

Wendover Circular (via The Lee and Swan Bottom)			Wendover to Great Missenden		
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Wendover Circular (via The Lee and Swan Bottom)

Start & Finish: Wendover station

Wendover Station, map reference SP 865 077, 7 km south east of Aylesbury and 136m above sea level.
Great Missenden Station, map reference SP 892 013, 8 km north west of Amersham and 135m above sea level. Both are in **Buckinghamshire**.

Length: 20.1 km (12.5 mi), of which 3.9 km (2.4 mi) on tarmac or pavements (mostly in Wendover).
Cumulative ascent/descent: 437m. For a shorter walk, and an alternative finish in Great Missenden, see *below* **Walk options**.

Toughness: 6 out of 10

Time: 4 hours 45 minutes walking time.
For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 7 ½ hours.

Transport: Trains go from Marylebone station, on a half-hourly service (hourly on Sundays), journey time 47 minutes. There is a large car park at the station. Great Missenden (an alternative ending) is on the same line, one stop closer to London.

Saturday Walkers' Club: Take the train closest to 9.45 hours if intending to eat at the Old Swan, halfway into the full walk; or the train closest to 10.30 hours if intending to eat at the Cock & Rabbit or if taking Shortcut I

OS Landranger Map: 165 (Aylesbury & Leighton Buzzard)
OS Explorer Map: 181 (Chiltern Hills North) and 172 (only for the Great Missenden ending).

Walk Notes:

This walk combines some of the finest elements of the Chiltern Hills, while having very little overlap with other walks in the area. After leaving Wendover in a south easterly direction on the Ridgeway the walk rises into woods, which are rich in Bluebells in springtime. It then passes along fields to get to the picturesque green in The Lee, a conservation area village. From there it continues through woodland and the beautiful Lee Common to a 16th century lunch pub at Swan Bottom. After crossing some more fields, the afternoon section then leads entirely through woods right up to the outskirts of Wendover: it re-joins the Ridgeway for a while and then descends steeply off the escarpment down an ancient Holloway. Only to rise again, on forest tracks with some panoramic views, until getting to the highest point of the walk in the middle of Wendover Woods. From there the route meanders through the woods, passing a wildlife hide and an ancient hill-fort site, before descending steeply to the plains.

Walk options:

Shortcuts: It is possible to shorten the walk in three ways, shortcuts II and III are mutually exclusive; Shortcut I cuts out 5.1 km, 68m ascent/descent before lunch, this reduces the rating to 4/10; Shortcut II cuts out 1.1 km and 55m descent/re-ascent after lunch, this reduces the rating to 5/10; Shortcut III cuts out 0.7 km and 25m descent/re-ascent after lunch.

Alternative Ending: You may vary the afternoon of the walk and finish in **Great Missenden**.

This increases the length of the walk by 1.4 km. Follow the main walk directions to the Old Swan lunch pub, and then follow the alternative ending directions at the end of the main text.

This version is also rated 6/10 (but only 4/10 if using Shortcut I)

Lunch:

The Cock and Rabbit Inn/Graziemille Restaurant, *The Lee, Buckinghamshire, HP16 9LZ (01494 837 540, <http://cockandrabbit.pub/> <http://www.graziemille.co.uk/>).* Food served 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-23.00 Monday to Friday, 12.00 to 23.00 Weekends. Located 7.3 km (4.6 mi) from the start of the walk, this pub cum Italian Restaurant has been under its current management since the mid-80s.

The Old Swan, *Swan Lane, Swan Bottom, Buckinghamshire, HP16 9NU (01494 837 239, <http://www.theoldswanpub.co.uk/>).* Open 18.00-21.00 Mon, 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-23.00 Tue-Thu, 12.00-23.00 Fri-Sat and 12.00-19.00 Sun. Food served 12.00-14.30 and 18.45-21.00 Tue-Thu, 12.00-14.30 and 18.30-21.00 Fri-Sat and 12.00-15.00 Sun. Located 10.0 km (6.2 mi) from the start of the walk (4.9 km if taking Shortcut I), The Old Swan is a family run 16th century free house with exposed beams and a roaring log fire. It has been awarded Cask Marque accreditation for its ales, and serves sandwiches as well as a limited but diverse menu of high quality dishes plus a handful of weekly specials at reasonable prices.

At weekends it is advisable to book ahead.

Tea places in Wendover:

Cafe in the Woods, *Wendover Woods, St Leonards Road, Wendover, Buckinghamshire, HP22 5NF (01296 620 294, <http://www.cafeinthewoods.co.uk/>).* Open 9.00 –17.00 weekdays, 09.00-18.00 weekends.

The George & Dragon, *4-6 Aylesbury Road, Wendover, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6JQ (01296 586 152, <http://georgeanddragonwendover.com/>).* Open 17.00-23.00 Mon, 12.00-14.30 and 17.00-23.00 Tue-Thu, 12.00-24.00 Fri-Sat and 12.00-22.30 Sun. Food served 18.00-20.30 Mon, 12.00-14.00 and 18.00-21.30 Tue-Sat and 12.00-22.30 Sun. A traditional pub serving authentic Thai cuisine.

