

Thame Circular		
1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check
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Thame Circular

Start: Thame High Street

Finish: Thame High Street

Thame High Street, 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: 21.0 km (13.0 mi), of which 4.9 km (3.0 mi) on tarmac or concrete.

Cumulative ascent/descent: 97m.

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

Toughness: 3 out of 10

Time: 4 hours 20 minutes walking time.

For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 7 ½ hours.

Transport: Thame High Street is a 9 minute bus ride away from Haddenham & Thame Parkway station, on bus line 280 (Aylesbury to Oxford), with a bus running every 20 minutes (2016 return fare: £4.00). It leaves from the station forecourt of Haddenham & Thame Parkway station, which is on the London Marylebone to Bicester main line. Journey times are from 34 minutes, with two trains per hour. The exit from the platform is near the end 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, largely following the waymarked Thame Valley Walk, to the numerous tea options in Thame and then the return bus journey to Haddenham & Thame Parkway station.

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

Walk options:

Shortcuts: It is possible to shorten the walk in the morning by cutting out the recommended lunch time destinations, leading to lunch in Shabbington instead. This cuts out 5.7 km and is rated **1/10**.

An in-walk shortcut cuts out the outlying recommended lunch pub in Worminghall, should you run late for the food service hours there (cuts 2.0 km).

There is also an **infrequent bus service** (covering all three possible lunch stops) from Worminghall via Ickford and Shabbington to Thame, which currently runs once around lunch time and then again once late afternoon (Mon-Fri), just mid-afternoon on Sat and not at all on Sun.

Extension: It is possible to extend the walk in the morning by adding a diversion through Tiddington and Waterstock (adds 3.6 km, rated **4/10**).

Lunch:

The Fox and Goat Oxford Road, *Tiddington, Oxfordshire, OX9 2LH (01844 339 808, <http://www.thefoxandgoat.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).

Open Mon-Tue 10.00-15.00 and 17.30-23.00, Wed-Thu 10.00-23.00, Fri-Sat 10.00-24.00 and Sun 11.30-23.00. Food served 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-21.00 Mon-Sat and 12.00-17.00 Sun.

The Clifden Arms 75 Clifden Road, *Worminghall Buckinghamshire, HP18 9JR (01844 338 429, <http://theclifdenarms.co.uk/>)*. Open Tue-Thu 11.00-15.00 and 17.00-24.00, Fri-Sun 11.00-24.00. Food served Tue-Sat 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-22.00 and Sun 12.00-15.00.

The Clifden Arms is located 11.9 km (7.4 mi) into the full walk. It is a thatched 16th century, Grade II-listed, building with a medieval range and a 17th century cross wing. Its name derives from the 2nd 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, it offers inspired, but affordable menus, based on pub classics. 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, <http://www.risingsunickford.com/>)*. Open Mon-Fri 12.00-14.30 and 16.00-23.00, Sat-Sun 12.00-23.00.

Food served Mon-Sat 12.00-14.00 and Wed-Sat 18.30-21.00, Sun 12.00-15.00. 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.oldenglishinns.co.uk/our-locations/the-old-fisherman>)*. Open 12.00-late. Food serving times may vary during the seasons, but typically might be: 12.00-14.15 Mon-Fri and 18.00-21.00 Wed-Fri, 12.00-15.00 and 17.30-21.00 Sat, 12.00-20.00 Sun. The Old Fisherman is located 9.5 km (5.9 mi) into the walk if taking the Shortcut.

Tea:

The Six Bells 44 Lower High Street, *Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 2AD (01844 212 088, <http://sixbellsthame.co.uk/>)*. Open Mon 12.00-22.30, Tue-Thu 12.00-23.00, Fri-Sat 12.00-23.30, Sun 12.00-23.00. Food served Mon-Fri 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-21.00, Sat 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-21.30, Sun 12.00-18.00.

