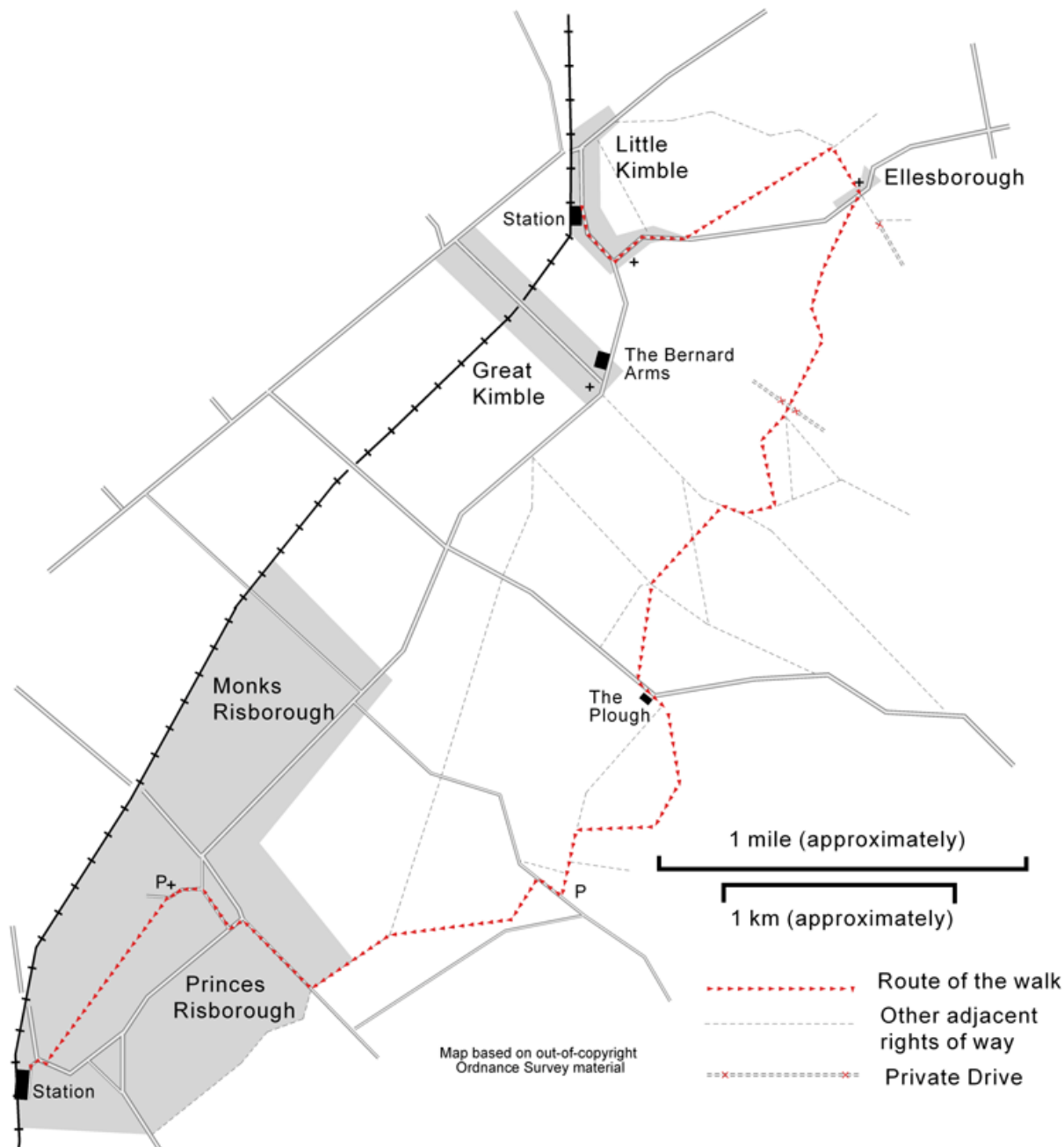


## Little Kimble – Ellesborough – Princes Risborough

A short but hilly walk taking in some of the best of the Chilterns scarp, both open hillside and some classic beechwood, with several stunning views over the Vale of Aylesbury, and some points of historical interest, including the old wall paintings in Little Kimble Church.

Checked 2009



## Distances

Little Kimble station to Ellesborough	1 mile (1.5 km)
Ellesborough to Princes Risborough	4.5 miles (7 km)
Total Little Kimble to Princes Risborough	5.5 miles (8.5 km)

Two main hills, one of them quite steep, of 250 to 350 feet (80 to 105 metres).

## Travel

Little Kimble station is on the branch line from Princes Risborough to Aylesbury, with hourly trains for much of the day. Princes Risborough is on the main Chiltern Railways line from Marylebone via High Wycombe to Banbury and Birmingham, with a frequent service.

There is a good bus service (hourly on Sundays) between Aylesbury, Princes Risborough and High Wycombe, stopping at Ellesborough Church and Little Kimble All Saints' Church. There is no longer a regular bus service to Kimble station.

