

Parkland Explorers Trail (35-45 minutes with small children, 20-30 minutes without)

Start and finish: in front of the Mansion, on the carriageway drive

A walk designed to keep children entertained whilst walking!
One stretch across grass (4-9) may be tricky with buggies if it has been raining heavily recently.

- 1) Walk to Stumps Hill Pond (along the path in front of you as you stand with your back to the Mansion). Look for wildfowl such as coots (white beaks) and moorhens (red beaks), and pond-loving species such as dragonflies. Enjoy sitting on the benches made from fallen oak from Beckenham Place Park!
- 2) Walk downhill across the grass (on a mown path) towards Beckenham Place Park gate. You will walk past little trees (called whips) that were planted by volunteers in December 2018. On your right, in the woodland, is an interesting standing deadwood tree – can you see or hear any woodpeckers pecking on it? It's a favourite spot for them to find insects to eat!
- 3) Just before you reach Beckenham Place Park gate, take the path signed towards the Foxgrove. It winds up past a large fallen log on your right – can you see any mini-beasts living on it? Mini-beasts love living on dead wood, which is why we leave lots of it standing or lying in the park. Next, you'll pass a log circle where you could stop to have a sit down and sing some camp songs!
- 4) Near the top of the path, leave the path and walk across the grass to the right, towards a hay bale near the edge of the woods. This hay bale was made during the heat wave of summer 2018 when a combine harvester came to the park to cut all the meadow grass to reduce the risk of the grass catching fire. It was fun to see farm machines and tractors in the park! Can you imagine them driving round creating bales like this one?



A Moorhen feeding its chick

- 7) Turn back on yourself, crossing the path you came up and walking downhill across the grass towards the mansion. At the bottom of the hill, you'll come to a "swale", where water from the drainage ditch is stored. Look for lovely reflections in the water! Often you see dogs swimming in the swale too! You could try floating a leaf boat on the water!
- 8) Turn right and follow the water line along until you reach lots of logs lying on the ground. These were cut from a huge oak tree which blew down in strong winds one Sunday in September 2018. The logs are fun to play on - let your imagination run wild! You could be using the logs to cross shark infested water – careful not to let the sharks get your toes! See if you can find the remains of the trunk. Stand inside -9it and imagine you are a tree growing up out of the ground. The oak was over 200 years old when it blew over. What sort of things might it have seen in its lifetime?
- 9) Continue straight (on the grass) towards the lake, then turn left to take the path uphill back towards the mansion. You'll pass the park's rarest creature – a huge red squirrel!!! . Can you think of a name for it? Continue on the path until you reach the Mansion.

Well done for completing the Parkland Explorers Trail – you can now call yourself a Beckenham Place Park Explorer! What was your favourite part of the walk? Maybe you can draw a picture of it when you get home to remind you of your adventures?



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For further information and more trails, visit www.beckenhamplacepark.com