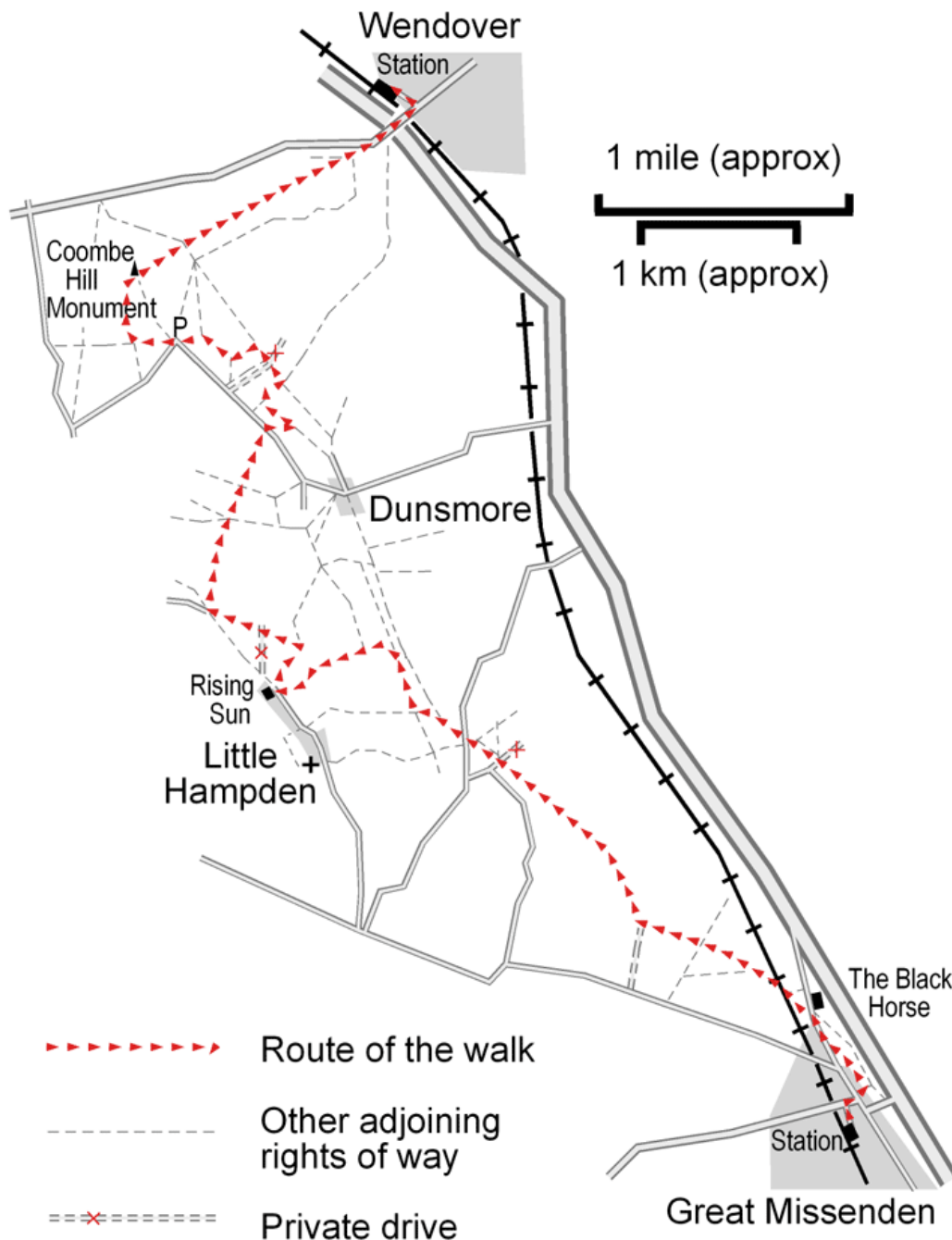


GREAT MISSENDEN TO WENDOVER

An enjoyable and varied walk through woodland and some pasture, starting in the Misbourne Valley and culminating on the Chiltern escarpment at Coombe Hill, with one of the finest views in the county, before descending to the charming small town of Wendover.

The energetic walker could combine this walk with the route from Wendover to Great Missenden, to make a day-long hike.