The car park at Princes Risborough station is usually pretty full on weekdays. If you need to come by car, you may do better to park at the Mount car park, near the church, a little over half a mile (1km) from the station. Parking at Little Kimble is very limited (the station building is now a private house), though there is a lay-by near the church.

Detailed travel information for the whole of this area is available from the Traveline South East website [www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk](http://www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk) or telephone 0871 200 22 33

## Ordnance Survey Map

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

## Refreshments

Pubs: The Plough at Cadsden normally has a supply of plastic bags for muddy boots. The Bernard Arms at Great Kimble is 350 yards from the route.

The opening times of the pleasant buffet at Princes Risborough station suit the commuter rather than the walker. For refreshments in Princes Risborough it is best to look near the market square. 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

From Little Kimble station, cross the busy A4010 with care, turn right and walk for 300 yards on the main road in the Princes Risborough direction, and turn left into Ellesborough Road (signposted Wendover).

(or if arriving by bus: from the bus stops, go downhill and then turn right into Ellesborough Road.)

**Immediately, on the right, is All Saints' Church, renowned for its fine 14th century wall paintings, arguably the best in Buckinghamshire. The collection of saints includes St Francis preaching to the birds, St Christopher, St James and St George.**

**In the chancel is a group of floor tiles from the 13th century, with an Arthurian theme.**

Continue along the pavement past the church and when the pavement runs out cross the road with care and continue on the left hand verge.

Immediately behind the "Ellesborough" village road sign take the footpath on the left.

This footpath, signposted "Aylesbury Ring", takes you briefly by conifers through the edge of a private garden. Leaving the garden behind, you pass down a narrow path to reach a stile into a field, with gardens still on your right.

Continue in the same direction across the field to reach a gate and stile, and go straight on with a hedge and then fence on your right. Your target is Ellesborough church, up above you on your right, but you must wait to turn towards it until you reach the waymarked crossing footpath at the next stile on the right.

Take the path up towards the church and into the church grounds.

**Ellesborough church is open on summer weekend afternoons. There is a fine view from the tower.**

Take the stepped path up the knoll and then drop down again to the Ellesborough Road. Cross the road with care (poor visibility both ways).

**The almshouses ahead of you are shown on Bryant's 1825 map of Buckinghamshire.**

If you wish to go a few yards along the track directly opposite to look at the almshouses, first note the kissing gate and signpost 30 yards along the road to the right, which is where your route continues.

From the kissing gate take the path across the field at an angle of about 30 degrees from the field boundary on your left, to go through a kissing gate in the next hedge/fence.

Continue on the rising path in roughly the same direction, with the steep slopes of Beacon Hill above you on the left.

**Following the implementation of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, this area is now open access land, where you are free to walk where you like. If you are feeling energetic, it would be a shame not to climb to the top of the hill for the view, coming back down again afterwards to join this path before it enters the woodland ahead. The easiest route is to follow this path until it starts to go downhill, then go left uphill to join a narrow path just above a broken fence, which you follow to the right. At the top of the hill do not attempt to cross the fence ahead.**

**To the right of Ellesborough church, in the woods at the foot of the hills, is Halton House, now the officers' mess for RAF Halton, and further right is the monument on Coombe Hill.**

**To the left of Ellesborough church, and five miles (8 km) away, is the Buckinghamshire County Council office tower, with Aylesbury church a little to the left of it.**

**To the left of that is Quainton Hill, with a mast on top and the windmill much lower down to the left.**

**On the top of the next hill to the left is Waddesdon Manor, visible above the trees.**

**On the larger hill to the left of that, and further away, is Brill.**

**Almost at your feet, in the woodland below you, is an ancient earthwork called Cymbeline's Castle. Any connection with Shakespeare's Cymbeline is unproven, though it is claimed that the name Kimble may derive from Cymbeline.**

Continue on the main path along a slope of almost alpine steepness to a stile in the field corner, where you reach the woodland of Ellesborough Warren.

Enter the woodland, taking the stepped path uphill, and eventually emerge to another field.

The well-trodden path runs across the middle of the field to the next piece of woodland.

As it reaches the trees, it becomes wide and rutted, having been joined by a track used by vehicles on the Chequers Estate. Continue through the wood for 200 yards, then ignore the crossing track which is clearly signposted as private in both directions and go through the kissing gate ahead beside a metal gate.

**Keeping to the left of the field would bring you to the path which eventually crosses the main driveway of Chequers, but this is not the direction for today's walk.**

Keep to the right through the clump of beeches and go downhill, keeping the fence on your right until you reach a kissing gate into more Open Access Land.

Go through the gate and climb up steeply, but briefly, to the top of the ridge.

Bear left along the ridge through the grass and low scrub, getting closer to the right hand (lower) field boundary, to another gate in the far corner of this narrow enclosure.

Once through this gate, turn right and you are on the Ridgeway. From here you follow the Ridgeway and its acorn waymarkers in a westsouthwesterly direction, keeping left at the signposted right fork which leads to Great Kimble. The path leads you diagonally uphill across low ridges.

