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| Haddenham to Aylesbury (via Gibraltar and Ford) | | |
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Haddenham to Aylesbury (via Gibraltar and Ford)

Start: Haddenham & Thame Parkway station

Finish: Aylesbury station

Haddenham & Thame Parkway station, map reference SP 731 085, is 10 km south west of Aylesbury, 22km east of Oxford, and 81m above sea level. Aylesbury Station, map reference SP 817 134, is 78m above sea level. Both are in **Buckinghamshire**.

Length: 23.3 km (14.5 mi), of which 5.8 km (3.6 mi) on roads or pavements.

Cumulative ascent/descent: 177/183m. For a shorter walk, *see below* **Walk options**.

Toughness: 4 out of 10

Time: 5 hours walking time.

For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 7 ³/₄ hours.

Transport: Haddenham & Thame Parkway (HTP) station is on the London Marylebone to Bicester main line. Aylesbury is on the Marylebone to Aylesbury line (also operated by Chiltern Railways), but is also served via a loop branching off from the Bicester line at Princes Risborough. Buy an 'Aylesbury Return (any route permitted)'-ticket [i.e.: NOT an 'Aylesbury (via Chalfont & Latimer) Return'], this covers the outward journey up to Princes Risborough. You might then have to pay on board for a single Princes Risborough to HTP extension (there are no barriers at HTP).

Journey times are between 34 and 51 minutes to HTP, with two trains per hour, and between 60 and 70 minutes from Aylesbury, with three trains per hour.

Saturday Walkers' Club: Take the train closest to 9.30 hours.

OS Landranger Map: 165 (Aylesbury & Leighton Buzzard)

OS Explorer Map: 181 (Chiltern Hills North) and 180 (Oxford)

Walk Notes:

This pleasant walk through the scenic heart of Aylesbury Vale passes through the tranquil Thame Valley in the morning, linking up several unspoilt and picturesque hamlets with gentle views to the surrounding hills, while passing three good village pubs en-route. After lunch several grassy fields and a substantial, newly planted community woodland are passed through. Later the stately mansion of Hartwell House is rounded, before the route heads into Aylesbury for tea.

The regular Oxford to Aylesbury bus service is never far away from the route, making it easy to choose a shorter option.

Walk options:

The Oxford to Aylesbury **bus route** (200/280) along the A418 offers an option for a shorter walk, either taking you back to Haddenham station or on to Aylesbury bus station (200m from the rail station). It runs every 20 minutes weekdays, half-hourly Saturdays and hourly Sundays, and you can catch it from many points along the route, either after lunch in Gibraltar or Dinton, near Dinton Church (halfway through the walk), or later in the afternoon in Hartwell (4 km from the end).

Details are to be found in the walk directions.

Lunch:

The Crown at Cuddington Aylesbury Road, *Cuddington, Buckinghamshire, HP18 0BB* (01844 292 222, <http://www.thecrowncuddington.co.uk/>). Open Mon-Sat 12.00-23.00, Sun 12.00-22.30. Food served Mon-Fri 12.00-14.30 and 17.00-22.00, Sat 12.00-15.00 and 17.00-22.00 and Sun 12.00-15.00.

The Crown is located 7.1 km (4.4 mi) into the walk and a characterful Grade II listed pub, functioning equally well as a popular local and as a serious dining pub. The atmospheric interior includes a locals' bar and several low-beamed dining areas. There is also a small patio area providing outside seating and an opportunity for al fresco dining in the summer.

The Bottle & Glass Thame Road, *Gibraltar, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8TY* (01296 748 444, <http://www.thebottleandglass.com/>). Open Mon-Thu 11.00-23.00, Fri-Sat 11.00-23.30, Sun 12.00-22.30.

Food served Mon-Sat 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-21.30 and Sun 12.00-21.00. The Bottle & Glass is located 10.3 km (6.4 mi) into the walk. A large thatched-roof pub, with a roaring log fire, completely rebuilt after a devastating fire, offering affordable, good quality food, prepared from locally sourced produce.

The Seven Stars Stars Lane, *Dinton, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8UL* (01296 749 000, <http://www.sevenstarsdinton.com/>). Open Mon-Sat 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-23.00, Sun 12.00-22.00. Food served Mon-Sat 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-22.00, Sun 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-21.00.

The Seven Stars is located 10.9 km (6.8 mi) into the walk. It was saved from closure by local people purchasing the freehold, and it has a snug, a main bar and a dining area.

The Dinton Hermit Inn Water Lane, *Ford, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8XH* (01296 747 473).

The Dinton Hermit is located 13.6 km (8.5 mi) into the walk. It derives its name from a legend surrounding the execution of King Charles I (see "Notes"), and is **currently shut**.

Tea:

The Bugle Horn Oxford Road, *Hartwell, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8QP* (01296 747 594, <http://www.vintageinn.co.uk/thebuglehornhartwell/>). Open Mon-Sat 12.00-23.00, Sun 12.00-22.30.

