



# Great Missenden to Amersham walk

The Chilterns, beech woods, and Little Missenden.

## Little Missenden & Penn Wood

**Length** 16.3km (10.1 miles), 5 hours. For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow 8 hours.

**Toughness** 4 out of 10.

**OS Maps** Explorers 172 & 181 or Landranger 165. Great Missenden, map reference SP893013 is in **Buckinghamshire**, 8km north-west of Amersham.

**Features** This lovely Chilterns walk, only 40 minutes from London by train, makes an easy outing at any time of year. The route is more open than most Chilterns walks, but there is one large beech wood, Penn Wood, which produces fine autumn colours. Other attractions include four interesting churches, the ancient village of Little Missenden, and Amersham's surprisingly unspoilt old town, which is approached over a ridge with fine views. After tea, it is a 20 minute walk up through a wood to reach the station.

In January and February one section of the bridleway just before point **[6]** is invariably flooded.

**Walk Options** The easiest way to shorten the walk is to carry on along the road past The Crown Inn at point **[5]** and follow the well waymarked South Bucks Way into old Amersham, a distance of 3.6km (2.2 miles) compared to 9.4km (5.8 miles) by the main walk route. The only disadvantage of this short cut is that it is close to the busy A413 throughout. It reduces the overall walk length to 10.5km (6.5 miles).

There is an hourly bus into Amersham from point **[6]** but this is a disappointing place to finish the walk. Another option would be to get a taxi from one of the lunch pubs.

**History** The [Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul](#) in Great Missenden was built mainly in the fourteenth century. It is located on a hill outside the town because when it was built Great Missenden was only a collection of scattered farms and the hilltop location made a good focal point.

[St John the Baptist Church](#) in Little Missenden has a giant thirteenth-century mural to St Christopher carrying the Christ child across the waters. Part of the church was built in the tenth century. The gatepost is in memory of Dunkirk in 1940.

[All Saints Church](#) in Coleshill is a neo-Gothic church designed by Street, whose work was praised by Betjeman. The stone for the church, completed in 1856, was brought by river to Windsor and then by cart.

The building of the [Parish Church of St Mary](#) in Amersham started in the early 1100s. The window glass is mainly from the nineteenth century.

**Travel** Take the train nearest to **9.55am** from **Marylebone** Station to **Great Missenden**. Journey time 42 minutes. Great Missenden is one stop outside London Transport zone nine and Network card holders can get a discounted London Transport zone 1-9 travelcard at weekends and on bank holidays from any Underground ticket office up to a week in advance. You then only need to buy a one stop extension from Chiltern Railways from Great Missenden to Amersham.

This approach has the advantage that on the return journey from Amersham you can use the four Underground trains an hour (45 minutes to Baker Street) as well as the two hourly Chiltern Railway trains to Marylebone (39 minutes: only one train an hour on Sundays). By contrast, a normal day return to Great Missenden is only valid on Chiltern Railways.

**Lunch** The original lunch stop for this walk is the [Squirrel](#) pub (tel 01494 711 291) in Penn Street, some 9½km into the walk, which serves pub classics from midday to 2pm Tuesday to Saturday and 2.30pm Sunday. But you really are spoiled for choice for pubs on this walk, all of which have some outside seating for fine days.

140 metres down the road from the Squirrel, the [Hit or Miss Inn](#) (tel 01494 713 109) – the name refers to cricket, in case you were wondering – has a more creative menu, and plenty of seating. It serves food until 2.30pm Monday to Friday, 3pm on Saturday and all afternoon on Sunday (roasts only), and is open in the afternoon for drinks, including tea and coffee.

For slower walkers or late starters, Little Missenden, some 5½km into the walk, has two characterful old pubs. The **Red Lion** (tel 01494 862 876) is particularly charming, with a garden with a large pond and friendly ducks and chickens. Inside it is a cosy old-fashioned pub and the food is basic but hearty. The **Crown** (tel 01494 862 571) is more rudimentary, offering pies, baked potatoes, sandwiches and soup from midday to 2pm Monday to Saturday.

**Tea** The recommended tea stop is **Seasons Café Deli** in Old Amersham, which is open until 6pm daily. This has limited seating, however, so groups might like to explore other options nearby. One immediately across the road from Seasons is **Gilbey's Restaurant** (01494 727142) which advertises cream teas. Otherwise, there are a number of ancient pubs in the vicinity, including the [Crown Inn Hotel](#) 50 metres to the west of Seasons, which offers afternoon tea and the **Kings Arms** 100 metres beyond that. Just before Seasons on the route there is also the **Nags Head**.

An earlier option halfway through the afternoon portion of the walk is **The Plough** (01494 259757) in the village of Winchmore Hill, which serves tea and coffee and is open all afternoon daily.