**These ridges represent old trackways (some of which are shown on early estate maps) which fell into disuse when the bridleway you are about to cross was laid down at the time the road below was turnpiked, in the early nineteenth century.**

For the best views, just before you enter woodland, take the short diversion when the knoll of Chequers Knap appears on your right, returning to the Ridgeway path afterwards.

**From here, Marsh level crossing is exactly in line with Aylesbury church and exactly half way to it. Kimble parish reaches as far north as the crossing and a mile (1.6km) south-eastwards into the woods behind you. A number of Chilterns parishes are similarly formed of a long strip of land, with lowland for arable crops, steep slopes for rough grazing and woodland for timber and pigs.**

Drop down to a crossing bridleway in the trees ahead,

**The woods above you are Pulpit Hill (National Trust) with what is thought to be an iron age fort.**

(To detour to visit Pulpit Hill, turn left here up the bridleway and at the top of the hill take a path marked with white arrows to the right, returning here afterwards, otherwise:-)

Turn right down the bridleway, then in another 30 yards turn off to the left, still following Ridgeway markers.

Going through this gate, you come to another area of scrub and grassland.

**This is an old rifle range. The position of the butts (where the targets were located) is clearly visible 200 yards to your left, with firing positions at 100 yard intervals in front of them.**

From here, you are aiming southwest to the point about 150 yards away where the path runs along the edge of woodland. (If you climb the grassy slope to your left (southeast) to look at the butts, you will have to come down again!)

Follow the path along the woodland edge, with views down to paddocks and stables below on your right. Ignore a crossing footpath and continue, through a kissing gate, to another crossing bridleway.

**This is a very old trackway, shown on Jefferys's 1770 map of Buckinghamshire.**

Here the route of the Ridgeway has recently been changed and you follow it straight on through the gate into Granglands Nature Reserve, on a newly recorded public bridleway.

Go straight downhill, then through another gate and on through woodland (there are two parallel paths; the left-hand one is less likely to be muddy) to reach the road.

Cross with care, turn left, take the access road ahead to the Plough, and consider whether you need refreshment before the long climb up to Whiteleaf Hill.

Past the Plough, turn right following the Ridgeway signs and take the left fork, go through a kissing gate and then fork right as the path climbs up the hill (south), then swings southwest as it climbs up a spur of Whiteleaf Hill, which combines stately old trees and good views. Ignore a cross path.

**Note that much of the self-sown woodland is ash rather than the traditional beech. It is suggested that ash is more natural to the area than beech, which was cultivated for the furniture trade, particularly in High Wycombe.**

A gate brings you to the grassy sward at the summit of the hill, from where there are magnificent views to the west. Your route goes to the left, but first go ahead to enjoy the view.

You have climbed about 350 feet in the last twenty minutes so enjoy the reward... but be aware that you will be in the company of those who have walked a level 350 yards from the nearby car park!

**Below you, beyond the wooden rail, is Whiteleaf Cross, cut through the topsoil to show the (hopefully white) chalk below. 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.**

**There are information panels on the wooden rail, and a brass plate on a pillar gives the directions of the main landmarks.**

With your back to the views, turn right (south), as the Ridgeway fingerpost indicates, and join the surfaced path which leads to the car park. Skirt round to the right of the car park, down to the road. Here turn sharp right, then in 25 yards turn off up to the left to reach a Brush Hill signboard. Here, as at Whiteleaf Hill, much conservation and archaeological work is being done by local volunteers. The path swings round the signboard and in another 100 yards reaches a kissing-gate. Go through this and bear right, passing a seat with a fine view ahead into Oxfordshire, and another pillar with a plate indicating the main landmarks visible from here.

**The directions to Beckley and to Waddesdon are indicated. The hill to the left of Beckley is Shotover, and between Beckley and Waddesdon are Brill and Ashendon.**

Continue down the grassy ridge.

Towards the far end of the grassy area you reach a kissing gate and signboard on the right by another seat.

The path descends through woodland and scrub and comes out again to a field.

It runs along the left-hand edge of the field to join the Upper Icknield Way, a public byway, at the end of the field.

Turn left onto this track. In 400 yards you will emerge at New Road, on the very edge of Princes Risborough.

Turn right and walk 400 yards downhill to the roundabout by M&S Simply Food and the Horns Lane car park (three hour maximum stay, except Sundays and Bank Holidays).

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

Turn left and cross the road at the pelican crossing, then turn left and right into the High Street, where most shops apart from the supermarkets are to be found.  
After 200 yards, turn left at the market square into Church Street.

**The Market House was restored as a memorial to those who died in the First World War.**

The church is across to your right, as is the Manor House.

**Parts of the church date from the thirteenth century, but most of it is Victorian.  
The seventeenth century Manor House (National Trust) can be visited only by written appointment.**

Walk straight on down Manor Park Avenue, a pleasant private road for part of its length but a public footpath nonetheless. Half-a-mile from the square, there is a T-junction with Summerleys Road.

Turn right and then immediately left up Station Approach for the station, which is just round the corner.

Stephen Cotton