

The following notes describe the route from one place to another so that you can link these together to make your own circular walks, depending on how far you want to go or the places you want to see.

Saunderton to Bradenham

Distance: 2.5km/1.5miles, allow 30 -50 minutes.
Difficulty: No stiles or narrow gates. Gentle slopes.
Access: Suitable for pushchairs

From Saunderton station car park walk down to the road then left under the bridge to the main road (here are bus stops and the Golden Cross pub). Take care crossing the road and walk a short distance up Smalldean Lane. At the entrance to the "Clare Foundation" leave the road, bear right across the grass verge and through a pedestrian gate to join a broad grass path parallel to Smalldean Lane. After about 250m turn right and follow another broad grass path across the field, passing a wood on your left, to a gap in the hedge. Turn left uphill on the field edge grass path for about 20m and then right, to follow a hedge on your left. Eventually, at a crossing hedge, turn left uphill again for 20m then turn 90° right downhill as indicated by the arrow on the "No Riding" sign post. In 400m go over the farm track and straight on. After 500m pass through two gates to arrive at the road by Bradenham Church. Turn right for the route back to Saunderton or the Red Lion pub, or cross the road by the church if going to West Wycombe or Downley.

Bradenham to Saunderton

Distance: 2.5km/1.5miles, allow 30 - 50 minutes.
Difficulty: One stile, two narrow gates and one steep uphill slope then downhill.
Access: Only the Easy Route is suitable for pushchairs.

At the Red Lion pub turn right along the main road for 20m before crossing the road and through a kissing gate. Follow the track passing under the railway bridge then uphill following the right hand hedge to go through a pedestrian gate on the right. After 100m turn left through a gate and following the left hand hedge uphill, enter the wood through a timber gate. Continue up this path for about 350m to join a tarmac lane at Nobles Farm. Turn right along this lane, eventually downhill, crossing a stile to reach a road. Turn right and walk along the road into Saunderton (take care - especially at the sharp bend).
Easy Route - at the Red Lion pub turn right and walk along the main road to the Golden Cross pub where you can turn left for Saunderton station.

Bradenham to West Wycombe

Distance: 3.2km/ 2 miles allow 40 to 60 minutes.
Difficulty: No stiles or narrow gates. 2 uphill sections.

From the church follow the wall around Bradenham Manor and turn left uphill (still alongside the wall) on a good track. At the point where the track splits turn right on to a narrow signed footpath into the woods. After a short distance ignore a path to the right and bear left uphill for 400m ignoring a signed footpath to the right and continuing until you reach a further path junction with signed footpaths to the left and right. Continue on past this junction and as the track starts to drop downhill, turn right along a narrow waymarked path continuing downhill. Ignore all side paths until a metal gate is reached at a junction with a footpath running next to the railway boundary fence. Turn left and follow this path alongside the railway to its end at a footpath junction. Turn right here under the railway bridge and cross the field to the main road. Cross this with great care, go through a metal gate and follow the path along a right-hand field boundary fence until a metal kissing gate is reached in the boundary fence. Go through the gate and continue gently uphill with the field boundary now on the left until Church Lane is reached. At the road turn left to West Wycombe or right towards Saunderton.

West Wycombe to Saunderton & Bradenham

Distance: 4km / 2.5miles, allow 1 - 1.5hrs.
Difficulty: Steeply uphill to the church, then fairly level or downhill. One stile and a kissing gate (on the short route to Bradenham - one steep downhill slope and a second kissing gate). Some paths muddy in winter.

From the car park by the garden centre go right towards the main A40. At the junction take the left turn up the hill past the school and the entrance to Hell Fire Caves. After Church Lane joins, take a left hand path up onto open grassland and towards the mausoleum. Go through the churchyard, turning right to the car park and straight on towards some low timber posts and a track. Keeping left of the house, follow the track through the woodland for 800m until at a fork bear right. Stay on this track for 1km ignoring all side paths, passing through a timber gate and reaching a tarmac road at Nobles Farm. Follow the road past Nobles Farm, eventually downhill, crossing a stile to reach a road. Turn right and walk along the road (take care) into Saunderton.
 (To take the short route to Bradenham, take the narrow path opposite the entrance to Nobles Farm, dropping steeply down through woods and fields, turn right then left under the railway bridge. Take care crossing the main road to the Red Lion pub).

Bradenham to Downley Common

Distance: 3.2km/2miles, allow 50 -70mins.
Difficulty: No stiles or gates. Paths muddy in winter.

