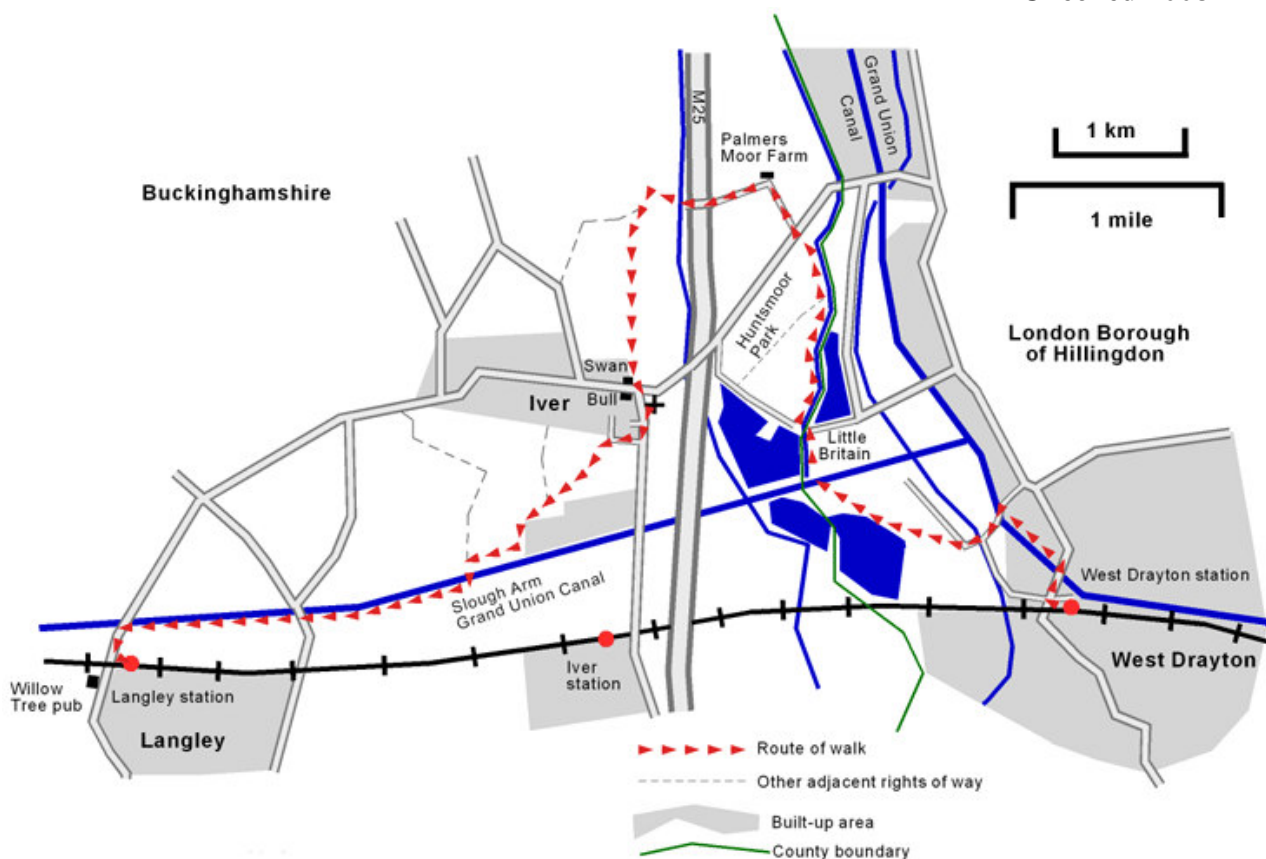


West Drayton - Iver - Langley

A 'three counties' walk this, starting in the London Borough of Hillingdon, crossing over into Buckinghamshire to visit the old village of Iver, and ending just over the border at Langley in Berkshire. The walk begins on the Grand Union Canal and ends going along part of its western extension, the Slough Arm, after following the attractive River Colne for some distance. With generally firm surfaced paths at least as far as Iver, this could also make a good winter walk.

Checked 2008



Distances

West Drayton - Iver	3 miles (5 km) (plus 0.8 miles (1.3 km) to Iver station)
Iver - Langley	2.5 miles (4 km)
Total	5.5 miles (9 km)

Flat terrain, easy walking.

Travel

West Drayton, Iver and Langley stations are all on the Paddington - Slough - Reading line, with approximately half-hourly services (hourly on Sundays).

Bus service 58 (about half hourly until early evening; no Sunday service) links Iver West Square with Slough and Uxbridge.

Refreshments

The Railway Arms and the De Burgh Arms at West Drayton
The Swan, The Bull, and other opportunities at Iver.
The Willow Tree at Langley (“No heavy boots or working clothes”)

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 almost entirely on O.S. Explorer Map 172 Chiltern Hills East. At the very end of the walk you go 200 yards off the bottom of the map along the B470 to Langley station.

Route

West Drayton - Iver 3 miles (5 km)

From West Drayton station, go down Station Approach and right on High Street.
Cross the canal bridge and loop under it to follow the Grand Union Canal west to the next road bridge at Trout Road.

The Grand Union Canal Company was formed in the 1930s from the merger of several former canal companies, the most important of which was the Grand Junction Canal Company, founded in the late 18th C to create a canal link between London and the Midlands. In 1801 the ‘Paddington Arm’ was opened, giving more direct access to central London, and the Slough Arm was opened in 1883 (one of the last stretches of canal to be built in Britain). The Grand Union was nationalised in 1948 along with other canals, and was one of the last to keep commercial traffic alive (though in steep decline by the 1950s).

