

Walk 15

Christmas Common

This walk is perfect for those seeking a more challenging woodland walk away from the crowds and not phased by a few slopes! The walk starts from Christmas Common, a small village perched on top of the Chiltern hills, with a good pub to return to. It is thought that the name came about because of the abundance of holly trees which grew in the area. Today, Christmas trees are grown here commercially so the connection is maintained. The route takes you through beautiful beech woodlands typical of the Chilterns and back along a Saxon sunken lane.

Distance: 3 miles (allow 2 hours)

Start: Christmas Common village. Parking at the side of the road opposite the pub or around the corner on Holloway Lane.

Access Information: This is one of the more challenging walks as the route goes downhill from 2 to 3 on the map (about a mile), and from there uphill as far as 6 (about ¾ of a mile). However the slopes are long and gentle, with the exception of one short but steep section (around 50m) from 3 to 4 on the map.

Refreshments: The Fox and Hounds pub, Christmas Common.

Route:

Walk down Hollandridge Lane 1 past houses ignoring the first footpath on your left. Soon after you will come to a bridleyway on your left signed 'Oxfordshire Way' 2 Follow this bridleyway through the woods, ignoring side tracks. After about a mile of gentle downhill, you will come to a crossing bridleyway. 3 Turn right climbing steeply to the edge of the wood. 4 Follow the path as it crosses fields heading towards Hollandridge Farm.

After passing by the edge of Hollandridge Farm on your left the path will bring you out on to Hollandridge Lane, 5 an unmade road. Turn right up Hollandridge Lane which ascends gradually to Queen Wood,

with good views over to your right. Hollandridge Lane is a road dating from Saxon times which formed part of the spine road of the twelve-mile long ancient strip parish of Pyrton stretching from Lower Standhill near Little Haseley in the Oxfordshire Plain to south of Stonor in the Chilterns.

Continue along Hollandridge Lane, ignoring a crossing forest track in Queens Wood. 6 The stone track becomes a sunken lane, then as you leave Queen Wood it becomes a well surfaced lane. Retrace your steps back to the start.

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