There are slim pickings up by Amersham Station, but if you are desperate, there is a **Tesco Express** just up the road selling snacks and a **Subway** beyond that which sells tea.

**Updates** No major changes. The Furrow (alternate lunch pub) has closed.

**Help Us!** After the walk, we would love to get your [feedback](#)

**Photos** Upload your photos to the [SWC Group on Flickr](#), and [videos to Youtube](#). This walk's tags are:



**By Car** **Start** HP16 9AZ **Finish** HP6 5AZ

**Help** National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline SE (bus times): 0871 200 2233 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

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## Walk Directions

The [numbers] and sketch map they refer to, is only in the book.

1. **[1]** Coming off the train, cross the footbridge and leaving **Great Missenden Station** building, *turn left*, your direction 20°. At the T-junction, *turn right downhill*, your direction 50°.
2. In 70 metres, at the next T-junction, *go left*, your direction 320° (to the right is the High Street).
3. In 25 metres *turn right* onto Walnut Close, your direction 50°. In 60 metres, at the end of this, take the tarmac path going to the left of the double garage of house number 18.
4. In 20 metres ignore a footpath to the left and a car park to the right to keep straight on, initially with a green metal fence to your left. In a further 100 metres, pass through a metal kissing gate and *turn right*, your direction 160°.

5. In 40 metres go through a metal kissing gate to the right of a wooden fieldgate. Cross the main road and continue *straight on*, using a tarmac path down the left-hand side of a green space, signposted South Bucks Way, your direction 160°.
6. In 300 metres you emerge onto a road, with a residential cul-de-sac to your right. Keep straight on and in 70 metres you come out into an oval-shaped green [2].
7. *Turn right* to follow the edge of the green for 40 metres until you are in front of a brick and flint house on its far side (bearing 160° from the point you entered the oval-shaped green). Pass to the *right* of this house *up a tarmac lane* signposted South Bucks Way (Church Lane, though the signpost is not that visible; the first cottage on the left is called The Pound).
8. Follow this lane as it climbs uphill. In 200 metres, ignore the South Bucks Way footpath off down the right to continue on a bridge over the A413 to the **Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul**.
9. If you want to visit the church, its entrance is on its left-hand side but otherwise *pass to the right* of the church. 30 metres up its right-hand side, look out for a rusted kissing gate in the fence to the right (it may be hidden by foliage in summer).
10. [!] *Turn right* through this kissing gate and then *turn left uphill*, ignoring a faint path straight ahead if you can see one. Aim to the right of a clump of three large trees 80 metres ahead and towards an electricity pylon high on the ridge in the far distance (again, this may be less visible in summer), your direction 80°.
11. In 450 metres, at the top of the field, go over a stile (a nice view backwards here), across a car-wide track, and over another stile to continue in roughly the same direction as before (now 100°) across an open field, heading to the right of the nearest pylon ahead.
12. In 250 metres go over a stile to continue with a hedge on your left-hand side, your direction 130°. In 250 metres pass under electricity pylons and in 300 metres, at the far end of the field, cross another stile to continue straight on, now with the hedge on your right.
13. In 160 metres, go over another stile to continue along the field edge, with a house visible ahead. In 100 metres, before you get to this house, turn right over a stile, and carry on down the path. In 50 metres you emerge onto a road opposite Rowen Farm and *turn right*, your direction 200° [3].
14. Pass the timber-framed Chapel Farm on your right with lighthouse lamps on either side of its front door. 20 metres beyond this *turn left* on a concrete track, signposted Circular Walk, your direction 100°.
15. Follow this track for 300 metres all the way to the bottom of the dip, ignoring ways off, and carry on uphill as it bears right and starts to climb again, by which time it has become a gravel track.
16. In another 180 metres, at the top of the hill, and just before the wood ends right, ignore a stile to the left, but *turn right* opposite it, following an arrow on a post, on a path just inside the woodland edge, your direction 220°.
17. In 60 metres *veer left* to leave the wood (a decaying stile here but it may not last long) and *turn right* along the edge of a field, with the wood now to your right.
18. Keep to the edge of this field as it *turns left* in 80 metres (it can be very muddy here in winter) and *then veers right* in another 40 metres. In another 30 metres, at a footpath post, *veer left* on a faint path across the field, your direction 120°.
19. In 60 metres, just before you get to the wood edge on the far side, *turn right* along the field edge, your direction 200°. Keep to this field edge, with the wood to your left, as it descends the hill.
20. In 300 metres, where the wood edge ends at a line of mini-pylons, *turn left* with the path across the open field, your direction 130°. In 150 metres, stay on a car-wide track upwards into the wood which soon narrows to a path, your direction due south.
21. In 200 metres you come to a path T-junction marked by a footpath post [4] with farm sheds visible beyond. *Turn right here*, passing a sign for Mantle's Wood, your direction 210°.
22. Stay on this path, ignoring ways off, for 400 metres, until you pass through the remains of a fence and see a footbridge to your right. *Turn right over the footbridge*, crossing the railway line. On the far side, follow the path to emerge into an open field in 30 metres. Carry straight on downhill, heading just to the left of the first mini-pylon, your direction due south.
23. In 150 metres cross the A413 with great care and go over a stile on the other side to continue down the left-hand edge of the field. In 90 metres cross a stream on a concrete footbridge. In 120 metres, cross a stile and *turn left* on the road, into **Little Missenden**. Immediately on your left is **St John the Baptist Church**, which is well worth a look inside.
24. Carry on along the road, past the church. In 100 metres, ignore a road to the right, and in a further 20 metres ignore Taylors Lane to the left. In a further 90 metres you pass the **Red Lion pub**, a possible early lunch stop.
25. Carrying on along the road, in 170 metres you pass Missenden House on your left: ignore a stile and footpath on the right here. In another 250 metres, the **Crown pub** is on your left, another possible early lunch stop [5].

