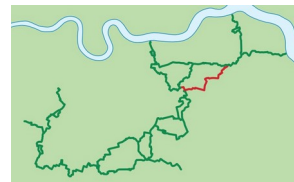




GREEN CHAIN

Section 3 of 15 Bostall Heath to Oxleas Meadow



Section start:	Bostall Heath
Travel to start:	Bus 99 from Woolwich Arsenal (DLR or Rail), Woolwich (Elizabeth line) or Plumstead (Rail) – see page 8
Section finish:	Oxleas Meadow
Travel from finish:	Falconwood (Rail) or various buses to other stations – see page 8
Section distance:	3.8 miles

Introduction

Section three of the *Green Chain* begins in glorious woodland which gives way to broad, open grassland. There is an urban component which comprises just over a quarter of the section before you enter ancient woodland once more. On leaving these venerable woods you emerge to a splendid view over Kent and Surrey.

Other than the urban parts, the surface is generally compacted soil or grass and can be muddy after heavy rain. The section ascends about 350 feet and descends by some 210 feet. Note that on our maps the chevrons (black arrow heads) show where the route is steep. The chevrons point uphill.

The route passes a shop in a filling station and a pub in Bellgrove Road towards the end of the walk. The only toilets are at the Oxleas Wood Café at the end of the section.

Updates: before setting off on this walk, please check with the *Green Chain Walk* news page on the [Inner London Ramblers web site](https://innerlondonramblers.org.uk/green-chain-walk) to make sure that there are no obstacles that might affect your ability to complete this section as described. If you come across a problem on the walk, [please let us know by email](mailto:info@innerlondonramblers.org.uk).

Overview map of section 3



Green Chain connections

The 52 mile *Green Chain Walk* is a branching network of 15 sections which offers many opportunities for circular and linear walks. You can download an introduction to the whole network from the [Inner London Ramblers web site](https://innerlondonramblers.org.uk/green-chain-walk) complete with a map showing how the sections are interconnected.

Section 3 can be part of a 7 mile circular walk when combined with sections 4 (east of Plumstead Common) and 4a; or a 10.2 mile circular walk when combined with sections 4 and 5 (south of Charlton Park).

Section 3 can also be part of a 19.7 mile linear walk from the River Thames to Crystal Palace Park made up of sections 2, 3, 6, 8 and 10.

Points of interest in the walk guidance

Bostall Heath (page 4)

Bostall means either 'a secure place' or 'a hillside path'. Bostall Heath was perhaps so named because it was above any inundation from the Thames and was reached from the floodplain by steep paths. Bostall Heath was the first component of the now 4,500 acres of protected *Green Chain* land. At the behest of the local parish the Metropolitan Board of Works purchased the land to prevent it being developed in 1878.

Bostall Woods (page 4)

Bostall Woods have been open to the public since 1893. Previously they were part of a private estate which built some of the paths available today. This involved some significant engineering. Following acquisition by the London County Council the many beech trees to the north east of the woods were supplemented by Scots pine which have not fared so well. The parts of the woods traversed by section 3 are the oldest and feature many oaks.

Woodlands Farm (page 6)

Woodlands Farm (89 acres) was the last wholly commercial farm in any Inner London Borough. It was used by the Co-operative Group to graze cattle prior to slaughter. Changes to legislation caused the abattoir to become unviable in 1984 and a 12 year campaign began to save the farm from becoming a motorway junction and later, a housing development. The Woodlands Farm Trust gained a 999 year lease in 1997 and has operated the farm ever since. They have made great efforts to ensure that it remains a truly agricultural site. It is open to the public between 9.30 am and 4.30 pm.

