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## Saunderton via West Wycombe Circular

### Hughenden Manor & West Wycombe Caves.

**Start and Finish:** Saunderton station.

**Length:** 16km (9.9 miles). For a shorter version and other variations, see *below*  
**Walk options.**

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

**Transport:** Trains run hourly between London Marylebone and Saunderton (journey time: 42-51 minutes). Take the train nearest to 9.45am. For the short walk, take the train nearest to 10.15am. For those driving, Saunderton station car park is free.

**OS Landranger Map:** 165

**OS Explorer Map:** 172

**Chiltern Society Maps:** 7 and 12  
 Saunderton, map reference SU813982 is in Buckinghamshire, 16km south of Aylesbury.

**Toughness:** 4 out of 10

**Walk Notes:** This walk combines a fairly easy stroll in the Chilterns through a mixture of woodland and sloping meadows, with an optional visit to Hughenden Manor and West Wycombe

Caves. The route heads south-east over the Chiltern Hills to Bradenham, and continues through Naphill Common and Flagmore Wood to Hughenden Manor. The route from Hughenden heads west across Downley Common to West Wycombe Caves for the recommended tea stop. After a brisk climb from the Caves up to the Dashwood Mausoleum, it is then an easy level stroll back into Saunderton.

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

**a) Shortening the walk:** You may reduce the length of the main walk by over 6km (3.7 miles) to 9.3km (5.8 miles) by following the main walk directions as given until [2]. Then follow the Short walk directions and pick up the main walk directions at [8].

**Other options:** You may combine the Saunderton via West Wycombe short walk with the Saunderton via Bledlow short walk (see Walk 2) for an 18.3km (11.4 mile) walk. This combined 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 9km (5.6 miles) to 25km (15.5 miles) by combining it with the Saunderton via Bledlow short walk. For the more ambitious, the walk may be lengthened by over 17km (10.6 miles) to 33.3km (20.7 miles) by combining it with the Saunderton via Bledlow main walk. Both of these longer walks take the form of a figure of 8. You can start with either walk – there are plenty of refreshment stops along the way.

An option for this walk via Wheeler End is available on the website of the Saturday Walkers' Club [www.walkingclub.org.uk](http://www.walkingclub.org.uk) in the 'Time Out Country Walks 2' section.

## MAIN WALK DIRECTIONS

### [1] [Numbers refer to the map]

Coming off the London train from platform 2 at **Saunderton Station**, go through the exit into the station car park and *turn left*, down Station Vale to reach a T-junction after 120 metres. *Turn left, down Slough Lane passing under the railway bridge.*

In 80 metres you *reach the T-junction with the A4010*. Cross over and go along the right-hand side of Smalldean Lane, your initial direction 50 degrees. *After 150 metres* cross the goods entrance road to The Clare Charity Centre on your right, then *turn right off the road for 50 metres across the grass area towards a redundant wooden gate*, your direction 60 degrees.

Go past the gate into a field and follow a permissive path round to the left (parallel to Smalldean Lane on your left). In 300 metres (having passed a previous double metal fieldgate along the way) you *reach a second double metal fieldgate on your left*. *Turn right* to go along the permissive path across the field, your direction 140 degrees. In 350 metres follow the path to the right around the edge of a wood, then in 50 metres *go through a wide gap in the*

*hedgerow into the next field and turn left uphill*, your direction 70 degrees.

In 40 metres go through a wooden kissing gate to the left of a wooden fieldgate and continue up the left-hand edge of a field, in the same direction. *At the top corner of the field ignore a wooden kissing gate and follow the footpath round to the right*, along the top left-hand edge of the field, your direction south. After 300 metres, at the corner of the field, go through a wooden kissing gate to the right of a wooden fieldgate and continue ahead, your direction 140 degrees. After 20 metres you pass by a 'No Riding' National Trust (NT) sign on your left, to continue down a car-wide grass track.

In 350 metres you cross another car-wide track into the next field and pass by three inter-linked benches on your left. After 400 metres go through a wooden gate and in a further 30 metres go through another wooden gate, which takes you onto a car-wide earth track.

After 70 metres you *come out to Bradenham Woods Lane, with the church opposite*. Cross the road to *go along the tarmac footpath alongside the church wall*. In 35 metres you reach the lychgate entrance to the parish church of **St Botolph's, Bradenham**. If not visiting the church, continue ahead. After 50 metres you pass by the entrance to Bradenham Manor on your left, with a 2 metre-high brick wall surrounding its grounds.

