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Saunderton via Bledlow Circular

Chinnor Hill & Bledlow Ridge

Start and Finish: Saunderton station

Length: 17.3km (10.7miles). For a shorter walk and other variations, see *below* **Walk options**.

Time: 5 hours 20 minutes. For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals allow 9 hours.

Transport: Trains run hourly between London Marylebone station and Saunderton (journey time: 42-51 minutes). Take the train nearest to 10.10am. For those driving, Saunderton station car park is free.

OS Landranger Map: 165
OS Explorer Maps: 171, 172 and 181
Chiltern Society Maps: 7 and 14
 Saunderton (station), map reference SU813 982 is in Buckinghamshire, 16km south of Aylesbury.

Toughness: 6 out of 10

Walk Notes: This walk through a peaceful part of the rolling Chiltern Hills has one or two steep hills, but the gradients are otherwise gentle and there are many fine views out over the valley and plain. The first part of the walk runs along the valley bottom before following the Ridgeway to lunch at Bledlow. In the afternoon you pass through a series of

secluded valleys before reaching Radnage, and then go over Bledlow Ridge and back along the valley to Saunderton.

Walk Options: Directions for the shorter variation are given at the end of the main walk text.

a) Short walk: You may reduce the length of the main walk substantially to 9km (5.6 miles) by following the main walk directions until point [3]. Then follow the Short walk directions, before picking up the main walk directions again at point [8].

Other options: You may combine the Saunderton via Bledlow short walk with the Saunderton via West Wycombe short walk (see Walk 3) for an 18.3km (11.4 miles) walk. This walk takes the form of a figure of 8. With plenty of refreshment stops along the way, you may choose to start with either walk.

You can increase the length of the main walk by over 9km (5.6 miles) to 26.6km (16.5 miles) by combining it with the Saunderton via West Wycombe short walk. For the more ambitious, the walk may be lengthened by over 18km (11.2 miles) to 33.3km (20.7 miles) by combining it with the Saunderton via West Wycombe main walk. Both of these longer walks take the form of a figure of 8. You can start with

either walk – there is no shortage of refreshment stops along the way.

MAIN WALK DIRECTIONS

[1] [Numbers refer to the map]

Coming off the London train on platform 2 at **Saunderton Station**, go into the station car park and *turn left* down the station approach road (Saunderton Vale) to reach a T-junction after 120 metres. *Turn right to head up a lane.*

In 270 metres the lane curves slightly to the right. **[!]** In 30 metres, just as it bends sharply to the left, *fork right and leave the lane*, passing a double metal fieldgate on your right, and follow a two-armed footpath signpost. In 5 metres you come out to the lower side of a field, where you *turn half-right along the lower edge of the field*, your direction 320 degrees.

In 150 metres, at the end of the field, *turn right and cross into the next field*. Keep straight on diagonally across the field, your direction north, merging with a hedge on your right after 100 metres. Keep to the right-hand side of the field. In a further 200 metres exit the field and continue along the side of the ex-Molins factory grounds with a fence to your left, your direction 340 degrees.

After 350 metres pass to the right of a 2 metre-high metal gate, then *cross a lane* (Haw Lane) and continue along a footpath into the next field. Carry straight on across the middle of this field, your initial direction 340 degrees, (further on the path curves to the left). In 450 metres go through a gap into the next field, to continue along the right-hand edge of this field, bordered by a hedgerow, your direction 330 degrees.

In 450 metres, at the right-hand corner of the field, continue ahead. *Pass between some farm buildings on your right and a thatched house on your left*, keeping straight on at a footpath post with a yellow arrow.

30 metres after the thatched house *the footpath comes out to a field*. *Pass to the left of a telegraph pole* after 40 metres and follow a footpath that veers to the right. Aim towards the right side of another telegraph pole (where the field narrows), 70 metres distant, your direction 10 degrees. 40 metres past the telegraph pole cross a stile **[2]** and *turn left along a quiet road*.

In 170 metres *fork left onto a signposted fenced-in footpath*, opposite Carpenter's House, your initial direction 300 degrees. In 300 metres you pass to the left of an HV pylon tower.

In another 100 metres, cross over into the next field, passing a three-armed wooden path signpost on your right-hand side, to *join the Ridgeway* and continue up the left-hand edge of the field, your direction west.

In 200 metres, at the left-hand field corner, continue up to go through a (missing) wooden gate after 20 metres. In a further 60 metres you reach a wooden kissing gate with a three-armed signpost. **[3]**

[If you are intending to take the short walk refer to the **Short Walk** directions at the end of this main section.]

