

Thame Circular			Extension, Shortcut and Alternative Ending		
1 <sup>st</sup> walk check	2 <sup>nd</sup> walk check	3 <sup>rd</sup> walk check	1 <sup>st</sup> walk check	2 <sup>nd</sup> walk check	3 <sup>rd</sup> walk check
05 <sup>th</sup> October 2013	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2016	06 <sup>th</sup> October 2021	02 <sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2021		
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## Thame Circular

**Start & Finish:** Thame Town Hall Bus Stop

Thame Town Hall, map reference SP 705 059, is 14 km south west of Aylesbury, 20 km east of Oxford, in the county of **Oxfordshire**, and 71m above sea level.

**Length:** 20.9 km (13.0 mi), of which 4.9 km (3.0 mi) on tarmac or concrete.

**Cumulative ascent/descent:** 115m.

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

**Toughness:** 2 out of 10

**Time:** 4 ½ hours walking time.

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

**Transport:** Thame Town Hall Bus Stop is a 9-minute bus ride from Haddenham & Thame Parkway station's forecourt, on line 280 (direction Oxford), with a bus running every 20 minutes (2021 return fare: £4.10) and a couple of other, more infrequent lines (return tickets are not mutually accepted). Haddenham & Thame Parkway station is on the London Marylebone to Oxford main line. Journey times are from 34 minutes, with at least two trains per hour. The exit from the platform is near the rear of the train.

**Saturday Walkers' Club:** Take the train closest to 9.00 hours (later for the short walk).

**OS Landranger Map:** 165 (Aylesbury & Leighton Buzzard)

**OS Explorer Map:** 180 (Oxford)

### Walk Notes:

This is a scenic and easy ramble north of The Chilterns through the Thame Valley on the Oxfordshire - Buckinghamshire border that involves a short bus ride (on a frequent service) at the start and the finish of the walk. Set off in a westerly direction from the charming market town of Thame through a Nature Reserve and soon pass through a beautifully laid out golf course to join the Oxfordshire Way through the ancient Rycote Estate, then head north through a few quiet villages to lunch in Worminghall or Ickford. After lunch continue easterly through pastures-with-views, largely following the waymarked Thame Valley Walk, to the numerous tea options in Thame and the return bus journey to Haddenham & Thame Parkway.

A shortcut cuts out the outlying villages and pubs to descend to the Thame River – partly along a dismantled railway line – and follows the river to a lunch pub in Shabbington.

An extension through the pretty villages of Tiddington and Waterstock leads through some more gently rolling, quiet countryside.

An alternative ending follows the Thame for a stretch and picks a different route through the golf course on the way back to Thame.

### Walk Options:

**A Shortcut** omits the recommended lunch time destinations, leading to lunch in Shabbington (cut 5.7 km).

**An in-walk shortcut** cuts the outlying recommended lunch pub in Worminghall (cut 2.0 km).

**An Extension** is possible in the morning by adding a diversion through Tiddington and Waterstock (adds 3.3 km).

**Bus Line 280** (the line you take from Haddenham Station to Thame), continues westbound along the A418, stopping at **Tiddington, The Fox**; which is close to both the Main Walk route and the Extension.

**A longer Alternative Ending**, from Shabbington to Thame, replaces the sequence of pastures at the end with a more varied route, first along the Thame then back through the golf course of the outbound route, along some different paths though. This adds 2.8 km.

### Lunch (details last updated 06/10/2021)

**The Fox and Goat** Oxford Road, *Tiddington, Oxfordshire, OX9 2LH* (01844 339 808, <https://www.foxandgoat.co.uk/>). The Fox & Goat is located 400m off-route 8.9 km (5.5 mi) into the extended walk. It is a beautifully refurbished pub, on the Oxford Road (A418).

**The Clifden Arms** 75 Clifden Road, *Worminghall Buckinghamshire, HP18 9JR* (01844 338 429, <http://theclifdenarms.co.uk/>). The Clifden Arms is located 11.9 km (7.4 mi) into the full walk. Open Mon-Tue 15.00-21.00 and Wed-Sun all day. Food served Wed-Sat 12.00-14.30 and 17.00-20.30 and Sun 12.00-15.00. It is a thatched 16<sup>th</sup> century, Grade II-listed, building with a medieval range and a 17<sup>th</sup> century cross wing. Its name derives from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Clifden, an Irish politician, who had purchased the manor of Worminghall in 1827. It stayed in family hands until 1911. In a quiet location at the end of a cul-de-sac, seating is available in either the bar, a larger restaurant part, or in the extensive garden.

**The Rising Sun** 36 Worminghall Road, *Ickford Buckinghamshire, HP18 9JD* (01844 339 238, <https://www.risingsunickford.co.uk/>). The Rising Sun is located 13.3 km (8.3 mi) into the full walk, or 11.3 km if taking the in-walk shortcut.

