



THE SPINNEY TRAILS: Beech Trail



This trail is
2.6km
or 0.6 miles

Circular route around a
large proportion of the
main Beech avenue that
served as the boundary for
Park Prewett Hospital.



Starting point
The White Helleborine
Arch at the open space in
Balata Way



The route:



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. Cross the road using the pedestrian crossings. Once you have crossed the road, turn right and follow the tarmac and block path. At the hospice, cross the road towards Parklands Hospital.



In the entrance to Parklands, before the 'Private No Parking' sign, turn to your left and follow the path through the Lime tree avenue to Rooksdown Park. When you reach Rooksdown Park follow the tarmac path to the right, then right again at the path junction.

Rooksdown Park used to be the Park Prewett Hospital cricket pitch. Cricket commentator John Arlott, known for his work on Test Match Special, was a records clerk at the hospital between 1930 – 1934.



Walk past the skatepark, school and community centre. At the playpark follow the path to the right to join Park Prewett Road towards the mini roundabout.



At the mini roundabout, turn left and follow the road until you reach the next mini roundabout. As you reach this mini roundabout by Divot Way you need to walk on the tarmac footpath between the playpark and the buff coloured brick block of apartments.

As you walk down this path, the line of pine trees on your left have been planted along the route of the old branch railway line to Park Prewett Hospital.



When you reach the gate follow the narrow dirt path to your right.

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.

Whilst walking down this path look out for the rookery up high in the Beech trees to your left - this collection of messy nests has been built by rooks and jackdaws.



Where the paths cross, take the right hand path down the large avenue of Beech trees and back down towards the starting point at the Helleborine Arch.



Look out

Keep an eye out for the birds of prey regularly seen in this area. Buzzards are the most common UK bird of prey, they are large with short tails, brown plumage and white underwings. Red Kites are often seen wheeling above roads thanks to their love of roadkill, they have chestnut coloured plumage and forked tails.

Red kite



Buzzard



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The Land Trust