Otherwise for the main walk go through the wooden kissing gate and continue along the Ridgeway up a steeper gradient, your direction 260 degrees.

In 110 metres ignore a stile on your left and veer right as marked by a wooden post with a yellow (footpath) arrow and a Ridgeway (national trail) acorn on it, your direction 310 degrees. You are now on the level going through a lightly wooded area along the line of the ridge. In 240 metres go through a wooden kissing gate, to continue along the top line of the ridge.

After 170 metres you start to go downhill through a more densely wooded area. In 250 metres, at the bottom of the hill, you emerge from the wooded area to go along

the fenced-in left-hand edge of a field, your direction 340 degrees.

After 80 metres, just before the corner of the field, *turn left through a metal kissing gate to cross a field*, your direction 280 degrees. In 140 metres go over a crosspaths marked by a footpath post.

After 90 metres go through a metal kissing gate and into the next field, to turn half left diagonally across the corner of this field. In 130 metres go through a metal kissing gate to *come out onto a road*.

Turn left for 10 metres and then turn right through a metal kissing gate. Continue along the left-hand edge of a field, your direction 310 degrees. After 200 metres ignore a stile on your left. In 20 metres *go left through a wooden kissing gate into the next field, and turn right, to continue in the same direction* along the bottom right-hand edge of this field.

In 200 metres turn right to go through a wooden kissing gate [4], leaving the Ridgeway. In 5 metres go through a wooden kissing gate. Turn half left, down a footpath across a field towards a stile bordering a clump of trees, your direction 350 degrees.

After 200 metres go up for 30 metres through the wooded area. At the top continue across a field in the same direction.

In 120 metres, at the far side of the field, go through a wooden kissing gate and then a car-wide earth track and another wooden kissing gate into a field. Continue ahead in the same direction, 350 degrees, along the right-hand edge of the field. In 400 metres, at the corner of the field, go through a wooden kissing gate to cross into the next field.

After 500 metres, at the right-hand corner of this field, go through a wooden kissing gate to go along a fenced-in footpath for 60 metres, to then *come out to a road and turn left*.

(Turning right here leads to the west entrance of **Holy Trinity Church** and, after a further 150 metres, you reach the entrance to **Lyde Garden**, a suitable picnic spot.)

In 160 metres you arrive at the lunchtime pub, the **Lions**.

After lunch, coming out of the main entrance of the Lions, *turn left across a lane into a field, where you turn half left*, towards the far left-hand corner of the field, your direction 200 degrees. In 250 metres, at the field corner, *veer right onto a car-wide bridleway ('Swan's Way')*, your direction 220 degrees.

[!] After 350 metres, where the bridleway crosses a field boundary, *turn half right, taking a footpath diagonally across a field*, your direction 260 degrees. In 200 metres, on the far side of this field, you pass under mini pylon electricity cables, and cross a stile to go along a fenced-in footpath.

In 220 metres cross a stile, to keep straight on across the field, ignoring a stile uphill to the left, your direction 260 degrees. In 70 metres cross over a stile and continue ahead to then go through a wooden gate onto a driveway.

In a further 45 metres *at a T-junction with a lane [5] turn left uphill* along a car-wide earth track bridleway, leading into a wood, your direction 120 degrees.

In 200 metres you reach a junction with bridleway signposts left and right. *Turn right, signposted to 'The Ridgeway ¼ mile'*, your initial direction south. Continue uphill along this car-wide earth track. (In muddy conditions you may prefer to take an intermittent footpath to the right.)

After 300 metres, at a bridleway crossroads, *turn half right onto a car-wide level earth track, rejoining the Ridgeway* (marked by a signpost), your direction 240 degrees. In 170 metres you pass by a metal gate entrance to a nature reserve

on your left and a second metal gate entrance after a further 180 metres.

In a further 220 metres, having come out of the wooded area and gone past a house on your left, you *reach a crosspaths marked by a four-armed signpost. Turn left uphill*, your initial direction 130 degrees. In 80 metres the footpath forks. Take the right fork, your initial direction 170 degrees. In 30 metres continue ahead, marked by a yellow (footpath) arrow on a post.

After 25 metres you enter a wooded area, the gradient now steeper going up **Chinnor Hill**. In 200 metres you pass by a tree on your right with a clear white painted footpath arrow pointing ahead. Continue uphill, following the white arrows.

