

# Ruislip Woods Walks

## Blue route 1.6km

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

The path starts from the Six Bells Pub on Ducks Hill Road and ends further up Ducks Hill Road. It can be walked either way round.

Accessible by bus 331 alighting at the Six Bells Pub. The 331 can be boarded from Uxbridge, Harefield, Denham and Northwood.



# Ruislip Woods Walks **Blue route**

**Follow the posts marked with a blue disc and arrow**



Follow the lane beside the Six Bells Pub on Ducks Hill Road. Go through the gate at the end into a field. Continue ahead until you see the first blue sign, turn left into Mad Bess Wood.

The first part of this walk will guide you through Oak, Hornbeam and Wild Cherry woodland (whilst keeping Breakspear Crematorium to your left). During the woodland walk you will notice patches of open woodland; these areas have been coppiced, usually on a 20-year cycle. Coppicing regenerates the woodland, providing timber and underwood resources, and encourages more wildlife into the woods.

**1** You will soon emerge into an open gorse area. Gorse is one of the only plants to flower in winter. The yellow flowers are protected by long sharp thorns from grazing animals such as deer.

**2** You may see bluebell flowers as you walk throughout the woods, although only in the springtime. Bluebells benefit from the regular coppicing that allows more light to reach the woodland floor.

**3** Soon you will reach the first bench on the left. If you sit here for a while you may hear or see passing raptors in the adjacent field. It is possible to see kestrel, hobby, sparrowhawk, buzzard and red kite from this location.

**4** Continue along the trail for a while passing the white Mad Bess cottage on the left. This cottage was built in the 1800s for the gamekeeper of the day. It is built on the site of a former woodman's cottage.

**5** You will soon reach the Scout's open-air chapel. This chapel is a memorial to Ruislip Scouts who lost their lives in the two world wars. A memorial service is held by the Ruislip Scouts on Remembrance Sunday.

**6** Taking a sharp right up the path at this point you will notice earth banks on either side. This section of path, called the Main Drive, is the surviving portion of a vanished lane system which formerly linked Jackets Lane (to the north) and Breakspear Road (to the south).

**7** As you turn right at the cross-roads you will notice a large multi-stemmed Field maple on the right. Field maples are identified by their five-lobed leaves.

**8** Why not take a seat near the Field maple and listen to the woodland bird songs. In late May and early June you may here the elusive cuckoo.

**9** As you walk along the last stretch of path on either side you should see a variety of flowers, including Red Campion, Herb Robert, Herb Bennett, Yellow Pimpernel, and Cow Parsley.

**On reaching the end of the Blue Route, exit Mad Bess Wood, turn right down Ducks Hill Road until you reach the 331 bus stop.**

**The 331 bus can be accessed from Uxbridge, Harefield, Denham, 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)