

## **NEWTON LEYS WALK**

### **Summer 2020 by Colin Docketty**

The walk starts and finishes at the Newton Leys Local Centre Car Park besides the Asda store, Islay Court, Jersey Road. MK3 5QW (SP872314), shown on the 2017 Official City Atlas. Newton Leys can be accessed either from Drayton Road, Bletchley or from the roundabout on the A4146 just west of the railway line (Jersey Road).

The route described below will take about an hour.

### **Introduction**

This is a new development with three Lakes: Jubilee Lake, the largest (a former pit for the brickworks); Little Willow, the smallest; and Gull Roost, the northerly of the three.

Jubilee has 'always been there' but access was always doubtful. The others are new. Little Willow is obviously for amenity value. The third, unnamed lake parallel to Guernsey Road is possibly for flood prevention. I call it gull roost as a considerable number of the larger gull species have decided to roost there.

The main interest will be waterfowl, Odonata, and some 'pioneer vegetation' colonising the disturbed ground of the newly developed area.

The walk follows hard paths all the way.

### **Site Walk Description**

From the parking area turn left on the Redway along Jersey road, past the Care Home to Channel Islands roundabout. Cross the road to view 'Gull roost lake' with gulls and other waterfowl. Then re-cross the road, go down Sark Drive, past Newton House to Little Willow, (the central lake).

Turn left alongside the lake then bear right (do not cross the bridge), keeping alongside the lake. From this path on the east side of Little Willow you may see swans, coot, moorhen and egret, as well as dragonflies if conditions are good.

At far end of the lake turn left along the footpath. When you come to a road (St Helena Avenue), bear left, cross over and take a wide footpath between Grenada Crescent on your right and Skye Crescent on your left, bordered by trees to Jubilee Lake. (This footpath is waymarked as a Public Footpath.)

Turn right at the T junction, across the bridge, and continue round to the red dog-bin where you go left over a bridge to the shore of the lake. Turn right to do a circuit of the lake (anticlockwise).

Note: when you reach the southern end of the lake you may encounter a fenced off compound used by the developer, closing off the footpath. It is fairly straightforward

to go around the fenced compound and then turn left down a made-up path through a small area of woodland (I walked this bit of woodland three years ago) which brings you to Skye Crescent. (Take care: there is a very steep drop down to the water).

From Skye Crescent there are two options:

1. Take the Z bend footpath back down to the lake (east side), past the mound, then regain the path where you entered earlier. When you reach St Helena Avenue turn right, then down Arran Way which brings you to the Car Park.
2. Continue along Skye Crescent, down Arran Way to the Car Park at the Local Centre.

**Birds:**

Swan and cygnets

Greylag goose

Tufted duck

Coot – On nest in middle of Little Willow.

**Plants:** (excluding 'Developer Landscaping')

Bull rush - *Typha latifolia*

Birdsfoot trefoil and possible the Greater version- *Lotus corniculatus/ Lotus pedunculatus*

Ox-eye daisy – *Leucanthemum vulgare*

Salad burnet – *Poterium sanguisorba*

Meadowsweet (in ditches) – *Filipendula ulmaria*

Musk mallow (white variety, possibly a garden escape). *Malva moschata*.

***The visit was made by Colin Docketty in May 2020, with additional notes by Mary and Phil Sarre, mid June.***