

The Spinney Trails



# SPINNEY TRAIL

THIS TRAIL IS  
**3.75km**

## Starting Point

The White Helleborine Arch at the open space in Balata Way



Buzzard

Circular, mainly woodland walk of about 3.75 km or 2.3 miles



- From the arch on Balata Way follow the dirt path to the right, down the impressive avenue of Beech trees

Balata Way was once an area of market gardens, and was then turned into the Park Prewett Hospital's golf course. Balatá trees are from Central & South America, and their sap was used to coat golf balls in the 20th Century.

If you are walking the trail in May and June, along this section you should see a wonderful display of White Helleborines (a type of orchid) along the edges of the path. White Helleborines are specialists of shady Beech woodlands as they can self-pollinate, meaning they are not reliant on pollinating insects that would prefer visiting flowers in sunnier areas.

- Keep walking down the path until you come to the bottom and then turn right and continue up the hill.

You will pass an interpretation board for the Spinney Viewpoint on your left. Pause here and see if you can see Reading's Green Park Wind Turbine on the horizon. You will need a clear view as it is over 10 miles away.

- Cross the entrance road to the ambulance station to continue on the path.
- When you get to the fork in the path take the left hand path on to the tarmac pavement and cross Park Prewett Road using the pedestrian crossings.
- Enter the woodland between the black and white bollards and follow the path emerging

at the far end. Cross the entrance road to Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital and enter the trees on the other side.

- Follow the path through the trees down the hill, at the bottom turn right and continue to follow the path through the Beech woodland for approximately 400 metres.
- At the junction of the paths turn right, staying in the woodland and follow the route along the avenue of Lime trees.

Lime trees have distinctive heart-shaped leaves which are often covered in aphids. Look out for blue tits hunting for insects on the leaves and branches. Despite having the same name, these Lime trees are not the ones which produce the well-known citrus fruit.

- Cross the entrance road that leads to the Squirrel Wood housing estate and continue to follow the path along the avenue of Lime trees.

Passing under the footbridge, continue along the avenue until the path emerges to the right near

the second footbridge.

- Bear left and follow the tarmac path to Rooksdown Avenue. Cross the road at the pedestrian crossing point and follow the tarmac path. At the belt of trees, bear right onto the grass and follow the line of trees.

You are now on the route of the Roman road from Winchester to Silchester. The Roman town of Calleva Atrebatum was adjacent to modern-day Silchester, and was a major crossroads in the Roman network across Britain. This walled settlement boasted an amphitheatre and thermal baths.

- At the end of the grass area, cross Gillies Drive and pass between the two concrete bollards then follow the path with the line of trees on your right and houses to the left.
- At Nightingale Gardens continue to follow the path through the trees. At the junction of paths at the bottom of the hill turn right and follow the path back to the White Helleborine Arch.



## LOOK OUT

Keep a look out for rooks and jackdaws which can be seen roosting together in collections of large, messy-looking nests in the treetops, known as rookeries. This area was called Rooksdown before any buildings were here.

Rook