The Thatch 29 Lower High Street, *Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 2AA (01844 213 340, <http://www.thethatchthame.co.uk/>)*.

(Pad Thai at) The Rising Sun High Street, *Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 2BZ (01844 214 206, <http://www.padthai-cuisine.co.uk/thame.html>)*. Open Mon-Thu 12.00-15.00 and 17.00-24.00, Fri-Sat 12.00-24.00, Sun 12.00-23.30. (Thai) Food served Mon-Sat 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-22.30, Sun 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-22.00.

Treacles Tea Rooms 12 High Street, *Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 2BZ (01844 260 840)*. Open Mon-Fri 8.30-17.30, Sat 9.00-17.30 and Sun 10.00-17.00.

Café Bobo 6 Greyhound Walk, *Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 3DY (01844 217 185)*. Open Mon-Sat 9.30-16.00.

The James Figg 21 Cornmarket, *Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 2BL (01844 260 166, <http://thejamesfiggthame.co.uk/>)*. Open Mon-Thu 11.00-23.00, Fri-Sat 11.00-24.00, Sun 12.00-22.30.

The Black Horse Hotel 11 Cornmarket, *Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 2BL (01844 212 886, <http://www.theblackhorsethame.com/>)*. Open Mon-Thu 11.00-23.30, Fri-Sat 11.00-2.00, Sun 12.00-22.30.

The Spread Eagle Hotel Cornmarket, *Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 2BW (01844 213 661, <http://www.spreadeaglethame.co.uk/>)*.

The Old Nags Head 43 Upper High Street, *Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 2DW (01844 261 450)*.

The Swan Hotel 9 Upper High Street, *Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 3ER (01844 260 399)*.

Rumsey's Chocolaterie 8 Upper High Street, *Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 3ER (01844 260 303, <http://www.rumseys.co.uk/our-shops/thame>)*. Open Mon-Sat 9.00-18.00, Sun 10.00-17.30.

Smarts Fish & Chip Shop 41 Upper High Street, *Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 2DW (01844 260 216)*.

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. Ca. 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.

River Thame

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 Showjumping Association, who has been one of the leading trainers and mentors in the equestrian world for the last forty years. Many of the royal family have ridden at WHTC and competitions are regularly held there.

Bernwood Jubilee Way

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.

Bernwood Forest

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 10th century and was a particularly favoured place of Edward the Confessor, who was born in nearby Islip.

From about 1217 through to the 17th century the forest went through a gradual period of deforestation.

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 ex-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 the Aylesbury to **Oxford bus** (number **280**) to Thame. After a scheduled 9 minute journey alight at **Thame High Street**, opposite the large red brick Town Hall.

Continue along the pavement in the direction of travel 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, when facing St. Joseph's Catholic Church, *turn left* down a car wide tarmac lane between houses. In 50m keep ahead along a tarmac track, at a junction with a lane joining from the left and ignoring a grassy track half left into trees. Follow this track first right then left and down into a park (**Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve**) and then across a two-railed bridge over **Cuttle Brook**. In 40m *turn left* through a metal field gate at a crosspaths by a display panel for the Nature Reserve.

In 35m you reach a wider grassy area and continue either on the left path along the brook or initially in the same direction as before (135°) and eventually you swing right with path and brook. In 340m pass through a gap in the trees into another grassy area, 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 is the club house of The Oxfordshire Golf Club, whose course you pass through later. In 235m, when the tarmac track turns right towards houses and where a narrow earthen track continues ahead, *turn down left* with a public footpath marker through a metal field gate. In 25m go through a metal kissing gate into a large grassy field 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 and in 20m *turn left* into another field over a railed wooden plank bridge and then over a metal kissing gate.

Now you head towards a wooden fence to the right of a white house on the other side of the field in 230m (145°). Cross over 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, ignore a footpath joining from the left and continue along the lane towards a junction with a road 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 *turn right* along a gravel lane, when the road turns left, and in 35m follow the lane around left through a usually open metal field gate (255°). In 175m ignore a bridleway turning off 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.