Crumbs Coffee *Town Court, High Street, Wendover, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6EA (01296 622 468).*

The Red Lion Hotel, *9 High Street, Wendover, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6DU, (01296 622 266, <http://www.redlionhotelwendover.co.uk/>).* Open 11.00-23.00 Mon-Thu, 11.00-24.00 Fri-Sat and 12.00-22.30 Sun.

The White Swan *18 High Street, Wendover, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6EA, (01296 622 271, <http://www.thewhiteswanwendover.com/>).* Open 12.00-23.30 Sun-Thu and 11.00-00.30 Fri-Sat.

Whitewaters Deli Café, *5 Chiltern Court, Back Street, Wendover, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6EP (01296 623 331).* Open 09.00-17.30 Mon-Thu and 09.00-18.00 Fri-Sat.

Rumsey's of Wendover, *The Old Bank, 26 High Street, Wendover, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6EA, (01296 625 060, <https://www.rumseys.co.uk/pages/rumseys-wendover>).* Open to 18.00 daily.

Lady Grey Tearoom, *26 High Street, The Little Barn Courtyard, Wendover, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6DU, (07519 834 251, <http://ladygreytearoom.co.uk/>).* Open 10.00-16.00 Mon-Wed & 10.00-17.00 Thu-Sun.

Shoulder of Mutton *20 Pound Street, Wendover, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6EJ (01296 623 223, <http://www.chefandbrewer.com/pub-food/shoulder-of-mutton-aylesbury-wendover/pid-P1189>).* Open 11.00 –23.00 Mon-Sat and 12.00-22.30 Sun. Food served 11.30-22.00 Mon-Sat and 12.00-21.30 Sun. A red brick, ivy-clad traditional 18th century pub, part of the Chef & Brewer chain.

Tea places in Great Missenden:

Café Twit *Roald Dahl Museum & Story Centre. 81-83 High Street, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, HP16 0AL (01494 892 192, <http://www.roalddahl.com/museum/cafe-twit>).* Open 09.00–17.00 Tue –Sat, 10.00–17.00 Sun. No dogs allowed.

Origins at the White Lion *57 High Street, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, HP16 0AL (01494 863 696, <http://www.originswinebar.co.uk/>).* Dinner served from 18.00 Mon-Sat.

The Cross Keys *40 High Street, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, HP16 0AU (01494 865 373, <http://www.crosskeysgreatmissenden.co.uk/>).* Open 10.00-23.00 Mon-Wed, 10.00–01.00 Thu-Sat and 10.00-23.30 Sun. Food served 12.00-15.30 and 18.30-21.30 Mon-Wed, 12.00-21.30 Thu-Sat and 12.00-16.00 Sun. A 16th century historic pub (Fuller's) with outside seating.

Matilda's *30 High Street, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, HP16 0AU (01494 890 411).*

The Pantry on Platform 1 *Great Missenden Railway Station, Station Approach, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, HP16 9AZ (01494 868 699, <http://www.thepantryonplatform1.co.uk/#> =).*

Notes:

Wendover

The town name is of Brythonic origin (Wandovre) and means "white waters", pertaining to the stream that rises in the adjacent hills and flows through the middle of the town, bringing chalk deposits on its way. The Chiltern Hills cross the parish and the village lies over 130m/400ft above sea level. The natural cutting through the Chiltern Hills near the town made this an easy route for travellers from the South East to the Midlands. But it also lies on an ancient South West to North East route: the Icknield Way. A branch of the Grand Junction Canal running from Wendover to Marsworth closed in 1904, but is on course of being restored by the Wendover Arm Trust. The main streets of Wendover are open and picturesque, containing many old houses, usually with tiled roofs, and a few thatched cottages.

The Icknield Way and the Ridgeway

Said to be one of the oldest roads in Britain, the Icknield Way is one of the few long-distance track-ways to have existed before the Romans occupied the country. The name is Celto-British in derivation, and may be named after the Iceni tribe, who may have established this route to permit trade with other parts of the country from their base in East Anglia. It has also been suggested that the road has even older prehistoric origins. It stretched from the Dorset Coast to the The Wash, crossing the River Thames near Wallingford. It was later one of the "Four Highways" of medieval England (the others being Ermine Street, Fosse Way and Watling Street). Today the Ridgeway National Trail follows parts of the ancient Icknield Way for 139km (87ml) from Overton Hill to Ivinghoe Beacon in the Chilterns. The modern day Icknield Way long-distance path then runs for 274km from Ivinghoe Beacon to Knettishall Heath in Norfolk.

St. Mary's Church, Wendover

Recorded since the reign of Henry III (1216) but thought to have an even earlier origin, its present building was built in the late 13th/early 14th century. In medieval times the rood cross was venerated as a place of pilgrimage. During the Civil War, Cromwell's troops camped in the church (you can still see the graffiti!) and in 1799 the first penny savings bank in the country (perhaps the world) was started in the church vestry. The church has some excellent examples of stained glass, and features under-floor heating (!) since its 2010/11 refurbishment.

The Chiltern Way

A circular waymarked Long Distance Path of around 214 km (134 mi), taking in some of the finest scenery in the country. There are now two optional extensions and an additional Berkshire loop taking the total to 352 km (220 mi). The Chiltern Way passes through some of the most attractive parts of the Chilterns, including the Bovingdon Plateau, the Chess valley, the Misbourne valley, Penn Country, the Hambleden valley, Stonor Park, Bix Bottom, Ewelme, the Ridgeway, Swyncombe Down, Bledlow Ridge, Hampden Country, Bulbourne valley, the Dunstable Downs and Sharpshoe Clappers.

