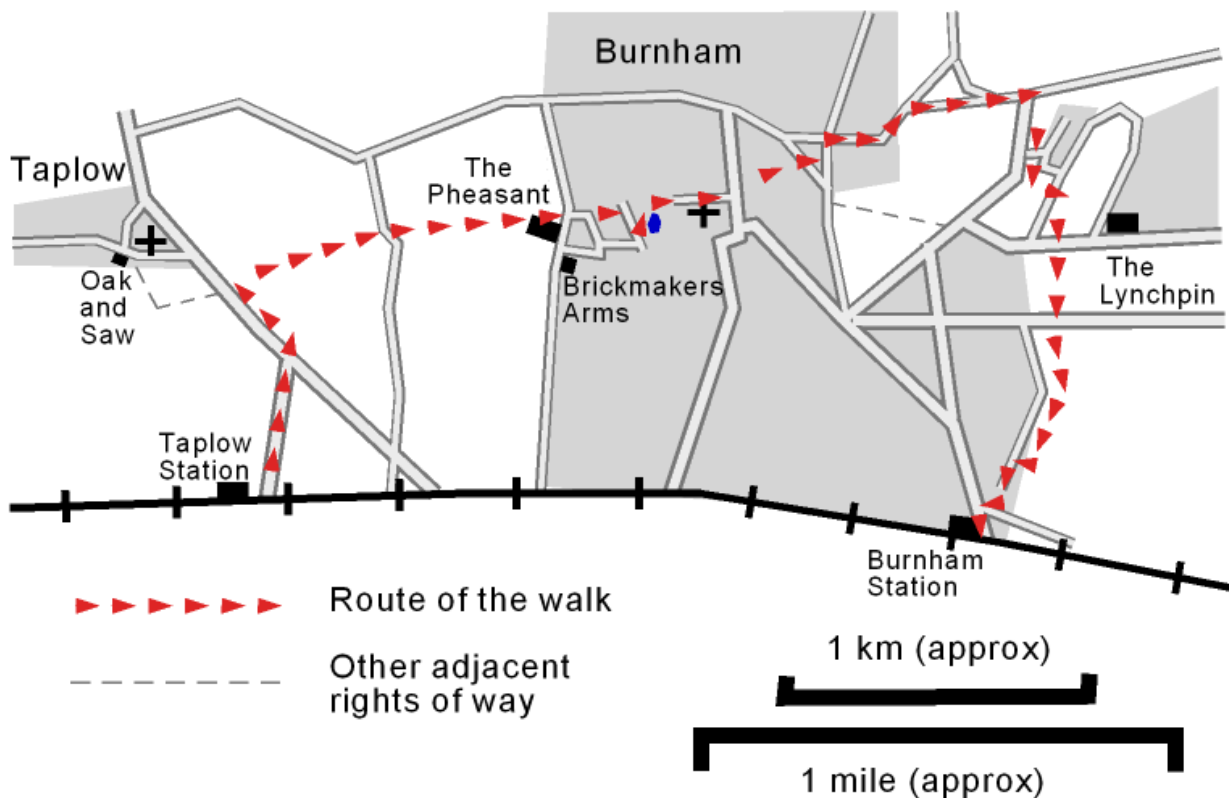


TAPLOW TO BURNHAM

An easy walk in a surprisingly rural pocket of south Bucks, visiting the charming old village of Burnham (well stocked with pubs!), a small lake and a nature reserve.



Distance

3.5 miles (5.5 km).

Not flat, but no significant hills.

Travel

Taplow and Burnham stations are on the line from Paddington, Ealing Broadway and Slough to Reading, but with no services on Sundays to Taplow.

There is a large car park on the opposite side of the railway to Taplow station and a small one outside the main station entrance (pay and display).

The entrance to the fairly small car park for Burnham station is in Sandringham Court, off Station Road (cheaper after 10.00 and at weekends).

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

Refreshments

Taplow village: The Oak and Saw.

Lent Rise: The Pheasant and The Brickmakers Arms.

Burnham: Old Five Bells, Ye Olde Swan, The Red Lion, The Garibaldi and The Bee, shops (Budgens), a chip shop and restaurants.

Britwell: The Lynchpin.

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

This walk is on O.S. Explorer Map 172, Chiltern Hills East.

Route

Leave Taplow Station by the main exit to the north, turn right and at the road junction turn left onto Station Road.

At the end, cross Boundary Road and turn left along a bridle path parallel with the road, to where the bridle path ends at a 30mph sign on the road, where you turn right along a footpath.

To make a short detour into Taplow village (ca 10 minutes each way), cross back over Boundary Road at the 30mph sign and go through a kissing gate opposite and along a footpath 250 yards to another kissing gate on the right.

Go through the gate and up an enclosed path to emerge in Taplow village, with St Nicolas House (1883) on the left, the Oak and Saw pub beyond that, and St Nicolas Church opposite.

The church is in Gothic style, dating from 1912, and is distinguished by its tall spire.

It is thought that the name Taplow comes from 'Taepa', a great Saxon prince or chief whose burial mound in the grounds of Taplow Court was excavated in 1883. The finds of 7th century Saxon jewels, clothing and pottery are to be seen in the British Museum in the Edward VIII Gallery, close to the Sutton Hoo ship burial remains.

