

# Railway days out from Marylebone



The text in this book is merely an indication of what might be possible ... or what might have been possible at the time of researching or later revision.

Each reader must assess whether each part of the route qualifies as suitable or safe for public access. The author does not warrant any point of legality or safety in any part of the description of the route.

Thanks are due to many people who have helped me with route-finding and with intelligence local to a number of areas traversed by the route. Their contributions enrich the route and the stories along it. Clearly, any mistakes and misinterpretations remain with the author.

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Front cover photograph:  
Marylebone station

# The days out

## Introduction

This document contains details of some walks which may be reached from Marylebone.

Those routes which are presented without photographs require a further visit to confirm updated details, so a degree of caution is to be espoused.

## Routes

- **Great Missenden to Princes Risborough (linear)**  
14.0km; 3hr 20min (see page 15)
- **Islip to Bicester (linear)**  
13.0km; 4hr 05min (see page 19)
- **Kings Sutton and Charlton (circuit)**  
10.8km; 3hr 13min (see page 23)
- **Lapworth, Baddesley Clinton and Packwood (circuit)**  
15.7km; 4hr 14min (see page 29)

In addition, there is a 241km station-to-station walk along the Chiltern main line between Marylebone and Birmingham Moor Street. Within that route, sections without photographs require confirmation as above. Details may be found at

<https://lwalks.london/london/personal/chrly/>





# General information

## Planning your days

### Getting to and from the routes

First of all, I intended to reach the start of each route as early in the day as possible. I did this by catching (generally) the first bus of the day from my nearest stop in the outermost fringe of London. This demonstrated the great difference between Sunday walking and the rest of the week: the first Sunday bus (at about 0740, as opposed to 0610 on other days) meant that the day's walk might not be started before 1000, and sometimes even later. I aim to finish the day's walk by 1400 if at all possible, because that's when the heat is switched off by the sun in winter (and the switch-off time comes even earlier if you are to the north of higher ground).

In the route guides, useful bus stops and stations are noted, with link routes described if they are not adjacent to the route itself. You will need both the TfL journey planner (<https://tfl.gov.uk/>) and the National Public Transport Information site (which has superseded and consolidated the various regional Traveline offerings and is at <https://www.nationalpti.co.uk/>) to plan your days. Once you know the routes you will need to research, <https://bustimes.org/> comes into its own, providing information about every bus and every stop — to give you shorter options and emergency exits.

You may note that I have tried to ensure that linear walks are chosen to be walking northwards or westwards as much as possible (unless the opposite direction makes significantly greater sense). This minimises staring into the sun, particularly in the morning when it is low in the sky. On circular walks, of course, the direction is all but immaterial, for you will be pointing south at some point in the circuit.

## Finding the way

### Map

Of course, the first step in finding the route is to read and to follow the detailed route-notes in the guide! But a map is still a very helpful aid, especially to find context, exit routes and alternatives, and the very best published maps for walkers are the Ordnance Survey Explorer series at a scale of 1:25000.

Assuming that you have access to a computer and printer, though, there is a far better option open to you than buying large fold-out paper maps which go out of date with every by-pass, brownfield

conversion, or cliff collapse. A subscription to the Ordnance Survey's online map service is one of the best investments any walker in Great Britain can make. For less than £40 per year (at 2026 prices), this will give unlimited online access to Ordnance Survey cartography stretching from Shetland to Scilly: you will note that they have a range of subscription plans available. See

<https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/osmaps/>)

for details of the subscription service.

With this subscription, you may import GPX routes and create your own routes: these may be stored in the cloud, accessible only to you with your account or, if you so desire, made available to other users of the app. Also, you may export basic GPX data for any route to a file, and the software is able to calculate optimal directions for road trips too. You may then print maps and route-plans, using your own decisions as to paper size (A4 or A3), scale, and orientation, without limit) for your personal use. The map quality is second to none, just as one would expect from the Ordnance Survey.

The A-Z atlases and maps (and similar publications) are also useful for street names, etc., and show some of the paths, particularly in the built-up areas, but the limitations of scale are greater with a mapset which prioritises roads and streets, so the precision is diluted.