The Lee

Thought to derive from the Anglo-Saxon word "leah", meaning "woodland clearing". It has been settled since the times of hunter-gatherers, stone-age tools have been found, also traces of an iron-age fort on the site of The Lee Old Church (now the oldest standing building in the Chiltern District) as well as earthworks from Roman times. Following the Norman Conquest (1066), The Lee was granted by William I to his half-brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. It then passed to the Weston Turvilles, fighting with the Cistercian Monks at Missenden Abbey for control of it. After the dissolution of the Monastery in 1547 the lease was granted to John Russell, Earl of Bedford, one of the most powerful men in the country at the time. In 1635 the Bedfords leased the estate to the local Plaistowe family, who kept it for 250 years, before selling to Arthur Lasenby Liberty, the founder of the Liberty store on Regent Street, London.

Liberty did his best in the years before WWI to create his vision of an ideal village: clearing the Village green, re-positioning the Cock & Rabbit pub and "improving the dwellings of the working classes". He also had strong relationships with leading English designers and key figures in the Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau movements. He introduced "Lee Week", an exclusive event designed to provide entertainment for residents and guests at the Manor House. He and his heirs subsequently owned The Lee until the 1950s and controlled development to preserve the character of the village (now in large parts a conservation area). For more information see the 36 page-booklet "A History of The Lee" by The Lee Newsletter Association (2011), available in both lunch places, or: <http://www.thelee.org.uk/>

Grim's Ditch

Grim's Ditch, Grim's Dyke (also Grimsdyke or Grimes Dike in derivative names) or Grim's Bank is a name shared by a number of prehistoric bank and ditch earthworks found across the chalk uplands of southern England.

The purpose of these earthworks remains a mystery, but as they are too small for military use they may have served to demarcate territory. Archaeologists agree that Iron Age peoples built the earthworks around 300 BC. The Chilterns ditch starts at Bradenham further north in the Chilterns than the end of the South Oxfordshire ditch. There are separate sections extending some 30 km north to Ivinghoe, partly along the Chiltern escarpment. Its size varies considerably and different sections may have had different functions. The route of the Grim's Ditch apparently passed through the town of Berkhamstead, and remnants of the earthwork can be seen on Berkhamsted Common and on the village green at Potten End.

The name "Grim's Ditch" is Old English in origin. The Anglo-Saxon word *dīc* was pronounced "deek" in northern England and "deetch" in the south. The method of building this type of earthwork involved digging a trench and forming the soil into a bank alongside it. This practice has resulted in the name *dīc* being given to either the excavation or the bank, and this evolved into two words, ditch and dyke in modern British English.

There are several theories as to the origin of the name Grim. Many ancient earthworks of this type exist across England and Wales, pre-dating the Anglo Saxon settlement of Britain by some 800 years. It was common for the Anglo Saxons to name features of unexplained or mysterious origin *Grim*, probably deriving from the Old Norse word *Grimr*, an Anglo-Saxon alias for the Norse God of War and Magic: *Wōden* (called Odin by the Norse).

The identities of Wōden and the Devil have also become conflated, as evidenced in the number of earthworks named after the Devil. As the Anglo-Saxon population converted to the new religion of Christianity, baptised converts renounced the old Saxon Gods along with the works of the Devil. It is thought that, as a result of this Christianisation, place names and features once associated with pre-Christian deities then came to be associated with the Devil. The names Grim, Graeme and Graham are closely connected and many British family and place names have been linked with the etymology of Wōden/Grim/Devil, Grimsby (residence of the Devil) being one of them.

Boddington Hill Camp

This oval prehistoric hill-fort is situated on a promontory and is thought to have been in use from 600 BC until about 400 BC. The earthworks enclose an area of 7 hectares (17 acres) and are complete except in the Northwest. The ramparts are covered mainly with scrub, brambles and some mature trees: as a result there are few places where the bank and ditch are clearly visible. They are best preserved on the East side, still standing 4m (13ft) above the bottom of the ditch in some places. Here one can still detect an inner scarp as well.

Great Missenden

Is a large village in the Misbourne Valley in the Chiltern Hills. The source of the Misbourne is to be found just north of the village, although the upper reach of the river runs only in winter and the perennial head is in Little Missenden. Great Missenden lay on a major route between the Midlands and London. The village is overlooked by the medieval parish church of **St. Peter and St. Paul**. Its position away from the village suggests an earlier settlement around the church with a move to its present location in the early Middle Ages.

Missenden Abbey, founded in 1133 as an Augustinian monastery, was ruined following the Dissolution of the Monasteries, and the remains were incorporated into a Georgian mansion which is now a conference centre.

These days the village is best known as home to the late **Roald Dahl**, the internationally famous children's author. Gipsy House in Great Missenden was his home from 1954 until his death in 1990, and many local scenes and characters are reflected in his work. Dahl is buried at St. Peter and St. Paul's Church and children still leave toys and flowers at his grave.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train in **Wendover** on platform 2, cross over the footbridge and leave the station through the ticket hall. *Turn right* along **Station Approach** and after 125m at the main road *turn left* towards the town. Pass the **Shoulder of Mutton** pub on the left and after 100m, at a roundabout, *turn right* along **South Street**. In 140m cross the road at the **King & Queen** pub to continue on the opposite side. In 60m, after passing a service station on the left, *turn left* into **Witchell**. In 20m, [!] at a well-hidden 2-way footpath sign on the right, ignore the path ahead along a fence and head instead in the direction of the second footpath sign, *half right* across meadows (110°).

