

Pangbourne Circular (via Goring-on-Thames)			Pangbourne Circular (via Goring) – Extended Version		
1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check	1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check
03 rd March 2019			03 rd March 2019		
Current status	Document last updated Monday, 04 th March 2019				
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Pangbourne Circular (via Goring-on-Thames)

Start & Finish: Pangbourne station

Pangbourne station, map reference SU 632 766, is 67 km west of Charing Cross, 7 km west north west of Reading, 51m above sea level and in **West Berkshire**.

Length: 16.0 km (10.0 mi). **Cumulative ascent/descent:** 203m.
For a shorter or a longer walk, *see below* **Walk options**.

Toughness: 3 out of 10

Time: 3 hours 45 minutes walking time.
For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 7 hours.

Transport: Pangbourne station is on the original line of the Great Western Railway to Bristol, between Reading and Didcot Parkway. Journey times are from 63 minutes on a stopping service, from 45 minutes if changing at Reading, and a bit longer on Sundays.

Saturday Walkers' Club: Take the train closest to 10.00 hours.

OS Landranger Map: 174 (Newbury & Wantage) [for a tiny slice of Goring] & 175 (Reading & Windsor)
OS Explorer Map: 171 (Chiltern Hills West)

Walk Notes:

Starting on the West Berkshire side of the Thames, this short walk links three pretty Thames-side villages via wooded ridges with splendid views. From Pangbourne you cross the river on the delightful Whitchurch toll bridge into Oxfordshire and ascend through Whitchurch-on-Thames and then some pastures to the highest point of the walk, with first scenic views down some pretty combs. The route follows the part-wooded ridge above the Thames Valley, with occasional splendid views of the valley and the Goring Gap between the Chilterns and the Berkshire Downs, before descending through a wildflower nature reserve and then leading along the valley bottom to Goring-on-Thames for lunch.

In the afternoon you return along the Thames Path Long Distance Trail, mainly through the river meadows, occasionally framed by wooded hills, then up through Hartslock Wood, and back down through Whitchurch and Pangbourne with its many tea options.

A finish in Goring-on-Thames, a modest extension in the morning, and a longer extension at the end of the walk along the Thames to Tilehurst station are possible.

This walk is based on a sketched walk originally developed by YHA Streatley (located across the river from Goring). The original leaflet is still available on the webpage under a separate tab.

Walk Options:

An extension in the morning, using parts of Book 1 Walk 4 and SWC Walk 243, adds 1.7 km/1.1 mi and 64m ascent/descent, and is rated **4/10**.

You can finish the walk in Goring-on-Thames, before or after lunch. Goring & Streatley station is one stop further along the line from London. Buy a Goring & Streatley return.

Upon reaching Pangbourne at the end of the walk, just after crossing the Thames, you could *turn left* to **follow the Thames Path to Tilehurst** station, one stop closer to London (map-led). This adds 5.4 km/3.4 mi and a little ascent/descent and is rated **4/10**.

Lunch:

The Sun Inn Hill Bottom, *Whitchurch Hill, South Oxon, RG8 7PU (01189 842 260, <https://www.thesunwhitchurchhill.co.uk/>)*. The Sun Inn is located – 900m off-route the morning extension – 4.2 km (2.6 mi) into the extended walk. Open 12.00-15.00 and 17.00-23.00 Tue-Sat and 12.00-17.00 Sun. No food served on Tuesdays.

The John Barleycorn Manor Road, *Goring on Thames, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 9DP (01491 872 509, <http://www.thejohnbarleycornpub.com/>)*. The John Barleycorn is located 8.1 km (5.0 mi) into the walk. Open all day. Food served Mon-Tue 18.30-21.00, Wed-Sat 12.00-14.00 and 18.30-21.00, Sun 12.00-14.00.

The Catherine Wheel Station Road, *Goring on Thames, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 9HB (01491 872 379, <http://www.tcwgoring.co.uk/index>)*. The Catherine Wheel is located 8.2 km (5.1) mi into the walk. Open all day.

