

Walk 3: Oakington to Gatehouse Road via Centenary Wood.

This walk starts at the Pavilion Car Park by the Recreation Ground.

The section of railway line in the photograph was taken from the old Cambridge to St Ives line that ran where the Guided Bus now runs.



Proceed down the path marked “Dog Walking” to the side of the Pavilion, passing between the Cemetery on your left and the MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area) on the right.

At the end of the MUGA turn slightly left and head across our burgeoning Community Orchard. This will in a year or two be providing fruit available to residents of our villages.



At the far end of the Orchard join the riverside path alongside Oakington Brook. Pass through a kissing gate and continue on for about 200m under trees until you reach a crossing path and the Mansell Wood bridge. This

bridge crosses Beck Brook, and if you look to the right from the bridge you can see the confluence of Beck Brook and Oakington Brook through the trees.



Continue into Mansell Wood, taking the right hand of the paths that join there. Shortly you will come across an Information Board showing you a map of the surroundings, and where you are heading. There is plenty of wild life to look out for. *Note that this map does rather exaggerate the size of Centenary Wood at the present time.*

Continue on the path through the wood for about 50m watching out for tree roots and the occasional stump, and you will come to a further bridge to the right. This takes you back across Beck Brook as it flows in



from Girton. On the far side of this bridge turn left onto a wide grassy path between the brook and the fields. (This is a permissive path rather than a Right of Way). You may see occasional buses going by on the Guided Busway one field

to the east, or cyclists or pedestrians on the bridleway adjacent to the Busway. The path swings to the right, away from the brook, and then left, and again right and left around a belt of trees.





In just under 1km you will see in front of you a small bridge across a field drain, and beyond it the first signs of Centenary Wood. As you cross the bridge you see a sign telling you that the wood, and the field is sits in, exist by permission of the tenant farmer managing that field. Public access is

allowed but is not a right.



The Centenary Woodland was planted in early 2010 by volunteers from the surrounding villages, mostly Oakington, Histon and Girton. The site was prepared and trees provided by Cambridgeshire County Council Estates Department, who are the land owners and it was their Centenary.

If you proceed along the track keeping to the left of the wood itself you will shortly come to an entrance, and can enter the wood here (please do not try and force a way through the surrounding hedge elsewhere).



It is a mixed deciduous open woodland with a wide range of species, a



few of which in time may grow to a considerable height. As the trees grow and block the light the intervening weeds should diminish, and some of the trees will need to be thinned to make way for the larger species. It is likely to be constantly changing for many years as the trees develop. There are a number of open areas which will become glades in time and may make good picnic spaces. In the mean time the

extra vegetation provides winter feed for Grey Partridge, and passing flocks of winter migrants



Follow the track on through the wood, keeping mainly to the left (other tracks are used mainly by the farmer for access). Exit the wood



through another gap in the hedge.

At the far end of the wood you can either turn left to follow the track back through the woodland field towards Oakington, or continue straight on to arrive at Gatehouse Road.



The exit to Gatehouse Road is masked by a farming trailer, it is believed in order to prevent unwanted motor traffic from entering the field, but as you will see there is a further Woodland Welcome sign greeting pedestrian visitors from that direction.

Where next? You can turn left along Gatehouse Road towards Histon to find the entrances to three other paths leading from Gatehouse Road back to Oakington or Westwick, or right to the junction with Cambridge Road to head for Girton or Oakington along the adjacent footpaths.