After 700m **[!]** *turn right* through an easy-to-miss narrow gap in the dense boundary hedge onto the golf course at an easy-to-miss footpath marker on a pole on the right. In 10m you emerge by a footpath marker on a wooden pole to cross a tarmac track and veer right across grass towards another tarmac track in 15m and follow yellow markers left (initially 300°, soon swinging right) with the **club house** on the left. In 240m *turn left* at a three-way track junction with a footpath marker on a wooden 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* towards an iron bridge over the lake and cross it. On the other side of the bridge *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 the road (345°). In 90m at a footpath sign *turn left* off this grassy path and in 25m cross the road to continue in the same direction on a grassy path, soon with young trees on the left (320°). In 80m leave the golf course over a stile in a hedge by an **Oxfordshire Way** sign on a pole.

Cross the Wentworth to Thame-**A329** and enter a wood (Old Paddock) through a wooden kissing gate. You are now passing through the **Rycote Estate** for the next 1.45 km. The path meanders through the wood and crosses several estate tracks, but a few yellow markers and the many "Private – No Admittance"-signs leave no doubt about the onwards route. In 300m you join a winding and wide track. Ignore a right fork along the way, and in 230m emerge from the wood onto a farm track to go through a wooden field gate onto a 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 stone track turning sharp left just inside the wood but follow yellow markers along this 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). Leave the wood through a metal kissing gate into a church yard. Pass **Saint Michael's Chapel** (ticketed entry occasionally) on the right along a gravel track. Descend some concrete steps from the church yard onto a gravel lane and turn left with a hand painted 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 a hand painted Oxfordshire Way-sign.

In 25m pass 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 on a grassy strip 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 Oxfordshire Way and **Thame Valley Walk** markers on a pole. **Here you have a choice:**

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

For the main walk, *turn left* and up with the Oxfordshire Way 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. You *turn left* over a stile and then *turn right* to continue in your previous direction (280°) on a tarmac lane, ignoring a footpath turning left down another lane.

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

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

For the main walk, continue ahead and in 12m *turn right* across a stile into a grassy field. Head down this grassy field, initially with a red brick house on the right, and in 100m pass through bushes, with stiles on either side, crossing a two-railed wooden plank bridge in the process (350°). In 50m climb another stile in a hedge to emerge on a busy road, where you *turn right* along the grassy verge. In 60m cross the road

carefully and continue in the same direction in a layby. In 55m *turn left* through an **easy-to-miss gate in a hedge gap** into a field. Continue along the right hand edge of the field (initial direction 315°).

In 420m leave the field by *turning right* over a pair of stiles to the right of some metal field gates onto a more than car wide grassy path between hedges and *turn half left* along it (355°). In 260m pass through a metal field gate and follow footpath markers left towards farm buildings (290°). In 105m climb over a stile to the right of a metal field gate onto a concrete lane and *turn right*, soon swinging left with the lane. Pass a red brick house and a double metal field gate but **[!]** 55m from the stile *turn right* off the lane through a metal gate into a large grassy field, 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 and continue along the road into **Ickford**, ignoring a footpath to the right straight after the bridge. Ignore another footpath in 460m. In 210m, just after passing the village hall, *turn left* opposite Rose Cottage along a grassy path between houses. In 40m walk through a wooden kissing gate into a grassy field 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 with a hedge on the right and a field on the left. In 170m the path swings right. In 45m *turn left* at a road T-junction. In 65m enter the church yard of **St. Nicholas, Ickford** through a metal gate and continue past the church on its left.