The Bugle Horn is located 19.6 km (12.2 mi) into the walk and 3.7 km from the end of it. It started life as a farmhouse, but during the early 1800s it was used as a wine store for Hartwell House, whilst Louis XVIII of France lived there in exile. Initially known as the Plough, the current name comes from the fossils of the same name that can be seen in the pub's walls.

The Hartwell House Spa Café and Bar Oxford Road, *Hartwell, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8NR* (01296 746 526, <http://www.hartwell-house.com/spa-cafe-and-bar/>). Open for afternoon teas & snacks

Mon-Fri 15.00-18.30, Sat-Sun 16.00-18.30. The Hartwell House Spa Café and Bar is located 20.0 km (12.4 mi) into the walk and 3.3 km from the end of it.

Aylesbury Station Coffee Shop One4six Coffee Station Approach, *Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP20 1RU*. Open Mon-Fri 5.00-18.30, Sat 8.00-14.00, Sun 9.00-13.00.

A plethora of options in Aylesbury City Centre (see Walk Directions), **recommended is:**

The King's Head King's Head Passage, Market Square, *Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 2RW* (01296 718 812, <http://www.kingsheadaylesbury.co.uk/>). Open Mon-Sat 11.00-23.00 and Sun 12.00-22.30. Food served Mon-Tue-Sat 11.30-15.00, Wed-Thu 11.30-15.00 and 17.00-21.00, Fri-Sat 11.30-21.00 and Sun 12.00-18.00.

Notes:

Haddenham

The village name is Anglo-Saxon Hæðanhām, "Hæða's Homestead" or, perhaps Hædingahām, "the home of the Hadding tribe". Haddenham is renowned for its ponds which were used to breed Aylesbury ducks, and it is also the home of Tiggywinkles, the animal welfare charity and veterinary hospital.

Wychert Way

A 21 km (13 mi) waymarked, circular walk around Haddenham linking the surrounding Wychert villages and pubs of Cuddington, Chearsley and Long Crendon. Waymarked paths link the centre of Haddenham and the station to the walk.

Wychert

Haddenham is known nationally as one of only a few wychert (or whitchet) villages. Wychert is Anglo-Saxon in origin (wit chert), meaning 'white earth', and refers to the local clay soil deposits. It describes a method of construction using the wetted clay mixed with straw to make walls and buildings, which are then thatched or topped with red clay tiles. The method is similar to that of a Cob building. To maintain the rigid nature of wychert it must not become too dry for risk of crumbling, nor too wet for risk of turning to slime. Keeping wychert well ventilated and not subject to excess condensation is therefore highly recommended. Render applied to a wychert wall must be of a breathable material – a lime based render is common practice. One of the largest Wychert structures is Haddenham Methodist Church.

River Thame

Now seen as a 65 km (40 mi) long tributary of the longer Thames, there is a school of thought saying that the Thames upstream of Dorchester, where the Thame joins it, is called Isis, and that the Thames is only the confluence of Isis and Thame. What seems certain is that all three names go back to the Celtic "Tamesas/Tamesis" (probably meaning "dark"). The Thame's source is several small streams in the Vale of Aylesbury. These streams converge north-east of Aylesbury.

Notley Abbey

The Augustinian Abbey at Notley was founded around 1162 and was the wealthiest foundation in Bucks. It was dissolved in 1540. The abbey church and the majority of the original abbey buildings survive only as buried remains, although portions were retained within the now Notley Abbey House. The barn is Listed Grade I. The house famously was the marital home of actors Sir Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh from 1945-60, renovated with the help of Lady Colefax, favourite decorator of the wealthy at the time. Nowadays it is used as a boutique luxury wedding venue.

Bernwood Jubilee Way

...is a 98 km (61 mi) waymarked circular Long Distance trail from Brill, Bucks, developed by the Bernwood Ancient Hunting Forest Project within the ancient Forest boundary. Brill's close association with Bernwood, as its administration centre, gave it an importance throughout the history of the royal forest and thus makes it an ideal starting/finishing point. The most northerly points of the route are near Oxford and Buckingham, the most southerly just north of Thame. It opened in 2002, Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee Year.

Bernwood Forest

...is one of several forests of the ancient Kingdom of England and a Royal hunting forest. It is thought to have been set aside as Royal hunting land when the Anglo-Saxon kings had a palace at Brill and church in Oakley, in the 10th century and was a particularly favoured place of Edward the Confessor, who was born in nearby Islip.

From about 1217 through to the 17th century the forest went through a gradual period of deforestation.

Thame Valley Walk

...is a 24 km (15 mi) waymarked linear Long Distance Path along the Thame Valley from Aylesbury to Albury, linking the North Bucks Way with the Oxfordshire Way.

