

Arborfield Cross and The Coombes.

An easy and well surfaced walk with woodland, hedgerows and countryside views, ideal for anytime, especially in winter.

1. Start at the Recreation Ground car park, Swallowfield Road, Arborfield Cross near The Bull pub. Cross the football pitches to the far-left corner. Cross the footbridge and turn right on the footpath. At the road turn left along the tarmac roadside path until you see Church lane on the right.
2. Turn right into Church Lane. When you reach the chevron sign as Church Lane bends right, turn sharp-left along the narrow lane. Walk all the way to the gate at the end and pass the gate onto a wide lane with cottages on both sides. Walk along this lane with open fields and spaced out large trees to right and left. Cross another lane and you will find the remains of an old churchyard on your left. Continue to the building right in front of you and turn right along another hard-surfaced lane. This area is managed for University of Reading and after walking on the lane for about 1km you pass a building named Centre for Dairy Research. You may see a number of farm animals in the buildings or the fields on the way. Just after the Centre buildings you will find some gates on the right-hand side with path markers.
3. Leave the concrete track and go through the gate and turn left in the same direction running parallel to the concrete track. You eventually reach a ford with a footbridge and rise up a slope. At the postbox at the top, turn right and then quickly fork right again along the Byway (a lane by any other name) with a couple of houses on your right. At the end of this lane you will meet a busy road. The B3030.
4. Cross directly onto another wide track. This carries a limited amount of traffic visiting Ellis's Hill Farm Shop and café. The vehicle track bends firmly right just before the farm shop, ignore this and take the path into the woodland directly in front of you passing multiple footpath signs. Keep straight ahead onto a woodland footpath. You may find potentially muddy sections ahead of you now but there are boardwalks to avoid the worst. After the boardwalk, at the end of a field on your right, you reach a path crossroads. Turn right and you will see a signpost pointing to School Lane. Follow this with another boardwalk over a muddy section and continue onwards ignoring all paths to left and right until you meet a concrete track.
5. Turn left, then turn right when you meet the road. This has been blocked and is partly traffic free. It was once a rat run and has schools and nurseries along it. Follow the road past the schools and all the way to The Bull pub. Cross to the left side of the pub and walk down the hill to where your car is parked. If you want refreshments, The Bull is there and just down from the car park a few hundred meters is Henry Street Garden Centre with a large café. I can't resist the cakes!