[But **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 church yard (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 church yard through a metal kissing gate into a large grassy field and veer right towards the right hand field boundary and to the right of a large solitary tree (320°). Upon reaching the boundary veer left along it towards the far right field corner. Leave the field over a broken stile and veer right in the next grassy field 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, now 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 initially 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 though, *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 (120°) and ignore the footpath ahead into 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 grassy field 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. *Veer right* with the brook and in 80m leave this field over a bridge with wooden gates either side. *Turn left* in the adjacent grassy field along its left hand boundary hedge towards the houses of **Ickford** (125°). In 195m 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 grassy field 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 opposite (or turn left, if coming out of the Rising Sun), along a road past a bus stop and in 55m *turn left* through wooden barriers 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* with a footpath marker and follow the left hand boundary of playing fields. In 150m pass 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 grassy field. In 50m you walk through a metal kissing gate onto a road.

Cross the road and then a concrete bridge and a stile into a cattle pen. Pass through it and into a grassy field to continue in the same direction towards a protruding corner of this field (120°). In 185m cross a stile with a **Bernwood Jubilee Way** marker into a fenced narrow grassy path. In 300m walk through a metal kissing gate and go over a two-railed wooden plank bridge and then walk through a metal kissing gate to continue in the same direction through a large grassy field. In 60m walk through a wide gap in a wooden fence, *veer slightly left* (115°) and in 185m squeeze through a gap left of a set of metal field gates either side of a car wide wooden bridge (or over some step-less stiles to the right of it). *Veer left* in a smaller grassy field and in 70m walk through a wooden kissing gate to cross an un-railed wooden plank bridge into a large field.

Ignore a path veering half left towards the houses of **Shabbington** and continue in the previous direction across the field (115°). In 190m you cross a farm track leading to Franklins Farm. In 20m go over a couple of stiles 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 continue in your previous direction along its right hand boundary towards a red brick bungalow. Walk past the bungalow on its left, cross a stile and a lane and *veer right* to cross a stile in a hedge into another field. *Turn half left* towards a church. In 100m, by a stile on your left, the Shortcut joins from the right out of the Thame Valley (for the hungry and

thirsty walkers: the red-roofed white building on the right at the bottom of the field is **The Old Fisherman**, lunch stop on the shortcut route). *Turn left* over the stile into the church yard.

***) 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 grassy field. Cross this field in the previous direction (40°) with the Thame River below right in the valley. The church tower half right in the distance (100°) is St. Mary the Virgin in Thame, our final destination. In 160m walk through a wooden kissing gate and in 50m through a gate, cross an un-railed wooden plank bridge over a brook and then a stile into a grassy area.

Stay to the right side of a hedge but in 40m *turn left* with footpath markers on a pole through a gap in the hedge to continue in the previous direction, now with the hedge on the right. In 35m climb over a stile into the next grassy field to swing right with the field boundary growth, keeping a slope to the left, all the way to the far right field corner. In 420m cross a wooden plank bridge and climb a stile in the boundary hedge into the next grassy field. *Veer half left* (60°) past a wooden mini-pylon and continue to a stile in the boundary hedge 160m beyond the pylon. In 325m you go over the stile and a plank over a ditch into another grassy field. *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 the gate onto a road and *turn right*. *Turn left* with the road in a bend and in 280m *turn right* with footpath signs over a stile into a grassy field and continue along its right hand boundary. In 325m cross stiles either side of a wooden plank bridge into the next grassy field 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 **Bernwood Jubilee Way** and **Thame Valley Way** 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 field. In 240m cross a farm track and then go over a stile into a grassy field to *turn right* along its boundary. In 100m in the field corner *turn left* and in 230m cross stiles either side of a wooden plank bridge into another grassy field. Continue along its left hand side. In 380m cross stiles either side of a wooden plank bridge into another grassy field. 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 **A 418**.

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**. The building on the right across the road is the lodge of the **Prebendal**, the long term home (from 1983 to his death in 2012) of the late Robin Gibb, the ex-Bee Gees singer. Walk up some steps into the church yard and pass the church on the right, passing his grave in the process.

Leave the church yard through a wrought iron gate onto a road. Follow 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**.

