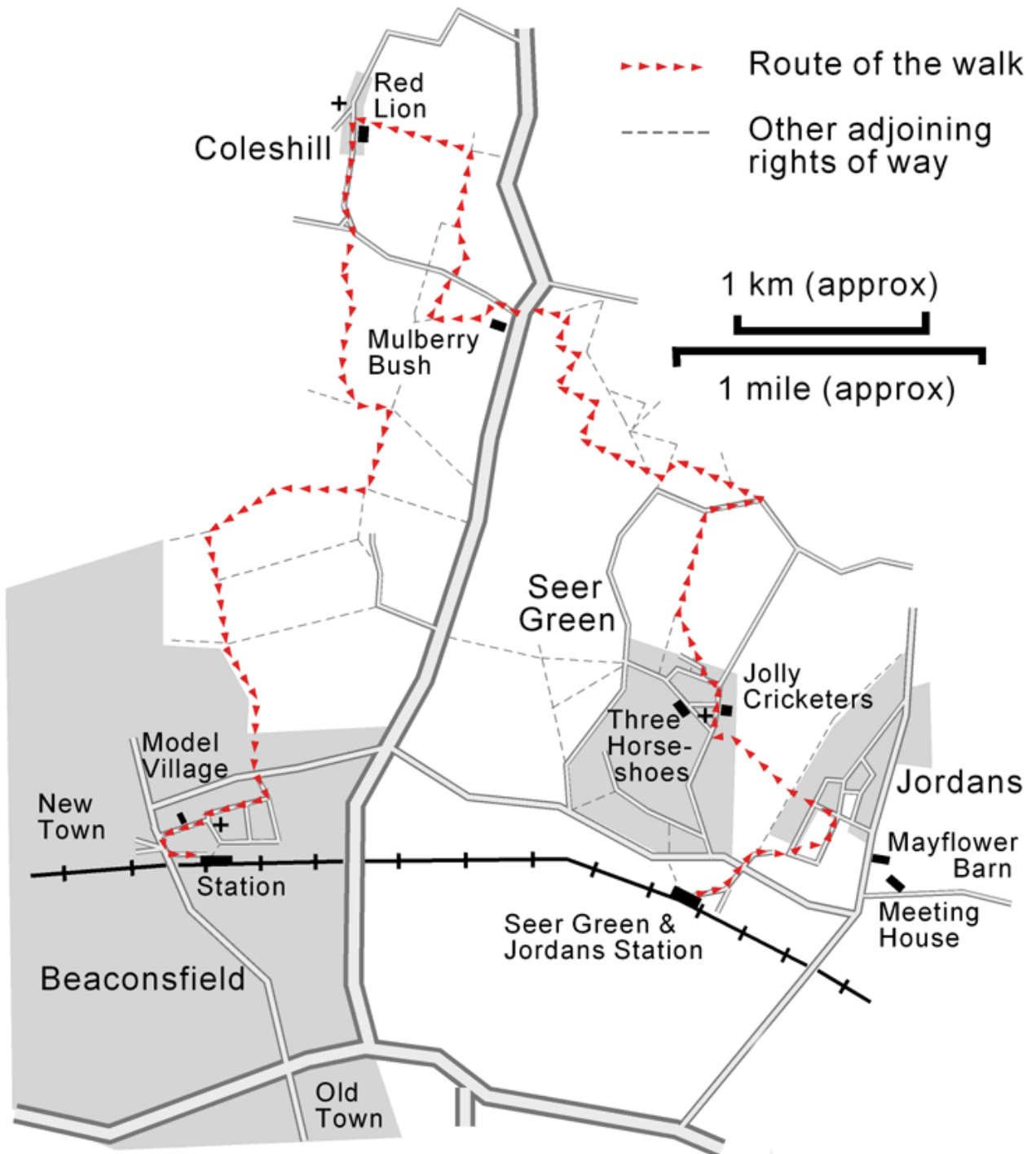


Seer Green to Beaconsfield

A pleasant walk through pasture and varied woodland. Jordans has Quaker associations. The model village at Bekonscot is an added attraction in the tourist season. This route has been walked when conditions were very wet indeed and with proper boots it was still passable.