Needless to say, Google Maps (and other online services) can show the route of an imported GPX file on top of their base maps. However, the quality of the map, and of the resultant print, will suffer badly in comparison with the Ordnance Survey app's offering of crisp, clear, high-quality cartography.

**Never** rely solely on a map on your smartphone: the drain on the battery as the phone polls for your location is significant, and the consequences of losing navigability because of battery drainage, while perhaps not quite as life-threatening as it was for the idiots who tried to navigate across the Lakeland Fells with a phone, are still serious. Also, when all is said and done, the places where you are need navigational assistance are precisely those with extremely limited signal quality.

To return to the Lake District for an example of the vagaries of signal strength, I pulled out my phone at Hardknott Roman camp (but only to check for a text), and there was only a very weak signal ... from Manx Telecom. To cap it all, I had a text from Manx Telecom two days later, asking for my views on having experienced their service in using my phone while abroad.

## Compass

Within the narrative, the sixteen main compass directions are used for most instances of orientation where the bearing is close enough. However, sometimes more accuracy is required, and a numerical

compass bearing has to be given (clockwise from north). It should be stressed that a compass is a very useful piece of equipment, even on suburban streets, but it becomes essential when crossing areas of heath or woodland where there is a multitude of paths (or none at all).

Nowadays, many of our mobile phones have compass apps, and for those whose phones are missing the app ... well, a basic Silva or Suunto (or similar) compass will be fine for these walks. Just keep yourself clear of danger by using your phone (and its battery) sparingly.

Of course, if you can see the sun, you can gauge directions pretty easily: it is in the east at 6am, in the south-east at 9am, south at noon, south-west at 3pm and west at 6pm (an hour later during British Summer Time, of course). The pedants may raise the question of longitude, but even at the westernmost tip of the Lapworth circuit, the clock is ahead of the sun by only seven minutes.

## Logistics

### Start and finish

You should note the restricted nature of much Sunday travel (and also on Saturdays, in some cases), and this may inform your choice of the day of the week for a particular route. The National Rail status page

<https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/disruptions/>

should warn you of planned and *ad hoc* disruptions to rail services, as will the TfL site for disruptions within London. Be sure to check <https://bustimes.org/> for bus availability, particularly at weekends.

### Food and drink

It might seem, at first glance, unnecessary to carry provisions while walking in a well-populated area, but needing to hunt down victuals can be distracting and dispiriting. If a café or pub is not reached at the right time of day (or is found to be closed when you arrive), a period of gloom may set in; at the wrong point of the natural cycle of walking spirit, the need for a formal stop can disrupt the flow of the walk.

Each of these eventualities may lead to a mental off-switch being thrown, when you will be walking *through* an area without the experience of being *in* the area. Indeed, if you stick rigidly to the routes as given in the notes, there will often be long stretches along which you will not encounter a shop on the route itself. In areas of dearth, off-route facilities are indicated.

Of course, this applies more stringently in the rural areas, where you know that there could be long distances between refreshment facilities. You should always carry a small water bottle and some emergency nibbles; on some stretches, it can be handy to have a sandwich or similar in reserve. You are encouraged to make use of local facilities in the areas passed through, but you should also make sure that you have a Plan B tucked away in your pocket or backpack — whether for yourself, or for someone you might meet who is in greater distress.

## **First aid**

The above advice applies equally to the carrying of a simple first aid kit of sticking plaster, antiseptic cream, antiseptic wet wipes (for disposal other than by flushing), tissues and sunscreen, plus zipped polythene bags for the sterile collection and subsequent disposal of any contaminated material. The small barrel of brandy which is stereotypically to be found round the neck of a St Bernard is optional.

## **Directions**

I try to keep out of the trap of “cross the stile, and make for invisible barn over the skyline”, a direction which I discovered (and revised) within a set of route-notes to a long-distance path more than forty years ago.

You will see that these directions are sufficient to follow the route if you have a capable map in your hand ... and a capable map-reader in your party.

## **Times and distances**

Each route is headed by details of the distance, ascent and duration. For the purposes of the calculation, standard walking pace is set at 5 kilometres per hour: individual readers may adjust expected timings according to their natural speed.