Outer Aylesbury Ring

An 85 km/53 mile circular Long Distance Walk along the higher ground around the outside of the original Aylesbury Ring to produce a walk with good views through pleasant countryside and passing through many delightful villages and towns. Launched in 2013 and created by Aylesbury & District Ramblers, who have also produced leaflets, detailing 14 sections plus separate linked circular walks.

<https://sites.google.com/site/outeraylesburyring/> .

The Aylesbury Ring

A circular 50 km (31 mi) waymarked circular Long Distance Walk around Aylesbury, through Wendover, Waddesdon and Aston Clinton, in parts sharing its course with the North Bucks Way.

The Dinton Hermit

Simon Mayne (Jnr) was a prominent member of the Parliamentary Party during the Civil War, and the then owner of nearby Dinton Hall, where he had housed Oliver Cromwell. Mayne later sat as a judge of the High Commission Court which tried King Charles I and also was one of the signatories of the king's death warrant. John Biggs, secretary to Mayne, was rumoured to have been one of the masked executioners of Charles I, but then – out of remorse mixed with melancholy – hid himself away after the Restoration as a recluse in a cave or hut near Dinton Hall. He is supposed to have been fed by local people for 36 years until he died in 1696.

Michael R. Roads Community Woodland

Known as Michael's peace, planted in the winter of 2001-2 in memory of Michael Roads, whose generosity led to the creation of this woodland. A memorial stone is let into the ground near the trig point.

Midshires Way

A 362 km (225 mi) waymarked linear Long Distance Path from Bledlow, Bucks to Stockport, Greater Manchester, linking the Ridgeway National Trail with the Trans Pennine Trail across the shires of Middle England.

Swan's Way

A 106 km (66 mi) waymarked linear Long Distance Path from the Northants border near Milton Keynes through Bucks to the Ridgeway National Trail near Princes Risborough and along the Chilterns to Goring-on-Thames, Oxon.

North Buckinghamshire Way

...is a 53 km (33 mi) waymarked linear Long Distance Path from Pulpit Hill to the county boundary near Milton Keynes.

Hartwell House

...is a Grade I listed building owned by the Ernest Cook Trust, and since 2008 has been leased to The National Trust. It is currently used as a hotel. The core of the present house was constructed in the early 17th century for the Hampden family and then the Lee's, an old Bucks family. Confederate General Robert E. Lee and Sir Christopher Lee are amongst their descendants. Between 1809 and 1814 the owner of the house, Sir Charles Lee, let the mansion to the brother of the last king of France, known as King Louis XVIII. The arrival of the impoverished king and his court was not a happy experience for the mansion, with once grand and imperious courtiers having to farm chickens and assorted small livestock on the lead roofs. The King signed the document accepting the French crown in the library of the house, following the defeat of Napoleon. The British Meteorological Society was founded in the library in 1850.

Its proximity to Chequers means that it has frequently been the host of international and Government summits and meetings. The gardens at Hartwell were laid out by Capability Brown c.1750. The North Avenue is a grand vista through trees planted in 1830, but today terminated by the ever encroaching town of Aylesbury.

Egyptian Well

The Egyptian Well is a folly built in 1850 by Joseph Bonomi the Younger, an Egyptologist. It is an alcove seat opposite a small spring. The stone pylon bears the Greek inscription ΑΡΙΣΤΟΝ ΜΕΝ ΥΔΩΡ (Water is Best), attributed to Thales.

Round Aylesbury Walk

A circular 20 km (12 mi) waymarked walk closely circling around Aylesbury

Aylesbury

The town's name is of Old English origin, its first recorded name Æglesburgh is thought to mean "Fort of Aegel". Excavations in the town centre even found an Iron Age hill fort dating from the 7th century BC. Aylesbury was one of the strongholds of the Celtic Britons, from whom it was only taken in the year 571 by Cutwulph, brother of the King of the West Saxons; and it had a fortress or castle of some importance. The Roman Akeman Street, linking Watling Street north of St. Albans with Cirencester, led through here (nowadays as the A41), providing the grounds for it becoming an important commercial centre in Anglo-Saxon times. It is also the burial place of St. Osgyth, a local noblewoman (from Quarrendon) martyred by Danish Vikings in 700, whose shrine at St. Mary's attracted pilgrims.

Aylesbury was declared the county town of Buckinghamshire in 1529 by Henry VIII, presumably to gain favour with Anne Boleyn's father, whose many properties included Aylesbury Manor. The town played a large part in the English Civil War, when it became a stronghold for the Parliamentarian forces, and in 1642 the Battle of Aylesbury was fought and won by the Parliamentarians. Nowadays the urban area has a population of 75,000, doubled since the 1960s due to new housing developments, and it is projected to rise by another 25,000 in the next ten years!

WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train in **Haddenham and Thame Parkway Station** on platform 1 and walk up a ramp towards the station building. *Turn right* into a car park, with a taxi shed to your right. Head left for the exit of the car park in 55m by a grey metal hut (240°), to leave under a height restriction barrier and turn right onto a narrow gravel path, parallel to a main road, though separated by trees. In 120m, cross the concrete approach lane to the nature reserve and continue along the main road, now on a narrow grassy strip. In 125m, at a four-way road junction, turn left. In 35m *turn right* off the road by a Public Bridleway sign and through a metal kissing gate into a field (ignoring the obvious car wide farm track).

In the field *turn right* with a Permissive Footpath sign, along the grassy field boundary and parallel with the car wide farm track (235°). In 200m *turn right* through another metal kissing gate by a wooden four-way footpath marker pole into another field. Follow green **Wychert Way** and yellow footpath markers across the field (280°). In 240m you reach the boundary hedge with the main road and a footpath marker on a pole behind it, *but turn left this side of the hedge* along the field boundary and into the narrow neighbouring field, following Wychert Way and **Permissive Footpath** markers (250°). In 170m follow a two-way wooden footpath marker on a pole (Long Crendon and Chearsley) right and through the boundary hedge to cross the main road and continue into a field. Follow a footpath marker on a pole across this large field gently rising on a usually well cleared path (310°). In 485m leave the field through a gap in the boundary hedge at the busy **A418** (Oxford to Aylesbury) and cross it.

[Note: After prolonged rainfall there is a risk that the river crossing ahead becomes impassable. Therefore, if the middle section of the grassy field at the bottom of the valley ahead, on this side of the river, is flooded, the river crossing is likely to be impassable (as it involves crossing two arms of the river and – assuming you even get to the first bridge – the spit of land in between the river arms will then be under water as well. In this case do NOT descend towards the river, but follow the **Flood Diversion** detailed at the end of the main directions.]

Continue in the same direction through a metal gate to the right of a metal field gate, down along a grassy car wide farm track, then a field boundary, towards the **Thame River** (310°). In 410m you go through a metal kissing gate to veer left (280°) across a grassy field towards a bridge over an arm of the Thame. In 260m you cross a two-railed steel-and-concrete bridge. *Turn left* but stick to the other arm of the Thame on the right, on slightly higher ground. In 140m *turn right* over a bridge across an arm of the Thame, which is split here further into two channels, indicating the former site of a mill. Ignore the first stile that comes into view, dead ahead, and *veer right* to another stile in 35m, left of a metal field gate, right of a metal ramp-cum-cattle grid built into a fence.

With views of **Long Crendon** on the left, cross the stile, ignore the footpath up the left side of the field, *but turn right in the field* along its right hand grassy boundary, following Wychert Way and **Thame Valley Walk** markers (35°), soon parallel and next to the river (behind trees), with **Notley Farm** and a large dovecote visible on a hill half left ahead. In 400m in the far right corner of the field continue in the same direction across a stile and through a metal gate either side of a narrow wooded area, into a larger grassy area, now with a wooden fence on the right. Behind the fence is the car park of **Notley Abbey**, whose remains are visible ahead. In 110m leave the grassy area through a metal gate into a fenced-in narrow path and follow it left for 115m around the grounds of Notley Abbey. Exit from the path through a metal gate and continue uphill on the tarmac and grass rear approach track for Notley Abbey.

Walk through a gravel car park and past the entrance of **Notley Tythe Barn**, pass through a gap in the fence next to a (usually open) gate, ignore a footpath joining from the left at a track junction, and in 45m *turn right* along a farm track between fences. Note the deer sculpture in the field on the left. Swing right with the path around farm buildings and a horse exerciser (an equine tread mill). In 100m *turn left* through a gate to the right of a metal field gate, past the dovecote seen earlier (15°). In 60m pass through a metal field gate and in 90m walk past an info panel for Notley Abbey on the right. In 80m cross a stile (**Bernwood Jubilee Way**, Wychert Way and Thame Valley Walk markers) into a grassy field and follow its right hand boundary. In 110m pass a redundant stile and follow a marker broadly in the same direction towards the next stile, which in 80m crosses into a wooded area (35°).

Cross the stile and a brook over a railed concrete bridge and continue on a meandering path, which follows a stream through the wood. Swing right with the path, but in 100m at a cross paths stay ahead on a car wide grassy path uphill through a young tree plantation (Long Mead Copse, 35°), where the stream turns right. In 150m go through a metal gate and walk down steps to cross the line in a cutting and then re-ascend on the other side. *Turn left* with the path and go through a metal gate into a field to follow its left hand grassy margin. Views open up to the village of **Chearsley** ahead and across the Thame Valley to Haddenham and the **Chiltern Range** behind it on the right.

In 400m leave this field in the far left corner through a metal field gate, cross a farm track and walk through a metal gate into the next field to continue in the same direction. In 65m, just before a stile, *turn right* inside the grassy field to head for the church yard of **St. Nicholas, Chearsley**, 80m away, and enter it over a stile.

