railed bridge and in a little further you come to a cross roads. This is also the county boundary between Surrey and Berkshire though there is nothing to tell you this! At the time of writing there was a finger-post pointing to "The Look Out". Don't go that way but turn right and follow this track as it bends gently to the left. Part way along the track gets particularly muddy. This track ends at a gravelled drive with signs of farm working to your right. This is a private area, so turn left along the drive and you will see Rapley Lake.

Follow this drive along the edge of the lake and across the brick bridge. You will exchange the lake for rhododendrons on your right.

Continue for about 200m beyond the bridge and a track will come in at an angle on your left. Take this track, doubling back slightly on the route you have just taken.



In about 300m you will catch signs of an old wrought iron gate and a track off to the right. Don't be tempted to turn right but continue through the gates in the direction you have been going.

After little more than 50m you will see the "Look Out" finger board and realise that you have been at this cross roads before. Turn half right (taking the only track that you have not been on) and just keep following it - in all for nearly 1km. The terrain you walk through will vary and you will pass the end of one of the grassy avenues and then reach another.

When you get to this second, wider, grassy avenue turn right and walk along it towards the iron fencing. Just before you reach the fence, turn left and walk along the path to the kissing gate by which you entered the woods. Alternatively, go through the gate in the fence onto Vicarage Lane (which by this point is a gravel track), turn left and follow it back

Safety and other considerations:

Please remember the 'country code'. Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints.

Woodland footpaths can be expected to be uneven and have trip hazards such as protruding roots or holes. Paths may be muddy and slippery. There may be overhanging branches, brambles, etc. You should take care and wear suitable footwear and clothing.

Always keep track of where you are so that you could retrace your steps if you miss the intended route or it is blocked. Walking alone is inadvisable.

There are deer living wild in these woods - but you will be very lucky if you see one. However if you do encounter any that do not run away then treat them with the greatest of respect.

This is a walk that the author has done many times. The description given here is provided in good faith but no assurances as to its accuracy or suitability for you are given.

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