**The Old Fisherman** Mill Road, *Shabbington, Buckinghamshire, HP18 9HJ* (01844 201 247, <https://www.greeneking-pubs.co.uk/pubs/buckinghamshire/old-fisherman/>). The Old Fisherman is located 9.5 km (5.9 mi) into the walk if taking the Shortcut. Open all day every day. Food served all day every day.

### Tea (details last updated 06/10/2021)

**Plenty of options in Thame**, both pubs and cafés. The ones on the route are mentioned in the text, as well as where to find other options. Of the cafés, recommended is:

**Rumsey's Chocolaterie** 8 Upper High Street, *Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 3ER* (01844 260 303, <https://www.rumseys.co.uk/pages/rumseys-thame>). Open Mon-Sat 9.00-17.30, Sun 09.30-17.00.

## **Notes:**

### **Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve**

Thame's award-winning nature reserve is a unique piece of 'semi-wild' countryside. Meandering through the reserve is a tributary of the River Thame called the Cuttle Brook, which springs to life in the Chilterns.

### **Oxfordshire Way**

A 108 km (67 mi) waymarked linear Long Distance path linking the Heart of England Way at Bourton-on-the-Water with the Thames Path at Henley-on-Thames across the rolling limestone countryside of the Cotswold Hills.

### **Rycote**

Rycote is Anglo Saxon and indicates a small group of dwellings amongst fields of rye. Rycote House was a great Tudor country house built on the site of an earlier mansion early in the 16th century, probably for Sir John Heron, Treasurer of the Chamber to first Henry VII and then Henry VIII. Henry VIII and his fifth wife, Catherine Howard, honeymooned here in 1540. It was long believed that Rycote House burned down in 1745 and that its remains were demolished in 1800, apart from one corner turret and some outbuildings. However, in 2001 Channel 4's Time Team investigated Rycote Park and established that Rycote had been rebuilt after the fire. In about 1920 the stables were converted into the present House.

### **Saint Michael's Chapel**

A Perpendicular Gothic building with a chancel, nave and west tower, founded as a chantry in 1449 by the Lord and Lady of the manor. It retains 15C wooden fittings incl. pews, stalls and a screen. Now owned by English Heritage.

### **Thame Valley Walk**

A 24 km (15 mi) waymarked linear path along the Thame Valley from Aylesbury to Albury, linking the North Bucks Way with the Oxfordshire Way.

### **Thame River**

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

### **Waterstock House (Horse) Training Centre**

A well-known training centre for horses and riders alike and a venue for local and national equestrian training events and clinics, it was once owned by Lars Sederholm, former Consultant Head of Training for the British Show-jumping Association. Many of the royal family have ridden at WHTC and competitions are regularly held there.

### **Bernwood Jubilee Way/Bernwood Forest**

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

Opened in 2002, Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee Year.

The Bernwood Forest was one of several forests of the ancient Kingdom of England and a Royal hunting forest. It is thought to have been set aside as Royal hunting land when the Anglo-Saxon kings had a palace at Brill and church in Oakley in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and was a particularly favoured place of Edward the Confessor, who was born in nearby Islip. From about 1217 to the 17<sup>th</sup> century the forest went through a gradual period of deforestation.

### **Seven Shires Way**

A 372 km (231 mi) waymarked circular Long-Distance walk around the Oxfordshire County boundary. The route criss-crosses the boundary and ventures into six other shires: Gloucestershire to Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Wiltshire. <http://www.sevenshiresway.co.uk/>

### **Prebendal**

The site of the Prebendal House is very close to the heart of the Anglo Saxon settlement: the area known as Priestend where the road to Crendon crossed the river Thame and the Aylesbury to Oxford road used to pass between the Church and Vicarage, and it was surrounded on three sides by a man-made moat, and on the fourth side by the river. The moat could well have been a part of the original Anglo Saxon defences or an enclosure boundary. The current building was originally the residence of the Bishop of Lincoln's prebendary (a type of canon involved in the cathedral administration). It is now a private residence, and its most famous recent resident has been Robin Gibb, the Bee Gees singer.

## WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train in **Haddenham and Thame Parkway Station** on platform 1 and walk up a ramp towards the station building. *Turn right* towards a bus stop and take number 280 bus (direction Oxford) or the number 120 bus (direction Thame). After a scheduled 9-minute journey alight at **Thame Town Hall**, opposite the large red brick Town Hall (if taking the 120, then you alight by the Town Hall, not opposite it).

Continue along the pavement in the direction of travel (if off the 280) and in 180m pass **The Rising Sun** pub and *turn left* at a double roundabout into **Southern Road**. In 100m *turn right* along **Mitchell Close** and in 100m, by St. Joseph's Church, *turn left* down a car wide tarmac lane between houses. In 50m continue downhill along a tarmac track at a junction with a lane joining from the left, ignoring a grassy track half left into trees. Follow this track first right then left and **Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve** and across a two-railed bridge over **Cuttle Brook**. In 40m *turn left* through a metal field gate at a cross paths by a display panel for the Nature Reserve. In 35m you reach a wider grassy area and continue veering left to continue along the brook and follow the brook to the right. In 340m pass through a gap in the trees into another meadow, ignore a bridge over the brook on the left, and *veer right* on a clear path (230°). In 120m you walk beside the brook again and in 90m climb some steps with metal railings on the left onto a raised tarmac path at a T-junction.

