

Pangbourne Circular (via Goring-on-Thames)			Pangbourne Circular (Extension & Tilehurst Ending)		
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	27 th Oct. 2023		03 rd March 2019	24 th Sept. 2024	
Current status	Document last updated Wednesday, 25 th September 2024				
<p>This document and information herein are copyrighted to Saturday Walkers' Club. If you are interested in printing or displaying any of this material, Saturday Walkers' Club grants permission to use, copy, and distribute this document delivered from this World Wide Web server with the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The document will not be edited or abridged, and the material will be produced exactly as it appears. Modification of the material or use of it for any other purpose is a violation of our copyright and other proprietary rights. Reproduction of this document is for free distribution and will not be sold. This permission is granted for a one-time distribution. All copies, links, or pages of the documents must carry the following copyright notice and this permission notice: <p>Saturday Walkers' Club, Copyright © 2019-2024, used with permission. All rights reserved. www.walkingclub.org.uk</p>					
This walk has been checked as noted above, however the publisher cannot accept responsibility for problems encountered by readers.					

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:** 202m.
For a shorter or a longer walk, see below **Walk Options**.

Toughness: 2 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 52 minutes on a stopping service, from 38 minutes if changing at Reading, and a little 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 combes. 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 Thames Valley's 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, modest extensions in the morning and the afternoon, 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:

A Morning Extension, using parts of Book 1 Walk 4 and SWC Walk 243, adds 1.7 km/1.1 mi and 45m ascent/descent, and is rated **3/10**.

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

An Afternoon Extension through **Hartslock Nature Reserve** (famous for its wildflowers, especially orchids) adds from 300m to 1.4 km and up to 100m ascent. It also – even on the very short version – leads up to some elevated viewpoints with very fine vistas along the Thames Valley.

At the end of the walk, follow the Thames Path to Tilehurst station, one stop closer to London. This stretch of the Thames has been described as so crowded with views "they might have dropped from the gold frames of the Royal Academy". Adds 5.4 km/3.4 mi and 35m ascent (**4/10**).

A Small Variation of this Extension, leads for a bit longer along the river, giving views across the water to the magnificent **Mapledurham Estate**.

Bus Line 16 (frequent to Reading Station, 7 days), has a stop just after the route crosses the railway line in Purley-on-Thames (cuts 1.8 km).

Lunch (details last updated 29/10/2023)

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 all day every day. Lunch served 12.00-14.30 Wed-Fri, all day Sat and 12.00-16.00 Sun.

The John Barleycorn Manor Road, *Goring on Thames, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 9DP (01491 872 509)*. The John Barleycorn is located 8.1 km (5.0 mi) into the walk. **This pub is currently closed and for sale.**

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 16.00-22.00 Tue & all day Wed-Sun. Food served 18.00-20.00 Tue, 13.00-15.00 & 18.00-20.00 Wed-Sun.

The Chocolate Café 9 The Arcade, High Street, *Goring on Thames, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 9AY (01491 874 264, <https://www.thechocolatecafeclub.co.uk/goring/>)*. The Chocolate/Village Café is located 8.3 km (5.2) mi into the walk. Open to 17.00 daily.

The Miller of Mansfield High Street, *Goring on Thames, Reading, RG8 9AW (01491 872 829, <https://themillerofmansfield.com/>)*. The Miller is located 8.4 km (5.2 mi) into the walk. Open all day every day. Food served 12.00-14.30 Mon-Fri, 12.00-15.00 Sat, 12.00-17.00 Sun as well as 17.00-20.45 Mon-Sat.

Pierrepoints Café 1 High Street, *Goring on Thames, Reading, RG8 9AB (01491 874 464, <https://pierrepoints.co.uk/>)*. Pierrepoints is located 8.6 km (5.3 mi) into the walk. Open Tue-Sun 08.30-17.00.

The Swan at Streatley High Street, *Streatley on Thames, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 9HR (01491 878 800, <https://www.coppaclub.co.uk/theswanatstreatley/>)*. The Swan is located 400m off-route, on the other side of the Thames, 9.0 km/5.6 mi into the walk. Open all day every day. A Coppa Club venue.

