

Willoughby Wander

A lovely circuit through some beautiful meadows, surprisingly close to the industrial centre of Crawley.

Start Point: Willoughby Fields car-park, off Ifield Avenue

Distance/Duration: 3.5/4 miles / 1.5/2 hours

Difficulty: **Medium**, undulating with some rough terrain. Can be very wet and muddy in places so sturdy footwear is recommended

Accessibility: **Restricted**, parts of the walk are along rough paths, so may not be suitable for wheelchairs or buggies. There are several stiles on the route.

Refreshments/Facilities: None

Directions	Information
1. Enter Willoughby Fields by walking up to the Crawley Rugby Club's clubhouse. Pass it and turn half left. On reaching the rugby field, turn half right and at the first corner turn left. At the second corner turn right through a gateway into a meadow area.	You are walking alongside the River Mole, which rises near here before running north west through Surrey for 50 miles. It joins the River Thames at Moseley near Hampton Court Palace. In medieval times the river was known as the Emyln Stream.
2. Follow the path along side the stream and pass by a narrow, old bridge. Eventually the path bears to the right, but continue alongside the stream, until the stream forks away to your left. Follow the track into the woods.	The meadows of Willoughby Fields have been designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance, for their rich grassland and thick hedgerows
3. Turn left over a wooden footbridge and then continue right. The path comes back over another bridge and then turn left, over yet another bridge and enter onto a rugby pitch.	
4. Turn to your left and follow the edge of the field around turning right at the first corner. Halfway down the long side of the pitch there is a gap in the hedge on your left. Go through it and then climb over the stile onto a public footpath	
5. Go along the left hand side of the field to the top corner and cross over two stiles, the second taking you right, over a ditch. Continue on and you will enter a playing field.	This field is often grazed by horses from a local stables

6. Turn left and cross another stile, turning right to follow round the edge of this field. Halfway along go through the gateway and bear left.

7. At the corner of this field, cross over a stile and bridge and then follow the somewhat indistinct path to the right.

8. Head towards the buildings of the County Oak industrial estate. The footpath continues out of the field to the right of the red-brick building.

The County Oak Industrial estate got its name from the large tree that used to grow in this area, which marked the original boundary between Surrey and Sussex.

9. Continue away from the building and the path reaches a T-junction. Turn right and follow the path at the rear of industrial units for a short distance.

10. Pass by a playground and continue into Langley Walk. Carry straight on into residential area.

11. Pass Fir Tree Close on the right and then turn right down the public footpath that is a surfaced drive until the first kissing gate. Go through the kissing gate and continue for 50 metres and then turn left through the next kissing gate. Go through this gate and you re-enter the Rugby Club playing fields

12. Carry straight on with the hedge on your left and pass through a gateway into another pitch. Turn left and follow the edge of the pitch until you reach another gateway. Turn left through the gateway and follow the path back to the club-house and car-park