Checked 2008.



Distance

8 miles (12.5 km)

One steady climb of a little over 100 feet (35 metres) and some smaller ones, none of them steep.

Travel

Seer Green and Beaconsfield are both on the Chiltern Line between Marylebone and High Wycombe, with a frequent service (but hourly to Seer Green on Sundays). There are car parks at both Beaconsfield station and Seer Green & Jordans station for rail travellers only – buy your ticket when you park (reduced rate after 9am weekdays and at weekends).

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.

Refreshments

Pubs: The Jolly Cricketers and the Three Horseshoes at Seer Green, the Mulberry Bush (formerly The Magpies) on the Beaconsfield to Amersham Road, and the Red Lion at Coleshill.

In keeping with its Quaker origins, there is no pub in Jordans though provisions can be obtained at the village store on the green (closed Sundays).

There are shops at Seer Green, and various possibilities for refreshments at Beaconsfield.

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 number 172, Chiltern Hills East.

Route

Start from Seer Green Station.

From the ticket office turn right and walk down the approach road to join Farm Lane, then ahead to crossroads (Longbottom Lane).

Cross and go 100 yards along Wilton Lane. Where this divides, take the right fork, and at the end take a steep path up to the left, to a road bend.

Take the path into the wood ahead.

This is Crutches Wood, permanently reserved as an open space – see the memorial stone.

Go ahead nearly 150 yards to another memorial stone and a seat, and then a further 100 yards to a fork.

Take the path ahead, passing a seat, to emerge on a road at a conspicuous red dog loo.

From here the Quaker sites are ahead across the field, but access to them is at present very limited, and during pipe laying work the direct route is blocked, so turn left along the road to the village green, where, unless you want to visit the sites, you turn left.

To visit the Quaker sites, turn right and then right again along the footpath on the other side of the road and parallel with it, then continue on the road verge.

The large brick building to the left was until recently Old Jordans Guest House and Conference Centre and was originally Jordans Farm. The farm was acquired in 1639 by William Russell, one of the early Quakers, and served from 1659 as a meeting place of local Quakers. George Fox, who founded the movement, and William Penn worshipped there regularly. Meetings were frequently broken up by the authorities, and worshippers imprisoned.

The wooden building end on to the road is the Mayflower Barn, so called because it is said to have been built from the timbers of the Mayflower, in which the Pilgrim Fathers sailed.

An eminent antiquarian, Rendel Harris, published a book in 1920 setting out the evidence. Most of this is circumstantial, but it does at the very least add up to a string of quite remarkable coincidences. It certainly was common for redundant sailing vessels to be brought up the Thames and broken up for building, and it is said that if you stand in the barn and look between your legs at the roof, it looks very much like the hold of a wooden sailing ship! Unfortunately there appears no longer to be public access to the barn.

To visit the burial ground, continue down the road, take the new path beside it for a short distance then turn left away from the road to enter by a gate on the right.

Opposite the meeting house are the graves of William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, his wives Gulielma and Hannah, and ten of their 16 children.

The simple meeting house, probably the most famous in the country, was built in 1688, the year that the Declaration of Indulgence gave freedom of religion. Unfortunately it was badly damaged by fire in March 2005, but it is hoped it will reopen in 2008.

Retrace your steps to the village green, where you now continue ahead with the green on your right.

A plaque on the small building by the green, which houses the offices of Jordans Village Ltd, commemorates Fred Hancock, the first Secretary, and refers to the ideals of the founders.

Jordans Village was established by local Quakers in 1919 as a model village, and designed by Fred Rowntree.

The idea of creating a Village Estate at Jordans took shape in 1915-1916 when land became available and enabled Friends to fulfil a long-cherished wish to do something to preserve the surroundings of Jordans Meeting House, an area with a long Quaker history.

