

# Foxholes Wild Walk

Berkshire  
Buckinghamshire  
Oxfordshire



## Explore Foxholes: stroll through rolling countryside, woodland and quiet villages

Starting in Shipton-under-Wychwood, this 11 km circular walk takes in ancient woodland at the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust's (BBOWT) Foxholes nature reserve.

- 11 km/7 miles (about 2.5 hours)
- To start the walk from Kingham railway station, allow an extra hour
- There are additional paths through Foxholes nature reserve to explore further, including a Wildlife Walk

### How to get to the start

**Postcode:** OX7 5FJ **Grid ref:** SP 282 186

**By bus:** Check [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info) for information about local buses

**By train:** The route starts at Shipton railway station, alternatively there is an extension to start from Kingham railway station. Check [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) for train times

**By car:** There is parking at both Shipton and Kingham railway stations and very limited parking at Foxholes nature reserve (access track is very potholed, a 4x4 is recommended)

**By bike:** There is cycle storage at Shipton and Kingham railway stations



Please help us look after wildlife by keeping dogs on short leads at Foxholes and picking up after them.

## Foxholes Nature Reserve

This tranquil woodland, a remnant of the ancient forest of Wychwood, is one of the best bluebell woods in Oxfordshire. The wet ash-maple woodland bordering the River Evenlode gives way to beech further up slope with oak and birch on the gravel plateau within the reserve.

In spring the woodland floor is vibrant with primroses, violets and early-purple orchids. More than 50 bird species, including marsh tit, nuthatch and treecreeper breed in the wood, producing a chorus of song through spring and summer.

Wild honeysuckle grows in the wood and is the food plant of the white admiral butterflies' caterpillars. Look for the butterflies flying in the woodland. Numerous other butterfly species have been recorded in the wood, including ringlet, holly blue, and speckled wood.

Fungi are abundant here during autumn. Over 200 species have been recorded including boletes, russulas, milkcaps and false death cap. Look out for the bright red beechwood sickener poking out from the fallen beech leaves, the fly agaric – the classic red and white fairytale toadstool, and the blue-grey oyster mushroom, growing in tiers at the base of trees.

### Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)

BBOWT relies on the support of our members to help us look after local wildlife. By joining BBOWT you can help to secure the future of special landscapes like Foxholes.

[Join us today!](#)

## NATURE NOTES



The carpets of **bluebells** in spring woodlands are one of Britain's

great natural spectacles. Native English bluebells have a distinctive 'droop' like the top of a shepherd's crook, the tips of the narrow, bell-shaped flowers are rolled back and the pollen is creamy white. Any plants that grow upright will be Spanish bluebells that were introduced to Britain by the Victorians and escaped from gardens.



**Fungi** emerge from the soil mainly in autumn. There is a great variety of them in

all sorts of shapes, sizes and colours. The parts we see above ground are the reproductive bodies of the fungi: their gills or pores release millions of spores that are carried by the breeze to germinate elsewhere. Below them is a web of microscopic filaments, or mycelium, in the soil that aids decomposition of dead material.



**White admiral** butterflies are seen flying in shady woodlands, clearings and

rides during late summer. The upperwings of the butterflies are black with white markings on the wings. They have a distinctive flight pattern: short periods of wing beats followed by long glides. Their caterpillars feed on honeysuckle flowers and the adults feed on bramble flowers.



Listen out for **willow warblers** in woodland and areas of scrub

during the spring. These small, grey-green birds come to the UK from sub-Saharan Africa to breed. They look very similar to the chiffchaff but their songs are very different. The willow warblers' song descends down the musical scale while the chiffchaff calls its name.

**STAGE 5**  
**Milton-under-Wychwood to Shipton railway station**

Turn left on High Street, bear right at the playing fields towards Shipton. Turn on to the A361, passing the pub on the right; cross the river and uphill to the railway station.

**STAGE 1**  
**Start to Bruern Wood**

From Shipton railway station head downhill on the A361 towards the village. After 600 metres turn right on to Meadow Lane and 200 metres after the last house turn left on to the brideway. Follow the hedge to the end, then turn right on to the worn path between arable fields. Follow the path towards Heath Farm, passing a small conifer plantation and cross a road, then following the hedge into Bruern Wood.

Listen for yellowhammer singing from tops of hedges.

**STAGE 2**  
**Bruern Wood to Foxholes car park**

Follow the woodland ride to the house, passing a spring and the avenue of lime trees, then cross the road to follow path beside a wood. At the path junction 700 metres from the road, turn the left to a small car park.

In spring, look for primroses and bluebells along the woodland ride edge.