This is the course of the dismantled **Oxford-Thame-Princes Risborough Railway** line. *Turn right* along the track. After 50m, the large building visible in the distance on the left up a hill (foliage permitting) is the club house of **The Oxfordshire Golf Club**, whose grounds you pass through later. In 235m, when the tarmac track turns right towards houses and where a narrow earthen track continues ahead, *turn down to the left* with a public footpath marker on an NCN 57 post, and in 10m go through a metal field gate. In 25m go through a metal kissing gate into a large pasture and continue along its left-hand boundary. In 350m leave the field through a gap in the boundary hedge along a grassy path between hedges (often muddy) and in 20m *turn left* into another pasture over a railed wooden plank bridge and through a metal kissing gate.

You head towards a wooden fence to the right of a white house on the other side of the field in 230m (145°). Go through a metal kissing gate to the right of the fence and continue between a pond and a fence. In 40m emerge on a tarmac lane, where a footpath joins from the left and bear right along the lane towards a junction with a road at a bend to continue in the same direction through the village of **Moreton**. In 340m pass a war memorial on a triangular grassy patch at a road junction. In 130m you **[!]** *fork right* at a road junction with **Prospect Cottage** on the left (ignore a public bridleway sign pointing left). Views open up on the left towards **The Chilterns**. In 350m, where the road turns left, you *turn right* along a gravel lane (a Public Road), and in 35m follow the lane around to the left through a usually open metal field gate (255°).

In 175m ignore a marked bridleway turning right to continue along the gravel lane. In 35m pass the entrance gate to a golf course maintenance yard. In 40m the golf course is on the right behind a hedge. In another 700m **[!]** *turn right* through an easy-to-miss narrow gap in the dense boundary hedge onto the golf course with an easy-to-miss footpath marker post on the right. [This is 40m before a marked bridleway turns left off the track.] In 10m turn right with a marker post along a tarmac track and in 25m *turn left* with another one at a three-way junction of paths (initially 300°, soon swinging right). In 50m you have the **club house** away on the left through some trees. In 240m *turn left* at a three-way track junction with a footpath marker post (315°). In 125m you reach a lake and *turn left* along it with the path. In 180m at the end of the tarmac path *turn right* across a grassy area (a Lady's Tee) towards **an iron bridge over the lake**.

Cross the bridge and on the far side *veer left* on a tarmac track and *turn left* on another tarmac track at a T-junction, now with another lake on the right. In 200m continue ahead at a junction with another tarmac track from the left. In 190m at a footpath cross paths *turn right* along a grassy path (15m *before* reaching a wooden field gate and the club house approach road behind it), now walking parallel to a road (345°). In 90m *turn left* with a marker post off the grassy path and in 25m cross the road to continue in the same direction on another grassy path, soon with trees on the left (320°). In 80m leave the golf course over a stile in a hedge by an **Oxfordshire Way** (OW) signpost. You cross the Wentworth to Thame-**A329** carefully and enter a wood (**Old Paddock**) through a wooden kissing gate with an OW signpost. You are now passing through the **Rycote Estate** for the next 1.5 km.

The path meanders through the wood and crosses several estate tracks, but a few marker posts and the many "Private – No Admittance"-signs leave no doubt about the onwards route. In 300m you cross a wide track with a marker post, soon ignore a right turn, and continue between fences. In 230m emerge from the wood to cross a farm track and go through a wooden field gate onto a wide grassy path between fields, with a hedge on the right and a barbed wire fence on the left (290°). In 400m walk through a wooden gate and continue in the same direction across a farm track, then through a wooden field gate and into woods. Ignore a track turning sharp left just inside the wood and follow a few marker posts along the winding path through the wood for 210m (in 80m turning left with the path near a corner of the wood, with the gardens of **Rycote House** behind a fence and a high hedge on the right, then swinging right). You leave the wood through a metal kissing gate into a churchyard, with the interesting **Rycote Park Ice House** away on the left, restored in 2016.

Pass **Saint Michael's Chapel** (ticketed entry occasionally) on its left along a gravel track and descend some concrete steps from the churchyard onto a gravel lane and *turn left* with a Footpath-sign. In 55m *turn right* on a dog leg at a corner in the fence along a tarmac lane and in 45m *turn left* before the entrance gate to **Rycote House**, following an OW-sign. In 25m go through a metal kissing gate and then walk across a grassy area to enter a wooded strip in 50m through a wooden kissing gate. In 25m leave the wooded strip and the **Rycote Estate** through another kissing gate and continue in the same direction with a hedge and fence on the right. In 70m you join a farm track and go through a wooden field gate to then walk through farm buildings. In 150m pass through a double metal field gate to leave the farm grounds, in 10m pass an OW and **Thame Valley Walk** (TVW) marker post before reaching a three-way track junction.

