

How to get to the start

Walks are located north of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire.

Walks can be started from West Wycombe, Saunderton, Bradenham and Hughenden, all of which have good public transport access. If you live nearby you can walk or cycle to the start from parts of High Wycombe, Downley or Naphill.

By train: Saunderton station (un-manned) is on the line between London Marylebone (45mins) and Birmingham Snow Hill operated by Chiltern Railways. Call 08456005165 or www.chilternrailways.co.uk for times and fares.

By bus: There are regular services from High Wycombe to West Wycombe, Bradenham, Saunderton and Hughenden. For times call 0870 6082608 or www.traveline.org.uk.

By car: There are free car parks at West Wycombe and Hughenden Manor. Or you can use a pub car park, but please check with the pub staff.

Visitor information

There are a number of places where you can get refreshments/use toilets on the walks and there is a shop in West Wycombe and Downley. Pubs usually serve food lunchtimes (12-2) and evenings (after 6).

Hell Fire Caves Café West Wycombe (01494 533739)

Open weekends all year and week days March – Oct, 11-5.30

The George and Dragon West Wycombe (01494 464414)

The Swan West Wycombe (01494 527031)

West Wycombe Garden Centre Café (01494 438635)

The Golden Cross Saunderton (01494 562293)

The Plough West Wycombe (01494 538583)

The Red Lion Bradenham (01494 562212)

Le de Spencer Arms Downley Common (01494 535317)




The Bricklayers Arms Downley (01494 520597)

Hughenden Manor Tea Rooms (01494 755500)

Open Wed-Sun, from March – Dec.

For details of places to stay, attractions or other walks and rides contact Wycombe Information Centre 01494 421892 or www.visitbuckinghamshire.org

This is one of a series of walks in the Chilterns. It mainly follows rights of way, which are way marked as follows:

-  Footpaths (walkers only)
-  Bridleways (horseriders, cyclists and walkers)
-  Byways (open to all traffic)

Please be considerate in the countryside

- keep to paths and leave gates as you find them
- please keep dogs under close control

If you have enjoyed this walk there are many other wonderful walks in the Chilterns area including Chilterns Country walks from Wendover, Tring and Henley-on-Thames rail stations call 01844 355500; The Ridgeway National Trail www.nationaltrails.co.uk; walks in the Chilterns www.chilternsaonb.org; walks in Buckinghamshire www.buckscc.gov.uk; or buy Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 172 and make your own walk www.ordsvy.gov.uk

The Chiltern Hills were designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1965. This is in recognition that the Chiltern countryside is amongst the finest in England and Wales. The Chilterns Conservation Board is the body charged with protecting the AONB. Call 01844 355500 or www.chilternsaonb.org.

If you, or a member of your community, would like this leaflet produced in another language or format (large print or audio cassette), please contact the Chilterns Conservation Board.

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Photographs kindly provided by © Chilterns Conservation Board, National Trust and Gerry Whitlow.

Chilterns Country

West Wycombe & Bradenham Walks



Several Circular Walks
Shortest walk: 2½ miles, allow up to 1 hour
Longest walk: over 10 miles, allow up to 5 hours

About the walk

These walks take you through the countryside estates of West Wycombe, Bradenham and Hughenden where there are fantastic views, magnificent beech woods and carpets of bluebells and wild flowers. You can see places of great architecture and historic interest and wildlife such as red kites and muntjac deer.



The walks have markers to help show you the way where the route is not obvious. (waymarker shown to the left)

You can break your walk with a tasty meal or refreshing drink.



Walking gets you fit and keeps you healthy

Features of interest

(see numbers on map)

1. West Wycombe Park

Like many holidaymakers Sir Francis Dashwood (1708-81) was inspired by his travels to transform his estate with styles and art-objects from Italy and the Mediterranean – only on a grand scale. The mix of classical, gothic and English features has been described as a paradise. He even dammed the River Wye to create a lake in the shape of a swan. The House and grounds, now owned by The National Trust, are still the residence of the Dashwood family and are open to the public (01494 513569) www.nationaltrust.org.uk



West Wycombe Park

2. Hell-Fire Caves

The caves consist of a mile of underground passages with various figures depicting the life and times of the members of the Hellfire Club who met there. The infamous tales of their orgies and pagan ceremonies may have originated from political rivals as a smear campaign. The caves were created in the 1750s to provide work for unemployed farm workers and are now a visitor attraction. www.hellfirecaves.co.uk

2. West Wycombe Village and Hill

Much of this attractive Chilterns village is owned by the National Trust. Most of the buildings are 16th - 18th century (more information is available from a village leaflet in the



Picnic on West Wycombe Hill

Post Office). Wycombe is famous for its furniture making industry. At the bottom of Church Lane a surviving workshop still makes furniture using local beech wood. The church on the hill was rebuilt by Dashwood in the 1760s at the same time as the mausoleum was built and is still used for family burials. The golden ball on the church is made of copper and has small seats inside with fantastic views.

