

# The Parks Trust Self-Guided Walks: Shenley Wood & The North Bucks Way

Walk by Peter Burrett, Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013

## Start point

Turn off Tattenhoe Street (V2), between Oxley Park and Westcroft roundabouts, into Merlewood Drive, Shenley Wood. After a short distance turn left into a free car park.

## Walk overview

This is a circular walk, finishing at the same car park. It does pass through the Oakhill and Medbourne housing areas, but at all times along routes flanked by trees or hedges.

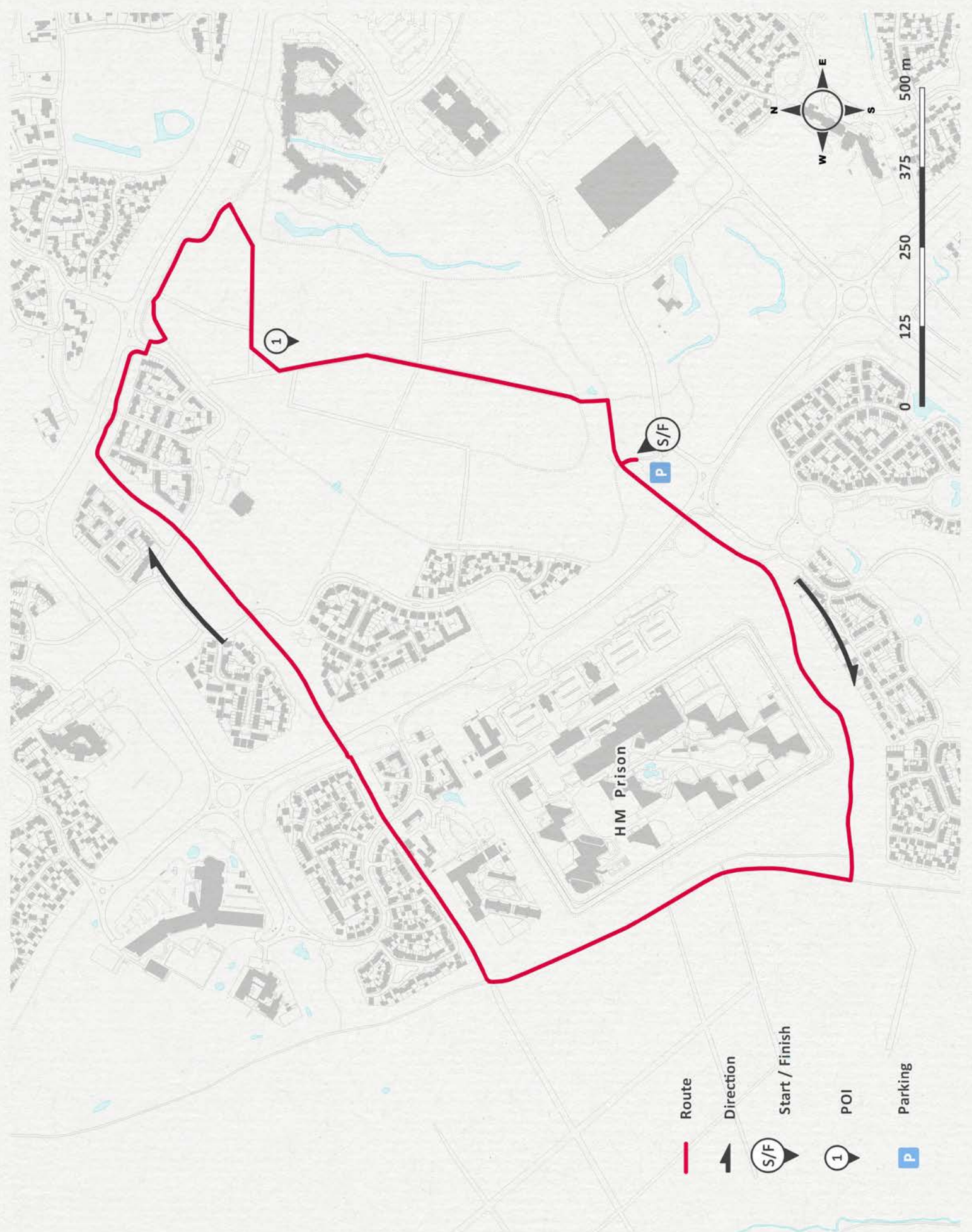
The walking is along footpaths of varying quality, red ways and bridleways. In wetter weather some of the route suffers from muddy conditions, so suitably robust footwear is recommended. The nature of some of the footpaths together with one or two inclines means the walk is unfortunately not suitable for wheelchair users.

