

This trail guide has been provided by

Friends of Kilminorth Woods

Kilminorth Woods Local Nature Reserve.

There are a number of paths you can choose when walking in the Woods. Most paths have some steep sections or steps, may be uneven, and can be muddy after rain.

This walk is just one suggestion.

If you have a dog with you, please pick up and dispose of waste in the bin by the gate at the Millpool entrance to the Woods. Thank you.

Enjoy your walk!

Self-Guided Walk

LOOE to WATERGATE and back

Allow 2 hours

(includes an optional short cut - allow $\frac{3}{4}$ hour)

Pause for a while at the entrance to Kilminorth Woods.

Can you identify the carvings on the sign board? Are any birds visiting the two feeding tables?

Go through the gate and walk along the paved path.

Oakwoods information post. Unless it is winter, try to identify the tree behind this post from the shape of its leaves. Clue: look up!

Walk to where there is a seat **π**, and the path divides.

Take the left hand track. (This is a bridlepath – horses and cycles permitted.)

There are a lot of beech trees along the path in this section of the wood, and quite a dense understory of holly. Look out for the old log on the right – you can see the tree rings, one for every year of growth. How old was this tree when it fell down?

Bats information post. *Where do Kilminorth Woods' bats sleep?*

Cross the stream. There is a seat **π** here if you need a rest!

Notice how the fallen trees have opened up the tree canopy, allowing more light onto the woodland floor, encouraging new growth. Dead trees also provide an important habitat for fungi and insects, and contribute to a healthy woodland.

This more open area alongside the stream is a good place to see and hear woodland birds.

The ancient Giant's Hedge is to the left of the path, a large bank of earth now somewhat degraded.

Continue along the bridlepath to the first of two finger posts. (There is a seat **π** by the second post.)

Short cut. At this point you can choose to follow the shorter yellow route **○** which takes you steeply downhill. Part way down, take the right fork, which brings you down to the riverside. Turn right onto the red route **○**.

(GO TO **§** BELOW)

OR, continue along the bridlepath.

On your right you pass an area of relatively recent re-growth. Notice the young trees with multiple stems – a sign of coppicing.

The Tit Family information post. *What do these birds eat?*

There is a seat **π** here!

Notice the oak tree below the path. It is a relatively large specimen for Kilminorth Woods.

Continue uphill along the path.

Bluebells information post. *How can you recognise a native bluebell?*

At the next finger post, you will see a seat **π** in the clearing ahead.

At this point you can take the steep path on the right down to the river, following the red route .

(GO TO §§ BELOW)

OR take the easier route and continue along the bridlepath to the gate and the road.

Woodpeckers information post. *Which Woodpecker is pictured?*

The Giant's Hedge information post. *Who do you think built the Giant's Hedge?!*

At the road, watch for traffic, turn right and walk downhill to the small hamlet of Watergate.

At one time this hamlet at the head of the tidal river would have been busier than it is now. The river was used to transport agricultural products to and from the coast.

Immediately after the cottages, there is a turning to the right (public footpath sign) which takes you onto the riverbank, where there is a seat  and a sign board.

You can see a small area of saltmarsh across the river, which can be covered by very high tides. This provides a different habitat, attractive to water birds.

Follow the path into the Woods.

§§ The red route  rejoins here.

Pass through the gate.

Kingfisher information post. *Why are kingfishers difficult to spot?*

As you walk along this path you will catch glimpses of saltmarsh to your left through the trees.

Oakwoods information post.

This path is probably an ancient route to Looe. Notice how deeply worn some sections of the path are.

Mammals information post. *What are the three mammals in the photograph*

If the tide is high you will need to take the path to the right at this point. At the top of steep steps the path divides – take the left fork. You are now on the yellow route ☉ which takes you back down to the riverside.

GO TO § BELOW)

If the tide is low you can continue downhill, then walk beside the riverbank over the mud flats. **Watch out for low branches!** This brings you to the old boatyard site. If you follow the trail close to the river you will pass a seat π.

This land was reclaimed to build an additional boatyard during WWII. The boatyard survived until the 1990's. It was an important source of employment in Looe. Look around carefully – what evidence can you see of the boatyard?

How many different birds can you see from here? If the tide is low you may see herons, egrets, oyster catchers, curlew, and several varieties of gulls, all feeding on the mud. These mudflats look barren, but actually are teeming with life and provide good feeding grounds.

Cross the boatyard site ...

§ The yellow route ☉ joins here.

... and follow the path over the stream.

There is a seat π opposite the signboard. Follow the paved path back to the entrance.

Butterflies and Moths information post. *What colour is the silver washed fritillary?*

Notice the redundant telegraph poles!

We hope you have enjoyed this walk. Come again!

Friends of Kilminorth Woods

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[LOOE to WATERGATE and back]

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