Distances are given in kilometres (after all, that's how the grid squares are constructed on the map, and we should really have ditched the awkward multiples of 12, 3, 220, and 8 several generations ago); the duration is based on Naismith's Rule at a flat-ground pace of 5 kilometres per hour, and accounting for slope. If your natural walking speed is at 4 kilometres per hour, you will need to adjust the duration by a factor of 1.25 to obtain an approximate duration for your own needs.

Do not assume, though, that you can manage a faster gait, especially in towns and cities: that will just put you under the cosh on expectations, and will leave no time to stand and stare. Urban



walking has its own accelerations and decelerations, separate from its rural counterpart — even waiting at traffic lights will change your overall speed. Key access points to public transport within routes are given at the appropriate points in the narrative of the route directions.

## Background information

Throughout the text, I have attempted to give historical and other context to the areas through which you are passing. This may discuss a physical aspect of the route, such as the geology or architecture. Alternatively, it may point out something which might be interesting in social terms — a famous resident, perhaps, or a link with another route. These discursive alerts will be in [blue](#).

While each reader may have a favourite topic for such background information, it is hoped that there will be some interest for all in each of these inserts into the route-text.

Another form of insert alerts the reader to the various logistical matters which you will encounter — either for good (the presence of opportunities for refreshment or for the replenishment of supplies, and transport opportunities), or for the not so good (having to travel along a busy road or cross a busy railway, or the presence of other poor or dangerous walking conditions). In addition, this covers any points where an apparently obvious next step is the wrong answer. These logistical alerts will be in [red](#).

## Respecting the route

Responsible walkers will always obey the Countryside Code when in the country, but respect for the route does not stop at the 30mph signs.

Whether you are on a street, a towpath, a footpath, or any other part of the route, you are only a guest passing through the community of others. The residents and other users have every right to expect that you do not abuse their environment while you borrow it for your transient use.

- Parking in residential roads, in front of gates or other field access, and beside farm driveways at the start or end of your walk is dissuaded most strongly — use local car parks if you really must arrive by car (though using public transport is a far better option, especially in walking linear routes). After all, these routes are described as *railway* days out.
- Do not make excessive noise as you go along — play no music, and quiet conversation barely above a whisper is loud enough. Let the surroundings do the talking.

- Do not block the way for other users by walking in large groups or more than two abreast (this is, of course, the most civilised way to act wherever you walk, be that along Oxford Street or in the Outer Hebrides).
- Be extremely careful not to leave litter anywhere — it is always an eyesore and may be dangerous (*e.g.*, in starting a wildfire). Always try to replenish your supplies at local shops, cafés, and so on: this helps to pay back the community for your use as you pass through.
- Finally, be sure to enjoy your passage through the areas borrowed by the routes — and show it by smiling to the locals you meet.

## Conventions used in this guide

### Measurement

One convention will already have been noted — the consistent use of metric measurements. This is the logical choice to correspond with map scales, and avoids the need for mental arithmetic in scales of three or of 22. Most people can be happy to consider their natural walking pace at 6kph, 5kph, or 4kph: that translates to one kilometre per 10, 12, or 15 minutes respectively. Even an ambling 3kph comes out at a nice round 20 minutes per kilometre.

However, there are other conventions to give you, the reader, help in reading the text.

### Colour

Within the route sections of the guide (that is, excluding these preamble pages), black text is used to denote the detailed route descriptions, while coloured text is used for other types of information.

- Text in black is used for detailed route description.
- Text in maroon is used for logistical information, such as access to public transport or the whereabouts of cafés, restaurants, pubs or shops. It is also used to warn of dangers or “wrong-route” options
- Text in blue is used for historical and other background information, and for descriptive discussion text.
- Text in green is used to describe alternative routes.

Clearly, these classes of information may overlap in places to a greater or lesser degree, and inevitably there will be some leakage of text into what some readers may consider the ‘wrong’ colour.

## Words

Within the text I use the word *refuge* in two ways to describe specific aspects of the route.

- A *refuge path* is a path provided (usually as a permissive route by the landowner, and often by agreement with the local highway authority) along the edge of a field, etc. This typically separates the walker from a roadway which would be dangerous owing to the lack of a verge. Some refuge paths are also used as off-road equestrian refuges.
- In crossing a road where there is no pedestrian crossing (whether light-controlled or a plain zebra crossing), a small island between the two directions of road travel is described as a *refuge*.