3. Hughenden Manor

Hughenden Manor was the home of Victorian Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli from 1848 - 1881. Disraeli and his wife Mary Anne planted dark evergreen trees in the woods near the Manor. When Dizzy, as Mary Anne called him, returned from Westminster after weeks of running the country, "he spent the first week back examining his trees, and the second week examining his books". Disraeli's grave is next to the church. The House and grounds are open to the public and owned by The National Trust (01494 755573) www.nationaltrust.org.uk

4. Bradenham

The Manor House was the birthplace of Benjamin Disraeli and the village and estate is owned by the National Trust. A scene in the film "Dirty Dozen" was filmed near the village green.



Cricket game at Bradenham

Most of the woodland above Bradenham is beech, originally planted during the 1800s for the local furniture industry. The woods are carpeted by bluebells in early May.

5. Downley Common

The common originally provided grazing land for the villagers of West Wycombe. The ponds in the woods are probably over 300 years old, they were created to provide water for cattle. More information on the history of the Common is available in a leaflet available from Downley Post Office.

Red Kites

These distinctive birds of prey were reintroduced to the area from Spain in 1989-1994 after human persecution drove them to extinction in England by the end of the 19th century. One of the reasons for their success is that they scavenge on birds and animals killed by vehicles and game birds shot during the hunting season but not retrieved by dogs. They also feed on insects, earthworms and small mammals.



Landscape Character

Much of the countryside on this walk is owned or managed by the West Wycombe Estate and the National Trust. As well as making a living from agriculture and forestry they are also managing the land to conserve the traditional character and wildlife of the Chilterns. You will notice the woodland on top of the hills, grasses on the upper slopes and arable fields in the valley bottoms.

The following notes describe the route from one place to another so that you can link these together to make your own circular walks, depending on how far you want to go or the places you want to see.

Saunderton to Bradenham

Distance: 1½ miles, allow 30 – 50 minutes

Difficulty: No stiles or narrow gates. Gentle slopes.

Access: Suitable for pushchairs

- From Saunderton station walk left down to the road and then turn left under the bridge and walk up to the main road (there are bus stops here and the Golden Cross pub).
- Take care crossing the road and walk up Smalldean Lane. At the entrance to Janssen-Cilag go up the grass verge on the left and pass through gateposts and then follow a broad grass path running parallel to Smalldean Lane on the left for about 250m. Turn right and follow another broad grass path across the field, past a wood on your left to a gap in the hedge. Turn left uphill on the field edge grass path for about 20m and then right following a left hand hedge. Eventually a crossing hedge is reached at which point turn left uphill for 20m and then turn right downhill. Cross over the farm track and go straight on, through two gates to the road in Bradenham village (the Youth Hostel is on the left). Turn right to take the route back to Saunderton or to the Red Lion pub or cross the road to the church if going to West Wycombe or Downley.

Bradenham to Saunderton

Distance: 1½ miles, allow 30-50 minutes

Access: Easy Access route. Or 2 stiles, 3 kissing gates, steep uphill slope, then downhill.

- Easy Access route – at the Red Lion pub turn right and walk back along the main road to Saunderton station.
- Or cross the main road to the right of the pub, go through the gate and take the footpath under the railway. Then cross a stile to the right and follow a left hand hedge through into thin woodland, uphill across a field and into woods, eventually joining a tarmac lane at the top at Nobles Farm. Turn right here. *(Then see West Wycombe to Saunderton walk notes)*

Bradenham to West Wycombe

Distance: 2 miles, allow 40-60 minutes

Difficulty: No stiles or narrow gates. Flight of steps. 2 uphill sections.

- From the church follow the wall around Bradenham Manor and turn left uphill (still alongside the wall) on a good track.

At the point where the track splits take a footpath to the right which heads uphill into the woods. Follow this path past several timber marker posts to the top of the hill ignoring all side paths. Continue along the track until a waymarked fork is reached. At this point head downhill on a narrow path on the right and continue along this ignoring all other paths, crossing over the rail line (take care!) and then the field to the main road.

- Cross the road (take care) and follow the footpath across the field and up the hill, turning left at the top to reach a kissing gate onto Church Lane. At the road turn left to go to West Wycombe village or turn right to walk towards Saunderton.