You are now walking over the playing fields of **Wendover CC**, the Witchell ground. Head towards a point between two of the taller trees on the opposite side of the field, where you leave through a wooden gate in the border fence onto **Chapel Lane**, at a T-junction. Cross the lane and turn slightly to the right along **Heron Path** (140°), with a small playground in the field on the right and a wildflower meadow on the left. In 100m *turn right* at a path T-junction at **Heron** and **Sluice Cottages**. This is **The Ridgeway**. Bend to the left with the tarmac path, soon passing **Hampden Pond** on the right, with the lychgate of **St. Mary's Church** now visible 70m ahead.

Pass through metal bollards before you come out on to **Church Lane** and *turn left* on the road. Follow this around the churchyard perimeter wall and ignore a gravel approach road turning off right with the wall, staying on the main road instead when it straightens out again (130°). On the right you pass **Wendover Campus** (formerly Wendover House School), a Monday to Friday boarding school for pupils with Special Educational Needs. After another 225m the main road turns left at a 4 way-junction, with a no through road joining from the right and **Wellhead Cottage** ahead. Continue in the same direction following Ridgeway and Bridleway signs, initially still on tarmac.

You stay on this path in the same broad direction (125°) for the next 1.1 km until you *turn left*. In more detail: After 150m and having passed farm buildings on the right, the tarmac ends. Views soon open up on the left towards the hills of the afternoon route (**Boddington Hill** and **Halton Woods**), just before passing allotments. The path now runs between raised banks, with a close tree canopy above. In 75m the gradient increases, another 175m further along the path rises out of the banks and views open up again. 250m later you pass **Boswells Farm** and houses on the left. Stay ahead through a metal gate. 225m from the farm house you come to a path junction, with a bridleway (the **Chiltern Link**) heading on and the **Ridgeway** turning left.

Turn left with a Ridgeway sign and at an information panel in 20m ignore a faint path ascending half right, but head straight on (65°), with a fence on the left. After 100m *fork right*, following the Ridgeway sign on a post, soon rising sharply. After 500m you reach a 3-way footpath sign. [!] *Turn right*, up into trees on an indistinct path (150°). In 65m *turn left* at a T-junction with a car wide forest path. The next 1.4 km are on paths like this one, which can be very muddy and well churned, often though the worst of the mud can be circumvented by heading through the trees to the side!

Keep on this tree-lined track with occasional white arrows, initially due E, and still rising, soon ignoring a path on the left leading back down to the Ridgeway. In 125m the track levels out. In 275m continue in the same direction at a way-marked footpath junction. In 20m ignore a footpath on the left, and in 160m pass a **trig point**. In another 170m the path runs just inside the forest border. 120m later stay ahead at a forest track junction, following a yellow footpath sign on a pole on the left, and *veer left* after 10m with the path (110°). In 440m you get to the edge of the forest at a T-junction with a car wide lane in a bend and with a metal 4-way footpath/byway sign on the left.

Here you have a choice:

For a shortcut continue in the same direction and pick up directions at the end of the walk directions under **Shortcut I**.

For the main walk *turn right* (due W) through a dip along the car wide track. *Turn left* with the path in 115m, now with a field on the right (195°), in 120m pass cottages and then a new-built farm house. *Turn right* along a road at a T-junction and in 50m *turn left* to follow a **Chiltern Way** signpost along a lane, passing what used to be **The Gate Inn** pub. Pass **Lee Gate Barn** on the right, in 20m ignore a footpath turning left, and in 25m [!] ignore a road to houses and continue ahead on a grassy path (190°).

You walk between wooden fences as you pass ruined farm sheds on the left and, as you reach the end of the house gardens on the right, you *turn right* through a metal gate at a footpath T-junction. Follow a **Chiltern Way** sign *half left* across a field on a clear grassy path (255°). Continue in the same direction in 110m at a 4-way footpath junction. In 375m go through a hedge gap and *turn left* along a grassy field margin (165°), ignoring the path ahead across the field towards the right of a white house. In 170m *turn left* at a field edge, and in 40m *turn right* with a footpath sign, now with a wood on your left (140°). Stay on this path in the same direction, ignoring all ways off, mainly with a hedge on your left. In 350m the path veers left (120°). Stay in this direction for another 300m, with a hedge soon on your right.

At a 3-way footpath sign cross a car wide track and climb a stile to the right of a metal field gate into a grassy field. Ignore the **Chiltern Link** path heading half left to a house and continue straight on (150°) with a dyke on the right. In 180m cross a stile into another field and keep in the same direction with houses on the far left (160°). **This is a dedicated wild bird reserve, so please keep to the footpaths.** In 160m at a corner of the field boundary hedge *turn left*, with the hedge on your right, heading for a red brick building (30° initially). Exit the field after 180m through a gap to the right of a wooden field gate and *turn right* along a road running around the picturesque village green in **The Lee**, with the **Manor House** on the far right side of the common.