From the church keep the wall of Bradenham Manor on your left. Join the track uphill for 150m and after turning left ignore the footpath right and bear right uphill on the track. After 300m, where the track bends sharply right, go straight ahead into the wood. After 100m go straight ahead on the bridleyway which becomes quite wide in places. Ignore all crossing paths for approx. 700m until you reach a crossing bridleyway with a footpath straight ahead. Take the footpath and stay on it through light woodland for about 500m until it joins a bridleyway with a dew pond on your left. Turn left, shortly crossing a farm track, and follow the bridleyway through more woodland for 500m until you emerge on Downley Common by the cricket pitch. For the Le de Spencers Arms, turn left, follow the road and then the track around to the left.
 (For West Wycombe, turn right on the road, follow it around the left hand bend and after 40m take the bridleyway on your right).

Downley Common to Hughenden Manor

Distance: 1.6km/1mile, allow 25 - 30 minutes.
Difficulty: No stiles, two kissing gates. Mainly downhill with two short uphill slopes.

Emerging from the wood at the cricket pitch, turn left on the road. Where the tarmac ends, bear right (Note the Le de Spencer Arms is to the left). Stay on this rough track as it makes a left turn before passing to the left of a white house. Turn immediately right through a kissing gate. Go through the next kissing gate and immediately turn left to see two white arrows on a tree; follow the right arrow, along the path through the wood and in 150m meet a crossing path. Turn left and after 80m cross a chalk ditch, ignoring a white arrow on a tree on the right, and continue downhill to leave the wood where it meets a broad crossing track. Go straight over and uphill to where it joins another path at the top. Turn right and follow the path as it contours around the hillside. Continue straight on through the wood gently uphill to Hughenden Manor.

Hughenden Manor to Downley

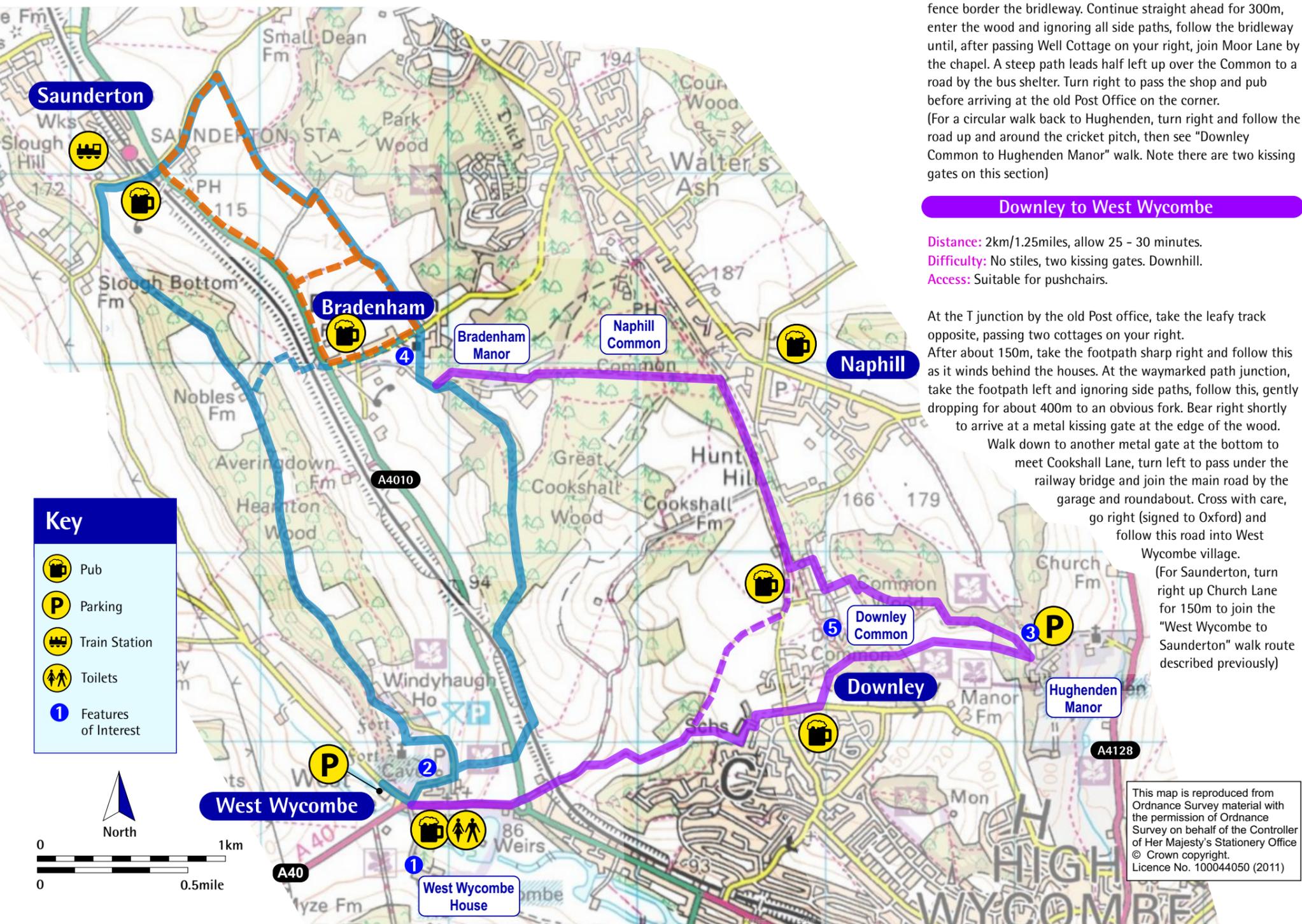
Distance: 1.6km/1mile, allow 25 - 30 minutes.
Difficulty: No stiles or gates.