In 130 metres *veer left to go up a car-wide shingle bridleway*, your direction 120 degrees, with the stone wall of Bradenham Manor on your left. After 180 metres at the south walled corner of Bradenham Manor **[2]**, the bridleway curves round to the left.

[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, continue on the main bridleway. After 7 metres *fork*

*right up a decayed tarmac car-wide track into a wooded area, your initial direction 60 degrees.*

In 150 metres a car-wide earth track merges from the left. After a further 100 metres you emerge from the wooded area into a small opening, to continue along what is now a car-wide shingle track, your direction east.

**[!]** In 160 metres, *where the shingle track curves round to the right, (with a bridleway ahead), turn half left across grass, along a path (which will follow the direction of the bridleway ahead), your initial direction 40 degrees. (Ignore another bridleway off to your left.)*

In 50 metres ignore a minor path forking off to the left, to continue along this path (parallel to the bridleway 30 metres to your right). After 70 metres you enter a wooded area. In 40 metres you *reach a path junction to veer half-left, your direction 50 degrees. In 25 metres you pass by a mini pylon electricity pole on your left at the start of a cable run.*

Continue along the path that follows the route of mini pylon cables overhead. In 150 metres, follow the permissive path where it curves to the left, *to continue under the mini pylon cables, your direction 10 degrees.*

After 250 metres, you skirt to the right of a pond (often dried up in summer) and continue in the same direction, still following the mini pylon cables. In 200 metres *you pass by a mini pylon electricity pole with a grey transformer box mounted halfway up; continue along the path tracking the cables, your direction 20 degrees.*

*In 30 metres you leave the route of the cable run, to fork right into a wood, your initial direction 60 degrees. After 50 metres at an unmarked path crosspaths, turn half-left towards some black metal gates at the entrance to a yard, your direction 20 degrees.*

In 50 metres you *come out onto a car-wide earth track, with the gates to your left. Turn right* along the track, your initial direction 120 degrees. After 100 metres you pass by some houses on your left on the edge of Naphill, and in a further 30 metres you *reach a two-armed bridleway signpost. [3]*

*Turn right, your direction 210 degrees. Go along the car-wide earth track, back into the wood, your initial direction 210 degrees. After 70 metres turn left, your initial direction 130 degrees. (In muddy conditions you may prefer to take the intermittent - unmarked - footpath 20 metres to the left; if you do this, ensure that you always keep sight of the bridleway, as this footpath meanders considerably and sometimes peters out.)*

*Follow this path for 1.4km until you reach a car-wide shingle track at [4] below.*

In more detail: In 700 metres you pass by a footpath post on your right with blue bridleway arrows. After a further 200 metres you pass by another footpath post; follow the blue arrow pointing straight on, your direction 150 degrees. In 300 metres you pass by another footpath post on your left with a blue arrow pointing ahead. Continue forward, your direction 140 degrees.

After 150 metres you come out to a car-wide shingle track (close to where some mini pylon cables cross the track). **[4]**

*Turn left, along the track. In 120 metres you pass the entrance to Rose Cottage on your left. After 60 metres, where the lane curves to the left by a car turning area; continue straight on taking the left-hand path entrance (rather than the right hand entrance with bollards) into a wood, and ignoring the right hand of two signposted footpaths, your direction 130 degrees.*

**[!]** *Veer right with an indistinct footpath marked by white arrow on trees.*

**[5]** *In 180 metres turn left by a metal footpath signpost, your initial direction 50 degrees. [For a short cut (missing out*

Hughenden Manor) to Le De Spencer's Arms, turn right here and in 80 metres turn left along a car wide track for 180 metres.] Continue along this path, marked by faint and not so faint white blobs and arrows on trees.

**[!]** After 60 metres *where the footpath forks, take the right-hand fork*, your initial direction 60 degrees. Follow the path round for 30 metres to go through a metal kissing gate out of the wood and into a field. Continue for 60 metres down the right-hand edge of the field and *through another metal kissing gate to enter Flagmore Wood*. **[!]** After 3 metres *turn left to take a footpath downhill*, along the left-hand side of the wood.