In 200 metres follow the footpath as it veers half left to go up some steps. In 15 metres veer left, now with a wire fence to your right. In 120 metres go through a wooden horse blocking barrier **[6]**, and *turn right along a lane* (Hill Top Lane), your initial direction 190 degrees.

In 350 metres *at a T-junction with Red Lane, cross over and turn left*, your initial direction 130 degrees.

In 150 metres, just past the entrance to Woodlands Farm on the left, fork left through a metal kissing gate, following a footpath signpost, your direction 130 degrees. In 10 metres you pass under mini pylon cables and in 60 metres cross over a stile.

In 25 metres go over another stile and after 70 metres (having passed by two barns on your right), continue along a car-wide shingle track, your direction 110 degrees.

After 300 metres *come out onto a road and turn right* to go along the grass verge on the left side of the road.

After 150 metres, *as the road curves right, turn left over a stile*, marked by a metal footpath signpost. Keep to the left-

hand edge of a field, your initial direction 110 degrees. In 250 metres, at the left corner of the field, cross over a stile to enter a wood along a car-wide track.

After 150 metres at the end of the wood, cross a stile to carry on down the left-hand edge of a field. In 400 metres at the bottom corner of the field, cross a stile and continue straight up across the next field, gradually converging with its left-hand side, your direction 140 degrees.

In 300 metres at the upper left-hand corner of the field, *cross a stile [7] to come out onto a bridleway, and turn left*, your initial direction 110 degrees. In 400 metres you join a car-wide tarmac track to continue ahead, your direction 150 degrees.

In 400 metres, *at a lane T-junction, fork left down a lane*, your direction 120 degrees.

In 110 metres turn left at a two-armed footpath signpost, your direction 60 degrees. After 25 metres cross a shingle drive to then go through a wooden gate into the next field to go across it, (towards a church).

In 200 metres go through a wooden gate at the top corner of the field to come out to a lane T-junction. Continue ahead up the lane for 35 metres into the churchyard of **St. Mary the Virgin**, Radnage.

After visiting the church turn left through the churchyard for 60 metres, *cross a brick stile and then go through a wooden gate. Turn half right* down across a field, your direction 110 degrees. In 80 metres go through a wooden gate into the next field, to continue in the same direction down across this field.

After 70 metres *go through a wooden gate and turn half right*, your direction 170 degrees, up towards the corner of the field. In 140 metres go through a wooden gate, now with a wood on your left, your initial direction south, as the footpath veers round to the left.

After 250 metres having gone through two wooden gates, you cross the upper edge of a narrow field and in 20 metres, go through a wooden gate. In 5 metres you pass on your right a field fence corner post with a white arrow and yellow footpath arrow pointing ahead and a yellow footpath arrow to the right.

[!]After 2 metres *turn left up a footpath, marked by a post to the right of the footpath*, your initial direction 350 degrees.

Continue up the footpath as it works its way up the hill, (veering to the right later on) to **Bledlow Ridge**.

In 250 metres the incline becomes less steep. In 60 metres you pass by a footpath down to your right and, after a further 30 metres, *you reach a footpath junction at the top where you turn right*.

After 10 metres there is a fence and a field on your right; your direction now 60 degrees. In 350 metres go through a metal kissing gate and then, after 150 metres, cross the main road. **[8]** (If taking a late lunch, turn left for the **Boot**.)

Continue ahead along a car-wide shingle driveway, which curves to the left. After 150 metres where the driveway ends, continue along a fenced-in footpath. In 100 metres you *reach the corner of a field with a stile to the right of a wooden fieldgate*. **[9]** *Cross the stile to go down the right-hand edge of the field*, your initial direction 10 degrees.

After 140 metres turn right through a metal kissing gate and then turn half left, downhill across a field, heading towards the right of some evergreen trees, your direction 40 degrees.

As you cross the brow of the slope, a metal kissing gate to the right of the evergreen trees becomes visible. *After 220 metres go through the kissing gate and turn left* along the left-hand edge of a field, which you follow for 300 metres until you reach a metal kissing gate in the corner of the field in front of some farm

buildings. *Go through the kissing gate and turn right along a driveway*.

After 150 metres *turn left at a T-junction*, marked by a three-armed signpost, and then follow the left-hand edge of a field on a car-wide tarmac bridleway, your direction 340 degrees. In 60 metres, where the tarmac driveway ends, continue ahead along the car-wide earth track, passing by a stile on your left after 100 metres. In a further 70 metres *at a path junction*, (marked by a wooden footpath post), *fork right to go across the field*, your direction 60 degrees.