Turn right along the road, after 100m passing the early lunch stop, the **Cock & Rabbit Inn/Graziemille Italian Restaurant**. *Turn right* after the pub at a T-junction and in 10m *turn left* along a tarmac lane, with houses on the left (**Hawthorn Farm** being the first). Stay on this lane for 350m, where you follow a **Chiltern Link** footpath sign *left into trees* (95°), soon with a grassy common visible through the trees on the left. Leave the woods at a 4-way path-junction through a metal kissing gate and *turn left*, slightly uphill. Follow the clear path across **Lee Common** towards a white house to the left of two corrugated iron sheds (15°).

Exit the common through a metal kissing gate to the right of a metal field gate and continue between hedges and a house on the left, then **Lee Common School**, reaching a road (**Oxford Street**) after 100m. *Turn left* along the road, and cross **Lee Clump Road** at a T-junction to continue with a tennis court and club house to the left, and a private house on right. Walk through a metal gate after 50m, continuing in the same direction, on a field edge with a hedge on the right. The hedge ends after 65m and you continue *half right* diagonally across the field towards its far corner (335°), where – with a footpath joining from the right – you enter woods.

Stay on this – potentially very muddy – path (310°) for 380m, ignoring a footpath to the right after 60m and a forest track joining from the left after another 150m. At the corner of a field on the right, [!] *turn right* out of the woods through a metal gate at a footpath sign on a wooden post into horse paddocks. Walk on the right hand edge of the field for 275m, bordered by a fence, passing two metal gates and then a metal field

gate, which exits onto a car wide track. In 60m climb over a stile to the right of a gate, and 15m later cross a road and ascend on the other side through a metal gate. In 170m, [!] 10m *before* reaching a metal kissing gate at a path junction, you come to a metal kissing gate on the left.

Here you have a choice:

For the alternative ending in Great Missenden, avoiding The Old Swan Pub, continue straight on (and pick up directions **at point [MW]** in the details at the end of this walk under **Alternative Ending**).

For the main walk as well as for the lunch stop for the Alternative Ending, *turn left* through the metal kissing gate into a grassy area. Keep to the right of a row of trees on a clear path (280°). In 85m you *veer left* towards the field fence on the left. Continue with the fence to your left and then through a metal kissing gate to the right of a metal gate and *turn right* along a road to the recommended lunch stop **The Old Swan, Swan Bottom**.

[*] Out of the pub *turn right* along the road and:

For the Alternative Ending in Great Missenden, in 30m *turn left* through a metal kissing gate along a wide fenced in footpath, following a Chiltern Way sign. Pick up directions at the end of the Walk Directions under **Alternative Ending**.

For the Main Walk finishing in Wendover, *turn right* immediately along a car wide track (305°) past houses on the left. Ignore a footpath (Chiltern Way) on the left after 100m and one in 170m, soon passing a row of white cottages on the right. When after 50m the track turns left, head straight on into woods to reach a 4-way footpath/byway sign after 5m. Take *the half right option* into trees (due N). After 300m on a sometimes indistinct path exit the wood through a small gap in the trees that only becomes visible late on, onto a field with a **white house** the other side of it. The onward path is potentially very muddy, but fairly obvious: across the field, *half left* towards a gap in a hedge (330°), where you cross a footpath and head on in similar direction (350°), slightly uphill into another field.

At the brow of the field, and level with the garden of the white house on the right, the path swings ever so slightly left and towards a now obvious gap in the trees about 200m away (345°). Enter the woods and cross a footpath, continuing towards a wooden barrier. *Immediately after the barrier ignore a right fork and continue straight on* towards a gap in the trees 30m away to exit from the woods into a field. **The Right of Way** is obvious: ahead and across the field, but may be so muddy that you want to turn right and follow the field boundary around. At the other side of the field enter a wood through remnants of a brick gate. In 30m exit from the woods into another field and *turn half right*, along the field edge.

After 100m re-enter the woods, heading *half right* and ignoring paths off first left and then right (**Grim's Ditch**, a notable Iron Age bank and ditch earthwork, crosses left-to-right). At a field corner walk *half right* across the field towards the corner of a hedge that runs around this field (15°). From there continue in the same direction along the hedge, soon passing **Uphill Farm**, leaving the field through a gap in a crumbling wall (345°) to enter a wooded area. In 60m walk through remnants of a wooden field gate and in 10m, where the path starts to descend, and with a Ridgeway sign visible 50m ahead, [!] *turn right* at a yellow footpath marker on a post along an indistinct path.

The path first swings back slightly past a white painted arrow on a tree, then ventures close to the farmhouse to eventually *turn right* at a white arrow towards the driveway. At the edge of the driveway *turn left* by a yellow footpath marker on a post, now

following a line of trees. After 120m *turn left* at a yellow footpath sign (350°) and descend, soon reaching a well-defined, car wide forest track (**The Ridgeway**). *Turn right* (20°) and follow this for 250m, eventually passing through wooden posts, with a rusty metal kissing gate to its left, to reach a road after another 20m.