I use the word *triangle* to describe a refuge of that shape, usually as a means of separating the traffic at the approach to a junction or roundabout. The word *footway* is preferred to *pavement*, and *underpass* to *subway* to avoid ambiguity with road surfaces and underground railways respectively.

## Maps of the route

The routes are mapped and are available to view on the *OS Maps Online* website and app (see the appropriate link at the end of this introduction) — *OS Maps Online* subscribers have access to the 1:25000 and 1:50000 maps, the latter really only useful for broad planning. You should note that the online access to the mapping will give you automatic updates to roads, paths and other features in the landscape (such as cliff erosion and rewilding projects) as they appear. This very useful feature is, of course, not covered by using paper maps, unless you keep purchasing replacements every time they are updated.

To find a particular route, you should home in on the area of interest (making sure that the start of the route is covered by the displayed area of the on-screen map).

- Select *Routes*, then *Discover routes*, and untick the *Premium routes* constraint (which restricts the search to some commercial providers).
- You should then be able to find the required route (whose name will begin with “Railway days out”, followed by the starting point, by scrolling through the list of routes alphabetically).

Alternatively, you may find it easier to paste the URL from the introduction to the route as given in the appropriate section of this document.

## Online resources — transport and logistics

There are some very useful resources from the major transport players, and from others. A few of the most notable resources are listed below.

- **Transport for London**

<https://tfl.gov.uk/>

Full details of all TfL services, including timetables, bus route maps, status reports, live arrival data, journey planning, and more. Third-party connections such as National Rail and non-TfL bus services are included. The website also contains resources for walking routes in London.

- **National Public Transport Information**

<https://www.nationalpti.co.uk/>

Journey planning for public transport across the country. TfL is generally more detailed and more accurate within London, but NPTI is needed when you stray beyond the TfL area. This website/app supersedes and consolidates the former regional Traveline offerings.

- **National Rail**

<http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>

Journey planning for rail services. Note that the TfL journey planner includes rail services within London. There is coverage of some rail services beyond London (there are inexplicable gaps) — however, since fares, disruptions and many other details may be found on the National Rail website, it is to be preferred for travel beyond London.

- **Bustimes**

<http://www.bustimes.org/>

Timetables (and maps of bus stops) for just about every bus route in Britain and Ireland. The compact format is kinder to smartphone usage than the apps from some transport organisations, and of course it consolidates data from all such organisations.

- **Ordnance Survey**

<https://explore.osmaps.com/>

Access to Ordnance Survey maps online, for desktop, laptop, tablet and smartphone. Printing maps is possible. Walkers are urged to take out a subscription: the cost will be repaid countless times over.

- **Bikehike**

<http://www.bikehike.co.uk/mapview.php>

Using OpenStreetMap, footpaths and cycle paths are overlaid on the base map. Useful for viewing link paths

to and from the route.

- **National Library of Scotland**

<http://maps.nls.uk/>

It may seem curious to reference a library in Edinburgh for information about the topography of London and elsewhere, but NLS carries an extensive collection of digitised historic maps covering the whole of Great Britain. These may be searched from an overlay on the modern map. Within the narrative text, if a reference is made to “old maps”, then NLS will be your source.





# Great Missenden to Princes Risborough

**GMN–PRR**

|                         |                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Start                   | Great Missenden station (GMN) — <b>HP16 9AZ</b>                                                   |
| Finish                  | Princes Risborough station (PRR) — <b>HP27 9DN</b>                                                |
| Distance                | 14.0km                                                                                            |
| Duration                | 3 hours 20 minutes                                                                                |
| Ascent                  | 318m                                                                                              |
| Transport and ticketing | Train from Marylebone; day return ticket to Aylesbury                                             |
| Facilities              | All facilities in Great Missenden and in the centre of Princes Risborough                         |
| Map                     | <a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/9321684/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/9321684/</a> |

## Introduction

The walk begins at Great Missenden station, on the line from Marylebone via Amersham. The station was opened in 1982 by the Metropolitan Railway Company. The journey from Marylebone takes about 45 minutes. The return journey from Princes Risborough to Marylebone may be as fast as 35 minutes, or may take up to twice as long, depending on the stopping pattern.