Leave the church yard in the far left corner onto a road and *turn right*. In 75m stay ahead at a three-way footpath junction with an **Outer Aylesbury Ring** marker, ignoring the **Thame Valley Walk** turning left and soon passing a sign for **Cuddington 1½** (110°). The irregular banks seen in the field on the right are remnants of a medieval moat. In 45m pass through a metal kissing gate into a grassy field and continue along its left hand boundary towards a – not initially visible – two-railed concrete bridge over the **Thame** in 130m. Pass through metal gates either side of the bridge. On the other side of the river the Flood Diversion joins from the right.

*) Cross this grassy field half left towards a footpath marker on a pole by a small clump of trees 220m away (65°) and *turn left* with the right hand side of the field. In 215m leave the field in its far right corner across a stile to the right of a metal field gate and *veer right* towards a wide gap in the boundary hedge on the opposite side (75°). Pass through the wide gap into the next field and head gently uphill towards a stile in the top left hand corner of the narrow end of this field, 275m away (60°). Cross a stile onto a wide grassy field boundary to continue along the left hand side of this next field, still ascending, and soon with trees to your left.

In 320m ignore a footpath joining from the left over a stile. In 50m by a footpath sign on a pole (**Chearsley 1 ½**) cross a stile onto a grassy road margin. *Turn right*, but in 35m turn left across the road and then a stile in a hedge into a field. Take the grassy path across this field to the left of a young hedge (50°). The views to the left are across the Thame Valley to **Nether and Upper Winchendon**, with the silvery cupola of **Aylesbury Astronomical Society's Observatory** visible on the brow of the hill range half left. To the right is the village of **Cuddington**. In 280m cross a tarmac footpath, to continue in the same direction along a field boundary and with garden fences on your right. In 150m leave the field in the far right corner over the outflow of garden ponds. *Turn right* uphill at a footpath marker on a pole towards the village and a church tower, by a semi-circular well-enclosure.

The path (**Tibbys Lane**) turns to tarmac in 30m, soon passing **Tyringham Hall** and **Tyringham Small** (!). Reach a road (**Upper Church Street**) at a bend by a footpath sign (Lower Winchenden 1) and fork right on it around **St. Nicholas, Cuddington** church and past Cuddington and Dinton CofE School. Pass the Village store and Post Office on the left, and *turn left* into **Spurt Street** when reaching the village green, this side of **The Crown at Cuddington** pub, a possible very early lunch stop. Soon you are passing a large thatched timber-framed house (The Pitchings) on the right. 125m from the village green *turn left* at a road T-junction into **Holly Tree Lane**, and then *turn right* immediately into **Great Stone**, following a Wychert Way sign on an electricity pole. In 135m at a T-junction you cross a road and then a metal kissing gate into a field to continue in the same direction (70°).

Follow **Wychert Way** signs along the field boundaries of four successive fields for 850m, until you reach a house. There you walk through a wooden kissing gate into a narrow path between a garden fence and a hedge. In 80m cross a tarmac driveway and continue in the same direction with a large hedge to your right. In 310m exit this field through a wooden gate onto a tarmac lane where you *turn right* and uphill. In 290m *turn left* at a T-junction along the grassy margin on the other side of a main road. (It is possible – and seemingly frequently done so – to walk instead along the grassy field margin behind a hedge, though technically this is trespassing). In 280m ignore a footpath turning right through the hedge to cross a large field.

In 180m *turn right* over a stile at a footpath fingerpost and then continue along the left hand grassy boundary of the large field (160°). In 290m cross a stile in the field corner into the next field, *turn right* and follow its right hand edge around to the far right corner. In 150m exit this field through a hedge and across a stile into a grassy area. *Turn immediately right* towards a stile to the right of a metal field gate 50m away (to the right of a corrugated iron barn, 240°). Go through the gate and in 40m cross a stile into a grassy field to continue in the same direction. In 50m in the right corner cross another stile into a fenced-in narrow path, which you leave over a stile at a field corner.

Turn immediately left over another stile along a grassy path, with gardens on your left and right. In 100m follow this path around to the right. In 40m *turn left* at a T-junction with a tarmac track (approach to **Foxglove Farm**). Pass the recommended lunch pub **The Bottle & Glass**, in **Gibraltar** to your right and reach the **A418** (again), with a stop for the **Oxford to Aylesbury bus** on the left. You then cross the road and *veer right* to walk through a metal gate to the right of a wooden field gate. Follow a grassy path with a fence on the left and a hedge on the right.