The road descends steeply to the left, but you *turn right*, passing **Uphill Lodge** and the entrance to **Uphill Farm Estate**. *Turn left* after 15m into trees through a metal gate, following a Ridgeway sign. Keep to this forest path near the crest of the hill, with fields to the right, and a steeply descending forest left. Keep ahead at a junction of paths after 100m and in another 150m you come to a 4-way path junction. Ignore the Ridgeway turning downhill half left and the faint path straight ahead into trees. *Turn right uphill* and 5m later *sharp left* to stay high and just inside the wood for 325m, always with a barbed wire fence on your right. Veer right with the path on an incline to eventually reach a T-junction of paths at a Ridgeway sign. Drop into the Holloway beyond the sign.

Here you have a choice:

For a shortcut rise up the bank opposite (half left), and in 5m cross a path with a prominent "no bikes or horses" sign, and pick up directions at the end of the Walk Directions under **Shortcut II**.

To continue with the main walk *turn left* downhill in the sunken path (185°). Follow the Holloway for about 800m to a road (always descending). In more detail: ignore the Ridgeway, joining from the left after 240m and another footpath 90m later. At a yellow marker 30m further down a narrow path veers off right and upwards.

Here you have a choice:

For a shortcut *turn half right* up the bank and in 20m at a T-junction with a forest track by a footpath marker *turn right* (345°) past a sign "no access for horse riders". Pick up directions at the end of the Walk Directions under **Shortcut III**.

To continue with the main walk continue descending the Holloway, ignoring another path joining from the right after 25m, and finally another footpath joining from the left in 350m. The track ends 70m further along between houses, near a road, with splendid views across the vale towards **Wendover**. **[!]** *Turn right and then immediately right again* along the driveway to the right of a redbrick house. Leave the driveway to walk up a grassy incline, with the garage and a fenced-in path on the left and a large tree on the right. In 20m stay left of a row of smaller trees and head *half right* towards a stile 60m away, to the right of a wooden gate at the border of the woods (75°).

Cross onto the narrow forest path (80°) and stay on it for 2 km to point [I], mostly ascending, initially steeply so. In more detail: in 120m the path bears left and widens considerably, with views now to the right down into the valley and the sunken path below. After another 150m the forest path *turns left* at a right angle, still uphill (ignore the narrow path into trees ahead). After 50m you cross a bridleway/mountain bike trail. In another 225m at a yellow marker on the right a footpath joins from the bank above (this is Shortcut III).

[]** In 175m another path joins from the right (this is Shortcut II).

[*]** In 150m yet another bridleway joins from the right. In 100m the path rises again and in a further 360m *fork right*, ignoring a major forest track descending down the valley flank. The whole stretch on the raised forest track provides great views to the left of the onwards route on **Boddington Hill** and **Wendover** behind it, as well as most of the morning route out of Wendover and up into the woods on the Ridgeway. The path

eventually levels out for a while, but always stays below the ridgeline. 500m later and after another steep ascent you pass a handful of benches offering great vistas down the valley. Continue on the forest path for 100m to exit to the right of a wooden forestry barrier and past a car park to meet a road. This is the **highest point on the walk** at 267m above sea level.

[!] *Turn left* along the road, passing the **Café in the Woods**, an early tea option, on the right. After 100m reach a large car park and – with the tarmac track forking right – continue ahead, along an earth-and-gravel car wide track (230°). Pass the **Go-Ape tree-top adventure site** on the left after 35m. Stay on this track for 175m and then keep ahead (225°) through wooden barriers along a narrow forest path, by a fire crest trail signpost, where the car wide track turns right. Cross a path after 25m and continue in the same direction with the occasional footpath marker, now broadly parallel with a road 50m on the right. After 125m cross another footpath and in 175m you pass through a grassy clearing in the trees and exit diagonally opposite through a wooden bike barrier. The path soon starts to descend more steeply (210°).

After 180m a trail crosses the path (down from the road above). 15m later the path veers left to descend further (150°). After 70m, at the next wooden footpath post you can see a wooden wildlife hide 50m to the left below in the forest bowl, with a wooden walkway leading to it. [!] 15m after the approach path to the hide *turn right* and uphill (210°) for 25m. Upon reaching the main forest path, *turn right*, still uphill (310°). In 80m *turn left* at a T-junction along a wide forest track. In 75m [!] *turn right* through trees towards a station on the fitness trail that runs through these woods (push-ups). In 10m *turn left* on a half-wide track (200°) and *fork right* after 110m with a **Hill Fort Trail** marker on a pole.

To the right is the site of **Boddington Hill Camp**, clearly identifiable by its earth bank and ditches. After 280m a track joins from the left, in 15m pass an information board about the hill fort on the right, and in 55m *turn right* at a T-junction with a car wide forest track. From here you have views through a gap in the trees to **Wendover** and across **Aylesbury Vale** to Aylesbury. Stay on this track for 500m, ignoring a couple of minor tracks off to the left, and always with the fort perimeter to your right. [!] But *turn left* and downhill by an easily missed yellow footpath sign on a post on the left, with the sit-ups station visible 10m away below. Descend steeply downhill (due W) for 400m.

Exit the woods and cross a car wide forest track to continue downhill for 35m with a garden hedge on the right, and *turn left* along a car wide tarmac path (**Beechwood Lane**) towards the outskirts of **Wendover** (275°), at a two-way bridleway/footpath sign on the left. In 350m keep ahead at a junction and stay on this road (**Barlow Road**, later **Hampden Road**) for 400m, passing Woollerton Crescent/Compton Road, Woollerton Crescent again, and Burke Road. Opposite Boddington Road *descend right* towards the now audible main road on a tarmac footpath between numbers 28 and 30 Hampden Road. After 80m step down to an approach road of the B4009 (Tring Road), where you *turn left* towards the town centre.