Checked 2008



Ramblers' Association: Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and West Middlesex Area

Distance

7 miles (11km).

Two steady climbs of about 150 feet (50 metres)

Travel

Both Great Missenden and Wendover are on the Chiltern Line between Marylebone and Aylesbury via Amersham.

Buses link Great Missenden with High Wycombe (but not on Sundays), and Wendover with Aylesbury.

Travel information for Buckinghamshire is available on www.buckscc.gov.uk/travelinfo or by telephoning 0871 200 22 33.

Refreshments

The Black Horse (which welcomes walkers – pre-booked for groups, please) is three quarters of a mile from the start.

The Rising Sun at Little Hampden (closed Mondays).

There is often an ice cream van in the car park approaching Coombe Hill.

There are various possibilities for refreshment in Great Missenden and Wendover.

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).

Ordnance Survey Map

The whole of this walk is on the Ordnance Survey Explorer map 181, *Chiltern Hills North*.

Route

On emerging from Great Missenden station at the booking office, turn left, then bear right down to the High Street mini roundabout.

Turn left for a few yards, then right down Walnut Close.

At the end take the tarmac path to the left of number 18, then before an electricity sub-station turn left along an enclosed path.

At the end of the path go ahead, to the left of the old hedge line, to a stile on to the road.

Continue along the road to a stile just past the last house on the left.

Go diagonally across the field.

On the right is Mobwell Pond, fed by springs, and the source of the River Misbourne. In recent years it has often been dry. On the road just beyond it is the Black Horse public house, a popular centre for hot-air ballooning.

Go through the railway underpass, turn right, diverging from the railway to a stile in the far hedge corner 100 yards to the left of the railway line. (Ignore another stile further left.)

Bear slightly left uphill to another stile.

Go up steps and straight ahead towards the wood corner.

(Contrary to what has been shown on the Ordnance Survey map, there is continuous woodland from here for over half a mile (1 km).)

Continue along the edge of the wood, following a wire fence on the left and ignoring the first stile on the left, to a stile in the field corner.

Cross the stile and go slightly uphill through Coneybank Wood, which in spring is carpeted by bluebells and other wild flowers, to a junction with a bridleway, at the end of the wood.

If you look through the hedge opposite at this point, you will have a good view of the dry valley known as Hampden Bottom, and in the far distance, amongst trees, can be seen Hampden House, the family home of John Hampden, a local and national hero of his time. His refusal, at a meeting in Great Kimble Church in 1635, to pay the ship money tax demanded by Charles I, was the first in a series of events which led to the Civil War.

Turn right and continue along this bridleway for another 500 yards, with fine views soon opening up across the upper Misbourne Valley to the right, to another junction. (Where the bridleway is muddy, there is often a well-used unofficial path next to it; we are not aware of any objection to you using this.)

Bear left and follow the path inside the left-hand edge of the wood.

On leaving the wood, continue ahead for two fields to a 5-way track crossing. (For the first 200 yards the official route is the bridleway to your right, and the stile ahead offers an unofficial alternative; after that you can take either the bridleway (between hedges/fences) or the public footpath in the field to the left of it.)

Take the track ahead just inside the left edge of the wood (if the track is muddy there is a parallel public footpath in the wood on the right) to a road (Cobbersmill Lane).

Cross the road and continue along the track ahead 250 yards to a stile on the left.

Cross the stile and then half right to another stile and then continue in the same direction to a stile into the wood.

Cross the stile and go downhill 60 yards to a path crossing.

Turn right for 500 yards along a level path to another path crossing (yellow arrows on a very large tree).

Turn left, downhill. Near the bottom of the slope continue in the wood past a field corner, to the wood edge ahead where there is a T-junction.

Turn left and then shortly right into a field going uphill. (the official path is to the right of the hedge ahead, though the track to the left of it appears to be well used).

At the top of the field enter the wood, taking the path initially slightly uphill ahead, not the track to the left.

Follow the path as it bears left, alongside an old boundary bank, then downhill, then up to a road in front of houses, where our route turns sharp right down a track.

The Rising Sun pub is ahead. Please observe the requests displayed about boots etc.

To continue the walk, follow the track through the wood for about 350 yards to a field corner on the left by some wooden fence posts.