In 200m, having walked through a couple of metal gates along the way, *turn left* with the path, and in another 30m *turn right* with the path, now with a large wooden farm building to your left. In 110m you walk through a fence gap and *veer left* through a wooden kissing gate 15m away. *Turn right* with a wire fence on your left, and a field behind (130°). In 80m *turn left* through a metal gate with a Wychert Way sign through a grassy strip towards a metal kissing gate in the far corner of this field (35°), to the left of – and 30m beyond – a wooden field gate 40m away. Go through the gate and follow the path through a couple of houses. In 60m emerge on a road opposite the next recommended lunch pub **The Seven Stars** in **Dinton**.

[**For a bus to a station turn left up the road for 375m to the A418** and then left along it to reach the bus stop at The Bottle & Glass pub in 180m]

Continue to the right of the pub along a tarmac lane (**Stars Lane**) and in 100m *turn right* in the bend of a road (by **Westlington Farm**). In 55m at a T-junction with another road (**High Street**) *turn left*. In 20m **[!]** *turn left off the road along a narrow tarmac track* where the road swings right and down (**Boot Lane**), with a Wychert Way sign on a low pole (built into a house wall). In 50m emerge onto an earthen path

between fences, now with more open views to the right. In 100m pass through a set of wooden kissing gates, crossing a stream and entering a field. Ignore a footpath turning right and continue in the same direction alongside a wooden fence on the left, initially with houses behind, then with the extensive grounds and ponds of **Dinton Hall**.

Exit the field in its far left hand corner through a wooden kissing gate and turn left along a road. In 35m *turn right* at a triangular grassy area to the right of the road (**a detour** to the churchyard of **Dinton Church** up ahead **is recommended**, if only for the splendid views to The Chilterns). [**For a bus** to a station **continue along this road past the church** for 530m to the A418 and the "Dinton Castle" bus stop]. After 55m along the road *turn right* over a stile into a grassy field by Wychert Way and **Aylesbury Ring** markers and follow its left hand boundary (140°). The prominent peak in the Chilterns chain dead ahead is **Pulpit Hill**, near Great Kimble and Princes Risborough.

In 150m in the far left corner of the field, leave it over a stile into a neighbouring grassy field to continue in the same direction, now with the hedge on your right hand side. In 230m in the far right corner, leave the field over a stile and then cross a stream over an un-railed wooden plank bridge in a gap in the trees to continue in the same direction in the next grassy field. In 140m cross a stile and an un-railed wooden plank bridge onto the grassy margin of the next field and ignore a footpath turning right over a stile.

The aim now is the far left corner of the second field in 640m. The right of way leads you diagonally across the two next fields (120°), but it may be preferable – if a bit longer – to follow the grassy boundary around the fields either on the left or right hand side. Leave the second field over an un-railed wooden plank bridge and a stile onto a grassy road margin, where you *turn right*. In 50m *turn left* through a wooden kissing gate to the left of a metal field gate into a grassy field (Bridleway, Aylesbury Ring and Wychert Way signs) and follow a wide grassy strip between fields along a line of trees, swinging right with it (initially 155°). In 300m go through a metal field gate, *veer left* and cross a railed wooden bridge over **Bonny Brook** in 120m (165°).

In 140m you go through a wooden kissing gate to the right of a metal field gate (140°) and cross a farm yard to reach a concrete lane and follow it between wooden fences to a T-junction with a tarmac lane in 170m. *Turn right* along the lane, **[!]** but in 85m, and 75m before reaching a main road, while also just before reaching the (currently closed) pub **The Dinton Hermit**, in **Ford**, *turn left off this tarmac lane* to cross an un-railed wooden plank bridge over a brook, and then a stile into a grassy field.

Walk towards a set of stiles on the opposite side of the field in 120m (120°). Go over these double stiles and then another stile and through a metal kissing gate to get past driveways to houses, then cross a field with one of two footpath markers: ignore the one veering right and take the path straight ahead (140°) towards another metal kissing gate in 100m. Go through two metal kissing gates and over a double stile into a grassy area with houses on both sides and in 40m cross a stile to the left of a metal field gate to then cross another grassy area and in 25m a set of stiles either side of a gravel driveway.

In another grassy field now, ignore the **Aylesbury Ring** marker veering left, and take the footpath **hard left** across this field (due E) towards a stile 200m away, to the right of a corner of a wooded area adjacent to this field. Cross the stile and negotiate a squeeze gate of sorts immediately behind it to continue in the same direction for another 200m. Cross stiles either side of a single-railed wooden plank bridge into a grassy area to head for a high gate in a deer fence 20m away. Pass through the gate into a forested area (**Michael R. Roads Community Woodland**) and follow the footpath marker along a car wide ride in the previous direction. In 135m *fork right* and in 35m at a crosspaths with a wider ride *turn right* towards a trig point 340m away.

At the trig point (92m above sea) with its memorial stone to the benefactor of this woodland, you can appreciate the idea behind it: 7 wide rides radiate out from the trig point, 6 of which (depending on visibility) offering views to some of the surrounding churches (the other one being a forest service ride), as despite its modest height, this is a local peak. Clockwise, starting due W, the churches are in: **Long Crendon** (seen early on in the walk across the Thame River, but largely hidden by a hedge), **Dinton** (the direction you walked from), **Stone, Aylesbury** (hard to spot for electricity pylons and the monstrous Bucks Council office building), none (the forest service ride), **Ellesborough** (between Wendover and Little Kimble) and **Princes Risborough**.

