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**John Bunyan** the 17th century preacher is strongly connected with Harlington - it was here that he was arrested for leading a meeting at a nearby farmhouse, resulting in his imprisonment at Bedford jail for unauthorised religious gatherings. It was whilst serving his 12 years sentence that Bunyan wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The **Church of St. Mary the Virgin** dates from the early 1300's and has a small stained glass window depicting scenes from Bunyan's book. There is also a John Bunyan Trail walking route [www.lets-go.org.uk](http://www.lets-go.org.uk)



The chalk hills act like a sponge soaking up rainwater until it emerges at ground level to form a stream, this water eventually flows to The Wash, Norfolk. Much of the drinking water in this area also comes from chalk "aquifers"; **Chalk streams** are an internationally rare habitat, only found in parts of northwest Europe and New Zealand. Their clear waters support many plants and animals, such as water voles and white-clawed crayfish. For more info about chalk streams visit [www.chalkstreams.org](http://www.chalkstreams.org) or call 01844 355500.

## Visitor Information

Harlington is a village at the foot of the Chiltern Hills, which has pubs and local shops. The walk also passes through Sharpenhoe where there is a pub at the front of the Clappers Hill

**The Old Sun, Harlington**, 01525 877330  
[www.theoldsunharlington.com](http://www.theoldsunharlington.com)  
Food some lunchtimes & eves, call pub for details.

**The Carpenters Arms, Harlington**, 01525 872384  
[www.the-carpenters-arms.com](http://www.the-carpenters-arms.com)  
Food lunchtimes & eves Tues to Sat

**The Lynmore, Sharpenhoe**, 01582 881233  
Food served every day 12-9pm.

For information about places to stay or visitor attractions in the area [www.experiencebedfordshire.co.uk](http://www.experiencebedfordshire.co.uk)

## How to get to the start

The villages of Harlington and Sharpenhoe are 3 miles north of Luton, Bedfordshire.

**By train:** Harlington is easily reached by rail and the walk starts from the station. There are direct services between central London (50 mins) and Bedford (15 mins). Trains depart from London Bridge, Blackfriars, Kings Cross Thameslink and call at London stations such as Kentish Town, West Hampstead, Cricklewood and Hendon and St Albans, Harpenden and Luton. For train times and fares call 08457 484950 or [www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk](http://www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk)

**By bus:** There are separate services to Harlington from Luton Bus Station and Dunstable on weekdays and Saturdays. For bus times call Traveline 0871 200 2233 [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info)

**Parking:** Harlington rail station car park, (there is a charge). You can park in the pubs in Harlington or Sharpenhoe if you buy food or drink. It is also possible to follow these walks from the free car parks at Sundon Hills and Sharpenhoe Clappers - please do not leave valuables in the car.

This is one of a series of walks through the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It mainly follows rights of way most of which are waymarked as follows:

-  'yellow arrow' Footpaths (walkers only)
-  'blue arrow' Bridleways (horseriders, cyclists and walkers)
-  'red arrow' Byways (open to all traffic)
-  'purple arrow' Restricted Byway (horseriders, cyclists, walkers and non-mechanically propelled vehicles).

Please be considerate in the countryside

- Keep to public rights of way, and leave farm gates as you find them.
- Please keep your dogs under control.

To download this and other Chilterns walks and rides leaflets visit [www.chilternsaonb.org/activities.asp](http://www.chilternsaonb.org/activities.asp) or call 01844 355504

For walks in Bedfordshire visit [www.lets-go.org.uk](http://www.lets-go.org.uk)

Visit [www.chilternsociety.org.uk](http://www.chilternsociety.org.uk) or call 01494 771250 for information on the Chiltern Society's walk programme, to obtain Chiltern Society footpath maps or to join the Society.

The Chiltern Hills were designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1965. This is in recognition that the Chilterns countryside is amongst the finest in England and Wales. The Chilterns Conservation Board is the body charged with protecting the AONB. [www.chilternsaonb.org](http://www.chilternsaonb.org).

This leaflet has been produced by © Chilterns Conservation Board, 2010, with support of :



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In summer strange **crop circles** have sometimes appeared in wheat fields at the foot of the hills.