The Village Café/Chocolate Café 9 The Arcade, High Street, *Goring on Thames, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 9AY (01491 874 264, <https://chocolatecafegoring.co.uk/>)*. The Village Café is located 8.3 km (5.2) mi into the walk. It is now part of a mini-chain, in other places called The Chocolate Café. Open to 17.00 daily.

The Miller of Mansfield High Street, *Goring on Thames, Reading, RG8 9AW (01491 872 829, <https://millerofmansfield.com/>)*. The Miller is located 8.4 km (5.2 mi) into the walk. Open all day. Food served 12.00-14.00 daily, as well as 18.00-21.00 Mon-Sat and 17.00-19.00 Sun.

Pierrepoints Café 1 High Street, *Goring on Thames, Reading, RG8 9AB (01491 874 464, <http://pierrepoints.co.uk/#section-85>)*. Pierrepoints Café is located 8.6 km (5.3 mi) into the walk. Open Tue-Sat 08.00-17.00 and most Friday evenings 18.00-23.00 for dinner.

The Swan at Streatley High Street, *Streatley on Thames, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 9HR (01491 878 800, <https://www.theswanatstreatley.com/>)*. The Swan is located 400m off-route, on the other side of the Thames, 9.0 km/5.6 mi into the walk. It is just completing a full refurbishment. Open all day every day.

Tea:

The Greyhound Inn High Street, *Whitchurch on Thames, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 7EL (0118 343 3016, <http://greyhoundwhitchurchonthames.co.uk/>)*. The Greyhound is located 1.1 km from the end of the walk. Open all day every day. Food served Wed-Sat 12.00-15.00 and 17.00-21.00, Sun 12.00-16.00.

The Ferryboat Country Pub & Restaurant High Street, *Whitchurch on Thames, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 7DB (0118 984 2161, <https://www.theferryboatwhitchurch.com/>)*. The Ferryboat is located 1 km from the end of the walk. Open Tue-Sat 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-20.30 and Sun 12.00-15.00.

The Garden Café 14 Whitchurch Road, *Pangbourne, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 7BP (0118 984 1114, <http://thegardencafepangbourne.simplesite.com/>)*. The Garden Café is located 500m from the end of the walk. Open 08.00-16.00 Mon-Sat.

The George Hotel The Square, *Pangbourne, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 7AJ (0118 984 2237, <http://georgehotelpangbourne.com/>)*. The George is located 450m from the end of the walk.

Café St. Louis 3-5 Reading Road, *Pangbourne, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 7LR (0118 984 2246, <http://cafe-st-louis.com/>)*. The Louis is located 400m from the end of the walk.

The Elephant at Pangbourne Church Road, *Pangbourne, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 7AR (0118 984 2244, <https://www.elephanthotel.co.uk/>)*. The Elephant is located 300m from the end of the walk.

The Cross Keys Church Road, *Pangbourne, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 7AR (0118 984 3268, <http://crosskeyspangbourne.com/>)*. The Cross Keys is located 300m from the end of the walk.

The Swan in Pangbourne Shooters Hill, *Pangbourne, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 7DU (0118 984 4494, <http://www.swanpangbourne.co.uk/>)*. The Swan is located at the end of the walk. Open all day.

Notes:

Pangbourne/River Pang

The River Pang is a small chalk stream river, and a tributary of the River Thames. It runs for approximately 23 km (14 mi) from its source near the village of Compton. To the east of Bradfield the Pang is joined by the River Bourne, which has its source near the village of Chapel Row, eventually entering the Thames in Pangbourne. Rivalling theories contend that – either – the river's name is a backformation from the villages' name, or that – in contrast – the village is named after the river.

The river and its water voles are thought to have inspired Kenneth Grahame's character Ratty and his book *The Wind in the Willows*.

The Thames Path

The Thames Path is a 296 km (184 mi) long National Trail following the River Thames from its source near Kemble in Gloucestershire to the Thames Barrier at Charlton, south east London, as closely as possible. A path was first proposed in 1948 but it only opened in 1996.

Along the tidal Thames from Richmond to the most easterly bridge in London, Tower Bridge, the Thames Path runs on both sides of the river.