Leave the canal here, cross the bridge and at the road junction follow Trout Road ahead over the Fray’s River and then round to the right for 70 yards past industrial units.

Fork left at a yellow barrier with a Colne Valley Trail sign onto a track.

Go over a bridge, bear left then take the right fork onto a sandy path with a high bank on your right.

If you find a serious litter problem here, please report it to Hillingdon District Council (see the paragraph about reporting problems before the list of walks) explaining that it is on the Colne Valley Trail and Beeches Way south of the Slough Arm of the canal.

Continue nearly half a mile (0.7 km) to the bridge over the Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal and go down to the towpath briefly to see one of the early coal posts (“148 15 VIC C146”).

From mediaeval times the City of London Corporation collected taxes ("metage") on coal and other commodities being brought into the city. Money from the coal tax was used for the rebuilding of St Paul's Cathedral, the Guildhall and Newgate Prison. In 1861 the London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Act led to the setting up of new coal and wine tax posts.

The funds from this system were used to pay off debts and for the building of new bridges over the Thames, the Thames Embankment and many other construction projects in London. With the growth of canal and railway traffic, extra collecting points for taxes had to be set up outside the City boundaries and posts were erected by canals, railways, tracks and roads into London, forming a circle roughly 20 miles from the General Post Office in the City of London.

The tax was finally ended in 1889 but more than 200 of the posts survive - many of them Grade II listed. There are a number of different designs.

Source: www.bbc.co.uk/education

Return to the bridge and continue on the Colne Valley Trail (and the London Loop) to the end of a road (Ford Lane), with Little Britain Lake ahead. (To the left, the river is very shallow and still fordable, and the lane continues on the opposite bank.)

Go slightly to the left on a path between the lake and the River Colne, then left over a footbridge into Buckinghamshire.

Follow the path to the right at a London Loop sign for over half a mile (nearly a kilometre) as it winds along by the side of the river, until you reach a kissing gate on the left, with a road and houses visible across the field to your left.

The field is part of Huntsmoor Park. Iver used to be surrounded by country houses set in private parks, such as Huntsmoor, Delaford, Coppins (once the home of the Duke of Kent) and Bangors.

Go through the gate and along a tree-lined path to another kissing gate at the road (B470).

Cross over and continue on Palmers Moor Lane, which curves to the left and then crosses the M25.

On the other side turn right and follow the drive to Delaford Manor, on the west side of Colne Brook.

Delaford Manor is a late 18th century house with 19th century additions, on the site of an older building.

Ignore a bridleway on the right, go over a small bridge, and then turn right along a gravel drive in front of Delaford Cottage.

Bear left at the end, then go through a gate and along an enclosed path that skirts the grounds of the manor.

Just beyond the end of the grounds, the path meets the Beeches Way at a signpost and stile on the left.

Go over the stile and continue on the Beeches Way, following a curving path (Coppins and Bangors are out of sight to the right) beside wire fencing, to meet a high wooden fence.

Continue along the fence for a short way to join a track with a large house on the right (Lower Delaford).

Continue ahead to join Swan Lane as it leads into Iver village.

The half-timbered Swan pub (400 years old) is on the right and The Bull is on the other side of High Street. Shops and other opportunities for refreshment are to the right.

Iver is in the Domesday Book as Evreham but it has earlier foundations as archaeological finds have included Neolithic potsherds. The name Iver means '(place by) the brow of a hill or tip of a promontory'.

To leave the route here either:

Turn right about 400 yards for bus stops at West Square (no Sunday service),

or:

Follow Thorney Lane ahead for 0.8 miles (1.3 km), going first over the Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal and then over a railway bridge. Immediately after this bridge, take a footpath on the right leading to Iver station.

Iver - Langley 2.5 miles (4 km)

Cross over from Swan Lane and go through the gateway of the church opposite.

The parish church of St. Peter dates from the 11th century though it shows work from many periods (including fragments of a Saxon window).

Follow the path round to the right of the church and through to the old 1837 school house behind it (now St Peter's Centre).

Turn right to exit on to Thorney Lane North, turn left and then take the second turning right into Colne Orchard.

At the far side of a green where Colne Orchard turns right, go through a short enclosed path between houses 14 and 15 to a field.

Go half left to cross a stile in the opposite fence.

From here the correct official route continues in the same direction to a hedge corner, to the right of a line of poplar trees and industrial buildings, but you may find it easier to zigzag along the field edges, by following the fence to your left, then right to a gateway on the left.

Go through the gateway and along the left-hand field boundary, then right along a hedge for a short distance to a hedge corner.

Turn left along the hedge towards large, green industrial buildings, then right along the field edge, past a 3-way signpost.

After the end of the buildings, turn left to take a fenced path along the field edge.

After following the path to the right and passing works buildings on your left, go left through a hedge gap with steps, and head towards a pylon along the left-hand edge of a field (may be cropped in summer).

At the pylon, turn right then in 20 yards go through a hedge gap on the left and continue in the same direction on a wide grassy way between hedges towards the next pylon.

Just beyond this, turn left at a footpath signpost and go over a bridge crossing the Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal.

The Slough Arm was opened in 1883, and was thus one of the last stretches of canal to be built in Britain. Originally built to carry bricks from the Langley brickfields, it is now used for leisure boating, and provides a 5 mile (8 km) lock-free route almost in a straight line from Cowley to the centre of Slough. It also makes for a pleasant 5 mile walk.

Follow the towpath to the right to the second road bridge. The hedge on your left is the Buckinghamshire – East Berkshire boundary.

Leave the canal here and go south on Langley Park Road to Langley station on the left.

The Willow Tree pub is just beyond the station, under the bridge on the right.

Alan Sheppard