



# Burghclere Circular Walk

Sandham Memorial Chapel (Stanley Spencer's WW1 wall paintings, NT), chalk streams, open fields, beech woodland, an old thatched barn, a huge avenue of trees, Watership Down views, and a charming disused railway walk hidden in the trees.



---

**Length** 11.2 miles / 18 km

---

**Toughness** 4 / 10  
**s**

---

**Features** This walk begins at Sandham Memorial Chapel (National Trust), to see Stanley Spencer's wall paintings of World War I. Check whether it is open. After visiting the chapel the circular walk from Burghclere goes through some lovely Hampshire countryside: chalk streams, open fields, beech woodland, an old thatched barn, a huge avenue of trees, and some fine views both south and north from Watership Down (where rabbits may be seen), while the disused railway walk at the end, back to Burghclere, is a charming surprise, hidden in the trees.

Sadly, the only way of getting to Burghclere is by car; the nearest station is 5 miles away and there is no regular bus service.

---

**Options** The walk might be extended by turning left on Sydmonton Road and finding a path up onto Watership Down, then walking along the ridge to join the route at the gate into the Sydmonton Estate, but this has not been investigated

---

---

**Travel**

Travel is by car, only; there is no convenient bus service. The nearest station is Newbury, 5 miles north. Don't park in the National Trust car park opposite the chapel as it closes at 3 pm. There are convenient free parking laybys on Harts Lane in Burghclere, between the chapel and the village church at the junction with Breachfield, on the route of the walk.

The hourly Stagecoach #32 bus along the A339 : Newbury (station) - Cottismore Farm - about 100m south of the Star Inn - Basingstoke (station). See the 'map' page. You'd need a OS map. The route hasn't been walk checked. This would add about 2km to the route.

---

**Lunch**

[The Royal Oak](#), Tel: [01635 297355](tel:01635297355), Ecchinswell, RG20 4UH, after about 7 km. If you leave Sandham Chapel after a visit of 1 hour, at noon, you can get to the pub about 13:30 pm.

---

**Tea**

Possibly at the Carpenters' Arms in Burghclere, just past the Chapel on Harts Lane; if not, then beer.

---

**Notes**

The walk begins in Burghclere, Hampshire, the site of [Sandham Memorial Chapel](#). This chapel, now run by the National Trust, was decorated by Sir Stanley Spencer R.A. between 1926 and 1932. His paintings are oil on canvas, set into panels on the walls of the chapel which have an arrangement that is similar to the Arena Chapel in Padua which has paintings by Giotto. Spencer painted scenes based on his experience as a medical orderly in Salonika during World War I, which include his obsession with the notion of resurrection. The chapel is lit by natural light only. Take some binoculars if you want to see details high on the walls. No photography is allowed but there is an illustrated book on sale for £7. The chapel is open from 11 to 3 pm on certain days of the week, usually including the weekends. Entry cost £11 [2025]. Check the web site before you go for opening times as they are seasonal.

Watership Down was made famous by Richard Adams in his 1972 novel. You should see rabbits, though there are lots of raptors around too, also looking for them.

The disused railway line once operated between Dicot and Southampton via Newbury, through Burghclere. It closed in 1960.

Highclere Castle (aka "Downton Abbey"), not on the route, is nearby visitor attraction. There are some summer only walks through its grounds - see its website.

Just off the route, but across the A34 motorway, is Beacon Hill (trig point, viewpoint, remains of an iron age hill fort). There is a car park and short

trail from the A34 'Old Burghclere' junction.