26. [!] For the short cut to Amersham, continue along the road for about 85 metres and take the footpath on the right-hand side, signposted South Bucks Way.
27. Your onward, main route is to *turn right* on the bridleway 10 metres before the Crown, between Jug Cottage and the village hall, your direction south. In 60 metres, you pass Tobys Lane Farm on your left-hand side. Keep straight up uphill.
28. You now stay on this bridleway between hedges all the way up the hill, ignoring ways off. At the top of the hill, the bridleway levels out, with open fields either side. 1km from Little Missenden it passes under a line of electricity pylons and after a further 250 metres another. The section after this second set of pylons seems to be invariably flooded in January and February, though it can be passed with difficulty by invading nearby fields.
29. 400 metres after the second line of electricity pylons, ignore footpaths left and right (a metal fieldgate to the left, a wooden fence to the right). But in another 250 metres, with the main road not far ahead, you come to a second crosspaths. [!] Here there are metal gates left and right and you *turn right*, following the footpath arrow across a field on a slightly raised bank, your direction 250°. A main road, the A404, can be seen and heard away to your left.
30. In 250 metres pass through a kissing gate and continue on past a white bungalow. In another 200 metres you come to a driveway between houses and 90 metres later this comes to a tarmac road, with the gates of Beamond Lodge ahead of you [6]. *Turn left* on this road, your direction 200°.
31. In 70 metres go straight on at a road junction. (To shorten the walk by getting the bus to Amersham mentioned in **Walk Options**, turn *sharp right* here, to find the bus stop on the right-hand side of the road). For the main route in 50 metres cross the A404 with care, to enter **Penn Wood**.
32. Keep *straight on* into the wood, ignoring a path to the right in 50 metres and a fork to the left 10 metres after that. In another 30 metres pass through a kissing gate to the left of a wooden fieldgate. In 50 metres more, ignore a fork to the right.
33. After this, keep straight on through Penn Wood. This path is broad and muddy in winter, and it can be a bit of an obstacle course. Be careful when walking round the morasses of mud not to stray off the path.
34. In 1km, you come to the end of the wood and a road where you *go left*. The **Squirrel**, a possible lunchtime pub, is straight ahead across the green.
35. If not stopping at the Squirrel keep to the road along the right-hand edge of the green. In 80 metres *turn right* on a road signposted to Winchmore Hill and Amersham. (To reach this point from the Squirrel, come out of the pub and turn left for 40 metres, and then keep straight on along the road to Winchmore Hill).
36. The **Hit or Miss Inn** is 100 metres along this road on the left. To continue the walk, however, in 20 metres, *turn left* up a signposted footpath. (If coming out of the Hit and Miss turn right on the road and in 70 metres, just after the end of some offices buildings to your right, turn right up a signposted footpath.)
37. In 80 metres pass through a kissing gate and curve right along the edge of a field, with buildings to your right. In 180 metres pass through another kissing gate and carry straight on across an open field, your direction 90°.
38. In 130 metres *enter a wood* and go straight on, with its edge to your right, your direction 120°. In 400 metres exit the wood by a metal kissing gate, and *veer slightly to the right* across a field, your direction 150°.
39. In 130 metres go through a metal kissing gate and carry straight on along a path between hedges. In 200 metres you come to a tarmac road with a bus shelter opposite (not served by any useful buses) [7].
40. Cross the road to continue straight on up an open space, keeping the hedge to your left, your direction 140°. In 160 metres merge with a tarmac road. You are now in the village of **Winchmore Hill**.
41. Keep on along the road, passing the Memorial Hall on the left in 100 metres. 40 metres beyond this, *turn sharp left* (ie nearly doubling back on yourself) *down a road called The Hill* and signposted to Amersham, passing **The Plough**, a possible refreshment stop.
42. In 80 metres, opposite the Methodist church on your left, *turn right* on a signposted footpath, your direction 80°. In 130 metres keep straight on along the right-hand edge of a field, and in 200 metres carry on down the right-hand edge of the next field.
43. In 400 metres enter a wood and keep straight on along a car-wide track, your direction 100°. In 80 metres, you emerge from the wood and keep straight on, heading to the right of a copse 120 metres ahead.
44. Beyond the copse keep straight on for 130 metres to cross a stile. Beyond this, follow the path with a wooden fence and open field to your left.
45. In 200 metres, pass through a gate and keep straight on up a broad grassy strip. In 80 metres this becomes a concrete drive. In 80 metres more pass through a metal gate to the right of a wooden fieldgate and carry on down a gravel driveway between gardens. In another 80 metres go through a gate and in 60 metres more *turn left* onto a road.