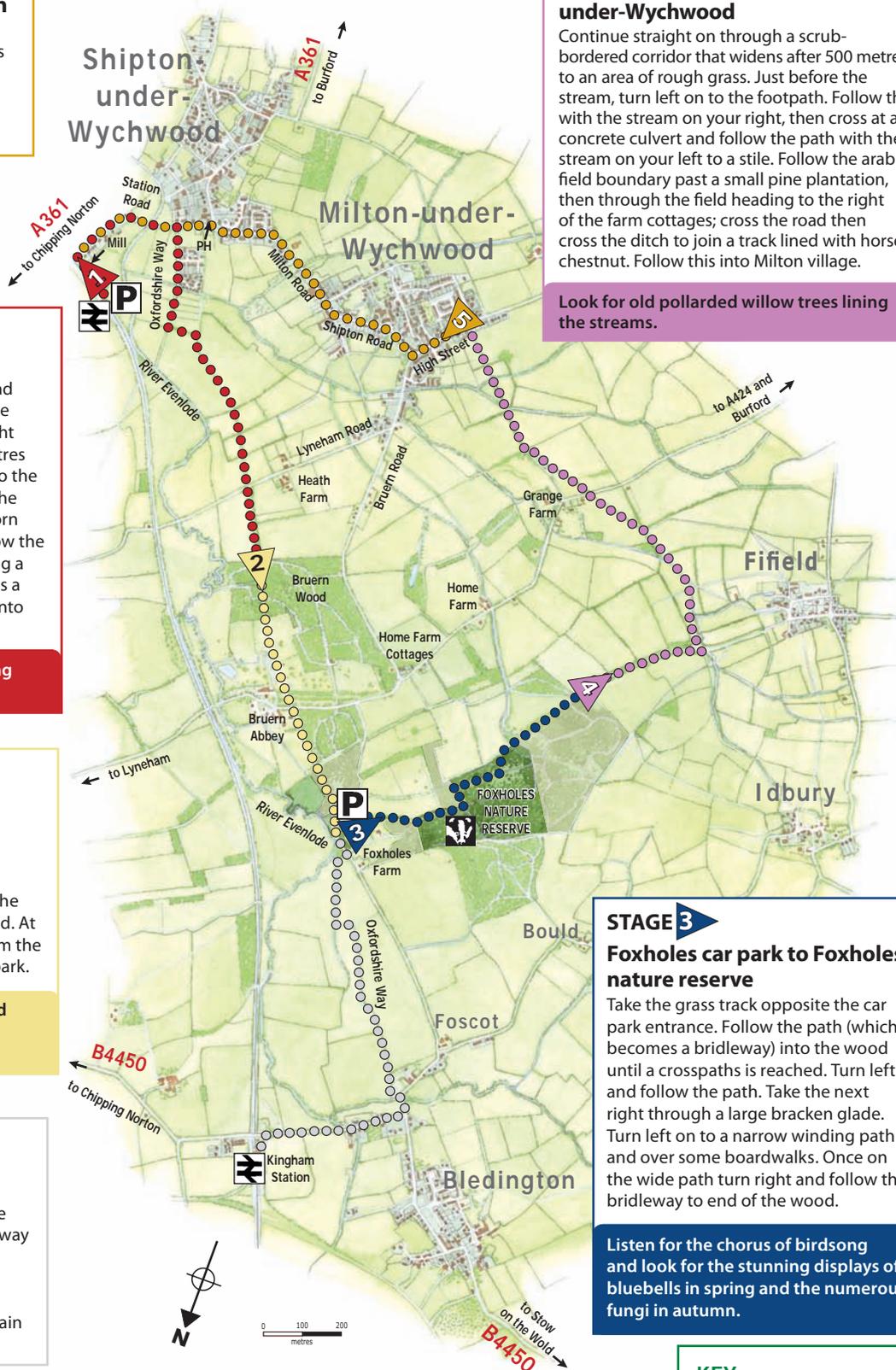
**To start at Kingham railway station:**

Turn right on B4450, then left at T-junction towards Foscot. As the road bends right, take the brideway (Oxfordshire Way) to FOXHOLES NATURE RESERVE. Turn left on to the track to the small car park at the nature reserve. Follow the main route from stage 3.

**STAGE 4**  
**Foxholes nature reserve to Milton-under-Wychwood**

Continue straight on through a scrub-bordered corridor that widens after 500 metres to an area of rough grass. Just before the stream, turn left on to the footpath. Follow this with the stream on your right, then cross at a concrete culvert and follow the path with the stream on your left to a stile. Follow the arable field boundary past a small pine plantation, then through the field heading to the right of the farm cottages; cross the road then cross the ditch to join a track lined with horse chestnut. Follow this into Milton village.

Look for old pollarded willow trees lining the streams.



**STAGE 3**  
**Foxholes car park to Foxholes nature reserve**

Take the grass track opposite the car park entrance. Follow the path (which becomes a brideway) into the wood until a crosspaths is reached. Turn left and follow the path. Take the next right through a large bracken glade. Turn left on to a narrow winding path and over some boardwalks. Once on the wide path turn right and follow the brideway to end of the wood.

Listen for the chorus of birdsong and look for the stunning displays of bluebells in spring and the numerous fungi in autumn.

**WILDLIFE HIGHLIGHTS**

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Woods carpeted with bluebells				✓	✓							
Variety of woodland fungi									✓	✓	✓	
Chorus of woodland bird song			✓	✓	✓	✓						
Graceful white admiral butterfly in sunny woodland glades								✓	✓			

**KEY**

- BBOWT Nature Reserve
- Railway station
- Bus stop
- Parking