East of the Thames Barrier, a Thames Path Extension (not part of the National Trail) runs for 16 km (10 mi) along the southbank to Crayford Ness, Erith, linking to the London LOOP.

The Chiltern Way

A circular waymarked Long-Distance Path of around 214 km (134 mi), taking in some of the finest scenery in the country. There are now two optional extensions and an additional Berkshire loop taking the total to 352 km (220 mi).

The Chiltern Way passes through some of the most attractive parts of the Chilterns, including the Bovingdon Plateau, the Chess valley, the Misbourne valley, Penn Country, the Hambleden valley, Stonor Park, Bix Bottom, Ewelme, the Ridgeway, Swyncombe Down, Bledlow Ridge, Hampden Country, Bulbourne valley, the Dunstable Downs and Sharpenhoe Clappers.

North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located in the counties of West Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire. The name North Wessex Downs is not a traditional one, the area covered being better known by various overlapping local names, including the Berkshire Downs, the North Hampshire Downs, the White Horse Hills, the Lambourn Downs, the Marlborough Downs, the Vale of Pewsey and Savernake Forest.

The AONB covers an area of some 1,730 km² (670 sq mi). It takes the form of a horseshoe on its side, with the open end facing east, surrounding the town of Newbury and the River Kennet watershed. The northern arm reaches as far east as the suburbs of Reading in mid-Berkshire, whilst the southern arm similarly reaches Basingstoke in northern Hampshire. The western extreme of the AONB reaches as far as Devizes. The highest points are the 297m (974 ft) summit of Walbury Hill, situated southwest of Hungerford in West Berkshire (and the highest point in southern England east of the Mendip Hills), and the Milk Hill-Tan Hill plateau northeast of Devizes in central Wiltshire, at 295m (968 ft) above sea level.

At its northeast extreme, the North Wessex Downs AONB faces across the Goring Gap to the Chilterns AONB on the other side of the River Thames.

Beyond the town of Marlborough the downs (now called the Marlborough Downs) sweep in a semicircle to the south around the headwaters of the River Kennet, with the Vale of Pewsey cutting through these downs carrying the headwaters of the Hampshire Avon.

The downland is part of the Southern England Chalk Formation which runs from Dorset in the west to Kent in the east and also includes the Dorset Downs, Purbeck Hills, Cranborne Chase, Wiltshire Downs, Salisbury Plain, the Isle of Wight, Chiltern Hills and the North and South Downs.

Geologically, its chalk downs, dry valleys and sarsen outcrops are of note, the last in the area around Marlborough providing material for many of the Neolithic and Bronze Age sites in the area such as Avebury Henge. Horse racing forms a major industry in the area, largely because of the good quality turf that comes with the chalk underlay, and much of the upland area is made over to gallops and other training areas.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train at **Pangbourne Station** on platform 1, cross over to the other platform via a subway and leave the station to *turn down to the right* along the approach road. In 90m at a main road (Shooters Hill, the A329), and with **The Swan in Pangbourne** pub, the tea-stop closest to the station, 100m away to the left along the road, you cross the road and continue down **The Wharf**, an initially tarmac cul-de-sac. In 100m you cross the **River Pang** on the road and *bear left* along a tarmac path between fences to the left of **Waterside House**. You have the **River Thames** on your left and in 100m cross a car wide gravel track. Continue with a wall on your right and in 30m *turn left* along the pavement of the B471 **Whitchurch Road**. In 50m the **The Thames Path** Long-Distance Path joins from the right through a fence gap and in 60m you cross the Thames on the road bridge towards **Whitchurch-on-Thames**.

You have a couple of eyots in the river on the left and a lock and weir as well, and in 110m pass the toll house of **Whitchurch Bridge**. Immediately after the toll house, you **[!]** *turn left* with the signposted Thames Path along a gravel private drive to **The Mill & Church Cottages**. In 65m *turn right* with the Thames Path along a walled path and in 25m go into the churchyard of **St. Mary the Virgin, Whitchurch-on-Thames** (usually open) and continue to its right. Go through the lychgate and *turn right* along a tarmac lane. In 100m *turn left* at a T-junction with the busy B road (now called **High Street**). In 30m you pass an info panel about the village on the left and in another 20m **The Greyhound Inn** on the right (by Eastfield Lane on the right: Book 1 Walk 51 Henley to Pangbourne comes down that lane).