Tea (details last updated 29/10/2023)

The Greyhound Inn High Street, *Whitchurch on Thames, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 7EL (0118 343 3016, <https://www.thegreyhoundwhitchurchonthames.co.uk/>)*. The Greyhound is located 1.1 km from the end of the walk. Open all day every day. Pop-up food sold on occasion. Owned by Oak Taverns Ltd.

The Ferryboat Country Pub & Restaurant High Street, *Whitchurch on Thames, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 7DB (0118 984 2161)*. The Ferryboat is located 1 km from the end of the walk. **It is currently closed.**

Pangbourne's Café 14 Whitchurch Road, *Pangbourne, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 7BP (0118 984 1114)*. The Garden Café is located 500m from the end of the walk. Open 08.00-16.00 Mon-Sat and to 15.00 Sun.

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.

La' De Kitchen 3-5 Reading Road, *Pangbourne, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 7LR (0118 327 9143, <https://pangbourne.ladekitchen.com/>)*. The La' De Kitchen 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 298 km (185 mi) long National Trail following the River Thames from its source near Kemble in Gloucestershire to the Woolwich Foot Tunnel, 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 Woolwich, a Thames Path Extension (not part of the National Trail) runs for 16 km (10 mi) along the southern bank to Crayford Ness, Erith, linking to the London LOOP.

The Chiltern Way

A circular waymarked Long-Distance Path of 285 km (177 mi), taking in some of the finest scenery in the country. There are also two optional extensions: a Berkshire Loop and a North Chilterns Trail.

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 Hambleton valley, Stonor Park, Bix Bottom, Ewelme, the Ridgeway, Swyncombe Down, Bledlow Ridge, Hampden Country, Bulbourne valley, the Dunstable Downs and Sharpshoe Clappers. <https://chilternsociety.org.uk/the-chiltern-way-2/>

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** (TP) 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 (**High Street**). In 30m you pass an info panel about the village and in another 20m pass **The Greyhound Inn** on the right. 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 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 with a footpath marker into a pasture in its bottom left corner. Follow its left-hand boundary uphill with **Stonycroft Plantation** on your left. 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.

You are walking on the level and with open fields to both sides. In 130m the track starts to descend 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 a concrete drive and go through a wooden kissing gate into a pasture and along a left-hand 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 ignore a blocked kissing gate on the right (the footpath through it has been diverted). In 75m you reach a metal kissing gate at the far end of the wood.

Here you have a choice:

For an Extension, *turn right* with a footpath marker on the gate into the wood and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Morning Extension**.

For the Main Walk, walk through the 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 a bridlemarker post into a narrow, wooded strip and in 150m *turn right* with a footpath signpost on the right, where the bridlemarker 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 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 turns right and left again by a large barn where a bridlemarker and The Chiltern Way join from the right and you follow the lane along a barbed wire fence (295°). The Extension has joined from the right.

*) In 200m pass **Upper Gatehampton Farm** and follow the tarmac through it. In 180m, the descent becomes a little steeper where a footpath joins from the right through a wooden kissing gate, and 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 with the **Coombe Fields and Hartslock Nature Reserve** beyond them. *Turn right* through the metal kissing gate on the right and make your way through the steeply sloping pasture (**Access Land**) to its far bottom corner by initially contouring around the hill and then following clear tracks. In 650m *turn left* through a metal kissing gate out of the Access Land and go down some wooded steps to a road and *turn left* along it. In 90m – by **Gatehampton Cottages** – *turn right* along a gravel drive. In 150m *turn right* at a four-way junction ('Goring ¾') along a concrete bridlemarker by **Gatehampton Manor**. In 110m by **Pip's Barn** *turn left* with a footpath signpost along a tarmac drive. In 60m by **Gatehampton Farmhouse**, *turn right* with a footpath sign on a brick wall.

In 70m the track continues as an earthen path 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 and *turn right* at a T-junction with a farm track, then immediately *bear left* along a fenced path. 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. In 100m continue in the same direction along a car wide track at a bend. In 250m ignore a left turning track to the Thames and in 20m go through a squeeze gate to the left of a metal field gate and continue 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 (currently closed).