The declared aim was to create a village based on Christian principles where artisans, among others, could ply their trades in conditions that would provide for the development of character and self-expression. It was not necessary to be a Quaker to come to the Village.

Over the years a number of open spaces have been preserved to retain the original character of a garden village, and the areas around the Village Green, the Meeting House and Old Jordans are designated as a Conservation Area.

Cricket is played on the green in summer and the village store and post office is owned by the community.

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

Continue along Seer Green Lane and take the track downhill ahead to a 'crossroads' of paths. Follow the path uphill, narrow at first but it soon becomes a wide track, bearing left at Manor Farm, to reach School Lane at Seer Green, opposite the Parish Church Hall. Turn right along Chalfont Road (Bus stop for 305 service, occasional buses to Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and Uxbridge; no Sunday service). Go past the Jolly Cricketers pub with church opposite.

The small church was built in 1847 when Seer Green became a separate parish.

On past the shop and cross the road at the car salesroom and go down Howard Road. Soon bear right into Howard Crescent and, after no. 24, take a path (signposted) between gardens to a stile. Cross and go diagonally left across the field to a stile hidden in the hedge. Over, turn right and follow the path over three stiles to reach Rawlings Lane. Here our route turns right to make a loop, to avoid a stretch of road that may be flooded after heavy rain, and to go through some pleasant woodland.

(The map shows an obvious short cut, by going left along the road, past Widmer Farm and, where lane goes sharp left, turn right to enter Hodgemoor Woods on a wide, stony track, which you follow to the left, to continue at:
“**After 100 yards, where the track bears right” below.)

Having turned right, go along Rawlings Lane for 400 yards, passing a large old house (Rawlings Farm) to where the lane turns sharp right. Enter the wood on the left, and bear left to follow the horse trail, fairly close to the edge of the wood, for 600 yards to a path crossing in a dip. Follow the path ahead as it bears left, to the edge of the wood, just before the road. Turn right along a track along the edge of the wood, with a field on your left.

**After 100 yards, where the track bears right, keep left on a narrow path just inside the wood edge. Keep along this winding path for over half a mile (1 km) as it follows the edge of the wood to the right, left (with some mature trees in the field to your left), right and left again, with views over the countryside. (This path is not recorded as a right of way, so there is no obligation to keep it clear, but we have always found it passable. However, you should be able to get round any obstructions by going a short way into the woodland on your right. If you keep in sight of the edge of the wood on your left, you will come to the right place eventually.)

After the final left turn, note that you are aiming to leave the wood at a point dead ahead, to cross the noisy A355, though the paths do not lead there directly and may be indistinct. Follow the path as it curves to the right into the wood and then turn left.

Cross with care (there is a pedestrian island to the right) to Magpie Lane by the Mulberry Bush pub (garden/food).

Go 100 yards up the lane and turn left on to the track for Ongar Hill Farm.

Follow the track as it curves to the right, to a waymark post on the right just BEFORE the farm (noting the windmill visible nearly half a mile (0.7 km) away half right; the walk passes closer to it later on).

Turn right and go across the field, along a line of trees, to a hedge.

Go right 30 yards to an enclosed path, down to Magpie Lane.

Cross to the stile opposite.

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

Over stile, along fence (following it as it bears left), through kissing gate, across field, and straight ahead along an unfenced track to a track on the other side of the next hedge

Turn left towards Herts Wood.

Follow the path up the right edge of the wood to pass the Red Lion pub (garden/food) at Coleshill, to the road (Village Road).

Until 1844 Coleshill was a detached island of Hertfordshire within Bucks (hence the name of Hertfordshire House, to the south west of the village). This was useful for Quaker dissenters like Thomas Ellwood who could live in Coleshill and avoid local Bucks magistrates.

Turn left, passing the pond, and continuing when the road becomes Windmill Hill. Watch out for the windmill behind houses on the left.

The mill was built in 1856 by Thomas Grove, and was known as Grove's Mill. It fell into disuse at the beginning of the twentieth century. Between the wars it was used as the headquarters of the local Girl Guides. The "wagon shaped cap" is said to be unusual in Bucks.