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

Head downhill on a concrete track, with trees on the left and a grassy field on the right. In 280m pass **Red House** on the left. In 70m *turn right* with a Thame Valley Walk 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 Thame Valley Way marker, 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 Thame Valley Walk marker in the corner: "**Follow the River**".

In 750m where the river turns left, *turn left* over a bridge into a neighbouring field to follow the river and in 60m *turn right* along the field boundary. In 400m, where the river swings away to the left, the path continues ahead with a wire fence on the left (can be overgrown in summer). In 120m you 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 corner of the road.

After lunch *turn left* over a stile into a grassy field by a footpath marker on a pole and walk half right diagonally across the field (325°) towards a stile about 50m to the left of the church visible 275m away. Cross the stile into the church yard. Re-join the main walk directions at the triple asterisks ***).

Extension (adds 3.6 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 marker. In 30m enter a grassy field 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 grassy field 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 reach a road at a T-junction.

- **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** *turn left uphill* through **Tiddington**.

In 60m pass a bridleway sign on a metal pole. In 100m pass the entrance to **Tiddington House**. In 25m the tarmac lane turns to gravel and levels out. In 65m a footpath joins from the left, keep ahead along the lane with a Bridleway marker by a fence corner. In 55m ignore a footpath turning left over a stile into a field and continue on a narrow earthen path (265°). In 240m pass **Greens Cottage** and cross a road to continue in the direction of a footpath sign along a car wide gravel farm track (now with the clearly audible hum of the **M40** in the air). In 135m, when the track turns right, continue ahead along a grassy field boundary with the boundary hedge on the left, when the farm track turns right.

[!] In 10m *turn left* through an unsigned narrow gap in the hedge and cross a stile. *Turn right* along a grassy field boundary to continue in the previous direction. In 100m leave the field in the bottom corner over remnants of a stile into the adjacent grassy

field and continue in the same direction. In 60m you go over remnants of a stile to the right of a metal field gate. *Turn half right* towards a large pond, aiming for a metal gate in a fence (305°). The **pond** has been created by a local benefactor for the enjoyment of the public. In 130m you walk through the gate and then around the pond along either direction. On the opposite side descend from the pond embankment and cross a two-railed wooden plank bridge over a ditch in a wooded strip.

In 50m emerge in a field corner with a footpath joining from the right over a stile next to a metal field gate. The right-of-way is half left across this large field (310°), but the recommended route is to continue in the same direction along the grassy field boundary on a Permissive Path (355°), with a brook on the right. In 280m in the field corner continue along a narrow path between hedges onto a raised bank and swing left with the path. This is again the dismantled **Oxford-Thame-Princes Risborough Railway** line. In 165m *turn right* off the railway bank with an Oxfordshire Way marker and through a metal gate into a grassy field. In 55m you pass through a metal kissing gate to reach the **A418** (Leighton Buzzard to M40) road in a layby and *turn left*.

Just beyond the end of the layby *turn right* to cross the road and follow an **Oxfordshire Way** marker through a hedge and across a stile onto a golf course. Cross a gravel track and continue ahead across a fairway, through a line of young trees and across another fairway towards a marker on a wooden pole 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 right (45°). Pass to the left of a wooded area (at the far corner you pass a footpath marker on a low wooden pole not visible from the brook crossing), across the next fairway and towards a stile in the boundary fence (210m from the brook crossing).

[!] Do not cross the stile into a grassy field 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 balls from the front). In 340m leave the golf course over a stile in the same direction into a grassy field and *veer left* towards a stile 100m away (285°). Cross this and head for the far left corner of the next, larger field (295°), to leave it over a stile 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, when the farm lane turns left, follow a footpath marker on a pole (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, when the wooded area ends, continue in the same direction (55°) 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 stile 10m left of the tree to leave this field into an adjacent grassy field and *veer slightly to the right* (60°). In 210m cross an often muddy 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 a stone arch **Ickford Bridge** (due E). Emerge from the field through the kissing gate 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 *).