

## The Elcot Ramble

7k (4.5 miles)

This is a lovely walk around the countryside surrounding The Retreat, it takes in a good variety of paths and a couple of short stretches of road. The paths are easy to follow and there are no hills to climb.

1. Leave The Retreat via the top (right hand) entrance and turn right on the road for about 400 metres until, just after you have passed Elcot Farmhouse on your left, you will see a byway sign pointing down a track on the right. Take the Byway, then turn right again at a Public Bridleway sign.

2. Follow this clear path straight on along the right edge of several fields, always with the hedge to your right, until you reach a small road. Cross the road and take the lane opposite - signposted Wickam Heath - and you will soon see a footpath sign pointing left.

3. Follow the sign through the gate and straight on briefly up the hill, then go through a gate on your right. Follow the main path until you reach a T-junction of paths, go straight on here and again when the path forks, following it down to a wooden bridge and then along to another bridge and onto a lane.

4. Turn left on the lane and follow it around to the left, and you will see a footpath sign pointing left. Take this path through the gate and along the track past the backs of some houses, then follow the footpath sign pointing right and then immediately left. Continue on this lovely treelined path with a stream on your left, then straight on when a path joins and when the path eventually forks take the right fork, heading diagonally towards a road.

5. When you reach the main road cross over carefully and then head left along the narrow verge until you reach a road junction. Turn right on smaller road, signposted Boxford, and carry on for about 300 metres, then turn left following a public footpath sign past large metal gate onto a wide track.

6. After passing a pond on your left you will see a footpath sign pointing left into the woods. Follow this fairly clear path that winds its way through the trees, but essentially carries on in the same direction, past a couple of yellow arrows, and eventually you should hear that you are approaching the main road again.

7. Cross the road carefully and just to the right there is a footpath sign pointing through a gate. Go through and straight on down left edge of field, turning right following the footpath sign along between some trees and a fence to another footpath sign pointing left. Go through the gate, straight across field to another gate, through that and then straight on across next field.

8. Go through the gap in trees at end of field then bear slightly left, following footpath sign, across next field. Go through the gap in the hedge and at a junction of footpaths turn left up a muddy path between hedgerows. Carry on as the path joins a wider track, passing the bridleway you took earlier, along to the road and left back to The Retreat.