### **Here you have a choice:**

**For a shortcut** follow the Thame Valley Walk marker *down right* along the concrete farm lane (for details see the end of the main walk directions under **Shortcut**).

**For the main walk**, *turn left* and up with the OW marker along a gravel-and-earth track (300°). The hill top villages on the right across the **Thame Valley** are (from right to left): Long Crendon, Chilton and Brill [SWC Walk Haddenham Circular (via Brill)]. In 800m pass farm buildings on the right and a church yard on the left (**St. Helen's Church, Albury**, usually closed), now on a fenced-in grassy path. *Turn left* over a stile and then *turn right* to continue in the previous direction (280°) along a tarmac lane with a restricted byway signpost, ignoring a footpath down a lane on the left.

### **In 65m – by Albury Grange on the left – you have a choice:**

**For an extension** *turn left* along a narrow earthen path with an OW Footpath signpost (for details see the end of the main walk directions under **Extension**).



**For the main walk**, continue ahead and in 12m *turn right* with a footpath signpost across a stile into a pasture. Head down the field and in 100m pass through bushes, with stiles on either side, crossing a two-railed wooden plank bridge in the process (this stretch can be awkwardly overgrown). In another 50m go through a boundary hedge gap onto the **A418** and cross it carefully to continue through a hedge gap and a metal kissing gate and continue in the same direction up a rising pasture. From the brow, aim for a metal field gate in the right-hand boundary hedge, and *turn right* out of the field through a couple of stiles to the right of a couple of metal field gates onto a more than car wide grassy track between hedges and *turn left* along it (355°). In 260m go through a metal field gate and follow a footpath marker to the left towards a farm.

In 100m *turn right* over a stile to the right of a metal field gate onto a concrete drive and *turn right*, soon swinging left with it. **[!]** In 60m from the stile *turn right* off the drive through a metal gate into a large pasture, heading for some large trees behind the far-left corner in the direction of a footpath marker on the gate post (340°). In the corner leave the field through a metal field gate into an adjacent grassy field and follow its left-hand boundary. In 160m *turn left* out of this field and into the boundary trees to cross a ditch over a railed wooden plank bridge, then a stile and a two-railed wooden plank bridge over a stream. Emerge from the trees onto a road. *Turn right* along the road towards a bridge. In 20m the walk extension joins from left over a two-railed wooden plank bridge over a brook. Continue along the road.

**\*)** In 50m cross **Ickford Bridge** over the **Thame River** and continue along the road into **Ickford**, ignoring a footpath to the right straight after the bridge (this would be another good **Shortcut to Shabbington** though). Ignore another footpath in 460m and in 210m, just after passing the Village Hall and opposite Rose Cottage, *turn left* with a footpath signpost along a grassy path between houses. In 40m walk through a wooden kissing gate into a pasture and continue in the same direction, ignoring a footpath half right towards houses. In 120m leave the field through a wooden kissing gate to continue along a fenced in path. In 170m the path swings right. In 45m *turn left* at a road T-junction. In 65m enter the churchyard of **St. Nicholas, Ickford** through a metal gate and continue past the church on its left.

**[If you are struggling to reach the recommended lunch pub in time**, or want to take a shortcut to the second recommended lunch pub, the **Rising Sun** in Ickford, anyway: *Turn right* immediately inside the churchyard (to the right of the church) and leave it in 60m through a wooden gate. Follow a fenced grassy path between trees. In 55m you walk through a wooden gate and over an un-railed wooden plank bridge and *turn right* on a gravel-and-earth path. In 10m ignore a footpath left over a stile into an overgrown area, but in a further 10m *turn left*. In 10m you walk through a kissing gate and over an un-railed wooden plank bridge onto an earthen track, with a hedge on the right and a wooded area on the left. In 120m at a footpath junction ignore the footpath veering left through a metal kissing gate across a field, but walk through a wooden kissing gate and *turn right* on a grassy path between a fence and a ditch and a hedge. In 95m continue through a wooden field gate and along a lane. In 20m *veer left* in front of a wooden barn with a footpath sign on a path between houses (and in 20m through a metal gate). In 25m you *veer left* along a lane. In 80m emerge by a bus stop on a road, opposite the **Rising Sun**. Pick up directions at the double asterisks **\*\*) .]**

Leave the churchyard through a metal kissing gate into a pasture and *veer right* to the right-hand field boundary (320°). At the boundary, *veer left* along it towards the far-right field corner. Leave the field through a metal gate and *veer right* in the next pasture towards a metal gate (320°). In 170m cross a brook over a two-railed wooden plank bridge, with metal gates either side, and continue in the next field towards its far-right corner. Cross a farm track and leave the field through a wooden kissing gate next to a metal field gate and continue towards a metal field gate in 130m. Walk through the

gate and continue in the same direction with a wooden fence on the right. In 60m continue ahead at a footpath cross paths, now on a concrete farm track, and in 100m leave the field through a metal kissing gate to the left of a metal field gate. In 30m *turn left* towards the recommended lunch stop, **The Clifden Arms** in **Worminghall**.