Counting from where you originated from, continue along the second ride in a clockwise direction (30°, towards Aylesbury). In 380m leave the forest through a gate in a deer fence onto a gravel farm track.

Here

- ...either *turn left* (**this involves 660m along a relatively busy country road**, without a verge to walk on), with **Moreton Farm** on your right. In 100m *turn right* with a bridleway sign through a metal gate into the farm grounds, ignoring the footpath continuing ahead towards the tarmac drive to the farm. *Turn left* on a tarmac track past a pond and past a sign for **Chiltern View Barn**, in 35m crossing a tarmac approach lane joining from the left over a cattle grid. Continue along a car wide gravel lane towards barns, with a bridleway sign on a post, between a hedge on the right and a fence on the left (340°).

In 90m, just before reaching the entrance gate to Moreton Barn, *turn right* through a wooden field gate into a large grassy field, following **Midshires Way** and **Swan's Way** markers. Head for a point about 100m right of a large corrugated iron barn surrounded by trees (25°) towards the brow of this field. From the brow you see not only the immediate aim: a bridge over a brook behind a metal field gate 200m away, but also the irregular ground patterns in this area towards the left: this is the site of the abandoned medieval village of **Moreton**. Walk through field gates either side of the bridge and continue in the same direction with a bridleway marker through the next grassy field towards and through another metal field gate in 95m (with a decrepit stile next to it).

Continue along a car wide grassy farm track between tall trees and in 55m emerge into a large field, where you follow the right-hand grassy boundary. In 270m *turn left* at a bridleway marker to follow a raised grassy boundary between two large fields (310°). In 60m stay to the right of a hedge to continue towards the far left corner of this field, where you *turn right* with a hedge and by a bridleway marker. In 300m, just before passing a house on the right, the path turns to tarmac. In 545m *turn right* at a main road. **[!]** In 660m, just before entering **Bishopstone**, *turn left* through a hedge and over a stile into a pasture, to follow its left-hand boundary (40°). In 210m leave the field in the far-left corner over a stile in a hedge and *turn left* in another field along its left-hand boundary.

- or *turn right* (**this leads mainly along bumpy grassy field boundaries, but avoids that busy road**) and in 10m continue along a fenced grassy path, ignoring a bridleway turning left into a field. In 250m *turn left* through a metal gate or a stile to the right of it through trees at a T-junction of paths at the end of the fence (and the woodland) on the right. *Turn right* in a large field along its grassy boundary, ignoring the bridleway across the field. In 340m *turn left* in the far right field corner at a T-junction of paths (and with – seasonally hidden – **Swan's Way, Midshires Way** and **North Bucks Way** markers).

In 600m continue in the same direction in the far right field corner through a hedge gap and a wooden field gate. Continue in the same direction along a wide grassy path with a hedge on the left. In 400m leave the field with a farm track over a bridge across a stream and in 35m cross a stile to the left of a metal field gate and continue along a tarmac lane (**Moreton Lane**). In 565m *turn left* along a road at a T-junction with a **North Bucks Way** fingerpost, opposite the war memorial in **Bishopstone**. In 40m *turn right* along a gravel farm track between fences. In 190m *turn left* into a grassy field over a stile to the left of a metal field gate field and follow its left hand boundary. In 250m cross a stile to the left of a metal field gate into the next field and continue in the same direction. In 260m, a footpath joins from the left across a stile in a hedge gap.

In 40m cross a stile left of a metal field gate into the next field and *veer right* across it (355°). Leave the field in the opposite corner through cow blocking posts to the left of a metal field gate. *Veer right* and take the right of two options: through a metal gate to the left of a metal field gate and through a wooded area along a farm track, which dips down and swings right. In 90m you reach the green in the hamlet of **Sedrup** at a junction with a bridleway. Follow the lane left through the hamlet in a north westerly direction.

[The first part of the track through the wooded area is mud- and flood-prone, so if it proves impassable, take another option from the last field: the path leading through the left-hand field gate into the next field and follow its right hand boundary. In 150m in the field corner *turn right* with a garden fence and in 40m reach a lane where you *turn left*].

Ignore all ways off until you reach a main road (the **A418** again) at a bend after 700m, with a possible early tea stop **The Bugle Horn** on the left. *Turn left* past the pub with a triangular green and the A road on the right, cross a road and continue past a bus stop (the last chance for cutting short the walk). In 130m from the pub *turn right* and cross the A road along a road following signs for **Hartwell House** and **Lower Hartwell**. In 110m fork right following signs for the National Trust owned **Hartwell House Hotel**. In 55m just before the entrance to the hotel grounds *turn right* for an early tea stop at **Hartwell House Spa Café & Bar**.