Turn left and continue just inside the wood and cross the tarmac drive of Hampdenleaf Cottage ("Little Hampden Farm" on the Ordnance Survey map).

Continue ahead just inside the wood (ignoring a left fork) to the end of a minor road (tarmac under much mud).

Enter the wood opposite and turn right, keeping close to the wood edge.

At a field corner continue ahead eventually passing an old stile and then down to a five-way junction in a valley.

Continue uphill, keeping ahead at a waymarked cross path, to post and rail structures with old horse jumps.

Continue ahead, at first just inside the wood, down to a road.

To avoid 70 yards of narrow road (while keeping, more or less, to public footpaths), our route here makes a detour of about 400 yards through pleasant woodland. Cross the road and bear right up the track opposite for 200 yards to a track junction.

Turn sharp left, and follow the track 350 yards to a fork (just after you pass a (not very conspicuous) hut at a hedge corner 50 yards to your left, and a field becomes visible beyond it).

Bear right, away from the hut, for 200 yards, to a stile on to a fenced bridleway.

Turn left for 150 yards to a crossing track with a metal gate on the right.

Continue ahead 170 yards by an old wire fence, watching for a footpath on the left, shown by a waymark post by the start of a high wooden fence.

Turn left here and follow the path downhill through the trees for 200 yards, to a cross-junction of paths at the bottom, just before an open bracken area.

Here turn right along the bottom of the valley and after 300 yards (having ignored some minor side paths) look for a waymark post at a distinct path crossing (where the path ahead, which you do not want, goes between raised banks, and curves gently to the right).

Turn left (another yellow arrow will immediately confirm that you are on the right path), to emerge at a car park at a road bend.

Head slightly left across the car park entrance to a pedestrian gate into Coombe Hill (National Trust).

Bear left, with a fence on the left and bracken and gorse scrub away to the right, for 300 yards, to go ahead to pass a kissing gate where the Ridgeway national trail (marked with acorn signs) comes out of the wood on the left.

Continue a few yards downhill and follow the Ridgeway as it bends to the right out on to the open hillside, with wonderful views opening up immediately.

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.

Several of the walks on this website follow the Ridgeway for stretches, and it's nice to meet the "serious" hikers and backpackers on it as well as those, like ourselves, out for a ramble.

You are now on Coombe Hill. This 106 acres of chalk downland was given to the National Trust in 1918 by Lord Lee of Fareham.

Lord Lee also bequeathed his home, Chequers, to the nation to serve as the official country residence of the Prime Minister. If you look down and behind you to the left soon, you will see the house coming into view.

The Chiltern Hills, of course, include not just the open downland of the escarpment, but mature beech woods, rough common, heathlands, dry valleys and the farmland of the plateau, where the chalk is overlaid by clay with flints.

Continue along the edge of the hill, gradually climbing, until you see a monument ahead. Make for this.

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.

The panoramic view takes in the ridge in both directions, and also gives a superb bird's eye view of the Vale of Aylesbury.

Just below the monument a topograph points out other landmarks, including two of the great houses built in Buckinghamshire by members of the Rothschild family. It doesn't mention the nearest, Halton House, which can be seen in the woods beyond Wendover.

At the monument turn right and follow the Ridgeway acorn waymarks gently downhill, with a steep hillside on your left, to cross a sunken bridleway in trees with a kissing gate each side.

Continue ahead along a narrow strip of open land, to enter trees again (there may be a Bacombe Hill sign).

Continue 100 yards and leave the wood by a kissing gate. (Here the Ridgeway path is waymarked to the left, but rejoins our path after 200 yards).

Follow the Ridgeway half a mile (nearly 1 km) as it bears slightly left down the slope of Bacombe Hill Nature Reserve, to reach steps down and then a kissing gate where footpaths merge.

A few yards ahead, note a signboard on the left, giving some interesting background information about Bacombe Hill nature reserve and the management of areas like this.

Continue ahead to the road, cross carefully and continue downhill. After the bridge over the bypass and railway, turn left for Wendover Station, or go straight ahead for Wendover itself.

There are some pleasant old houses just along the road ahead and the centre of the town is very attractive, and makes a relaxing place to wander in now that much of the traffic is whisked past it on the bypass.