This area is nationally important for the conservation of wonderful flowers and insects which live on unimproved **chalk grassland**. The flowers and butterflies provide a riot of colour in spring and early summer. Across England around 25% of this type of habitat has been lost since 1960, largely due to changes in farming. The grass has to be grazed by animals during the autumn and winter to keep it short, otherwise delicate plants are shaded out by more aggressive plants and grasses. Without the tireless work of conservation organisations, volunteers and farmers most of the remaining chalk grassland would be invaded by bushes and eventually develop into woodland. **Sundon Hills** and **Sharpenhoe Clappers** are managed by a partnership between The National Trust and Central Bedfordshire Council. Call 01582 500920 [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

**Harlington** was known as *Herlingdone* in the Domesday Book of 1086, which means 'hill of Hereia's people'; Hereia was a Viking family that settled in Britain around 900AD. The **Icknield Way** is probably the oldest road in Britain - dating back to Neolithic times, about 5,000 years ago. It was part of an ancient trading route that followed the ridge of chalk hills across southern England from the Norfolk coast to Dorset. It is still possible to walk some of this route today by joining together the Peddars Way and Ridgeway National Trails with the Icknield Way Trail, which forms part of this walk. [www.nationaltrail.co.uk](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk)

Walking is also a great way to lose weight; each 15 minute session of brisk walking will burn about 100 calories. The complete walk is worth over 1000 calories and it's fun too. Consult your GP if you have not exercised recently or have a known medical condition.

Set yourself challenges, but start gently and work up\*. Spend at least two sessions of 15 minutes each day walking briskly enough to raise your heartbeat, get warm and breath harder.

**Walking gets you fit and keeps you healthy!!**

You can start, break or finish your walk with a tasty meal or refreshing drink.

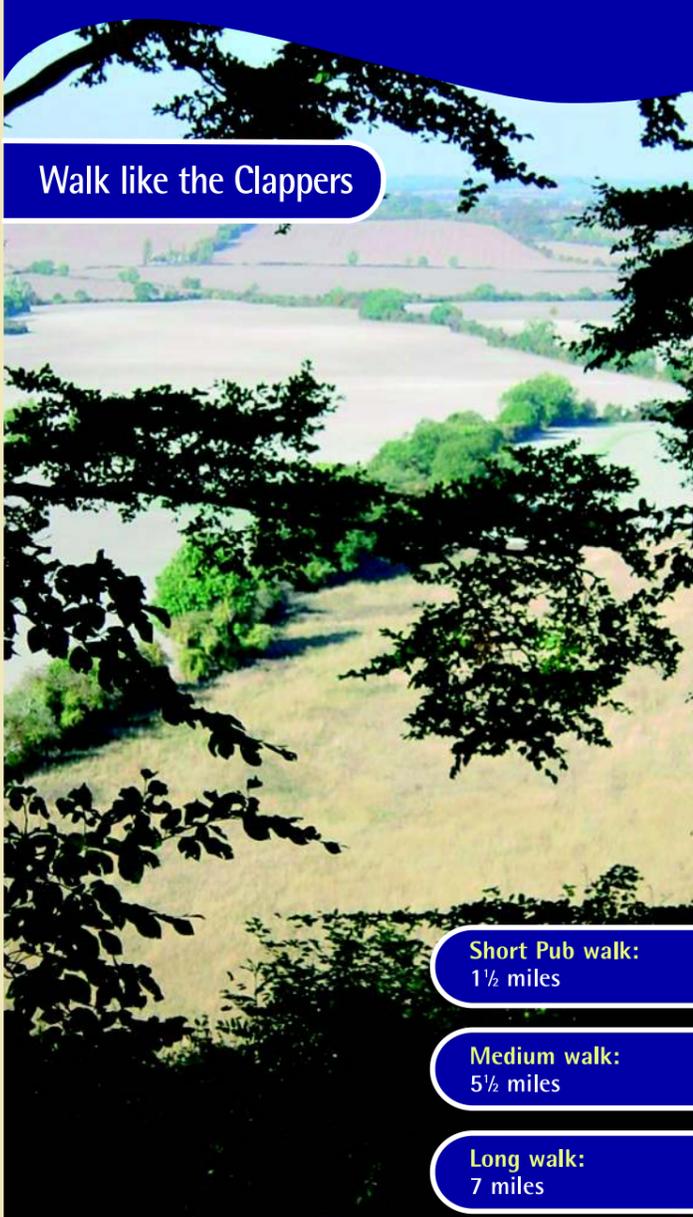


Enjoy the fresh air and fantastic views of the Chilterns countryside. These circular walks take you to the top of the Chiltern Hills, across meadows carpeted in wildflowers and through magnificent beech woods. The Chiltern Hills are to the north-west of London and easily reached on a short train journey.

## About the walk

# Chilterns Country

## Walk like the Clappers



**Short Pub walk:**  
1½ miles

**Medium walk:**  
5½ miles

**Long walk:**  
7 miles

**Start:**  
Harlington, Beds



## Long Walk

**Distance:** 7 miles, allow 3½ to 4 hours

**Access Information:** 1 stile, 6 kissing gates, flight of 8 steps downhill and narrow natural paths. A steady uphill climb for ¾ mile and steep descent, otherwise fairly level.