In 100m you pass a bus stop for services to/from Goring or Reading and in 100m cross **Manor Road** and continue in the same direction, now more clearly uphill. In 150m ignore **Hardwick Road** turning right off the High Street and in 20m the pavement discontinues as you leave the houses of Whitchurch behind. Cross over to the right-hand side and in 80m ignore a left turning road (the **Hartslock Bridleway**: this is the return route and the Thames Path turns left along it) to continue uphill along a raised car wide track to the right of the road. In 300m by **Foxglove Manor** on the right, the track meets the road and discontinues, opposite a **War Memorial**. Cross the road and continue uphill along a clear path on its left-hand side. In 60m, after crossing a drive to **Stonycroft House**, where the road turns up right, follow a signposted footpath ('Cold Harbour 1 ¼') in the same direction, still uphill.

In 50m ignore a right forking earth path and in 10m walk through a metal kissing gate into a pasture in its bottom left corner. Follow its left-hand boundary uphill with **Stonycroft Plantation** on your left and in 450m go through a kissing gate to the left of a metal field gate and continue in the same direction along a grassy track between fences, now on the level and with open fields to both sides. In 130m the track starts to descend, now between trees, with a scenic valley dropping away to the left. In 100m walk through a kissing gate to the left of a metal field gate and continue in the same direction with a wood on the right and **Beech Farm** on the left. in 40m **[!]** *veer left* between a couple of large round laurels and on the other side pass a hand-painted footpath sign. Cross the concrete farm drive and go through a wooden kissing gate into a pasture and follow its left-hand boundary fence (350°). In 100m in the far-left corner of the field, **The Chiltern Way** joins from the right and you walk through a kissing gate into **Beech Wood**.

In 90m by a right turning footpath through a kissing gate **you have a choice:**

For an extension, *turn right* through the gate and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Extension**.

For the main walk, continue in the same direction with a wooden fence on the right. In 75m go through a metal kissing gate into a pasture and continue in the same direction through a little dip, aiming just to the right of some large farm buildings at **Coombe End Farm**, way to the right of **Kessells Copse's** corner (295°). In 220m you walk through a metal kissing gate and continue in the same direction through the next pasture and in 70m go through a metal kissing gate and continue to the right of the farm buildings. In 100m walk through a metal kissing gate to the right of a metal field gate by a footpath signpost and *turn right* along the farm's gravel drive.

In 20m you go through a metal gate to the right of a metal field gate and in 40m curve right with the drive where another track joins from the left. In 100m go through a double metal field gate and *turn left* along a tarmac lane, ignoring the car wide gravel byway opposite, leading to **Cold Harbour**. In 250m, by **Cockpit Plantation** and a red brick cottage on the right, you *turn right* with a tarmac lane (305°), ignoring the private drive forking left. You have a high hedge on the left and the plantation on the right. In 370m, just after the tarmac lane has curved to the right, you continue in the same direction with bridleway and Chiltern Way markers into a narrow, wooded strip and in 150m *turn right* with a footpath signpost, where the bridleway continues ahead. In 30m continue in the same direction at a bend in a (private) tarmac lane and in 15m go over a stile to the left of a metal field gate across that lane and *turn left* with the lane.

You have splendid views on the left into the **Thames Valley** and towards the **Goring Gap** between the southern end of **The Chilterns** on the right and the **Berkshire Downs** on the left. [The gap was created by glacial meltwaters.]

In 400m the lane bends left and right again by a large barn and you *turn left* gently downhill with the lane along a barbed wire fence (295°), where a bridleway and The Chiltern Way join from the right. The Extension joins along it.