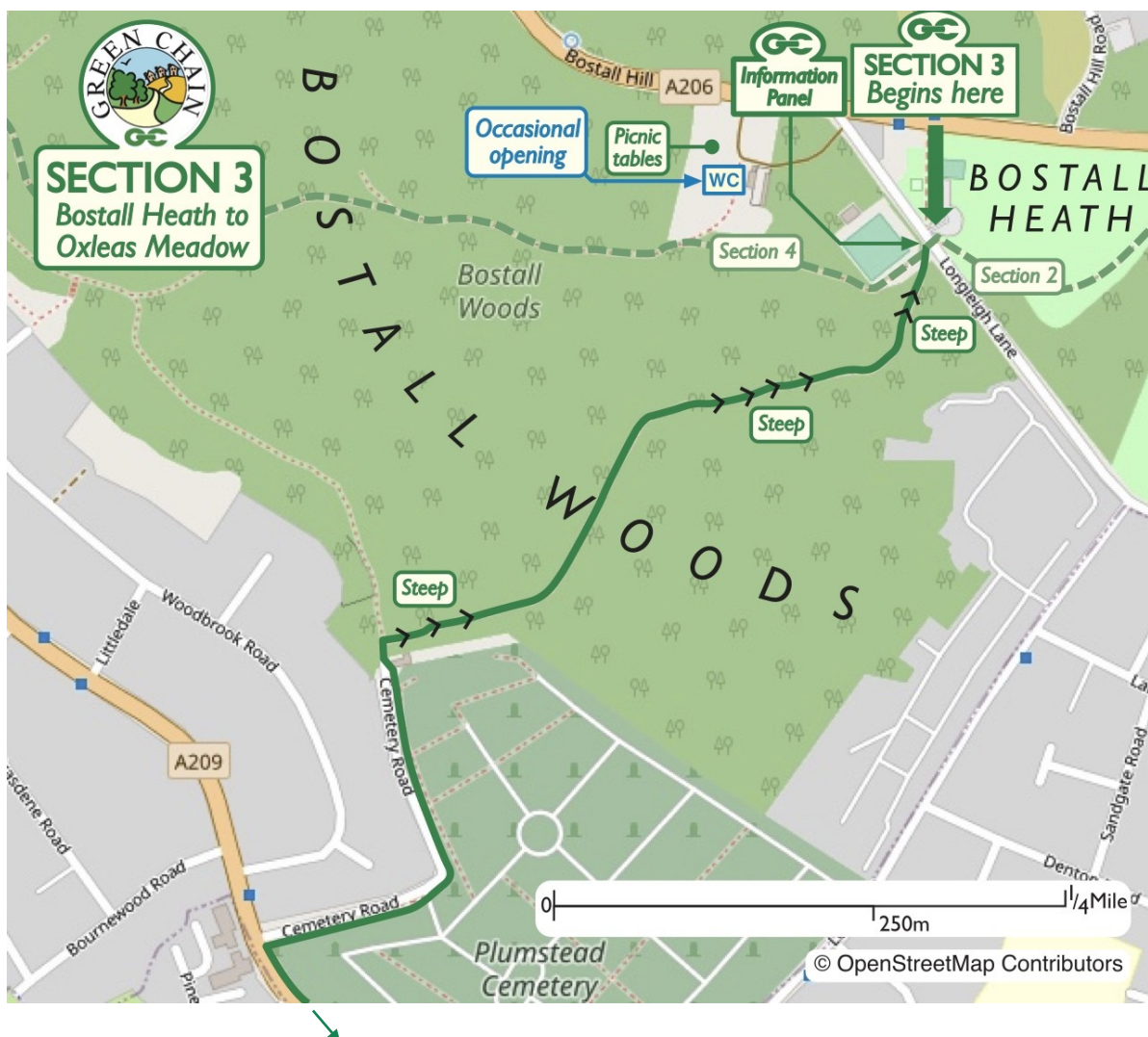
Oxleas Wood (page 6)

Oxleas Wood is in places over 8,000 years-old, covers 178 acres, and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The wood has been open to the public since 1930 yet was almost lost in the 1980s to motorway construction. After a vigorous campaign the road proposals were withdrawn in 1993. The wood is supported by a thriving friends group and is well managed.