80m after passing a road on the left leading to The Hale you get to a roundabout, with the Tourist Office on the left in a clock tower, and the **George & Dragon** pub (Thai cuisine) on your right around the corner. Cross to the right of the roundabout and continue on the small street a little to the left (Back Street). This runs parallel to High Street (where you find **Crumbs Coffee**, the **Red Lion Hotel** (pub) and **The White Swan**). In 150m reach the town square by the **War Memorial**. Here you find the recommended tea stops **Whitewater's Deli Café** on the right and **Rumsey's of Wendover** on the left and the **Lady Grey Tearoom** 40m along across the road on the left in a courtyard ('Antiques at Wendover'). In 200m *turn right* down Station Approach, by the **Shoulder of Mutton** pub, to **Wendover Station**.

Shortcut I (cut morning route by 5.1 km and reduce ascent/descent by 68m)

Continue in the same direction (120°) along the car wide track, after 300m coming to **The Old Swan** on the left.

Re-join the main route directions at the asterisk [*].

Shortcut II (cut afternoon route by 1.1 km and reduce ascent/descent by 55m)

Continue in the same direction towards a wooden post with a "Riding by Permit only" sign (250°). Continue on this bridleway, slightly uphill. After about 240m cross a path by a numbered post 15 on the left and a numbered post 13 on the right. Your path is now a narrow footpath, which in 65m descends, first gently, then more steeply, eventually coming out on a major forest track by a yellow footpath marker. *Turn right.*

Re-join the main route directions at the triple asterisk [***].

Shortcut III (cut afternoon route by 0.7 km and reduce ascent/descent by 25m)

After 40m *turn left* at a footpath T-junction (250°). In 20m go through a wooden bike barrier, now gently uphill. In 40m you *fork right* with a yellow marker on a post. In another 40m pass another yellow marker on the right and in 20m cross a bridleway with a yellow marker on a post, still rising on a narrow path between trees. The path levels out after 185m as you pass one more yellow marker on a post and in another 55m it joins the main forest track, where you *turn right*.

Re-join the main route directions at the double asterisk [**].

Alternative Ending at Great Missenden

Length: 21.6 km (13.4 mi), of which 3.9 km (2.5 mi) on tarmac or pavement.

Cumulative ascent/descent: 359/360m.

Length drops to 16.4 km (10.3 mi) if using Shortcut I.

Toughness: 6 out of 10 (4/10 if using Shortcut I)

Walk Notes:

While the main walk leads almost entirely through woodland in the afternoon, this alternative offers constantly changing scenery. It avoids settlements and roads, mostly following grassy fields, while still passing through a variety of varied and characterful woods. Several beautiful valleys are crossed in between, but the overall ascent/descent is still less than on the main walk. It ends with a scenic descent into Great Missenden.

WALK DIRECTIONS

In 250m walk through a metal kissing gate and *turn left* at a path T-junction (the main walk route joins from the right). **[MW]** In 10m *turn right* just before another metal kissing gate to continue along an enclosed path (105°). In 150m follow the footpath

round to the left. In 115m follow the path round to the right (initially enclosed, then with a hedge on the left). In 400m (just past two large barns on your right hand side), follow the (now) car wide track around and down to the left, swinging right at the bottom (due E). In 300m where the track curves left, **[!]** *turn right* by a redundant stile and a collapsed gate. Follow the yellow footpath marker on a post to the right of a prominent tree and into a field, to go down its left hand side (195°).

In 80m, by a sign "footpath only – no horses", cross over into the next field to go uphill on its right hand side (190°), in 170m with newly planted trees on the right. Ignore two forest tracks joining from the right, and cross over into the next field to *veer right immediately* and to follow a yellow arrow up a footpath enclosed by a hedgerow (on your left) and a wire fence (on your right). In 100m you go through a metal kissing gate into the corner of the next field to go up its left hand side. In 260m (having crossed a stile after 140m) go through a metal kissing gate to the left of a wooden field gate to cross a road and enter a wood through a gap in the corner by a 2-way footpath sign.

In 10m you *fork left* through the wood, following white arrows on trees. In 180m you reach a tree with a white painted cross on it. *Turn left* (130°), follow white arrows through a dip after 50m and then *turn left* after 15m. In another 20m cross a path to continue *half right* and in 60m reach a road by a 3-way metal footpath signpost, with a house on the right. Cross the road and go through a metal kissing gate to go along the left hand side of a field with tall trees on the left (100°). In 85m cross into the next field through a metal kissing gate left of a metal field gate. Continue in the same direction towards a metal kissing gate in 140m, leading into a wood.

Through the kissing gate follow a footpath through the wood for 890m to exit through a kissing gate. **In more detail:** in 180m a path joins from the left, and when in 210m the path veers right and descends (120°), ignore a path up to the right. In 320m at a cross paths with white arrows on trees continue ahead and down through the wood (175°). In 180m go through a metal kissing gate and ignore a stile in the corner fencing of a field on your right and a path going up left, but continue along the right hand side of the wood (155°). In 370m a footpath joins from the left, and at a path T-junction in 60m, *turn left*, initially with the wood on your left hand side and a field off to your right (80°).