In 270 metres, having crossed the field, you reach a stile. *Do not cross the stile but turn right along the left-hand edge of the field*, your direction 140 degrees. After 200 metres you pass under some National Grid cables; in a further 80 metres go through a gap and continue in the same direction along the left-hand edge of the field.

In 600 metres you come out to a lane (Haw Lane). *Cross the lane* and then cross a stile to go along the right-hand edge of a field. In 120 metres, at the corner of the field, go through a gap in a barrier to the right of an overgrown stile, and continue up the right-hand edge of the next field.

In 180 metres cross into the next field and continue up in the same direction along the upper right-hand edge of the field. In 300 metres, at the top corner of this field, go past a redundant stile to fork left for 20 metres to come out at the top corner of the next field.

The footpath leads diagonally down across the field, to the entrance where you came in (20 metres to the right of a mini pylon pole at the bottom field boundary), your direction east. (However depending on the time of year and the state of the field, you may prefer to go down the left-hand edge of the field and then turn right at the bottom corner to go along the bottom left-hand edge of the field.) At the bottom edge of the field, go through the hedgerow, passing a double

metal fieldgate on your left, and then turn left to go down the lane for 280 metres to reach Station Vale on your left.

For the suggested tea place, continue under the railway bridge for 80 metres to the T-junction with the main road. *Turn right* for the short distance to the **Golden Cross**. After tea retrace your steps to Station Vale and back up to **Saunderton station**.

WALK OPTIONS

a) Short walk directions:

Follow main walk directions until [3]

Do not go through the wooden kissing gate. *Turn left, along a bridleway* into a field, your direction 170 degrees. In 350 metres go through the field exit.

Continue down a car-wide earth track along the right-hand edge of the next field, your direction 220 degrees. In 160 metres, at a path junction marked by a wooden post, continue straight ahead to reach another path junction after 40 metres, again marked by a wooden post. Continue up a car-wide earth track across the next field, in the same direction.

In 360 metres go through a metal gate and continue more steeply up across the field between fences to **Bledlow Ridge**. After 220 metres, at the top of the field go through a wooden gate and continue along a car-wide shingle track. In 50 metres the shingle track joins a tarmac lane, your direction 210 degrees.

In 120 metres *take a fenced-in footpath forking off to the left, marked by a two-armed footpath signpost*, passing to the left of a redundant stile, your direction 210 degrees. After 120 metres go through a metal kissing gate into a field, to go down its left-hand edge. In 100 metres at a dip of in the field, continue uphill for 20 metres to its corner, and go through a wooden kissing gate.

Continue, with a wooden fence on your

right, your direction 150 degrees. After 180 metres you cross over a shingle driveway, and continue along a fenced-in footpath.

In 350 metres cross over a stile to reach the corner of the field on your left, with the stile you have just crossed to the left of a wooden fieldgate and another stile to the right of the wooden fieldgate.

If you are not intending to take lunch at the Boot, you now follow the main walk directions from [9]. Otherwise, continue ahead along the footpath. After 100 metres the footpath leads out to a shingle driveway. Follow the shingle driveway as it veers to the right to come out to a T-junction after 150 metres. Turn right for the short distance to the lunch stop, the **Boot**.

After lunch, coming out of the main entrance of the Boot, *turn left for a short distance along the main road, to then turn left onto the shingle driveway*.

Follow the main walk directions from [8].

Lunch & tea places

Lions Church End, Bledlow, HP27 9PE (01844 343345). **Open/food served** noon-2.30pm, 6-11pm Mon-Sat; noon-2.30pm, 7-11pm Sun. Located 7km (4.3 miles) from the start of the walk, this pub has an extensive garden and is the suggested lunch stop for the main walk.

Boot Chinnor Rd, Bledlow Ridge, HP14 4AL (01494 481499). **Open** 11am-11pm, closed Mon, 3-5pm Tue - Wed, 7pm Sun. Mon-Sat; noon-4pm, 7-10pm Sun. **Food served** noon - 2.30pm, to 6pm Sun. 6-10pm. The Boot serves good food and is the suggested lunch stop for the short walk option, 4km (2.5 miles) from the end of the walk.

Golden Cross *Wycombe Road,
Saunderton, HP14 4HU (01494 565974).*

Open noon-11pm Mon-Sat; noon-10.30pm Sun. **Food served** noon-2.30pm, 7-9.30pm Mon-Sat; noon-7pm Sun. This pub, close to Saunderton station, offers tea and coffee.