Walking directions

Section 3 begins on **Bostall Heath** next to the car park and *Green Chain* information panel at the junction with sections 2 and 4. Cross the road to a large *Green Chain* signpost and enter **Bostall Woods**. There is a bowling green to the right. You should veer away to the left from it.

Do not turn right just after the bowling green. There should be a waymarking post just ahead which directs you to shallow downhill steps. Just after the lower end of the steps there is a fork in the path, keep left here. There are no further opportunities to take the wrong route within the woods, so you can follow the clear path as you enjoy the fairly steep descent of almost half a mile through the trees. The woodland is highly attractive with very pleasant views over a glade to the left.





At the lower end of the descent you emerge from the woods to see buildings. Turn left here. The path joins Cemetery Road. Passing the rather fine gates of Plumstead Cemetery, you follow the road round a 90 degree right turn. Continue to the T-junction with the main road, Wickham Lane, where you turn left.

Cross Wickham Lane using the pedestrian refuge and keep left to meet the Foresters Arms public house on the corner of Highbanks Close. Turn right into Highbanks Close and follow it as far as its sharp left hand bend.

Leave the road here to continue straight ahead through a barrier and begin a sharp ascent up into the East Wickham Open Space. Walk along the surfaced path until just before some houses. At this point, look right across the grass to see a belt of trees stretching away across the open space. Turn right, onto the grass, and into the end of this 700 yard linear woodland.

The path progresses through the trees and about halfway through, swings quite sharply to the left and then right again. After this chicane the path enters a lengthy boardwalk over the sometimes saturated ground. This is the only boardwalk along the 52 miles of the *Green Chain Walk*.

Leaving the woods, go straight ahead, and through a gate into Glenmore Road. Turn left, and then first right into Dryden Road.

Continue along Dryden Road to where it bends to the left and becomes Keats Road. Here is the pleasant Keats Community Farm which grows organic vegetable produce for the London restaurant market.

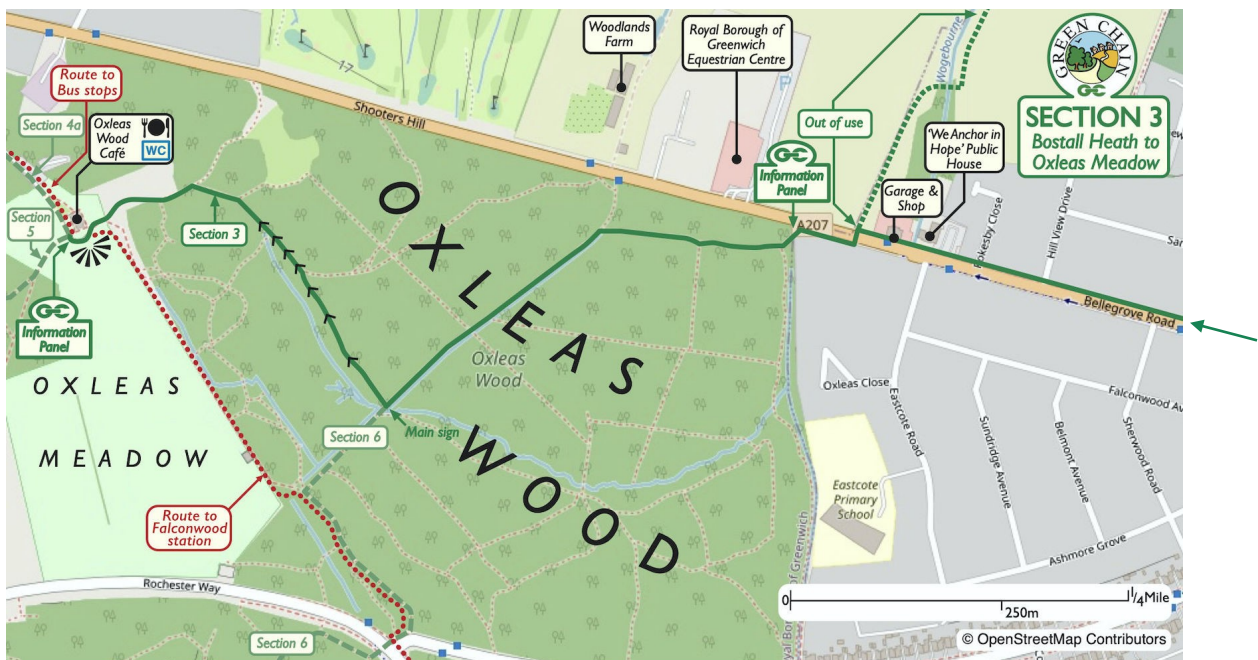
In the past the *Green Chain Walk* went through that farm to enter **Woodlands Farm**. Unfortunately, irresponsible dog-walkers allowed their animals to attack the farm's sheep and, at present, this part of the footpath is closed.