## Distances & times

Circular walk; Car park – North Bucks Way – Swans Way – Shenley Wood - car park = 2.5 miles, 60 minutes. There are no formal refreshment stops, but several benches / picnic tables along the route, including a sizeable grassy area with picnic tables quite close to the car park.









## The circular walk

Exit the car park where you see the Parks Trust's Shenley Wood noticeboard. After a few metres turn left off the footpath onto a red way. There is a large picnic area to your right. Take the red way bridge over Tattenhoe Street (V2). Where the red way bifocates, carry straight on following a sign to "North Bucks Way".

The red way now takes you down a green corridor between trees and hedgerows. Depending on time of year, you may catch glimpses of HM Prison Woodhill to your right. Where red way forms a T-junction with the North Bucks Way (signed), turn right. The North Bucks Way was established by the Ramblers Association in 1972 and extends for 35 miles from Princes Risborough to Wolverton, although we only complete a short length of it!

As you proceed north on the North Bucks Way, the mixed conifers and broad leaf trees of Oakhill Wood are on your left.

*We tried to find a route through Oakhill Wood to include in this walk. Although we followed a path of reasonable standard for a short distance, progress soon became difficult due to fallen trees, low-hanging branches and rampant brambles, and we abandoned the attempt. Walkers should feel free to explore the woods – which are not Parks Trust property, being just outside the Milton Keynes boundary – but additional time should be allowed.*

Turn right off the North Bucks Way where a path is signed "Swans Way". Swans Way is a multi-use trail for horse riders and walkers, extending for 65 miles from Salcey Forest in Northamptonshire to Goring on Thames, Oxfordshire.

Where the path emerges from cover you will see the houses of Oakhill to both sides. Continue down a gravel drive, cross Otterburn Crescent and proceed onto a footpath opposite where there is a Shenley Church End Parish Council noticeboard. Cross a red way and go through an underpass beneath Tattenhoe Street (V2) into Medbourne. Continue straight ahead on the footpath, which runs parallel with a bridleway (still part of Swans Way).

The footpath crosses winding Pascal Drive twice. Just before it reaches Fulmer Street (V3) it bends sharp right. Cross the red way which leads left into Shenley Church End. When the footpath reaches Pascal Drive again, cross the road, turn right then left at a T-junction of footpaths. You are now skirting Shenley Wood itself.

Shenley Wood is one of three ancient woodlands in Milton Keynes, Howe Park and Linford being the others. It is composed principally of ash, oak and hazel trees and was recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086.

The path bends several times before reaching a clearing with several large trees and a couple of benches. Walk off the path into the clearing, taking a rough track into Shenley Wood, almost doubling back on yourself at first. Pass through the gap next to a wooden gate and proceed slightly uphill on a decaying bark path further into the woods.



Just before the path reaches a T-junction – you will see a wooden way marker ahead of you at the junction itself – take a cut through to your left that goes past two oak trees before joining the main track, where you turn left.

Carry straight on this path for about 500 metres, past more wooden way markers and across several other paths that intersect the main route. The path soon becomes quite wide and of better quality bark chippings. Where the path ends, pass beside a wooden gate and turn right onto a red way.

The red way brings you back to the large picnic area passed on your outbound route. Here you turn left to the car park, but you might choose to stop for refreshments before returning to your car.