After 80 metres, *cross over a car-wide earth track and continue straight ahead uphill*, marked by a footpath signpost to Hughenden Manor, your direction east. In 5 metres you pass a 'Hughenden Estate, Flagmore Wood' NT sign on your left; *after 10 metres turn left up a permissive path*, your initial direction 30 degrees. *The path follows the left-hand side of the wood*. In 250 metres you *reach the corner of the field on your left*. Follow the *footpath round to the left*, your direction 40 degrees.

*After 40 metres turn left at a crosspaths and in 40 metres go through a metal gate with yellow footpath and red National Trust markers*, to leave Flagmore Wood. *Turn right* along the right-hand edge of the field, with Flagmore Wood on your right, your initial direction 120 degrees. In 120 metres, at the corner of the field, go through a metal gate. In 100 metres, ignore a stile on your right leading back into Flagmore Wood and in 40 metres continue ahead along the footpath up across a field. (The footpath now diverges from the edge of the wood, but your direction is still 120 degrees.)

On the far side of the field *go through a metal gate and across a car-wide track to go through another metal gate*. Follow a permissive path down across a field, your direction 80 degrees. Having crossed the field *go through a wooden kissing gate to*

*continue down a footpath through Woodcock Wood*, your direction east. *After 80 metres at a crosspaths, turn right up a path*, marked by a blue NT arrow on a footpath post, your direction 190 degrees.

After 300 metres go straight over a crosspaths, your direction 210 degrees. In 30 metres, *at a footpath T-junction, turn left*, your direction 170 degrees. After 30 metres you *come out to a tarmac lane at a T-junction*. *Turn left down the lane*. In 50 metres, where the lane turns down to the left, *veer right* along a narrow path through trees.

In 30 metres you emerge onto a tarmac lane junction by a National Trust kiosk on your right; continue ahead down a tarmac lane. After 120 metres the lane curves to the left around the **NT tea room**. After 40 metres, by the entrance to the walled garden on your left and where the lane curves to the right, you reach the house and garden entrance to **Hughenden Manor**.

To continue the walk, *turn right outside the entrance to Hughenden Manor down a brick walled lane*, your direction 260 degrees. In 50 metres, *at a footpath signpost, continue straight down through a wood* along a bridleway marked to Downley. After an initial right-hand turn, the path straightens out, your direction 330 degrees.

In 100 metres at a path junction continue down the (lower) path, signposted to Downley. In 200 metres you *come out of the wood; continue on the level along a car-wide earth track bridleway* between fences acting as a field boundary. In 300 metres you *reach wooden fieldgates on your left and right*. **[6]**

*Turn right* through a metal gate to the left of the wooden fieldgate to go across the field along a Permitted Bridleway (signposted Naphill), your direction 350 degrees.

*Having crossed the field, go through a metal gate to the left of a wooden field*

gate. In 15 metres, turn left at a crosspaths and go uphill along the left side of a wood, your direction 240 degrees. Follow the white arrows on trees for 250 metres until you reach a footpath junction, marked by a footpath post on your right by a ditch. Continue forwards, marked by one of the yellow footpath arrows, your initial direction 230 degrees.

After 25 metres continue ahead as indicated by a white arrow on a tree on your left, your direction 240 degrees. After 80 metres you reach a tree on your left with a white arrow pointing down ahead and a white arrow off to the right. Turn half-right, slightly uphill, your direction 290 degrees.

In 160 metres ignore a kissing gate on your right and continue ahead along the path. In 35 metres ignore a path up to the right. After 20 metres the path merges with another coming in from the left; keep right and continue up ahead, your direction 320 degrees.

In 30 metres you emerge from the wood. In 60 metres you go over a crosspaths and, in a further 30 metres, you pass by a footpath post on your right with a yellow waymark arrow. Fork right up a path along the side of a green, with a shingle lane on your right, your direction 330 degrees.

After 140 metres at the corner of the green, you come onto the shingle lane.  
[7]

*If not stopping at the suggested pub lunch stop, turn left and pick up the directions at the single asterisk [\*] below.*

*Otherwise for the suggested pub lunch stop, continue straight ahead to reach **Le De Spencer's Arms**, on your right after 130 metres. After lunch, retrace your steps to the corner of the green [7] to turn right.*

[\*] *Continue along the lane (with the green on your left side), your direction west. In 120 metres follow the lane as it curves to the left and in 50 metres turn*

*right by the entrance to a house (Blacksmith's Cottage), indicated by a footpath signpost. Go through a metal kissing gate into a field, your direction 290 degrees.*

Go along the right-hand edge of this field, to then in 75 metres go through a metal kissing gate into the next field to continue along its right-hand edge.