After lunch briefly re-trace your steps: *turn right* through a metal kissing gate to the right of a metal field gate and walk along a concrete farm track for 100m. At the footpath cross paths, *turn left* through a metal gate along a grassy path with gardens on the left. Keep in the same direction, through a couple of metal gates and then across a couple of grassy areas. In 210m *turn right* at a T-junction with a narrow tarmac track through a wooden kissing gate (120°) and immediately ignore the footpath turning left into some gardens. In 150m walk through a wooden kissing gate into a grassy area, with **Saints Peter and Paul church, Worminghall** on the right. *Turn left* along a narrow tarmac path through the grassy area and in 50m walk through a couple of wooden gates 20m apart onto a lane.

*Turn right* immediately along a grassy path between a wooden fence on the left and a hedge on the right. In 35m enter a pasture through a wooden kissing gate and continue along its right-hand boundary to the far corner. In 115m cross a two-railed wooden plank bridge over a brook and then walk through a wooden kissing gate. *Turn right* with the brook and in 80m leave this field over a bridge with metal gates either side. *Turn left* in the adjacent pasture along its left-hand boundary hedge towards the houses of **Ickford** (125°). In 200m continue in the same direction where the hedge curves left. In 220m walk through a metal kissing gate to the right of a metal field gate and continue in the same direction, ignoring a footpath turning left. In 200m leave this pasture in a corner of its narrowing end, over a stile to the left of a metal field gate, and opposite another possible lunch stop, **The Rising Sun**.

**\*\*) Turn right**, with the Rising Sun and a bus stop opposite (or *turn left*, if coming out of the pub), along a road and in 55m *turn left* with a footpath signpost along a narrow, fenced tarmac path. In 50m follow the path around to the right and in 75m *turn left* along a road (**Golder's Close**). In 160m at the end of the road *turn right* through wooden barriers with a footpath marker on the barrier along a tarmac path between fences. In 35m *turn left* and follow the left-hand boundary of playing fields. In 150m go through wooden bike barriers and in 90m walk through a gap in a hedge, over an un-railed wooden plank bridge and through a metal kissing gate into a pasture. In 50m you walk through a metal kissing gate and cross a road and go over a concrete plank and through a kissing gate into a cattle pen. Pass through the pen into a pasture to continue in the same direction towards a protruding corner of this field (120°).

In 185m go through a metal gate into a fenced narrow grassy path. In 300m (a footpath has joined from the right along the way) you walk through a metal kissing gate and go over a two-railed wooden plank bridge and then walk through a metal gate to continue in the same direction through a large pasture. In 60m walk through a wide gap in a wooden fence, *veer slightly left* (115°) and in 185m go through a set of metal gates either side of a plank bridge over a ditch. *Veer left* through a smaller pasture and in 70m walk through a wooden kissing gate to cross an un-railed wooden plank bridge into a large arable field. Ignore a path veering half left towards the houses of **Shabbington** and continue in the previous direction across the field along a usually well-cleared path (115°). In 190m you cross a farm track leading to Franklins Farm.

In 20m go through a couple of metal gates either side of an un-railed wooden plank bridge into a field and continue along its left-hand boundary towards the far-left corner of this field. Cross a stile in the corner into the adjacent field and *veer left* to the far-left field corner, to the left of a red brick bungalow, with some new housing away on the left. You go over a stile to the right of a metal field gate and walk past the bungalow, go

over a stile with a **Bernwood Jubilee Way** (BJW) marker, cross a lane a little to the right to a stile in a hedge into another field.

### Here you have a choice:

**For the Alternative Ending**, replacing the upcoming, near-continuous sequence of pastures with a more varied route, along the Thame and back through the golf course of the morning, *veer a little to the right* towards a red roofed building on the far side of the field, and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Alternative Ending**.

**For the Main Walk**, *turn half left* towards a church. In 100m, by a metal gate on your left, the Shortcut joins from the right out of the Thame Valley (the red-roofed white building at the bottom of the field is **The Old Fisherman**, lunch stop on the shortcut). *Turn left* through the gate with a **Seven Shires Way** sticker into the churchyard.

\*\*\* You pass **St. Mary Magdalene, Shabbington** on its left and leave the church yard to cross a road and walk through a wooden gate into a pasture. Cross this field in the previous direction (40°) with the Thame River on the right below in the valley. The church tower half right in the distance (100°) is **St. Mary the Virgin in Thame** (in high summer only the top of the tower will be visible). You follow a clear route through temporary paddock and field fences and in 160m walk through a wooden kissing gate and in 50m through a wooden gate, cross an un-railed wooden plank bridge over a brook into a grassy area. Stay to the left side of a large hedge/bush and in 70m go over a stile into a pasture to follow the field boundary around to the right, keeping a slope to the left, all the way to the far-right field corner. In 420m cross a wooden plank bridge and go over a stile in the boundary hedge into the next pasture.

