

ROCKINGHAM FOREST WALKERS



The Wrest Park Armistice Trail

Permanent Trail PT290

12km - BWF Grade 2

Start / Finish:- Wrest Park, Silsoe
Bedfordshire, MK45 4HR

Map: Explorer 193, Grid TL088:355

Entry Fee £1.00 – no award.



Bus service within 1 km of the start. Nearest railway stations are Bedford or Luton Central (not Parkway or Leagrave).

Wrest Park stages quite a few events during the year, please check on the English Heritage website for events and opening times. For car parking, follow the signs for additional parking pass the main house and turn left at last turning on left, alongside long single storey building, follow road to gravelled car park.

The organisers are not liable for accidents, thefts and/ or damage to property. Every effort will be made by the organisers to make these safe, enjoyable and memorable events

Auberon Herbert, 9th Baron Lucas, offered his country house – Wrest Park – for use as a hospital during the First World War in August 1914.

Soldiers arrived by train at Ampthill station where they were met by a fleet of ambulances and cars that transported them to Wrest Park. On arrival the soldiers were stripped and bathed in the 'louse house'. They were then taken onto the wards.

In total, 1,600 patients passed through Wrest Park Hospital. Most men stayed only for a few weeks before moving on to convalesce. Activities were an important part of daily life to keep up morale. These included amateur dramatics, cricket matches, fishing, and billiards competitions.

The medical staff at Wrest Park Hospital consisted of a Medical Officer, who could call on the services of three London-based surgeons, and a team of about 24 nurses.

Wrest Park's life as a hospital came to an abrupt end on 14 September 1916 when the mansion was badly damaged by fire. All 156 patients were safely evacuated, but the damage was so serious that it was not practical for the hospital to be reopened.

From the car park, return towards the main drive and cross to follow waymarked bridleway ahead with buildings on your right. Follow the bridleway into the trees ahead (Whitehall Plantation). Continue until you reach a waymarked (marker on right) unsurfaced track on the right.

Turn right and follow the track through the trees to the Gravenhurst Road. Cross to the bridleway opposite, signposted to Higham Gobion.

Q.1 On the Bridleway sign, how far is it to Higham Gobion?

Follow the bridleway to a pedestrian gate, through gate and turn right with hedge/fence on your right hand side (*this area is known as The Camp, it was believed that this was the site of a castle, but it is now thought these were medieval fish ponds*). Pass through gate in corner and ahead slightly uphill with hedge on right, ignoring bridge on right. Continue to the road outside Higham Gobion.

Turn left downhill along the road for 320 metres (be aware that this road can be busy), and then right on to the footpath at the cottages on the left-hand side. Follow the wide footpath with stream on right along the field boundary. In the corner of the field follow the path round to the left, aiming for and passing yellow topped post. In the corner of the field do not go through gap in hedge but follow footpath sign to turn left following hedge on your right.

Bear right on footpath following hedge and at the gap at the end of the field by yellow-topped post continue ahead along footpath between fence on left and hedge. Follow path alongside houses, follow round to left and at track turn right to road. Cross road to footpath opposite. Continue to metal kissing gate, through gate and ahead with fence on right to pass through a further two metal kissing gates and one wooden one. Turn left along stream, fence on left.

Continue on this path continue through metal kissing gate, as far as a metal bridge on your right. Turn left at the bridge through metal gates across field alongside fence on your left to another gate.

Q.2 On the marker post, referring to the sign at the top, what walk is this?

Go through kissing gate on other side of track and follow the right hand path heading towards a waymarked gap in the fence ahead. Continue to a wooden kissing gate in the corner of the field, continue through gate and follow footpath, stream on right, field on left to gap next to road bridge. Turn right on road over bridge to road junction. Turn left at junction (Noahs Ark

Public House to your right) and forward for 330 metres, passing burned out cottage on left). Just before next house on your left turn left onto track and then immediately right through waymarked metal kissing gate.

Follow footpath, fence on right, through metal kissing gate and ahead with hedge on right, to gap in hedge, follow footpath through gap and slightly uphill through earthwork.

Continue ahead with hedge on right to a green footbridge, pass through metal kissing gate and walk across field to metal gate and footbridge. Cross bridge and turn left, then turn right at the end of the fence on your right, follow footpath with ditch/wood on your left, bear left through waymarked gap and ahead with hedge on right, fence on left to road.

Turn right on road uphill towards village. (Upper Gravenhurst).

Q.3 As you enter the village, below the 30mph sign on the right there is a blue sign, who operates here?

Continue uphill through village, cross the junction with High Street, and in 250 metres turn left on to Public Bridleway. Follow this Bridleway for 1500 metres back to the start.

We hope you have enjoyed your walk. Have a safe journey home.

Route checked & updated 6th Jan 2018

When you have finished the walk please send your answers on a Permanent Trail Entry Form, your IVV cards, payment of £1.00 per walker (please make cheques payable to **Rockingham Forest Walkers**) and a stamped addressed envelope for return of cards to:

Phil Percival,

The Permanent Trail Officer

Rockingham Forest Walkers

77 Thor Drive,

Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK41 0WN