The two ends of this walk are on different lines out of Marylebone: it is usually less expensive to buy a day return ticket from Marylebone to Aylesbury. For journeys starting north of Marylebone, the ticketing economics must remain as an exercise for the reader.

All facilities may be found in Great Missenden, and in the centre of Princes Risborough (via an alternative ending to the route). Great Missenden station has a coffee shop and toilets on Platform 1, the London-bound platform.

## Route

**2** If you are alighting at Great Missenden station from London and you have no need of the facilities on Platform 1, take the ramp up to street level and turn right along the right-hand footway. Cross over the railway, then cross over the end of the station forecourt (where the exit from Platform 1 joins the road). Cross to the left-hand footway using the pedestrian crossing and continue onto the left-hand footway of High Street.

Follow High Street out of the town, crossing over the end of Rignall Road. Beyond the last house on your left, where the footway comes to an end, pass through a kissing-gate on the left and follow the public footpath across the field on the diagonal, with a pond over to your right, to reach a bridge over the railway, where the South Bucks Way joins the route from the right.

The South Bucks Way is a 37km walking route between Coombe Hill near Wendover and Denham Deep Lock on the Grand Union Canal north of Uxbridge. The pond is the source of the River Misbourne, which flows into the River Colne at Denham.

Pass beneath the railway and turn half-right to follow a path to a protruding corner of the field, where turn half-right to follow its left-hand edge. Pass through a kissing-gate and turn half-left to cross the next field, making for the left-hand end of a belt of trees. Pass through the trees and cut the corner of the field to continue with woodland on your left. At the end of the field, continue ahead into Coneybank Wood.

**3** At the end of the wood, turn right onto a by-way and follow it to a T-junction, where turn left, still with the South Bucks Way which now has bridleway status. Follow the path, rising gently, to cross a lane. Continue ahead, now on a public footpath, to reach Cobblershill Lane, where the Chiltern Way joins the party from the right.

The Chiltern Way is a 216km circuit of the Chiltern Hills National Landscape — formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty — with extra bolt-on variants. Full details may be found at

<https://chilternsociety.org.uk/the-chiltern-way-2/>

**4** Cross Cobblershill Lane and follow the South Bucks Way and the Chiltern Way straight ahead, as indicated by the signpost. After 140m, with a house on your right, branch off the lane to the left, still with the two named trails, keeping a few trees on your left. Cross the field to enter Hampdenleaf Wood.

Cross over a path within the wood, and exit onto a path which descends the right-hand edge of a field, then passes through a gap to ascend the left-hand edge of the next field. In the corner, turn right, then turn left to enter woodland. Within the wood, bear left onto a track which leads to Little Hampden,

At this point, the South Bucks Way departs to the right.

**5** Continue straight ahead with the Chiltern Way along a lane for 150m to reach, on your right, Warren Cottage. Here continue straight ahead onto a grassy track, with the house on your right. After a further 150m, enter a wood. After 200m, turn right and leave the wood. After a further 100m, turn sharp left, still with the Chiltern Way. Pass through a belt of trees and continue ahead to enter another belt, this time at one end. Follow the path along the length of the wood to reach Rignall Road at Hampden Bottom.

**6** Cross Rignall Road and turn half-left to ascend the field, facing just east of south. At the far side of the field, turn half-left to ascend through woodland to reach Hampden House on your left.

Hampden House is a Grade I listed country house which was owned by the Hampden family for around 900 years until 1938. Part of the house dates from the fourteenth century, but the main part of the building is Elizabethan, with remodelling during the Georgian era. It is now owned by a financial services company. It is not open to the public, but the state room is used as a wedding venue.

150m ahead, the Chiltern Way departs, branching off to the left towards Bledlow.

**7** Turn right, away from the house. After 150m, continue ahead with trees on your right for 900m, then pass through Grim's Ditch.

Grim's Ditch (from *grimr*, an old Norse name for the devil) is the name given to a series of linear earthworks, probably of Iron Age origin, which cross the Chiltern Hills. The lack of defensive works suggests that it is a boundary ditch used in animal management, as does its size, which is not as tall as, say, Offa's Dyke as it crosses Shropshire.

