

Wendover to Princes Risborough or vice versa (part of the Ridgeway)

Several parts of this route are included some of the walks fully described on this site. It includes some of the best of the Chiltern scarp and beechwoods, with fine views over the Vale of Aylesbury.

Distance

6.5 miles (10.5 km).

Several climbs of up to 130 metres (400 feet). The most severe climb is northbound out of Princes Risborough. There is also a short steep stretch southbound after Lower Cadsden.

Travel

Wendover is on the Chiltern Railways line from Marylebone via Harrow and Amersham to Aylesbury. Princes Risborough is on the main line from Marylebone via High Wycombe and Banbury to the Midlands. There is a branch line connecting Princes Risborough with Aylesbury, with trains approximately hourly.

Travel information for Buckinghamshire is available on www.buckscc.gov.uk/travelinfo and for the whole of SE England by telephoning Traveline on 0871 200 22 33.

Ordnance Survey Map

This walk is all on Ordnance Survey Explorer map 181, Chiltern Hill North.

Refreshments

The Russell Arms at Butlers Cross is half a mile (800m) off the route, down a very steep slope.

The Bernard Arms at Great Kimble is the same distance, but less steep.

The Plough at Cadsden is on the route, and usually has a supply of plastic bags for muddy boots.

Opportunities for refreshment in Wendover are mostly nearer the station than those in Princes Risborough.

Please always be considerate about muddy boots in pubs etc; either take them off, or cover them up.

Never eat or drink your own provisions on pub premises (including the garden, if there is one).

Route

Wendover station is at Grid Ref SP865076 and Princes Risborough at SP799027.

The route is well signposted and waymarked with the long distance path acorn sign.

The path through Linton's and Goodmershill Woods (Grid Ref: 849053) may not be clear on the ground after leaf fall, but there are signposts or waymarks about every 100 yards.

The route immediately north of Lower Cadsden (Grid Ref: 826045) has recently been moved eastwards on to a bridleway in the Granglands Nature reserve, avoiding most of the road walking.

This is unlikely to be shown on the map for some time. There is also an unofficial footpath a few yards east of the bridleway through the strip of woodland next to the road, avoiding even more of the road walking.

Points of Interest

The Countryside Commission's Ridgeway long distance path starts at Overton Hill, near Avebury. From there to the Thames at Goring it follows the prehistoric track along the Wiltshire and Berkshire downs. For the rest of its 85 miles, it takes a more convoluted route, sometimes on the Icknield Way, sometimes on the Chiltern escarpment (as now), but also through woodland and farmland.

The best views in this section are southbound going down towards Princes Risborough, northbound going down towards Wendover, from the Coombe Hill monument, and from above Whiteleaf Cross.

Coombe Hill is 106 acres of chalk downland given to the National Trust in 1918 by Lord Lee of Fareham (who also bequeathed his home, Chequers, to the nation to serve as the official country residence of the Prime Minister). The monument was erected in 1904 as a memorial to the 148 Buckinghamshire men who died in the Boer War, and is 64 feet in height, constructed of Aberdeen granite. It has been struck by lightning twice, in 1938 (after which it had to be substantially rebuilt) and in 1974. At 852 feet (260m) this is one of the highest points on the Chilterns.

Above Great Kimble you go across an old rifle range, with the butts (where the targets were) 200 yards uphill from the path, and firing platforms at 100 yard intervals in front. Maps from the early 20th century show firing platforms back as far as 600 yards, but these are no longer visible.

Above the rifle range is Pulpit Hill, with what is believed to be an Iron Age fort, with some well-preserved ramparts in attractive beechwoods.

You can see Whiteleaf Cross cut out of the chalk below you, with a wooden railing above it. The origin and purpose of the cross are obscure. The first certain written reference to it dates from the eighteenth century, though a tumulus to your left shows there was prehistoric activity here.