

THE PARKS TRUST WALKS

Walk 10. Woolstone & Campbell Park Art Trail

Walk by Peter Burrett, Tuesday 20 May 2014

Start point

Turn south off Childs Way (H6), between Woolstone and South Overgate roundabouts, into Pattison Lane. Turn left onto Newport Road, following it round to the right and pass The Barge Inn on the left. Where the road next bends round to the right, take a left and proceed until you reach a free car park next to the local cricket green.

Walk overview

This is a figure of eight walk beginning and ending at the same car park in Woolstone, and taking in Campbell Park and much of its art trail.



The walking is along good quality hardcore footpaths and red ways. There are a few inclines but the walk is suitable for wheelchair users.

Distances & times

Figure of eight walk; Car park – Woolstone Cricket Green – Newlands – Campbell Park Art Trail – Grand Union Canal - car park = 2.9 miles, 90 minutes.

Along the route there is only one opportunity to buy refreshments, at *The Barge Inn*, Woolstone, close to the starting/finishing point. This 19th century pub is open 12.00-23.00 Monday to Saturday, 12.00-22.30 on Sunday. Lunches are served until 17.00 every day, and evening meals are served daily. A visit at the end of your walk is highly recommended! There is an alternative pub – *The Cross Keys* – just a few hundred metres from the cricket green, further south on Newport Road.

The route is served by scores of benches at regular intervals, so plenty of opportunities to enjoy a picnic lunch.

The figure of eight walk

Facing the cricket green you will see a circular path skirting its edge, lined with horse chestnut trees. Turn right onto this. You soon pass a paddock on your right. Ignore another path on your right, continuing past a children's barked play area. Where the path bifurcates take the right fork away from the cricket green and turn left onto Mill Lane. Pass *The Barge Inn*, cross Newport Road and continue into Linford Lane opposite, passing a "no through road" sign.



The road becomes a pathway, crossing Pattison Lane and passing a blue sign for "*Campbell Park*" before continuing underneath Childs Way (H6) into Newlands. At time of walk, there were masses of cow parsley either side of the path. Walk over a footbridge across the Grand Union Canal and into Campbell Park.

At a cross ways of paths, go straight ahead up a slight incline. Turn left at the next cross ways onto cycle path 51, as indicated on a bollard. Turn right at the next cross ways, still on cycle path 51, and follow this across a bridge above Overgate. To the right you will see the cricket pavilion, home to the offices of The Parks Trust. Continue on the same path, past a sign for "*Open Air Theatre / Beacon*" and "*City Centre*". The art trail we will be following is also signed. You can now see the full extent of the cricket ground to your right, and its grassy stepped viewing areas.

The first piece on the art trail is soon visible to the right of the path. Having the appearance of a totem pole, it is "*Onwards and Upwards*" by Robert Koenig, 2011.

At the next footpath junction, carry on straight across, following another art trail sign. Pass through a metal gate to the side of a cattle grid into a grazing area. As the footpath passes beyond a small copse, you will see a beacon atop a hillock to your right. Continue on the art trail across another footpath where circular metal seating surrounds a tree trunk. Take the path sweeping up a gradual incline towards the beacon. You pass the Open Air Theatre on your left, where the works of playwrights from Shakespeare to Roald Dahl have been performed.

When you reach the beacon, sometimes known as the belvedere, stop to take in the panoramic view across Milton Keynes and surrounding hills. The beacon itself is part of the art trail, and is named *The Light Pyramid*, by Liliane Lijn, 2012.





Now turn to walk back towards John Lewis, the shopping centre, the theatre district and the slope of the Xscape ski dome. In front of you (slightly down into a dip) is a circular area called MK Rose with scores of stone obelisks, each representing a significant date in the development of Milton Keynes.

From MK Rose, retrace your steps toward the beacon. Just before a cattle grid, turn left onto a circular path that takes you past several benches with sculpted covers, and past another installation – Cave, by Ivan and Heather Morison, 2011 – overlooking a rough grazing area, complete with dew pond.



At another crossing of paths, turn right and start to walk around the outside of the paved and grassy Labyrinth feature with, as its centre piece, The Armillary Sphere, Justin Tunley, 1995.

Here at the Labyrinth is an information board about the various pieces along the Campbell Park art trail. Half way around the Labyrinth, take some steps down to a footpath. (There is a wheelchair friendly ramp too). Turn right, and after a few metres you will again see the hilltop beacon to your right. (*CAUTION! At this point there is a steep downward section of path. Wheelchair users should, perhaps, have assistance here*).

To your left you will see a series of more formally planted gardens. There are pathways to allow you to explore these, and plenty of benches.

Pass by another cattle grid. The path takes you between two semi-circular concrete ponds. To your left, beyond one of the formal borders, lies another piece of art, Chain Reaction by Ray Smith, 1992.



Shortly after this sculpture, again on your left, is a tranquil pond semi-covered by reed beds and surrounded by several large weeping willows. Moorhens were spotted here. You are now facing the cricket pavilion. To the right of the pavilion can be seen another art piece, Gnomon (Shadow Caster) by Peter Bowker, 1994.

Turn left and take the path around the edge of the cricket pitch. Cross the access road leading to the pavilion itself. You will see the Grand Union Canal in the near distance, most likely with colourful narrow boats present.

Cross Overgate. Before reaching the canal, turn right onto another footpath, skirting a small lake complete with water fowl. At a junction of paths, turn left, then right at a T-junction up a slight incline. This leads to the next piece of art – Head by Allen Jones, 1990.



Four footpaths converge onto the area where this sculpture stands. Carry on straight across. You will walk over a plate sunk into the ground showing lines of latitude and longitude, and directional arrows to Bedford, Winslow, Northampton and Leighton Buzzard. The path sweeps to the right until a T-junction. Turn left and back over the stone-built canal bridge crossed earlier in the walk.

Immediately after the bridge, turn right to join the boardwalk that runs parallel with the canal tow path. The boardwalk is attractively lined by poplars, but is of hardcore, rather than wood! Briefly joining the tow path itself, head under the two bridges that carry the two carriageways of Childs Way (H6). These are numbered Grand Union Canal bridges 82A and 82B.

Rejoin the boardwalk. The next bridge over the canal is of stone and numbered 83. It carries the red way from Springfield to the Ouzel Valley Park. Pass this, and a large green area opens out on your left, complete with children's play area. At the far side of this, take a footpath on the left and cross Pattison Lane before reaching Newport Road. Cross, and proceed to the car park opposite.