*Veer half left* (60°) past a wooden mini-pylon and continue to a stile in the boundary hedge 160m beyond the pylon. Leave the field over the stile and a plank over a ditch into another pasture. *Cross the field diagonally* towards a metal field gate in the opposite corner (50°), with the houses of **Long Crendon** behind on a hill. In 300m walk through a metal gate to the right of the field gate onto a road and *turn right* along it. *Turn left* with the road in a bend and in 280m *turn right* with a footpath signpost over a stile into a pasture and continue along its right-hand boundary. In 325m cross stiles either side of a wooden plank bridge into the next pasture to continue in the same direction along its right-hand boundary. In 300m you cross a stile and a wooden plank bridge into the next field to continue along its right-hand grassy boundary. In 100m, where the field boundary turns right, continue half right (140°) with **BJW** and **TVW** markers on a usually well-cleared path towards a hedgerow.

In 230m, at the hedgerow, *veer left* across the next section of this same field (110°) towards a gap in the boundary hedge in 210m, again on a usually well-cleared path, and continue in the same direction across the next (arable) field. In 240m cross a farm track and go over a stile into a pasture and cross it diagonally with a yellow corner to its far-right corner. In 250m cross stiles either side of a wooden plank bridge into another pasture and continue along its left-hand side. In 380m cross stiles either side of a wooden plank bridge into another pasture and continue along its left-hand side. In 450m leave the field over a final stile onto a pedestrianized tarmac lane (the **old Thame-Long Crendon road**) and *turn right* towards the busy **A418**. In 50m cross the road and in 230m cross a bridge over the Thame (note the Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire County boundary marker in the bridge railings). In 120m pass barriers onto a road towards the church spotted earlier: **St. Mary the Virgin, Thame**.

Walk up some steps into the churchyard and pass the church on the right, passing in the process the grave of **Robin Gibb of the Bee Gees** (he used to live in the building behind the ledge on the right across the road: the **Prebendal**, from 1983 to his death in



2012). Leave the churchyard through a wrought iron gate onto **Church Road** and in 130m reach **High Street** at a T-junction opposite **The Six Bells**. *Turn left* and in 150m pass a double roundabout by **The Rising Sun**. In 130m the road forks, stay on High Street. Continue past **Treacles Tea Rooms** and a **Costa Coffee** on the right until you reach **the bus stop for buses to Haddenham & Thame Parkway Station** in 140m. There are numerous other tea options (incl. **Rumsey's**) in Thame (which is generally worth a good look around), mostly on **High Street**, its continuations **Cornmarket** and **Upper High Street**, or to the left in the parallel **Butter Market**.

## Alternative Ending

The undulations in the field appear to be remnants of the earthworks of an abandoned medieval village. In about 300m you go through a metal kissing gate by a TVW signpost onto **Mill Road** at a bend by **The Old Fisherman** on the right. Continue in the previous direction along the right-hand pavement, then a grassy verge across an arm of the Thame and in 75m another one. In 110m cross another waterway and immediately *turn right* with a footpath signpost over a two-railed footbridge and a stile into a pasture and follow a right-hand field boundary. In 120m you have an arm of the Thame to your right and in another 200m the confluence of the two arms. In 120m in the far corner of the field, follow it around to the left and in 60m *bear right* in the next field corner through the boundary growth to cross a two-railed footbridge over a ditch into a large arable field. *Turn right* along the right-hand field boundary, with the Thame still on your right. In the far field corner, *veer right* to cross another ditch on a two-railed footbridge and continue along another field boundary. Curve to the right with the river and the boundary and in the far field corner by a marker post, *turn left* away from the Thame, following a brook and the field boundary towards the **A418**.

Go up a bank to cross the road and continue in the same direction with a footpath signpost over a stile to the left of a metal field gate back into the **Rycote Estate**. Ignore a footbridge on the left into **Colesheath Copse**, and in 75m go through some trees and in 20m up some wooden steps onto the raised dismantled railway line. *Turn left* along the track with the copse on your left, and in 160m at the corner of the copse, *turn right* with a marker post and a handwritten 'Footpath' sign to follow right-hand field boundaries, with a ditch and a high hedge on the right, through three large fields, separated by ditches. In the third field you gently ascend to a brow, from which you get part-views of the golf course walked through in the morning, with the Chilterns rising beyond it. You have the **Old Paddock** wood on the right and the large **Field Farm** on the left across the field, with **Long Crendon and Brill** villages visible in the back (SWC Walk Haddenham Circular via Brill). Leave the field through a metal kissing gate and over a footbridge across a ditch and cross the **A329** to continue to the left of the crescent shaped walled entrance of the **Oxfordshire Golf Club**.

