

Rail to Trail – North Camp to Ash – 3.3 miles

At North Camp station, from the end of platform 1 turn right, cross the road and go immediately up the footpath directly opposite. At the road turn right and cross to the other side by the traffic bollard, turn left and then right into Carrington recreation ground.

Exit Carrington recreation ground at the far end barrier (pedestrian access only) and turn left. At the shop on the right hand side take the lane then the path between the houses. On reaching the canal bank turn right. Follow the towpath all the way to the sluice gate and concrete railway bridge at Ash Vale station.

Turn right up the roadway and immediately right again crossing over the canal into the woodland where again turn right after passing the gate and stay on the roadway.

Where the track divides take the right-hand path. The path is lined with broom which flowers in May and June. Where the path splits again take the right hand side. This lovely path has Greatbottom Flash on the right hand side and woodland on the left. The Flash and surrounding reeds and trees are very good for bird life. When you reach the fence follow the path. Here you may see greater spearwort and yellow iris / flags in early summer as you see the flash then the canal on your right hand side. Continue on this path around a corner to the left and take the next turning right by the red and white firing range sign. Continue to the Swan pub.

Join the road opposite and take the first left turn into the unmade Cuthbert Road. Turn right into Chambers Road. Go up the hill and at the junction turn left to the fence and follow the path on the right. Where this track turns right look left for the path up to a wider path and turn right. Cross the wooden bridge and turn left. Turn right at the MOD land access gate then immediately left along the fence line. At the next gate continue straight on the obvious path. Cross the next bridge and angle left in the trees back to the fence and turn right. At the fence corner continue straight on up the hill. Where the path splits continue straight on - the right hand option. Where large tracks cross your path ignore them and continue on in the same direction. You will arrive at the main road and cross straight over, over the style into the park. Cross diagonally towards the car park. Join the lane and turn left. Just before the final houses on the right take the narrow footpath on the right. Gatekeeper, Red Admiral and Small Tortoiseshell butterflies were all here in June. This footpath emerges on the main road just a few yards from Ash station which is on your left, cross the lines by the level crossing for stations in the Blackwater Valley.

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I hope you enjoyed the walk!