Walter de la Mare retired to Taplow, where he lived at the imposing Hill House (400 yards beyond the pub) from 1925 to 1940 with his wife, Constance Elfrida Ingpen, and four children.

To return to the walk, either retrace your steps or turn right onto Rectory Road then right at the T-junction with Hill Farm Road (which becomes Boundary Road) to where the detour started.

Continuing on the walk, take the footpath away from the village, initially with tall hedging on the left but then opening out with fields on both sides.

Cross Hitcham Road and continue on a footpath through woods, going under a low brick tunnel (possibly an estate bridge giving access for Hitcham House on the left to land south of the public path?).

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

Continue on the sunken path as it gently rises, going under another bridge, and reaching the top of the rise with fine views of the countryside to the south, with Windsor Castle to the south-east. The spire of Burnham church can be seen ahead.

Go through double kissing gates and on to another kissing gate at Lent Rise Road. The Pheasant pub is on the right and The Brickmakers Arms a little further down to the right.

The hamlet of Lent Rise (the word 'Lent' comes from the Old English word meaning 'shelter') was one of the many brick-making areas of South Bucks until the last century, and the Methodist Church in Eastfield Road (built in 1897) occupies the site where a brickworks once stood.

Cross over to Lent Green and go ahead 150 yards along Church Walk, to a T junction.

Turn right then cross over to take a footpath to the left, along the edge of a small lake. At the end of the lake, turn right and follow the footpath to the right of a graveyard into Church Street, with St Peter's Church on the right and the Old Five Bells pub on the left.

St Peter's Church (built by the Normans some time between 1150 and 1200) has an array of brasses and tombs, some of which date from the 16th century. The oldest part of the building is the tower which is believed to date from about 1200. There is a fine Victorian stone reredos and massive 17th century altar rails formerly part of a staircase at Eton College. You enter the church through the Cornerstone, a social area with light refreshments and toilets, open 10 am to 4 pm, Mondays to Fridays.

Continue ahead into Burnham village, noting the old Fire Station on the right where Church Street joins High Street.

Burnham may have been inhabited even before Roman times. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book which records that, in 1086, the Manor of Burnham was held by a "Walter son of Other". His son William took possession of the estate, along with the new surname of "Windsor" (it is said that William was the founder of the Windsor family). The estate remained with the family until it was split between Duncan de Lascelles and Ralph Hodeng in 1204.

Burnham was largely a farming community and in medieval times the town had a market and a fair.

In the High Street are numerous 16th and 17th century buildings.

The Fire Station with its bell tower was built in 1908, following the establishment of a fire brigade in the early 19th century; by the late 1800s there were 12 volunteer firemen.

To the right can be seen the tower of The Priory, now refurbished as offices.

To the right there is a pub (The Garibaldi) where High St ends opposite a green. To the left along High St are 3 more pubs: Ye Olde Swan, the Red Lion and furthest away is The Bee, on Britwell Rd.

From the end of Church St, cross over High St and continue along an alley slightly to the left (adjacent to the pharmacy) which leads to an enclosed footpath that emerges onto Hogfair Road.

Cross over and continue on another short stretch of footpath, then turn left into Green Lane and right at the road junction onto Britwell Rd.

Follow this to the right, past Court Lane.

Out of sight to the left is Burnham Grove where it is thought the poet Gray stayed with his uncle Johnathan Rogers in 1736.

A little further on the right is Grenville Court and the South Bucks Bridge Centre and Tudor Barn, with a nice clocktower behind at the rear entrance to Grenville Court.

Grenville Court dates from the early 18th century, with extensive Victorian additions. At one time it was occupied by Lord Grenville (who was related to William Pitt). From 1920 the property was owned by an enclosed community of Anglican nuns but it has now been converted to business use.

Continue to the mini-roundabout at the junction with Farnham Lane and Lower Britwell Road, then where the pavement ends, cross over and go through bollards to Cocksherd Green. This is now in Berks, though used to be in Bucks until the boundary was moved in 1974.

Turn right across the green, over a road (Dove House Crescent) and ahead to the far corner into Bangle's Spinney.

Take the left-hand path and after 50 yards turn left again, to follow winding paths downhill to a road (Lynch Hill Lane).

Turn right (the raised bank is pleasant walking, but has steep descents) and continue to a road (Long Furlong Drive). (Alternatively, cross the grassy valley to the Lynchpin pub opposite, and then cross the road to your right and come diagonally back down to the bottom of the grassy slope, leaving the basketball court on your right.)

Take a track ahead leading to a basketball court.

Continue past the court along the bottom edge of a grassy slope to Whittaker Road, opposite Littlebrook Avenue.

Cross Whittaker Road to a metal kissing gate leading into Haymill Valley Nature Reserve.

Haymill Valley is a wildlife trust reserve and heritage site managed by Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), one of several such sites which contain standing water habitat. Notice the informal fencing encouraging visitors to keep to the path.

Follow the path for nearly half a mile (0.7 km) through woods, keeping in sight of fencing on the right and passing three tall metal gates, to emerge at a gap in the fence (with brambles ahead) into a car park at the back of flats. (If nettles on the last section of path are troublesome, emerge by the third gate, and continue 350 yards on the parallel road.)

Walk ahead to a sign on the left saying "No 179-217" then turn left and follow the road through the residential estate as it bears to the right.

Go ahead along a short footpath, cross over two roads and turn left, then right at the lights into the access road for Burnham Station.

Alan Sheppard