

# Ruislip Woods Walks

## Red route 1.2km

The Red Route is one of several easy access guided walks that pass through Ruislip Woods.

The path starts from Wiltshire Lane and ends at the Lido car park, Reservoir Road, and is mostly downhill. It can, however, be walked either way round.

Accessible by bus H13 alighting at the top of Wiltshire Lane, Northwood. The H13 can be boarded from Ruislip, Ruislip Manor, Pinner, and Northwood.



# Ruislip Woods Walks **Red route**

## **Follow the posts marked with a red disc and arrow**

**1** The first post for the Red Route is situated at the Wiltshire Lane entrance to Park Wood (one of the four woods that make up Ruislip Woods). Wild cherry trees can be seen close to the first route marker. Wild cherry have attractive, shiny, reddish bark, and in the autumn provide cherry fruits for a wide range of woodland fauna. Continue walking downhill, keeping the golf course to your right.

**2** Bats will roost in large mature trees, such as oaks, examples of which you'll see as you walk down the hill. Bats roost together for body warmth and social contact, and Ruislip Woods harbour several bat species. Continue walking down the hill.

**3** As the earth bank to your right draws parallel with the route you will spot a beech tree growing on the earth bank. At some time in the past this beech tree was coppiced, or cut down to the stump, and has since re-grown several large horizontal branches. Trees growing on boundary earth banks, such as this one, were often coppiced as a way of marking the boundary of one owner's land with another.

**4** On some decaying tree stumps you may notice what look like boot laces covering them. These are part of the honey fungus, a species of fungi found in woodlands that lives off dying and deadwood. Although often destructive in a park or garden, honey fungus is kept in check in woodlands by strong competition with other fungi.

**5** On the way down the hill you may notice rowan trees, and during the autumn the bright red berries are a distinctive and valued food resource for woodland birds and small mammals. Turn right and follow the gravel path around the edge of the golf course for about 100 metres. Turn left at the old, disused building and cross the small bridge.

**6** Follow the path ahead, alongside the bridleway, and walk through the opening in the fence ahead of you to enter Poor's Field. Proceed by turning left and keeping the Field to your right. Poor's Field is the last remaining relic of the common wasteland that used to cover a substantial area in the north of the Parish of Ruislip. The vegetation is of typical acid soil heathland i.e. low in nutrients. The small grass mounds covering the Field are ant hills, important feeding areas for green woodpeckers.

**7** Cattle are grazed in Poor's Field during the summer months to help control the invading scrubby vegetation. They eat the stems, shoots, leaves, and berries of species such as bramble, grasses, trees, and gorse. In the past other livestock such as horses and pigs would have regularly grazed on the vegetation of this common land. During the summer months look out for heath spotted orchids, and for butterflies such as the meadow brown, red admiral and speckled wood.

**8** The grassy areas, as well as the nearby lido, are good habitats for grass snakes, which feed on frogs, toads, newts and small fish. In addition to grass snakes, there are also populations of slow worms. Continue walking along the path, keeping the lido and railway line to your left.

**9** As you walk you may notice mature oak trees scattered around. These are home to hundreds of different insects, fungi, and lichens, and are used as feeding grounds, nesting areas, lookout points, and homes for many birds, insects and mammals.

**10** Follow the path through the last remaining field and exit Poor's Field via the kissing gate by the road and car park.

**You are now in Reservoir Road. The H13 bus stop is down on the left-hand side of the road past the pub.**

**The H13 runs from the top of Wiltshire Lane, Northwood, to Ruislip Lido, in Reservoir Road, Ruislip. The H13 can be boarded from Ruislip, Ruislip Manor, Pinner, and Northwood.**

Further copies of this leaflet can be obtained from the Woodland Centre, next to the Lido beach, as well as public libraries and the Civic Centre in Uxbridge or downloaded from the council's website at

 [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/greenspaces](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/greenspaces)