Continue along Keats Road to where it ends at the junction with Chaucer Road. Cross Chaucer Road, turn right, and continue for 350 yards to a grassed area. Keep to the left of the grass for 230 yards and then turn right to cross it and face the distinctive St Mary the Virgin Church, built in 1955.

Cross the road, turn left, and continue to the end, to meet the busy A207, Bellegrove Road. Turn right into Bellegrove Road and follow it for 700 yards to pass the 'We Anchor in Hope' public house. There is a filling station next door to the pub and, a few yards further on, there is a pedestrian refuge. Use the refuge to cross, and once across, turn right.

Shortly afterwards you come to **Oxleas Wood** on the left. Now the urban road walking is well and truly over as the path enters some very fine ancient woodland. Note that Oxleas Wood can be muddy in winter and early spring.





At the beginning of the wood turn left off Bellegrove Road and very shortly, take the first right onto a slightly wider path. Follow this path for about 250 yards to the junction with a yet wider path, turn left here.

Follow the broad straight path for 380 yards to find a large *Green Chain* signpost to the left. This prominent sign marks the start of section 6 of the *Green Chain Walk* (grid reference TQ 44247 76005).

Turn right at the sign to continue to the end of section 3. You now begin an increasingly steep climb of just over 400 yards through highly attractive dense foliage. This is generally straight but veers left towards the end. At the top of the gradient turn left.

Pass a small cluster of exercise machines to the right and then, suddenly, to the left, a huge vista opens up. Continue forwards, up a short, steep, ascent to the Oxleas Wood Café and public WCs. This is the highest point of this part of Shooters Hill and the view is spectacular. Both western Kent and eastern Surrey are laid out before you and were it not for the North Downs, Sussex would be clearly visible.

Section 3 ends at the major *Green Chain* signpost outside the café which marks the junction with sections 4a & 5.

Travel to and from section 3

Travel options to the start of the section

By train: the nearest station to the start is Abbey Wood which is on both the Elizabeth line and the main line to Dartford via Woolwich.

However, it is much easier to reach the start by taking the 99 bus from Woolwich Arsenal (DLR or Rail), Woolwich (Elizabeth line) or Plumstead stations (Rail). Alight at Longleigh Lane. Carefully cross the road from the stop to take the surfaced path almost opposite. At the end of the path turn left and in a few yards you reach the beginning of section 3.

Travel options from the end of the section

By train: leave the Oxleas Wood Café and walk downhill beside the trees to the left. At the bottom turn left to join section 6 and follow it to the crossing of Rochester Way. At that road turn left and walk beside it until reaching Falconwood station which is also on the left. The distance to the station is three quarters of a mile.

By bus and train: follow the Oxleas Wood café approach road to its end and turn right. Almost immediately turn left onto the main Shooters Hill Road to find the bus stop nearby. The 89 goes to Blackheath for mainline trains and Lewisham for mainline and DLR. The 486 goes to Charlton for mainline trains and North Greenwich for the Jubilee line. The stop on the other side of Shooters Hill Road is for the 244 which goes to Woolwich Arsenal for mainline and DLR services and Woolwich for the Elizabeth line. The distance from the café to the stops is about 500 yards.