Bradenham to Downley Common

Distance: 2 miles, allow 50 – 70 mins

Difficulty: No stiles or gates. Paths muddy in winter.

Gently uphill for ½ mile.

- From the church follow the wall past Bradenham Manor until you reach the track and turn left uphill (still alongside the wall) until the track splits. Take the right hand track uphill for ¼ mile. When it bends sharply to the right take the path straight on into the woods.
- Continue straight ahead until the path soon becomes a broad bridleway. Follow this for ½ mile ignoring all the numerous side and crossing paths until eventually a junction is reached with both a crossing bridleway and a footpath that continues straight ahead. Cross the bridleway and follow the footpath as it bends right and continues ahead through light woodland for about ½ mile until it joins a bridleway by a dew pond. Turn left onto the bridleway and follow it through more woodland for ½ mile until you reach Downley cricket pitch and common.
- (To go to West Wycombe follow the road to the right, around the bend and then take the bridleway on the right, next to the flint house. - *Then see Downley to West Wycombe walk notes*).

West Wycombe to Saunderton (& Bradenham)

Distance: 2½ miles, allow 1- 1½ hours

Difficulty: Steeply uphill to the church then flat or downhill. 1 Kissing gate and 1 stile (additional stile on short-cut). Paths can be muddy after wet weather.

- From West Wycombe take the lane uphill toward St Lawrence's church.
- Take the first opening in the left hand hedge up the steps to open grassland. Then take the footpath on the left uphill

- towards the mausoleum. Go through the churchyard turning right at the church out on to the car park. Head towards some low wooden posts, just beyond which is a track. Follow this past a house on the right into woodland.
- Follow the track through the woodland ignoring all side paths and when the track splits take the right hand fork. Continue for ¾ mile along the track through the wood passing through a gate and eventually reaching a tarmac road at Nobles Farm.
- (To take the short route to Bradenham take the footpath on the right alongside the wooden fence close to the farm entrance, dropping downhill through woodland and fields, then turn right and then left under the railway and take care crossing the A4010 to the Red Lion pub)
- To continue to Saunderton carry on along the tarmac lane, eventually downhill crossing a stile to reach the road. Turn right and walk along the road (take care) into Saunderton.

Downley Common to Hughenden Manor

Distance: 1 mile, allow 20-30 minutes

Difficulty: 2 kissing gates. Mainly downhill but 2 short climbs.

- At the cricket pitch follow the road to the left and then right at the T junction. (The Le De Spencers Arms Pub is to the left). Follow the track past the houses and around the bend. Past the house on the right take the footpath on the right downhill into woods. At the gate turn left for 10m then take the right hand path which eventually joins another path. Turn left, then after 100m, when the path bends to the left, go straight on over the chalk ditch.
- At the bottom of the hill go straight on over the track, uphill. Then turn right following the path above the field eventually into woods and to a broad track. Turn left uphill to Hughenden Manor.

Hughenden Manor to Downley

Distance: 1 mile, allow 20-30 minutes

Difficulty: No stiles or gates. Uphill for ½ mile.

Access: Suitable for pushchairs

- From the National Trust car park at Hughenden Manor, follow the 'entrance' signs to House & Gardens. At the entrance gate turn right along the estate road.
- When a wood is reached follow a bridleway downhill through the woods and then gently uphill between fields and into another wood.
- Continue along the bridleway into the wood and after about a ¼ mile a junction with 5 paths is reached. Ignore these paths and continue on up the bridleway before emerging from the woods at the top where the bridleway joins a tarmac road.
- Turn left at the road and almost immediately turn left onto a path uphill across the common to join another road in Downley village. At the road turn right past the pub, shop and post office.

Downley to West Wycombe

Distance: 1¼ miles, allow 25 – 35 minutes

Difficulty: No stiles or gates. Downhill.

Access: Suitable for pushchairs

- At the T junction near the Post Office cross the main road and follow a footpath over 2 stiles and along a school boundary fence to the school entrance gates. Turn right just past here and follow the path until you reach tall beech trees. Turn right downhill through the trees, following the path downhill to the left. When the path joins the bridleway carry on downhill to Cookshall Lane. Then follow the lane to the left under the railway and down to the main road. Cross the road taking care and at the roundabout follow the road to the right into West Wycombe.
- (To make a circular route back to Hughenden, at the bridleway turn right uphill and follow this to Downley cricket pitch, turning left at the road).



Key

- Pub
- Parking
- Train station
- Toilets
- Feature of interest