If starting the walk at the National Trust car park follow the 'entrance' signs to House & Gardens. At the entrance gate turn right along the estate road. At the signpost at the edge of the wood take the bridleyway downhill signed 'Downley', and after 50m, ignore a crossing path. Continue ahead down to the bottom where a hedge and a field fence border the bridleyway. Continue straight ahead for 300m, enter the wood and ignoring all side paths, follow the bridleyway until, after passing Well Cottage on your right, join Moor Lane by the chapel. A steep path leads half left up over the Common to a road by the bus shelter. Turn right to pass the shop and pub before arriving at the old Post Office on the corner.
 (For a circular walk back to Hughenden, turn right and follow the road up and around the cricket pitch, then see "Downley Common to Hughenden Manor" walk. Note there are two kissing gates on this section)

Downley to West Wycombe

Distance: 2km/1.25miles, allow 25 - 30 minutes.
Difficulty: No stiles, two kissing gates. Downhill.
Access: Suitable for pushchairs.

At the T junction by the old Post office, take the leafy track opposite, passing two cottages on your right. After about 150m, take the footpath sharp right and follow this as it winds behind the houses. At the waymarked path junction, take the footpath left and ignoring side paths, follow this, gently dropping for about 400m to an obvious fork. Bear right shortly to arrive at a metal kissing gate at the edge of the wood. Walk down to another metal gate at the bottom to meet Cookshall Lane, turn left to pass under the railway bridge and join the main road by the garage and roundabout. Cross with care, go right (signed to Oxford) and follow this road into West Wycombe village.
 (For Saunderton, turn right up Church Lane for 150m to join the "West Wycombe to Saunderton" walk route described previously)



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About the walk

These walks take you through the countryside estates of West Wycombe, Bradenham and Hughenden where there are fantastic views, magnificent beech woods and carpets of bluebells and wild flowers. You can see places of great architecture and historic interest and wildlife such as red kites and muntjac deer.

Walking gets you fit and keeps you healthy



Features of interest

(see numbers on map)

1 West Wycombe Park

Like many holidaymakers Sir Francis Dashwood (1708-81) was inspired by his travels to transform his estate with styles and art-objects from Italy and the Mediterranean - only on a grand scale. The mix of classical, gothic and English features have been described as a paradise. He even dammed the River Wye to create a lake in the shape of a swan.

The House and grounds, now owned by the National Trust, are still the residence of the Dashwood family and are open to the public (01494 513569) www.nationaltrust.org.uk



West Wycombe Park

2 Hell-Fire Caves

The caves consist of a mile of underground passages with various figures depicting the life and times of the members of the Hellfire Club who met there. The infamous tales of their orgies and pagan ceremonies may have originated from political rival as a smear campaign. The caves were created in the 1750s to provide work for unemployed farm workers and are now a visitor attraction. www.hellfirecaves.co.uk

2 West Wycombe Village and Hill

Much of this attractive Chilterns village is owned by the National Trust. Most of the buildings are 16th - 18th century (more information is available from a village leaflet in the



Picnic on West Wycombe Hill

Post Office). Wycombe is famous for its furniture making industry. At the bottom of Church Lane a surviving workshop still makes furniture using local beech wood. The church on the hill was rebuilt by Dashwood in the 1760s at the same time as the mausoleum was built and is still used for family burials. The golden ball on the church is made of copper and has small seats inside with fantastic views.

