

Artist Residence

OXFORDSHIRE

SOUTH LEIGH & RUSHY COMMON

Distance: 3.5 miles

Time: allow 2 hours

A local adventure - it can get very muddy so make use of our Hunter wellies and get stuck into countryside living!

1. Leaving the village on the Stanton Harcourt road, take the footpath on the right just beyond the South Leigh sign past the front of Tar Wood Lodge and through the gate with the yellow arrow. Continue ahead keeping Tar Wood on your right. As you pass under the pylons you will see Wytham Hill and Great Wood, then Boars Hill to your left. Follow the hedge and look back to see Eynsham Hall Park beyond College Farm.

2. Continue straight ahead when joining the track with a gate in the hedge on your right. The track to the left leads to Stanton Harcourt. After passing beneath a large oak tree look through the gap on your right where you may see many peewits, which nest on the ground. There are various birds here including long tailed tits, blue tits, chaffinches, and larks overhead.

3. Turn right when you reach the Stanton Harcourt to Cogges road for about 200 yards then take the footpath on the right just before The Firs. This track climbs gently between mixed hedges including dog roses, with rosebay willow herb and cow parsley. Rabbits and hares can also be seen along here. When reaching the opening bear left keeping the hedge on your left then continue straight on passing the gap on your left, heading for the pylons. Look out for buzzards overhead and deer prints on the ground. You will soon join a track through a plantation with pines on your left.



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4. At the end of the plantation you join another track where our route goes to the right, but a short detour to the left brings you to an oak tree and memorial to Arthur Stanley Colson (a local farmer) and to see the disused buildings of Tar Farm, originally built for the Eynsham Hall estate in the 19th century. Retrace your steps to the track continue for 50 yards then fork left with the hedge on your left.

5. Before the track bends to the right (before the pylon) go through the gap in the hedge on the left, look for the yellow footpath marker which may be hard to see in the summer growth. From here take the path at right angles keeping the large open field on your left and hedge on you right. Make for the stile ahead cross this and then the next one and continue down the hill. Tar Farm is on your left with Tar Farm cottages below. At the bottom hedge, look out for the footbridge which can be hidden, to the left. Cross the bridge and join the grassy track.

6. Stop here. The lake ahead was a former gravel pit and is now part of Rushy Common Nature Reserve. The lake is currently being restored as a haven for wildlife. This is part of the Lower Windrush Valley Project, as is Standlake Common Nature Reserve. You might see Canada geese, heron, mallards, shellducks, gulls, tufted ducks, swans, coots and moorhens. Turn right on the grassy track and continue until you get to the railway track. Look out for deer, foxes and on a sunny day lots of butterflies.

7. Cross the track and continue ahead following the blue marker into Moor Lane and you will come out into South Leigh opposite White Cottage.