*Turn left* briefly towards a wooden kissing gate and *turn right* this side of the gate to follow a clear grass path to the left of a ditch (i.e.: ignore the public footpath through the gate and parallel to the road). In 50m, at the end of the ditch, *curve to the right* with the path and in 25m pass a low footpath marker post on the left. In 80m another footpath joins from the right, the Oxfordshire Way (OW) joins along that path and the outbound route followed it. You are now re-tracing the outbound route for 480m. **In more detail:** in 100m *turn left* along a tarmac path, joining from a wooden field gate on the right, ignoring the continuation of the OW up ahead. In 180m ignore a right turning tarmac path up towards the club house and in 200m ignore a right turning marked public footpath to the long iron bridge over the main lake on the golf course.

You *bear to the left* with a marked public footpath, following the tarmac path to the right of the smaller of the two nearby lakes. In 20m ignore a path to the right and in 80m *curve to the right* with the path, away from the lake. You have a fairway on the left (played from ahead) and the audible **A329** beyond it behind a hedge. In 220m ignore a marked footpath turning left towards the A road along a gravel track. You pass a wooden rain shelter and continue at a slightly elevated level, with a long stretch of the Chilterns now visible on the right-hand side. You walk between a green and a tee and in 170m *turn right* with a footpath marker post at a three-way path junction, and in 60m you have a fairway on the left (played from the right). In 80m *turn left* with a marker post at a three-way junction, crossing the fairway. In 90m walk between tees (the hole is played to the left) and in 110m follow the path to the left, now with a fairway on the right, and played from behind. In 100m *turn right* with a marker post, ignoring a left fork. You walk between more tees (this hole is played to the left, across a small lake) and in 80m *curve to the right* with the path.

*Turn left* (this turn is 20m before a small pond) to leave the golf course over a stile onto a gravel public bridleway running along its boundary and *turn right* along it. In 550m, at a T-junction with a car wide gravel lane, *turn left* along the lane, now reversing the morning route to and through the village of **Moreton**. **In more detail:** in 200m *turn left* along a tarmac lane at a bend; in 340m by the first houses of Moreton, *turn left* along a road at a T-junction; follow the road for 400m through the village and *bear left* along an electricity line at a fork in the road. The lane curves to the left in 90m by a two-way footpath signpost and **[!]** you *bear right* to the right of **Brook Cottage** along a tarmac path between garden fences. You have left the outbound route.

In 100m cross the **Cuttle Brook** on a two-railed bridge and follow the tarmac path along fields on the right, with hedges and trees on the left. In 400m you *turn left* at a T-junction with a car wide grass-and-gravel track (**Moreton Lane**, a public footpath) and in 140m pass the entrance gate to **Fieldview Farm** on the left. In 250m you cross the signposted **Phoenix Trail** along the dismantled railway line and continue along a tarmac lane ('Town Centre ¼'). In 130m continue in the same direction where **Arnold Way** joins from the right behind. In 75m you pass a sports field on the left and in 180m reach a mini-roundabout at a five-way junction. Cross **Southern Road**, *turn right* along the pavement and *turn left* into the first residential road, a cul-de-sac, with a 'High Street' sign on a lamp post on the right. In 50m continue along a tarmac path and follow this through a car park at the back of shops through to the **High Street**.

The bus stop for services to **Haddenham & Thame Parkway Station** is opposite, 50m to the right, in front of the **Town Hall**.

### Shortcut (cut 5.7 km and 20m ascent/descent in the morning)

Head downhill on a concrete track, with trees on the left and a pasture on the right. In 280m pass **Red House** on the left. In 70m *turn right* with a TVW marker on a wide gravel path. This is again the dismantled **Oxford-Thame-Princes Risborough Railway** line. In 275m you go over a stile to the right of a wooden field gate. In 150m **[!]** *turn left* down wooden steps through a gap in a hedge. Continue along a grassy field boundary and in 100m go over a stile to the right of a metal field gate and then cross a road. Continue in the same direction, following a TVW signpost, along the left-hand boundary of a large field, now with a brook on your left. In 120m in the field corner *turn right* and follow the advice on the TVW marker in the corner: **"Follow the River"**.

In 750m, in the field corner, where the Thame River turns left, also *turn left* over a two-railed bridge through the boundary growth into a neighbouring field to follow the river and in 40m *turn right* along the field boundary. In 400m, where the river swings away to the left, the path continues ahead with the field boundary. In 120m cross a stile and a two-railed wooden plank bridge over a ditch to emerge on a road (**Mill Road**). *Turn left* and cross the ditch and a couple of arms of the Thame to – in 190m – reach the lunch stop **The Old Fisherman** in a bend of the road. After lunch *turn left* with a footpath signpost through a metal kissing gate into a pasture and walk half-right diagonally across the field (325°) towards a metal gate about 50m to the left of the church visible 275m away. Go through the gate with a **Seven Shires Way** sticker into the churchyard. Re-join the main walk directions at the triple asterisks \*\*\*).