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

To go past all other lunch options, *turn right* along Station Road and in 100m you have **The Catherine Wheel** on the left. **Goring & Streatley station** is 250m further up the road. *Turn left* along a tarmac drive, in 40m continuing as a tarmac path to the right of a car park to in 80m reach the **High Street**, opposite **The Goring Grocer**. **The**

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 **Pierrepoints Café**. [The large hotel **The Swan at Streatley** is to be found on the far side of the bridge.] *Turn left* across the road by Pierrepoints Café and walk down some steps onto Lock Approach.

Mill Cottage, the last home of **George Michael**, is 30m ahead, but you *turn right* with a Thames Path signpost ('Whitchurch 3 1/2') 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 along an engineered gravel path, 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** away up on the left, on **Open Access** area famous for its orchids (amongst them the very rare monkey orchid), blue harebells and butterflies. **An Extension** up the steep slope to its top **is well worth it, for the views along the Thames Valley**. For detailed directions go to the end of this text and look under **Hartslock Nature Reserve Extension Loop**.

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 the Hartley Steps 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** (currently closed). In 120m pass the **toll house** and cross the Thames. In 60m beyond the river, the Thames Path turns left through a gate.

Here you have a choice:

For an Extension to Tilehurst station, *turn left* through the gate and pick up the directions below under **Tilehurst Ending**.

For the Main Walk, continue ahead and in 50m a footpath turning right is the direct route back to the station. **For the village** though, with several more good tea stops, continue in the same direction along the road, in 50m passing the **Working Men's Club** just before going under the railway bridge. In 20m on the left you pass **Pangbourne's Café** and in 50m reach a roundabout at the junction with the A329. You have **The George Hotel** on the right and **La' De Kitchen** 20m on the left as well as **Nino's Trattoria**, a **Costa Coffee**, **Miah's of Pangbourne Tandoori** all within another 50m. *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, continuing as a footpath, to the railway station 100m away.

London bound trains depart from the far Platform 2.

Morning Extension

In 80m *bear right* with the path and in 75m *turn left* with a marker post. In 80m you emerge from the wood at a bend of a grass 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*. In 75m, by **Pine Paddock** (house) on the right, you *turn left* through a gap between a fence and a hedge (a missing stile) 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**.

Turn right along the lane and in 90m by **Laurel Cottage**, where the road turns right, *turn left* along a tarmac drive (a signposted bridleway), in a broadly north easterly direction. You pass a few houses on the left 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 in another 50m – by **Lavender Cottage** – *bear to the right* again to continue past a bridleway marker post along a path along the fringe of a wood. In 100m, at a T-junction with a car wide track (a marked four-way bridleway/footpath-junction), *turn left* through the wood (bluebells in season), further downhill. In 350m you emerge from the wood and continue downhill along an initially car wide track past **Bottom House Farm** (on the OS map) along the bottom of a shallow valley.

You go through a couple of gates and in 300m have the hanging **Stapnall's Plantation** on the left, now along a narrower path. In a 400m *turn up to the left* at a marked three-way bridleway junction into **Great Chalk Wood**. In 120m continue uphill along a track joining from the right (the **Chiltern Way** joins long it). In 450m, at the top of the rise in a corner of the wood at a three-way track junction, *turn hard right* with the Chiltern Way inside the wood (285° initially), gently uphill. In 180m you have 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 ignore a right turn by a marker post and continue past two unmarked wooden posts towards the edge of the wood 60m away. *Bear to the right* with the path between bushes and continue towards some barns 100m away and *turn right* along a tarmac drive.

