

Walk 16

Bourne End and Spade Oak Lake

An attractive and varied walk combining a wonderful stretch of the Thames Path with views of the hills beyond and a circuit of Spade Oak Lake Nature Reserve. The Lake contains many different kinds of water birds and good views of them can be obtained from the permissive path which runs along the edge of the lake. The historic village of Little Marlow with its two pubs makes a perfect half-way stop.

Distance: 3 miles (allow 2 hours)

Start: Bourne End train station.

Access Information: This is a level walk. There are two footbridges by Spade Oak Lake which have a step up to them. Some of the footpaths around Spade Oak Lake can be muddy in winter.

Refreshments: The Spade Oak pub is passed towards the end of the walk. There are two pubs at Little Marlow close to the outward route, or there are cafes and pubs in Bourne End.

Route:

From Bourne End station turn left along the main road to the roundabout and then left again along the High Street. When you see a filling station on the opposite side of a road to your right, turn left down Wharf Lane. Follow this road to the Thames Path, taking care when crossing the railway. **1**

Turn right along the towpath, go past the marina and the Upper Thames Sailing Club, continuing to Spade Oak Meadow. **2** Keep straight ahead alongside the river until you reach a kissing gate. **3** Go through the gate and turn right along the hedge, cross over the railway (with care) which will bring you to Spade Oak Lake. **4** Keep straight ahead (or follow the permissive footpath to the right and along the edge of the lake which will give you better views). Carry on until you reach a

surfaced lane and stay ahead towards Little Marlow (well worth exploring). Just about 100m after a row of cottages on the left, look for a footpath on the right. Take this footpath and walk along the edge of the field. **5**

Soon you go over two footbridges, then turn right in field and cross the access road again. Shortly after entering the 2nd field, turn right at a waymark post along a path towards the lake, cross a footbridge and turn left alongside the lake. After 600m, turn left over a footbridge and through a gate. Cross the field and past the next gate to a lane and the Spade Oak pub. **6** Right past pub and left along Upper Thames Way. **7** Stay ahead over the railway to the river and turn left to return to Bourne End station.



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