### Extension (add 3.3 km and 31m ascent/descent in the morning)

Walk along the narrow earthen path with a garden fence on the left and with an Oxfordshire Way signpost. In 30m enter a pasture through a metal kissing gate and continue along its left-hand boundary. Leave the field in the far-left corner over a two-railed wooden plank bridge over a stream with metal gates on either side. Continue in the same direction through another pasture and in 100m leave it over a railed wooden plank bridge over a stream with metal gates on either side. In 110m leave this field over a stile to continue between houses. In 100m you reach a road at a T-junction by a two-way OW-signpost on the left.

- **For an early lunch** *turn right* down the road and in 300m at a T-junction with the A418 find **The Fox and Goat** a little on the left.
- **Else** cross the road and continue along a tarmac drive between houses.

In 40m go over a stile to the left of a metal field gate and in 10m over another into a large pasture. *Veer a little to the left* across the field (250°) to aim for a hard-to-spot hedge gap, in line with a small solitary tree beyond that hedge. In 180m leave the field over a stile in the hedge and go down some steps onto a tarmac lane. *Turn up to the left* along the lane with a marker and in 20m *turn right* up some steep railed steps with an OW signpost into a large arable field and *veer left a little* across it (now with the hum of the **M40** in the air), following a line of electricity poles along a usually clear path (255°). On the far side of the field, go through a gap in a barbed wire fence onto a car wide grass track and *turn left* along it, with a garden hedge on the right.

In 40m *turn right* with the hedge and follow a gravel drive, and in 50m continue along the hedge where the drive turns right to the thatched house. In 30m at the hedge corner, *veer right* with a marker post and walk along a left-hand arable field boundary. In 90m cross a railed bridge over a stream and go through a metal gate into a pasture and continue in the same direction. In 110m go over a stile to the left of a rusty metal field gate into the corner of a large arable field. The right-of-way is half-right across this

large field (310°), but the recommended route is to continue in the same direction along the field boundary on a Permissive Path (355°), with a brook on the right initially. In 280m in the field corner continue along a narrow path between hedges onto a raised bank and turn left with the path. This is again the dismantled railway line. In 165m *turn right* off the railway bank and through a metal gate with an OW marker into a pasture.

In 55m you go through a metal kissing gate to reach the **A418** in a layby and *turn left* through it. In 20m beyond the end of the layby, *turn right* to cross the road and follow an **Oxfordshire Way** signpost through a hedge and across a stile onto a golf course. Cross a gravel track and continue ahead across a fairway (played from the right), through a line of trees and across another fairway (played from the left) towards a marker post next to a solitary tree 90m away (5°). *Veer right* towards a red-brown gravel track (40°), and in 75m continue along this track. In 110m cross a brook over a wide stone bridge and continue in the previous direction, but ever so slightly to the right (45°). Pass to the left of a wooded area (at the far corner you pass a low footpath marker post not visible from the brook crossing), across the next fairway (played from the left) and towards a stile in the boundary fence (210m from the brook crossing).

[!] Do not cross the stile into a pasture though, but rather *turn left just inside the golf course*, keeping to the fence (the hole on the left is played against your walk direction, i.e.: watch out for balls from the front). In 340m leave the golf course through a metal kissing gate and continue in the same direction through a pasture. In 100m go through a metal kissing gate and *veer left* towards a metal gate 70m away (285°). Continue in the same direction through the next field, heading for the far-left corner and in 90m leave it through a metal kissing gate to the left of a wooden field gate. *Turn left* on a road for an optional visit of **St. Leonard's Church, Waterstock**. Else *turn right* along the road through **Waterstock**. In 140m pass **Waterstock House (Horse) Training Centre**. In 80m *turn right* with the road and in 20m at a war memorial *turn left* off the road along a gravel car wide farm lane (55°).

In 200m, where the farm lane turns left, follow a footpath signpost (Ickford 1 ¼) straight on through or past a metal field gate and continue along a farm track with a wooded area on the right and a field on the left. In 140m, where the wooded area ends, continue in the same direction (60°) across this large field, heading slightly to the left of a medium height solitary tree to the left of a larger solitary tree on the other side of the field (the boundary itself is not initially visible over the brow of the field). In 535m cross a stepless stile 10m left of the tree to leave this field into an adjacent pasture and continue in the same direction. In 210m cross an often water-filled depression in the field on a raised part of soil and *veer right* across this part of the field towards a metal kissing gate in the boundary fence to the right of the stone arch **Ickford Bridge** (due E). Emerge from the field through the kissing gate with a **Seven Shires Way** sticker and a two-railed wooden plank bridge onto a road. The Main Walk joins from 20m to the right through the road side trees.

*Turn left* and re-join the main walk directions at the asterisk \*).