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

Hartslock Nature Reserve Extension Loop

You walk steeply up to a wooden gate and pass a **map of the Nature Reserve**, then ignore a wooden gate on the right ('No Access') just before a bench-with-views. The path descends and in 50m **!!** you *turn right* through a wooden gate and go up a stepped path. Pass an info panel on the orchids that can be found on the hillside in season (April to August) and continue uphill towards the top-left corner of the fenced area, now with **downriver views** opening up towards Pangbourne. In the corner go through a wooden gate and *turn right* uphill with a **Permissive Footpath** marker in the next section of the hillside, with trees on the left and very fine views on the right. In 90m you go over a brow and gently descend into a green bowl, with woods framing it on the left and far sides. In 160 you meet a fence and *turn left* uphill along it to in 20m *turn right* through a metal gate and follow a clear path gently uphill the third section of the reserve. In 150m you reach **the highest point of the extension**, about 120m before the far corner of the reserve. Turn back, both to admire the views and then to retrace your steps to the fence and through the metal gate, then through the second section of the reserve back to the wooden gate walked through on the outbound route.

Here you can either go through the wooden gate and further retrace your steps, **or fork right** into trees on a clear path and descend to wooden gate 20m away with a **Permissive Footpath** marker on it. Go through the gate and down a stepped path through a wooded strip and at the bottom go through a wooden gate into a grassy open area and *turn left* at a T-junction with a public footpath. In 10m you pass the wooden gate walked through on the outbound route and go up a little rise. In 50m you pass the bench-with-views. Descend back to the **Thames Path** and in 150m *turn left* along it.

Tilehurst Ending

Bear left towards the river and for the next 3.3 km follow any reasonable path along the river, using a few footbridges to cross drains and tributaries along the way. You approach the **lock and weir at Mapledurham** along a fenced grass path and go through a wooden gate, then pass a first small car park. In 30m go through another wooden gate and pass another car park and the lock on the left (with the audible weir to the left of it but out of sight) and the **Lock Cottage** on the right. In 150m you cross a drainage channel on a footbridge and go through a wooden gate and in 10m reach a three-way signpost, with a public footpath continuing along the river and the Thames Path bearing right and with some **fine views back on the left to the river weir**.

Here you have a choice:

For a slightly longer route, continue along the river with the public footpath. In 160m go through a gap in some bushy growth. In 60m you get first views of the Grade I-listed Elizabethan **Mapledurham House** and its **St. Margaret's Church** across the river. The river bends to the right and in 75m you have lost sight of Mapledurham. In 120m cross a narrow low-lying area (this can be flooded, in which case wade through or skirt it to the right). Ascend some steps and go through a metal kissing gate to follow a concrete track to the left of some houses, with the river on the left. In 40m ignore a road to the right but in another 100m **[!]** *turn right* along a path between houses (an unsigned public footpath). In 75m, by a footpath signpost backwards and at a T-junction with a road at a bend, continue along the road a little to the left (**Brading Way**). At its end, *turn left* along **Colyton Way**. At its end, *turn right* along **St. Mary's Avenue** and follow it to the left uphill, now called **New Hill**. Pick up the directions below at the asterisk *).

For the Direct Route, *bear right* between electric fences through the meadow and in 160m go through a metal kissing gate onto **Mapledurham Lane** and follow it, away from the river. You have a sports field to the right and at the end of it go through a squeeze gate to the left of a car gate. At a T-junction with a road *turn left* and in 25m cross **New Hill** (road) and *turn right* uphill along its pavement.

***)** In 130m cross the railway line and in another 30m pass a **bus stop for services to Reading Station**. *Turn left* with a TP signpost along **Hazel Road**, going further uphill and ignoring any roads off to the left. In 230m the road goes over the brow and curves to the left. In 100m you pass the ornate gate to **Purley Magna** and in 230m *turn right* with a TP sign on a lamppost along **Skerritt Way's** right-hand pavement. In 90m *veer right* with the tarmac path, temporarily away from the road, but in 90m you are back along the road. In 150m, at the end of the road, *turn left* with a TP signpost into a small wood. Follow a clear earthen path for 150m and go through a wooden gate onto the pavement of the busy **Oxford Road** and *turn left* along it. In 110m ignore the TP turning left back to the river (there is no access to the station from the river) and in 450m *turn left* towards **Tilehurst Station** 40m away.

London bound trains depart from the far platform 4, reached via an overbridge.