3 Hughenden Manor

Hughenden Manor was the home of Victorian Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli from 1848 - 1881. Disraeli and his wife Mary Anne planted dark evergreen trees in the woods near the Manor. When Dizzy, as Mary Anne called him, returned from Westminster after weeks of running the country, "he spent the first week back examining his trees, and the second week examining his books". Disraeli's grave is next to the church. The House and grounds are open to the public and owned by the National Trust (01494 755573) www.nationaltrust.org.uk

4 Bradenham

The Manor House was the birthplace of Benjamin Disraeli and the village and estate is owned by the National Trust. A scene in the film "Dirty Dozen" was filmed near the village green.



Cricket game at Bradenham

Most of the woodland above Bradenham is beech, originally planted during the 1800s for the local furniture industry. The woods are carpeted by bluebells in early May.

5 Downley Common

The Common originally provided grazing land for the villagers of West Wycombe. The ponds in the woods are probably over 300 years old, they were created to provide water for cattle. More information on the history of the Common is available in a leaflet from Downley Post Office.

Red Kites

These distinctive birds of prey were re-introduced to the area from Spain in 1989 - 1994 after human persecution drove them to extinction in England by the end of the 19th century. One of the reasons for their success is that they scavenge on birds and animals killed by vehicles and game birds shot during the hunting season but not retrieved by dogs. They also feed on insects, earthworms and small mammals.



Landscape Character

Much of the countryside on this walk is owned or managed by the West Wycombe Estate and the National Trust. As well as making a living from agriculture and forestry they are also managing the land to conserve the traditional character and wildlife of the Chilterns. You will notice the woodland on top of the hills, grasses on the upper slopes and arable fields in the valley bottoms.

How to get to the start

Walks are located north of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

Walks can be started from West Wycombe, Saunderton, Bradenham and Hughenden, all of which have good public transport access. If you live nearby you can walk or cycle to the start from parts of High Wycombe, Downley or Naphill.

By train: Saunderton station (un-manned) is on the line between London Marylebone (45 mins) and Birmingham Snow Hill operated by Chiltern Railways. Call 0845 600 5165 or www.chilternrailways.co.uk for times and fares.

By bus: There are regular services from High Wycombe to West Wycombe, Bradenham, Saunderton and Hughenden. For times call 0871 200 22 33 or visit www.traveline.info

By car: There are free car parks at West Wycombe and Hughenden Manor. Or you can use a pub car park, but please check with pub staff.

Visitor information

There are a number of places where you can get refreshments/use toilets on the walks and there is a shop in West Wycombe and Downley. Pubs usually serve food lunchtimes (12 - 2) and evenings (after 6).

Hell Fire Caves Café West Wycombe (01494 533739) Open weekends all year and week days March - October, 11 - 5.30

The George and Dragon West Wycombe (01494 464414)

The Swan West Wycombe (01494 527031)

West Wycombe Garden Centre Café (01494 438635)

The Golden Cross Saunderton (01494 562293)

The Plough West Wycombe (01494 538583)

The Red Lion Bradenham (01494 562212)

Le de Spencer Arms Downley Common (01494 535317)

The Bricklayers Arms Downley (01494 520597)

Hughenden Manor Tea Rooms (01494 755500) Open Wednesday - Sunday, from March - December

For details of places to stay, attractions or other walks and rides contact Wycombe Information Centre 01494 421892 or www.visitbuckinghamshire.org

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:

-  Footpaths (walkers only)
-  Bridleways (horseriders, cyclists and walkers)
-  Byways (open to all traffic)
-  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 dogs under close control.

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Outdoor Clothing and Equipment
Walking Boots and Shoes

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www.foxsoutdoor.co.uk

If you have enjoyed this walk, there are many other wonderful walks in the Chilterns:

- Visit www.chilternsaonb.org or call 01844 355500 for other Chiltern Country walks
- Visit 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. Visit www.chilternsaonb.org or call 01844 355500



Photographs: The Chilterns Conservation Board, National Trust and Gerry Whitlow

Chilterns Country

West Wycombe & Bradenham Walks



Several Circular Walks
Shortest walk: 2½ miles, allow up to 1 hour
Longest walk: over 10 miles, allow up to 5 hours