---

**Help Us!** After the walk, please leave a [comment](#), it really helps. Thanks!

You can also upload photos to the  [SWC Group on Flickr](#) ([upload your photos](#)) and [videos to](#)  [Youtube](#). This walk's tags are:

---

**By Car**      **Start**

---

**Help**      National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Traveline (bus times): 0871 200 22 33  
(12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

---

**Version**      Mar-25 [Andrew H](#)

---

**Copyright**      © [Saturday Walkers Club](#). All Rights Reserved. No commercial use. No copying. No derivatives. Free with attribution for one time non-commercial use only. [www.walkingclub.org.uk/site/license.shtml](http://www.walkingclub.org.uk/site/license.shtml)

---

## Walk Directions

1. Turn left out of Sandham Memorial Chapel and walk 1 km along Harts Lane, past the church on the right.
2. At the junction with Well Street, with a school almost opposite, turn left, not down Ayres Lane. Look for a footpath sign to the right after about 180 m. This is the start of the Brenda Parker Way, a cross-country footpath.
3. Follow this path for about 2.5 km. After 230 m, cross a road into woodland; the path then swings right into the gravel drive in front of a large house after 400 m, with two low barns to the left. At the house, swing left towards the wood, called Batt's Copse. Follow the farm track laid with stones and rubble along the field edge. The track passes between two woods then straight across a field before crossing across a stream to reach a road.
4. Turn right at the road. In about 350 m take a farm track left. Follow the track with woods to the left. After 1 km, when approaching houses, the path swings to the right then left to meet Ecchinswell Road at Hydes Platt.
5. Cross the road, walk past a little black and white thatched cottage with a lean-to. After 400 m, just before a gate into a property, turn right down a path, heading south, towards Ecchinswell.
6. After 700 m turn left to cross a stream on a bridge. Turn right and follow the direction of the stream until another bridge takes you back over it again. Follow the damp gully (which could be very muddy in winter) down to the main street of Ecchinswell.
7. The lunch time pub, the Royal Oak, is about 300 m down on the left.

8. Leaving the pub, turn right, then in 40 m turn right down Mill Lane, cross the bridge and follow Ecchinswell Road for 550 m. Just past a lane on the right and opposite a house where the road curves slightly left, take the footpath right, between hedges, heading south and rising slowly.
9. Follow the path gently upwards, pass between woods with Nuthanger Copse on the right. The path curves right towards the farm until it meets a track. Turn left to walk down the track to the road.
10. There is no direct path to Watership Down across the huge field in front of you crossed by electricity pylons, so at Sydmonton Road turn right. The road has high banks with Hawthorn hedges interspersed with Horse Chestnut trees. There is no footpath, so take care; it's probably the busiest road on the walk.
11. After 700 m, at the first crossroads, turn left up a narrow lane towards Watership Down. This pretty, winding lane passes through beech woodland and a high mossy bank with views over the fields below.
12. At the top, called Nuthanger Down, a foot path left and right crosses the road. Turn right onto the grasslands of the Sydmonton Estate. There are fine views north at the start which change to views southwards as you walk along the Down.
13. Follow the marked footpath west as it swings around field edges. The path passes next to Ladle Hill Iron Age fort, behind a fence. Another fort can be seen on a hill on the other side of the valley.
14. Look out for rabbits in the distance. There are lots of Buzzards and Kites around so the rabbits may be twitchy.
15. About 300m after passing Ladle Hill, at a lone small tree marked with a flint cairn, turn sharp right: follow that path down the hill through bushes and trees to Sydmonton Road again.
16. Cross the road in the same direction, now heading north. There is a fine avenue of trees to the right, either side of the old entrance to Sydmonton Court (currently owned by Andrew Lloyd Webber). The road passes several houses with the odd name 'Wergs'.
17. After 1.3 km, where the road forks, take the left fork and immediately turn left up a farm track, rising between hedges.
18. At the edge of woodland after 300 m, you come to the parapets of an overgrown bridge. Turn sharp left just after the end of the parapet and drop down to the disused railway track. It may be slippery.
19. Pass under the brick railway bridge and follow the straight track for about 1.5 km along a high, wooded railway embankment towards the village of Burghclere.
20. The railway track comes to an abrupt end against the back of someone's garden and the path turns right to join the road. Turn left at the road, pass Station House, up to Harts Lane in Burghclere.

21. At Harts Lane, turn right towards the parking laybys; turn left to go back to the chapel and the Carpenters Arms.

© [Saturday Walkers Club](#). All Rights Reserved. No commercial use. No copying. No derivatives. Free with attribution for one time non-commercial use only.  
[www.walkingclub.org.uk/site/license.shtml](http://www.walkingclub.org.uk/site/license.shtml)