Edmund Waller, the Civil War poet of "Go lovely rose...." and orator, was born at Coleshill and built Hall Barn, south of Beaconsfield, in about 1660. The estate was subsequently acquired by the first Lord Burnham, the newspaper magnate, and has been in the family since.

Down the hill to bear left at Magpie Lane and immediately take a signposted path to the right.

This path leads to a stile, over, turn right on a quiet lane and opposite the pylon go left over a stile. Cross the field diagonally right to stile under power lines.

Cross, go down right hand hedge to a kissing gate.

Through this go ahead along the edge of woodland to join a track.

Follow the track 70 yards to a path into Great Luckings Wood on the left (where there should be a waymark post).

Turn left into the wood and follow a winding path slightly uphill for 120 yards, then turn right at a waymarked post, following the path left and right downhill to the valley bottom.

Go left for 300 yards, joining a wide track, to a field corner.

Turn right up a fenced path with the field on your left, to farm access road at the top.

Turn right along the access road to enter woodland, with Wood Cottage on your left.

Go ahead through the wood, keeping left at a fork, to the end of the field on your left, then continue a further 500 yards, crossing a small dip, down to an old fence across the path with a cross path just beyond it, at the bottom of a wide, shallow valley.

Note the quite large ditches and banks, presumably old property boundaries.

Turn left along the path, and continue 600 yards, still gently downhill until you reach gardens.

Continue ahead to the left of the gardens nearly half a mile (0.7km) to reach Ledborough Lane.

Cross and go down Wilton Road, then right into Grenfell Road.

Follow this to turn left at green by church into St. Michaels Road then immediately right along Warwick Road with Bekonscot Model Village on the right.

Bekonscot claims to be the oldest model village in the world. First opened in 1929, it covers one and a half acres, and includes a quarter of a mile of railway track, a third of a

mile of roadway, 160 buildings (including a model of “Green Hedges”, see below) and some 8000 plants, concentrating on miniature varieties.

All the profits go to the Church Army.

Open daily, March to October.

Continue ahead to reach Penn Road. Here you will find shops, cafes, etc.

This end of Beaconsfield - the New Town - only really developed following the coming of the railway in 1906.

The picturesque Old Town is nearly a mile away to the south, and is built around crossroads (now a roundabout) on the old London to Oxford road. The four roads which radiate from here are lined with a wealth of houses in many styles dating back to the early 17th century, and are called respectively London End, Windsor End, Wycombe End and Aylesbury End. Every Tuesday a popular market is held in Windsor End, and all four Ends are closed on one day each year for the fair. Both fair and market were founded over 700 years ago.

Few small towns can have as many literary associations as Beaconsfield.

One of the most popular, and certainly most prolific of children’s writers, Enid Blyton, had her house “Green Hedges” a short distance along Penn Road to your right. The house and garden are no more, having been sold for building, but she is commemorated in the name of the cul-de-sac built on the site - “Blyton Close”

The American poet Robert Frost brought his young family to Beaconsfield in 1912, and had his first book published while he was living in Reynolds Road (which is almost opposite Warwick Road) at number 26. The family used to enjoy walking in the local countryside.

Edmund Burke bought Gregories Estate in 1768 and lived there until his death in 1797. He is buried in the parish church, but the house and estate no longer exist.

GK Chesterton lived in Beaconsfield from 1909 until his death in 1936, and the house he had built in Grove Road called “Top Meadow” still stands. He was a well known figure about the town and a bust of him stood for many years in his favourite bar in the White Hart. His grave is in the Roman Catholic cemetery in Shepherds Lane (in the Old Town, off the main roundabout) and is marked by a headstone carved by Eric Gill.

Alison Uttley wrote her much loved stories for children about Little Grey Rabbit, Sam Pig and many other animal characters, in the years from 1930 that she was living at “Thackers” in Ellwood Road (some distance away in the Old Town).

Turn left for the station.

Tom Berry