In 110m at the end of the wood a byway joins from the left and the path now runs between hedges for a while, at the bottom of a vale, soon swinging right. In 530m you come out onto a lane and continue in the same direction along it. In 100m, *turn right* over a stile to go up the valley flank on the right hand side of a field (220°). In 240m you cross a stile to continue up the right hand side of the next field (with a new wire fence on the left), initially still rising. In 200m go through a metal gate to the right of a metal field gate and continue diagonally across the next field to a point just left of a pylon (235°). In 130m go through a metal gate into a field corner and *turn half left* along the left hand side of the next field (due S). In 80m go over a stile to cross a tarmac lane to walk along a fenced-in footpath, initially with a wall on the left.

In 140m you *veer right* along a narrow path through a small wood. After 50m go through a squeeze gate to go steeply down across a field (190°) towards the prominent cross paths at the bottom of the valley, with views over to the left towards **Chesam**. In 130m cross the car wide track (flanked by two squeeze gates) and follow the footpath up steeply through a wood. After 190m go through a metal squeeze gate to emerge from the wood and *turn left* along a tarmac lane. In 25m *turn right* along a car wide concrete track towards **Redding's Farm**. In 160m (and 100m before the farm buildings), *turn right* to follow a footpath alongside a hedgerow on a field (due N). In 50m *turn left* with the hedge (280°) with a valley on the right.

In 250m *turn left* with the hedge and over a stile to go along a fenced in footpath (200°). In 90m cross a stile and *turn right*, along the left hand side of a field. In 100m at the field corner you go over a stile into the corner of a wood. Ignore the faint path to the right along the edge of the wood to follow the more obvious footpath half left through the wood (240°), marked by faint white arrows on trees.

Stay ahead at a couple of cross paths at 25 and 50m. In 190m a path joins from the left. In 20m *turn left* at a crosspaths, with a couple of white houses 35m ahead, visible through the trees. In 170m go past the corner post of some wire fencing enclosing a field, with a path joining from left, to continue with the wire fence on your right hand side. In 30m a path joins from the left, in 70m go through a wooden gate to emerge from the wood by a 3-way footpath sign and *turn right* along a tarmac lane. In 100m at a 3-way public footpath sign *turn left* along a fenced in footpath (170°) and in 140m cross a stile into the corner of a field to go along its left hand side. In 160m at the left hand corner of the field cross a stile to the left of a metal field gate into the next field to continue in the same direction.

[!] Head for a (not initially visible) stile about 50m to the left of the far right field corner (145°) and in 260m cross the stile to then cross a smaller field in the same direction. Exit it after 110m (over a stile and through a gap in a hedge) onto **Chesham Road**, with **Hyde Lane** joining on the other side. *Turn left* along the grass verge. In 60m *turn right* across the road and enter a small wooded area through a gap in a hedge left of the entrance to **Hyde Manor** (Circular Walk signpost). Exit after 10m through a metal kissing gate into the corner of a field to go along its right hand side, following a line of mini-pylons (150°). Swing right with the field border in 150m (170°), and in 145m at the right hand corner of the field go over a (broken) stile into the next field. In 15m *turn right* towards a stile (220°) which you cross after 60m.

[!] Ignore the path veering half left, to continue in the same direction across the grassy field towards a stile at the bottom of the valley (**[!]** not visible for the first 100m). In 200m cross the stile to the right of a metal field gate leading onto a car wide concrete track and *turn right* to follow the track uphill. Another farm track joins from the right in 20m. In 280m at a T-junction with a tarmac lane (and **Hyde Farm** left) *turn right*. In 100m *fork left* off the road by a yellow footpath sign and through a small wooded area. *Turn left* after 10m and in 35m cross a stile to emerge from the wooded area to go along the left hand side of a field. In 100m you go over a stile between trees to continue along the left hand side of the next field (290°). In 150m cross a stile between hedges to continue along the right hand side of the next field towards a line of HV pylons, which you go under in 325m.

In another 160m pass a line of smaller pylons. In 70m cross over a stile and veer diagonally across the next field on an obvious path (half left 280°). In 120m the path starts to drop into the **Misbourne** valley, with **Great Missenden** ahead of you. In a further 110m cross a lane flanked by two stiles (**Rock Wood** is on the left). Now walk down across the next field on a faint path on the right slope of the valley, aiming for **St. Peter & St. Paul church**, hidden by a clump of three large trees, 350m away (260°). Enter the churchyard through a metal kissing gate and pass the church to its left. *Turn left* on a tarmac lane to go over a road-bridge across the **A413** (Aylesbury Road).

Follow **Church Lane** and in 270m *turn left* into **Church Street**. In 230m *turn right* along **High Street** and after 50m pass **Cafe Twit** ("truly swizzfigglingly flushbunkingly gloriumptious") on your right hand side, in 100m pass **Origins at the White Lion**, and in a further 60m reach the **Cross Keys** on your left, followed by a **Costa Coffee** and **Matilda's** (at a road junction). *Turn left* up **Station Approach** and in 130m you come to **Great Missenden station** on your left. There is a commendable **Coffee Shop, The Pantry on Platform 1**, from where the London bound trains depart.