

Leave Bexley station, and head downhill; when you reach Bexley High Street, turn right then immediately right again up Tanyard Lane. Follow the track under the bridge and beside the railway embankment. Where it opens out, keep the fence on your left and head towards the landfill site - ignore the road to the right. At the cottages, follow the unmetalled path straight on, up the hill and past the landfill.

1 *Huge numbers of poppies grow here - they like soil that's been recently disturbed - that's why they were the first flowers to re-colonise the devastated battle fields of WW1 - and became a symbol of remembrance.*

Follow the path downhill towards the water pumping station. At the bottom of the hill, go straight on, heading for the residential area in front of you. After you've passed the pumping station on the left, take an immediate left down the little alleyway. Follow the path until you come to the River Cray. Cross the bridge, turn right and keep following the river. You soon pass a huge oak - when it was a seedling, Richard III was still on the throne of England!

2 *London is an international city all right - in the trees above you, you're very likely to see - and hear - some of London's Parakeets*

Keep walking with the river on your right, and ignore the first bridge. When you reach a brick bridge over a weir, you're at Foots Cray meadows.

3 *You'll probably find mute swans on the river here. They get their name because they don't have a lot to say for themselves - but you'll certainly hear the roar of their wing tips when they fly - especially if you're in the flight path! The local kingfishers are much quieter when they fly - the only trace is a flash of vivid electric blue.*

Keep going past the bridge, with the river still on your right. Cross the little creek, and keep following the river. At the end of the meadow, go through the kissing gate by the metal fence then cross the little brick bridge on your right. After around 100m, fork left and follow the path towards All Saints Church. Where the path opens out, with the church

on your right - bear right, and head for the entrance in the fence.

4 *You'll see lots of molehills around here - even quite close to the river. But surprise, surprise - for an animal that spends most of its life underground, they actually swim very well!*

This brings you out onto Rectory Lane. Turn left and keep going until you reach the traffic lights, or take a short detour to your right to visit the church.

BREAKPOINT

Down the road to your left is a bus stop which can get you to Bexley or Swanley - and a pub!

To carry on, go straight over Foots Cray High Street, then immediately cross over Cray Road and turn left.

BREAKPOINT

On Cray Road is a bus stop which can take you to Orpington, Sidcup, Woolwich, Foots Cray or Eltham.

Take the second right up Suffolk Rd. At the end, turn left into the playing fields and follow the hedge round to the right, keeping the playing fields on your left. Where the path turns right, follow it through the concrete bollards.

5 *On your left is the ground of Cray Wanderers Football Club - one of the very first football clubs in the country.*

Go through the metal kissing gate, then bear left passing the entrance to the football club. Follow the path, past the allotments, and then through another kissing gate. At the end of the path, you come to an open grass area, with Queen Mary's Hospital on your left. Walk straight ahead up the hill, past the adventure playground on your right. At the top is a great view back into the valley, although you may find the impressive pub at the top of the hill equally attractive....

6 *Just in front of Sidcup Place are three Giant Redwoods - in California there is one so big, a tunnel was cut into it so that cars could drive through!*

Turn left and pass the pub and the walled garden. Just past the garden, turn right, keeping the wall on your right.

Pass the tennis courts and go straight ahead to Chislehurst Road. Here, turn left.

BREAKPOINT

The bus stop can get you to Bexley, Foots Cray, Sidcup or Bromley.

Follow Chislehurst Road, and cross the hospital entrance. Just past the bus stop, fork left down the ramp, then right, into the underpass. Take a left up the steps, left again up the ramp and cross the road bridge. Follow the curve; go down the steps and through the next underpass on your left. When you come out of the second underpass, head up the ramp to the left. At a sign for Scadbury Park Local Nature Reserve, managed by Bromley council, cross the stile and follow the edge of the field to the left - ignore the path leading off to the right.

7 *There are lots of oaks in the park, which were sacred to the Druids - its thought that the word Druid actually meant, "Oak Knowledge". They certainly had power - their wood is so tough that before iron tools arrived, they resisted all attempts to cut them down!*

Follow the path through some woods, and out into a meadow. Head left across the meadow, then follow the path into another wood and over a stream. Keep going up hill, and ignore the path off to the right. At the edge of the wood there's a gate; go through it, and the metalled path beyond, as it curves round to the right. When you get to a gate marked "Private", take a left then after around 200m, take the first right. Take the next right uphill, onto the main path. A short detour to your right takes you to the old moated manor - it's well worth seeing!

8 *The de Scathebury family gave their name to both the manor and the Scadbury Park that goes with it 700 years ago. The de Scathebury crest may be long gone, but rare Great Crested Newts still hunt here!*

As you follow the path round, past the moat, look out for the well on your to the left. Rejoin the main path by turning right.

9 *Note the many silver birch trees growing here. Their*

branches were used by Druids for driving out the spirits of the old year, and malignant influences generally - that's why offenders were flogged with birch, or "birched" up until quite recently - it was all part of the cure!

Follow the path past a huge oak on the right, up some steps and into a birch wood. Take the second path to the left, after the steps. Go through the wooden barrier, and you come to a major path crossing from left to right - turn right. When you reach the road take a left. This brings you out onto St Paul's Cray Road. Cross with care, then go past the metal barrier and down the path the other side. After around fifty metres fork left and keep following the path straight ahead.

10 *As you go into National Trust owned land, you can take a left into the Willett Memorial Wood. There is a memorial to William Willett, who was largely responsible for British Summer Time - he reckoned artificial light couldn't hold a candle to sunshine!*

11 *After a while you can take a detour to the right, to see another monument - this time to Francis Edlmann who saved the wood for everyone to enjoy in 1927.*

Carry on along the main path - ignore all the side paths - and eventually you come to a railway line. Turn right about thirty metres before the underpass.

12 *Not far from here is a well-preserved Cockpit - a sort of bullring for fighting cocks. Although cock fighting is now banned, its memory lingers on in the name of Tottenham Hotspur F.C. - the cocks wore sharp metal spurs to fight.*

At the next main fork take a left and keep going. Ignore all the turnings to the right and left - just keep going straight ahead. The path comes out by the railway lines and takes you over Kyd Brook. Keep following the railway - you're on the right track! Cross the bridge over the railway, and head for the next one. Cross that as well, and keep following the tarmac path. When you get to the road, go straight over, and carry on down the path opposite. Cross one final footbridge, and follow the path beyond it. At the next kissing gate is Jubilee Country Park, and the end of the section!

Keep following the path into Jubilee Country Park to start LOOP section 3, or, follow the station link by taking a left up the footpath leading to Tent Peg Lane, and another left at Crest View Drive. That brings you onto Queensway - and if you can resist the pubs and chip shop, Petts Wood station is in West Approach, a few hundred yards down Queensway, on your left.