At the corner of the field continue straight ahead, passing a double mini pylon pole on your right to go down through a lightly wooded area into a valley, your initial direction 320 degrees. After 140 metres at the bottom, turn left down along the valley bottom, your direction 260 degrees. In 350 metres the path reaches a tarmac lane.

*Turn left up the lane. In 200 metres, where the lane curves to the left, continue straight ahead, leaving the lane through a metal fieldgate down a shingle car park area, following a footpath signpost, your direction 210 degrees.*

After 100 metres go through a gap in the fence into a field. (There is a view of the church of St Lawrence and the Dashwood Mausoleum, West Wycombe, ahead to the right.)

Go down across the field, your direction 200 degrees. At the bottom of the hill go through a gap in the field boundary and cross over a car-wide track, to continue initially uphill through a newly wooded area and in 100 metres along the right-hand side of a field, your direction 210 degrees.

At the bottom right hand corner of the field continue straight on through a clump of trees for 40 metres into the next field, to go down the right hand edge of this field. At the bottom right hand corner of the field, cross a stile and go under a railway bridge. [7A]

Go through a dilapidated wooden gate into a field and turn half-left, and cross the field, towards the main road (A4010), your direction 210 degrees.

Cross over the road and go through a metal kissing gate to go up the right-hand edge of the field, your direction 260 degrees. After 200 metres turn right through a metal kissing gate, and turn left to continue up the left-hand edge of the next field. In 150 metres you *reach the top corner of the field*. Continue forwards to the right of a redundant wooden kissing gate, *coming out onto a lane*. **[8]**

*Turn left, down the lane*. After 30 metres the lane forks. If you are not having lunch at the recommended lunch place for the short walk (the George and Dragon Hotel), pick up the directions at the double asterisk [\*\*] below.

Otherwise, for the recommended lunch stop for the short walk, *continue straight-ahead down Church Lane*. In 150 metres the lane leads out *under an old house to a T-junction*. Cross over the main road and *turn right* to the **George and Dragon Hotel**. After lunch, coming out of the George and Dragon Hotel, *turn right and go back to the T-junction; turn left* and back up Church Lane. 30 metres before the junction with the upper lane take the tarmac footpath that forks off to the left. In 40 metres you come out onto a lane and after a further 50 metres you *reach the driveway entrance of West Wycombe Caves*. Turn right to go up to the gates to the caves. Pick up the directions from [9] below

**[\*\*]** *Follow the lane round to the right to reach the driveway entrance of West Wycombe Caves after 90 metres. Turn right to the gates to the caves. [9]* The suggested tea place for the main walk is the **café** immediately past the gates.

After tea, *come out of the gates to West Wycombe Caves and turn immediately right*, along a footpath with wooden pole fencing on the right, your direction west. In 50 metres, *at the end of the fencing, you come out into the open to an unmarked footpath junction where you turn right* up a steep footpath, your direction 330 degrees. After 20 metres

the path forks. Take the right fork and *continue up the steep footpath*. In 80 metres, *at a path T-junction, turn right up some steps*, your direction 40 degrees.

After 30 metres, *at the top of the steps, turn left* towards the mausoleum and the church of St Lawrence, West Wycombe. At the **Dashwood Mausoleum**, *turn right to pass round the right side of the mausoleum into the churchyard of St Lawrence*.

*After visiting the church of St. Lawrence turn right along a sand shingle track out of the churchyard*, and across a car park, your direction 350 degrees. At the edge of the car park leave the shingle track and cross the grass, continuing in the same direction as before. Go through some wooden bollards, *and then veer left after 40 metres onto a car-wide earth track*.

*From here the remainder of the walk follows this path in a northerly direction for 3km to a T-junction with Slough Lane, where it turns right for Saunderton*.

In more detail: After 120 metres you pass a footpath down to your sharp left. Continue along this car-wide earth track ignoring any turnings off for the next 850 metres, your direction 330 degrees. When you reach a tree on your right with a white arrow pointing straight ahead, continue straight on, ignoring the fork off to the left after 10 metres, your direction now 350 degrees.