***)** In 200m pass **Upper Gatehampton Farm**, staying on the tarmac through the farm buildings. The descent becomes a little steeper where a footpath joins from the right in 180m through a wooden kissing gate, as you continue downhill through a wood (bluebells in season) on the lane. In 200m emerge from the wood by some kissing gates on either side, where the area opens up and you have the **Coombe Fields and Hartslock Nature Reserve** to the sides. This is **Open Access Land**.

Turn right through the metal kissing gate on the right and make your way through the steeply sloping pasture to its far bottom corner by initially contouring around the hill on the right and then following clear tracks. In about 650m leave the Access Land by *turning left* through a metal kissing gate and then going down some wooded steps to a road. *Turn left* along it and in 90m – by **Gatehampton Cottages** – *turn right* along a gravel path between garden fences. In 150m *turn right* at a T-junction with a concrete bridleway by **Gatehampton Manor**, signed 'Goring ¾'. In 110m by **Pip's Barn** *turn left* along a tarmac drive with a footpath signpost and in 60m *turn right* with a footpath sign on a low brick wall by **Gatehampton Farmhouse**. The track continues as an earthen path in 70m and in 10m you walk through a gap to the left of a metal field gate.

In 230m walk through an underpass under the railway line, then through a wooden gate to the left of a double wooden field gate and *turn right* at a T-junction with a farm track. You have the large white-painted Georgian house **The Grotto** away on the left across The Thames in Lower Basildon, with the hills above Streatley village rising behind, and in 120m *turn left* with the track between fences by a pumping station on the right and in 50m *turn right* with it. In 250m ignore a left turning track leading to the Thames and in 20m go through a squeeze gate to the left of a metal field gate and continue in the same direction along a gravel then tarmac lane, initially between trees, into **Goring-on-Thames**. Ignore all ways offs and in 600m reach a junction with **Station Road** by **The John Barleycorn** pub.

You could continue in the same direction, but...

To go past all other lunch options, *turn right* down Station Road and in 100m you have **The Catherine Wheel** on the left. **Goring & Streatley station** is 250m further up the road. *Turn left* down a tarmac drive and in 40m continue along a tarmac path to the right of a car park and a toilet block to in 80m reach the **High Street**. **The Village Café/Chocolate Café** is 30m away to the right in a small shopping arcade. *Turn left* along High Street and in 60m pass **The Miller of Mansfield** pub on the right, opposite the church. Continue along High Street and in 100m you reach **Pierreponts Café**. The large hotel/pub **The Swan at Streatley** is to be found on the far side of the bridge.

Turn left across the road by Pierreponts Café and walk down some steps onto Lock Approach. **Mill Cottage**, the last home of the late **George Michael**, is 30m ahead, but you *turn right* with a Thames Path signpost ('Whitchurch 3 ½') towards the river, past **Goring Mill** on your left, across a bridge over the millstream and in 50m reach the riverside and *turn left* along it with the Thames Path, initially on tarmac. You now follow the Thames Path for 6.6 km/4.1 mi all the way back to Pangbourne.

In more detail: In 200m you cross a bridge and the path continues as earthen. Ignore all ways off, including byways and footpaths, as the Thames Path follows the river closely, with meadows and pastures on the left, finally through **Little Meadow** wildflower reserve, and in 1.7 km you go under the **Gatehampton Viaduct** carrying the railway line. In another 400m *turn left* with the path by **Ferry Cottage** and in 120m *turn right* at a T-junction with a Thames Path-signpost. In 575m by the corner of a hanging wood and a large beech tree overhanging the path, a waymarked footpath turns steeply up to the left. You find **Hartslock Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve** 20m away up on the left, on Open Access area famous for its orchids (amongst them the very rare monkey orchid), blue harebells and butterflies. **A diversion** up the steep slope to its top **is well worth it**, for the views across the **Goring Gap**.

