

W1802. Borthwood Copse and Red Squirrels.

Whilst it cannot be guaranteed, this walk is as good as any on the possibility of seeing a Red Squirrel.

The walk starts from the **Island Bistro** within the Sandown Airport complex. Walking away from the main road, follow a track, climbing steadily at the right hand side of Cheverton Farm caravan park (nominally signposted as SS57/NC23. At the summit, pass a white house and continue along the lane with high hedges.

Further houses are encountered, turning left between chicken/small animal pens (NC52) into Borthwood Copse itself. For those of you who are fortunate to be here in the Spring, this Copse produces an absolute riot of Bluebells. Digressing, after a short while you will come to a 'crosspaths', at which point turn right to take the path out of the copse and on to Alverstone Road. This is a small lane with occasional traffic, so please take care.

After 5/10 minutes, at the brow of a hill, turn **right** into Burnt House Lane (signposted NC44). The path directly opposite is NC12 signposted towards Alverstone-ignore this. After another 5/10 minutes walking, at a T junction turn left and then almost immediately turn left on to NC17, towards the Alverstone Mead Nature Reserve. On your right hand side is a squirrel hide, which has been refurbished this year (2018), if you are not lucky enough to see one, walk further into the reserve along the boardwalks, listening, pausing and watching amongst the trees. It is not that they are elusive, you will probably see one before you have realised.

You could easily spend a morning on the myriad of paths in this area, but make haste now, retracing your footsteps, back to the Island Bistro .