Else *turn left* following a footpath sign on the wall through a gap left of the main gate, with a garden fence on the left. Follow this track around the garden and in 75m emerge through a wooden kissing gate onto a lane. Continue in the same direction on a more than car wide track between stone walls, soon passing **Hartwell Church** (Of the Assumption of the Blessed Mary) on the right. In 50m at a fork at the entrance to the church yard continue ahead to the right of the church yard. In 60m reach a lane where you *turn right* and downhill, soon passing Hartwell's **Egyptian Well** on the left.

In 160m ignore a footpath through a kissing gate on the left. In 100m *turn right* through a metal kissing gate next to a metal field gate by a footpath marker. Stay on the right hand side of this grassy field, in 130m offering you great views on the right down the northern avenue back to **Hartwell House**. Leave the field in the far right corner through a metal squeeze gate onto a grassy path between trees and continue in the same direction. In 210m you cross a stream over a narrow two-railed wooden plank bridge. In 100m briefly enter a golf course and in 30m ignore a bridge across a brook on the left. Keep ahead and in 75m continue ahead into a narrow wooded strip, [!] but in 15m *turn right* on a faint path with a well-hidden footpath marker on fencing around trees to continue in this narrow wooded strip between golf course and playing fields.

In 140m *veer left* through a squeeze gate into the playing fields and cross this area diagonally to the right towards a barely visible gate in a fence to the side of a pile of dead tree trunks (100°) 330m away. Follow a path through a grassy area towards a road roundabout 120m away. Cross **Coldharbour Way** and *turn right* along it. Follow

the path around left and cross another road following an easy-to-miss **Round Aylesbury Walk** marker on a low electricity exchange and a "Stone 9 mins"-cycle path marker on a pole. Cross the main road into **Aylesbury** to *turn left* along the pavement on the opposite side ("Pebble Way and Station 10 mins"-cycle path signs).

Follow this main road to the next roundabout, to continue past it in the same direction. For this, keep on its right hand side and cross **Ellen Road** a little to the right to then continue into **Thame Road South** (60°). Pass the **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints**, ignore Briskman Way turning off right and veer left along a joint footpath/cycle path, which soon continues as a road. In 220m *turn right* at a T-junction with **Thame Road** and in 50m *turn left* along another joint footpath/cycle path ("Station 6 mins"). In 600m continue up a ramp over the railway tracks and in 125m *turn right* down steps on the others side towards **Aylesbury Station** (with its coffee shop).

For other tea options continue uphill to a major road junction in 120m. Cross it to continue in the same direction under **Friars Square Shopping Mall**, pass the **Central Bus Station** on the right, and emerge in a corner of **Market Square**.

- you'll find chain pubs (**The Bell** [Wetherspoon] on the left and **The Green Man** on the right) and some cafés around **Market Square** and at the top of the square is the recommended well-preserved medieval coaching inn **The King's Head** in a cobbled court yard, NT-owned but now managed by **Chiltern Brewery** as their taproom.
- for more options, leave the square at a five-way road junction in its top right corner (with **The Harrow** 20m on the right into **Kingsbury**, a quieter square with an elaborate Water Clock, as well as several cafés, pubs and restaurants (**La Salute**, **Buon Amici**, **The Kingsbury**, **The Rockwood** , **Malebon**, **Café Kingsbury**, **Emperors Lounge** [Brakspear] out through the top right corner of the square, **The Coffee Tree** and **The Queens Head** to the left, off the square).

Flood Diversion

From the A-road:

Facing the Thame Valley and the river, *turn right* (north easterly) along the very busy road to follow it *for 1.7km* (!).

In more detail: in 290m pass the approach lane to **Notley Abbey** on the left; in 180m a minor road joins from the right; in 460m the A418 **crosses the railway line**; in 165m you reach a large roundabout with a turnoff to **Haddenham** on the right; in 430m pass farm buildings on the left; in 190m **[!]** *turn left* with a footpath fingerpost left of a metal field gate into a field and follow its left hand boundary.

In 75m continue to the right of a shed behind fences. In 450m leave the field in its bottom left hand corner over a set of stiles either side of a car wide crossing over **Dad Brook**. Continue in the same direction in the next grassy field along its right hand boundary. In 195m at a corner of the boundary fence on the right follow a yellow marker on a pole in the fence to *veer left* (285°) across this now larger grassy field towards a metal field gate. In 200m pass through the gate and continue in the same direction with a boundary hedge on the right. In 110m at the bank of the **Thame** *turn right* across remnants of stiles either side of an un-railed wooden plank bridge over a muddy ditch. Continue along the river and in 130m reach a two-railed concrete bridge with metal gates either side on the left.

Turn right and pick up the main walk directions at the asterisk *).