### Description of route:

- Leave Harlington rail station and turn right over the bridge. Then turn right down the footpath between the house and hedge. Keep right alongside the fence until you reach a green.
- Cross the green and follow the road straight on and around to the left. After 100m turn right at the footpath sign towards fields, then right at a fence, around the back of the house, then over a stile and a footbridge and cross the field alongside the hedge. Continue to follow the path through the wood and then alongside fields.
- When you reach the gates for the disused tip at the junction with the railway underpass turn left following the path between the hedges (with the tip on your right). When you emerge turn right and follow the path alongside the field edges, eventually heading uphill. Go straight on where the Icknield Way bridleway goes left. Then turn right through a gap in the hedge following the bridleway and Icknield Way signs, follow the path uphill to a gate where you join the Chiltern Way.
- To continue on the walk, turn left, then take the path on the far side of the hedge to the right, uphill, to the top of the field. Then turn left, following the left side of the hedge to a kissing gate out to the road.



- At the road turn right, then after 20m cross the road through the kissing gate into Sunden Hills. Go through the picnic area following the fence. Go through the 2nd kissing gate on the left, into the field, and follow the path next to the trees, heading away from the car park and road.
- Then go through the next kissing gate and follow the track round to the right then look for a metal kissing gate on the right and go through it (waymarked Chiltern Way) and then alongside the hedge. At the end of the field turn left and follow the path past the wood, then turn left along the track, then turn right (follow signs) following the field edge path with the wood on your right.
- To follow the **Medium Walk** back to Harlington take the path to the left across the field and then follow directions below. To continue the **Long Walk** to Sharpenhoe take the path to the right into the wood.
- In the wood turn right and head uphill past a waymark post. Go through the wood then follow the path slightly to the right and along the track (with views through the trees on your left). A path goes right. Continue along a fenced path through the kissing gate, then across the field towards the right. Then through the next kissing gate, down the steps and across the road to Sharpenhoe Clappers car park.
- From the car park follow the surfaced path. From here there are two routes to reach the pub at the bottom of the hill. You can take the first left following the bridleway downhill; this is surfaced, less steep with no steps. Or take the second left waymarked Chiltern Way with great views and then descend a steep flight of 160 steps (see Short Pub Walk below for directions to the pub).
- From the pub walk alongside the main road to the left (in the direction of Harlington) to the end of the village.



Then turn left at the footpath sign into a field and follow the track alongside the hedge. Then turn right at the hedge crossroads (the hedge should be on your right). Follow this path around the field as it veers to the left - don't take the first path to the right over the bridge but do take the 2nd path on the right through the hedge and over a footbridge, then turn left and straight on (ignore the path to the left). Then follow the path to the right alongside the ditch.

- Cross the road and follow the footpath alongside the hedge, then through the gap and follow the hedge on the other side. Then turn right along the right side of the ditch heading uphill, past the wood on your left, to the road.
- Turn left along the road, then left again alongside the wall and across the park, past the church. Then turn left at the road. At the crossroads go straight across along Station Road to the rail station (or turn left for the pub).

## Medium Walk

**Distance:** 5½ miles, allow 2¾ to 3¼ hours

**Access Information:** No stiles and 2 wide kissing gates. Narrow natural paths. A steady uphill climb for ¾ mile and quick descent, otherwise fairly level.

### Description of route:

- Follow the description for the **Long Walk** until the **Medium Walk** is mentioned - then follow the path across the field and into the wood through the pedestrian gate. Then ignoring paths to the left and right go straight downhill, on a waymarked path, through a small clearing, eventually reaching a field.
- Go through the pedestrian gate and head diagonally across the field towards the hedge, then turn left along the bridleway. Turn right and follow the country road for about 250m, then turn left following the footpath alongside the hedge, then to the right at the waymark post to follow the path across the field. Eventually cross over a ditch and then straight on crossing to the right over the next ditch where the long walk joins from the right and then turn to the left following the path alongside the ditch heading uphill, past the wood on your left, to the road.
- Turn left along the road, then left, again alongside the wall and across the park, past the church. Then turn left at the road. At the crossroads go straight across alongside Station Road to the rail station (or turn left for the pub).



## Short Pub Walk from Sharpenhoe

**Distance:** 1½ miles, allow ½ to 1 hour

**Access Information:** No stiles and 3 kissing gates. Narrow natural paths. A steep uphill climb for ½ mile and steep descent of 160 steps.

- From the pub in Sharpenhoe turn right along the main road, then take the footpath on the right alongside the field. Before the wood turn right at a waymark post and go through two kissing gates and follow the path across the field. When this meets the road, follow the bridleway to the left heading uphill.
- At the top of the hill turn left and then turn left again onto a path waymarked Chiltern Way through the wood an up steps before emerging with views to the left. Continue to follow the path alongside the fence, with the wood on the right.
- Turn left at the end of this path taking the path steeply downhill (160 steps). Then continue downhill alongside the field edge to the road. Turn left to the pub.