46. On your right is **All Saints Church, Coleshill**. Carrying on past the church, in 80 metres merge with Village Road to your right, and carry straight on, passing Coleshill First School on your right.
47. In 500 metres you pass a bus stop and Coleshill Cottage on your left-hand side and Village House to the right. Stay on the road and in a further 150 metres you come to a three-way junction where you *fork right* with the main road, Tower Road **[8]**.
48. In 40 metres **[!]** *fork left* up a concrete road, marked Cherry Tree Farm (not the tarmac drive to its left), your direction 30°. In 150 metres, where the concrete ends, continue *straight on* along a path between a white fence left and a rusty metal fence right, your direction still 30°. In 70 metres go through a kissing gate.
49. In 40 metres the path emerges into a field. Keep on along its right-hand edge. In 120 metres cross a stile and in 30 metres more emerge into a field, with a view of Amersham (and a large electricity pylon) ahead **[9]**.
50. *Bear right* before the electricity pylon, keeping the field edge to your right-hand side, your direction 60°. In 160 metres at the end of the field (marked by a slight ridge), keep on down *the right-hand edge* of the next field, on a bank raised above the field to the right.
51. In 200 metres *turn sharp right* where the bank ends, heading to the left of a lone tree at the bottom edge of the field (or if you prefer, just to the left of a circular tower on the hill behind), your direction 160°. In 90 metres, at the field edge, *turn left*, your direction 10°, soon passing to the left of a line of bushes.
52. Follow this path along the valley bottom, with a ditch to your right. In 600 metres, houses start to the right and in another 300 metres you come to the far corner of the field.
53. Here *turn left* on a tarmac path, following a footpath sign. In 40 metres cross the A413 on a footbridge. 30 metres after the bridge, at a tarmac path T-junction, *turn left*.
54. In 100 metres, ignore a road right, and *veer left* into a field. Immediately *turn right* down its edge, heading for the tiled roofs of Old Amersham ahead, your direction 310°. In 40 metres, *curve right* on a faint path, heading to the right of the church tower, to come to a fieldgate 120 metres away, your direction north.
55. Pass through a gate to the right of the fieldgate and *turn left* on a road. In 60 metres this brings you into **Old Amersham**. *Turn right* on the road.
56. Passing the **Nags Head** on your left, the road brings you in 100 metres to a junction with a roundabout with the churchyard ahead. The recommended tea stop, **Seasons Café Deli**, is immediately to your left on this corner.
57. For other tea choices and a look at the picturesque main street of Old Amersham, turn left: the **Crown Inn Hotel** is in 50 metres on your left, and the **Kings Arms** another 100 metres further along.
58. Your onward route, however, is to cross the road and **[!]** *take the path directly across the road* from Seasons into the churchyard, your direction 20°.
59. If it is dark by this point, you can instead follow the road that starts in front of the old market building, 70 metres to the left (west) at this point and climbs uphill. This brings you up to the railway bridge mentioned in point 62 below.
60. Passing to the right of the **Parish Church of St Mary** on the path, you come to a tarmac lane and *turn right*, with a stream on your left, your direction 80°. In 60 metres, at a T-junction with a cemetery ahead, *turn left* and in 30 metres *turn right uphill* on a tarmac path with the cemetery wall to your right and allotments to your left.
61. In 250 metre you enter **Parsonage Wood** and keep *straight on*, ignoring all turnings off, and keeping some 40 metres from the edge of the wood and the road on your left-hand side.
62. In 500 metres, with the railway bridge visible some 100 metres ahead and 60 metres before the path merges with the road to your left, **[!]** *take an unmarked right fork*. In 100 metres *turn right* along the railway embankment. (If you miss the fork, go to the railway bridge and turn right before it on a footpath).
63. The path by the railway embankment passes houses on the right and in 70 metres comes to a main road. Cross the road carefully, *go left* under the railway bridge and *turn right* just beyond it for **Amersham Station**, 60 metres away. The near platform has trains to London.

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