Continue along the Thames Path through the lower end of **Lower Hartslock Wood**, slowly rising with the path, while also turning away from the river, when in **Hartslock Wood**. After 1.2 km the path emerges from the wood and continues between hedges. You dip down through a pretty combe and rise again along a stepped section and in 350m continue in the same direction at a bend along the car wide tarmac **Hartslock Bridleway**, leading to **Hartslock Farm** on the right. You pass some large farms and houses, while veering further away from the river. After 1.2 km reach the outbound route at a T-junction with the **B471** and *turn down right* along **High Street** into **Whitchurch-on-Thames**. In 450m you pass **The Greyhound** pub on the left and in another 100m **The Ferryboat Country Pub & Restaurant**. In 120m pass the **toll house** and cross the Thames. Once on the other side of the river, in 60m the Thames Path turns left (follow it for an **Extension to Tilehurst** station, adding 5.4 km/3.4 mi). In another 50m a footpath turns right and you could just follow this, the morning route, back to the station, with **The Swan in Pangbourne** your tea option.

For a short detour through the village with several other good tea stops though, continue in the same direction along the road past the **Working Men's Club** in 50m just before going under the railway bridge. In 20m on the left you pass **The Garden Café** and in 50m reach a roundabout at the junction with the A329. You have **The George Hotel** on the right and **Café St Louis** 20m on the left as well as **Nino's Trattoria**, a **Costa Coffee**, **Miah's of Pangbourne Tandoori** and **The Star Inn** (currently closed and for sale) all within another 100m. *Turn right* along the A road and in 80m *turn right* again at a T-junction with the A340, with **The Elephant at Pangbourne** and **The Cross Keys** a little to the left. In 150m *turn left* up a tarmac lane, soon turning to a footpath, to the railway station 100m away. London bound trains depart from the far platform 2.

Extension **(add 1.7 km/1.1 mi and 64m ascent/descent)**

Continue through the wood along the meandering path between fences. In 170m the fencing discontinues and in another 80m you emerge from the wood by a marker post at a bend of a car wide gravel farm track, by a barn 25m away on the left. Continue in the same direction to the left of **Boundary Farm** and in 160m go through a wooden gate to the left of a wooden field gate onto a road and *turn right* along it. In 75m, by **Pine Paddock** (house) on the right, you *turn left* over a stile (currently collapsed) and cross an arable field on a usually clear path (320°). [But for **The Sun Inn**, the very early lunch option, continue along the road for 900m, ignoring all ways off.]

In 220m go through a metal kissing gate into the adjacent pasture and veer a little to the right through it, aiming to the right of a clump of trees. In 300m leave the field through a metal kissing gate onto a lane opposite **Coldharbour Farm** and *turn right* along the lane. In 90m by **Laurel Cottage**, where the road turns right, you *turn left* along a tarmac drive, a signposted bridleway, in a broadly north easterly direction. You pass a few large houses on the left-hand side, and in 170m start a gentle descent on the drive. In another 30m ignore a footpath turning right through a metal kissing gate. In 50m follow the track to the left and right again, continuing in the previous direction, now along gravel and with a wood on the left. In 100m, at a T-junction with another car wide track (a four-way bridleway/footpath-junction), you *turn left* through the wood (bluebells in season), further downhill.

In 350m you emerge from the wood and continue in the same direction along an initially car wide track past **Bottom House Farm** (on the OS map) along the bottom of a shallow valley, still downhill. You go through a couple of gates and in 300m have the hanging **Stapnall's Plantation** on the left-hand side, now on a narrower path. In another 400m *turn left* uphill at a three-way junction of paths into **Great Chalk Wood**, ignoring the continuation a little to the right. In 120m ignore a right-turning track in the wood (the **Chiltern Way** joins long it) and continue in the same direction along a narrower path, still ascending. In 450m, at the top of the rise in a corner of the wood, *turn hard right* with the Chiltern Way *inside the wood* (285° initially), gently uphill.

In 180m a narrow path joins from the left, just before a corner of the wood, and continue with the wood boundary about 30m away to the left. In 130m – at a marker post – *fork left* with the Chiltern Way Bridleway, ignoring the right fork, a permissive bridleway. In 90m pass a marker post on your right and two unmarked wooden posts just ahead of this and head towards the edge of the wood 60m away, where the path bears sharply to the right and becomes enclosed between bushes. Continue towards some barns and in 100m *turn right* along a (private) tarmac drive.

Pick up the directions in the text above at the asterisk *).