In a further 250 metres go over a crosspaths, marked by a footpath post, your direction 350 degrees. After 500 metres go through a wooden kissing gate, with a sign on it 'Footpath only no bicycles'. Continue on a slightly narrower track, with a field to your left and woods on your right, your direction 340 degrees.

In 200 metres you pass the entrance to Nobles Farm **[10]** on your left where the track becomes a tarmac lane. After 500 metres the field on your left ends and you enter woodland, your direction 300 degrees. After 280 metres you go over a

diagonal crosspaths, with a four-armed footpath signpost on your right, and continue down the lane for a further 500 metres until you *reach a T-junction. Cross a stile to the left of a metal fieldgate and turn right onto Slough Lane*, your direction north.

In 240 metres *the lane curves sharply to the right; continue down the lane* for a further 280 metres until you reach Saunderton Vale to your left. For the suggested tea place for the short walk and late tea place for the main walk, 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 Saunderton Vale and back up to **Saunderton station**.

## WALK OPTIONS

### a) Short walk directions:

*Follow main walk directions to [2]*

At the walled corner of Bradenham Manor **[2]**, do not go round to the left along the car-wide track. Instead *fork to the right up a narrow footpath to enter a wood*, marked by a feint white arrow on the tree to the right at the start of the footpath, your initial direction 110 degrees.

*In 70 metres where the path forks, fork left up a narrow path*, your direction 100 degrees, (following white arrows on trees). After 25 metres veer right to join a main footpath upwards, your direction 120 degrees.

In 170 metres continue more on the level, now with a fence off to your left and a field beyond. After 100 metres follow the footpath round and down to the right, your direction 140 degrees. In a further 30 metres you pass by a footpath junction, with a path down to your right, (your path having levelled).

After 260 metres cross over a car wide track, your direction south. In a further

30 metres at a footpath junction, (marked by a post), continue in the same direction.

In 250 metres, the footpath having just curved to the left; ignore the car wide track up ahead to *take an easily missed narrow footpath forking off to the right*, (marked by a post), your direction south.

After 200 metres you go over a crosspaths to continue straight on as the narrow footpath widens and starts a gradual descent, your direction 170 degrees. In 100 metres the downhill gradient becomes steeper.

Continue in a southerly direction following the occasional white footpath arrow downhill as it becomes more densely wooded. After 400 metres *you go through a metal gate to emerge from the wood* onto a gravel path and turn left along this fenced in path (with the railway line down below to your right).

In 500 metres *at a path T-junction, turn right to go under a railway bridge*.

*You now follow the main walk directions from [7A].*

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## Lunch & tea places

### **Hughenden Manor Stables Restaurant**

*Hughenden Manor, High Wycombe, HP14 4LA (01494 755576). **Open/food served** Apr-Nov noon-5pm Wed-Sun. Nov-Mar noon-5pm Sat, Sun. Located 7.5km (4.7 miles) from the start of the walk.*

**Le De Spencer's Arms** *The Common, Downley, High Wycombe, HP135YQ (01494 535317). **Open** noon-3.30pm. 6-11.30pm Mon-Fri; noon-11pm Sat, Sun. **Food served** noon-2pm Mon-Thur, Sun; noon-2pm, 7-9pm Fri. Sat. Do book ahead if you want to eat at this pub,*

situated 9km (5.6 miles) from the start of the walk. This is the suggested lunch stop for the main walk.

**George & Dragon Hotel** *High Street, West Wycombe, HP14 3AB (01494 464414)*. **Open** 11am-2.30pm, 5.30-11pm Mon-Fri; 11am-3pm, 5.30-11pm Sat; noon-2.30pm, 7-11pm Sun. **Food served** noon-2pm, 6-9.30pm Mon-Sat; noon-2pm, 7-9pm Sun. The George & Dragon is the suggested lunch stop if taking the Short walk option; it's 5km (3.1 miles) from the start of this walk.

**West Wycombe Caves Café** *West Wycombe Park, West Wycombe HP14 3AJ (01494 533739)*. **Open** Mar-Oct 11am-5.30pm daily, Nov-Feb 11am-5.30pm Sat, Sun. This is the suggested tea stop and is found at the entrance to the caves.

**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.