

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** Cross the large meadow 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** Take the public footpath (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

private access road just before some cottages. Carefully cross the access road and either continue towards Little Marlow (well worth exploring) or, to continue with the walk, turn right along a footpath about 100 metres later. **5**

Soon you go over two footbridges and then turn right to go across the access road again. A short distance further on you will see a waymark post pointing right to the permissive path which you should follow. Bear left at the first junction down to the lake. Eventually the path turns left over a footbridge away from the lake and across a field to reach a lane and the Spade Oak pub. **6** Just past the pub there is a footpath sign on your left. **7** Follow this back to the river and turn left to return to Bourne End station.



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