There are other earthworks known as Grim's Ditch, or Grim's Dyke, elsewhere in the country.

**8** Beyond Grim's Ditch, the path (a public bridleway) bends to the left, then bends to the right. Cross a track and continue ahead through Kingsfield Wood, then cross the right-hand edge of a field to reach a crosspaths with Green Hailey Farm ahead.

**9** Turn right, then after 220m turn left to follow a public bridleway just inside the woodland of The Hangings, to reach the junction with The Ridgeway Path at Whiteleaf Hill.

The Ridgeway national trail is 136km long, and extends from Overton Hill near Avebury to Ivinghoe Beacon near Tring. Full details may be found at

[https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en\\_GB/trails/the-ridgeway/](https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/the-ridgeway/)

It is part of a 605km chain of four routes (Wessex Ridgeway, Ridgeway, Icknield Way Trail, and Peddar's Way — the last also a national trail) which link Lyme Regis on the Channel coast in Dorset with Holme-next-the-Sea on the North Sea coast in north-west Norfolk. This chain of routes, known collectively as the Greater Ridgeway) is a route which has been used since prehistoric times for trading and military purposes.

**10** Turn left to join The Ridgeway Path and follow it as it bends to the left to reach a car park with picnic tables. Exit the car park and cross Peter's Lane. Pass through a gate and turn right at an information board for Brush Hill, a nature reserve. Follow the path as it swings to the left. Where you exit the wood, do not turn

left to reach Kop Hill, but pass through a kissing-gate to cross open country. Descend through woodland and continue ahead to reach a T-junction of paths, where turn left. Descend to reach New Road, passing house-backs on your right.

If you need the facilities of the centre of Princes Risborough, turn right and follow the right-hand footway for 600m to a small Roundabout. Turn left to cross the road in front of the roundabout using the triangle as a refuge, then follow the left-hand footway round onto Horns Lane. Cross to the right-hand footway using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and pass through the town centre. Where the main road, by now Wycombe Road, swings to the left, stay on the right-hand footway, now on Station Road. Take Station Road's right-hand bend, then turn left onto Station Approach to reach Princes Risborough station.

**11** Cross New Road to continue along Upper Icknield Way. Pass more house-backs on your right, then pass a school on your right. Continue ahead, descending to reach more house-backs on your right, arriving at the junction with Wycombe Road. Turn right along the right-hand footway until you reach the end of Poppy Road, where cross Wycombe Road using the refuge and turn right to follow the left-hand footway of Poppy Road to its end at the junction with Station Road. Cross the road ahead and turn left along the right-hand footway. Take Station Road's right-hand bend, then turn left onto Station Approach to reach Princes Risborough station.

The railway arrived at Princes Risborough in 1862. For much of its history, Princes Risborough had four lines spreading out to the north — the line to Thame is gone, part of the Watlington branch (opened 1872) is now operated as a heritage railway, leaving the current lines to Bicester and Aylesbury. The impressive signal box (built in 1904, and now decommissioned) at the north end of the station is Grade II listed.

Risborough was a Saxon settlement; after the Norman Conquest, the manor was given to the Giffard family. King Edward II gave the manor to his son (the Black Prince): during this period, the settlement became known as Princes Risborough. King Charles I sold the manor to the City of London to settle some debts. More recently, there has been relatively light industry in and around the town, and houses for commuters have been built.

# Islip to Bicester

ISP–BCS

|                         |                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Start                   | Islip station (ISP) — <b>OX5 2TQ</b>                                                                |
| Finish                  | Bicester North station (BCS) — <b>OX26 6EF</b>                                                      |
| Distance                | 13.0km                                                                                              |
| Duration                | 2 hours 43 minutes                                                                                  |
| Ascent                  | 71m                                                                                                 |
| Transport and ticketing | Train from Marylebone; train at Bicester Village; day return to Islip                               |
| Facilities              | All facilities in Bicester; pub in Wendlebury                                                       |
| Map                     | <a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/13853959/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/13853959/</a> |

## Introduction

The walk starts at Islip station, on the Oxford line out of Marylebone, and finishes at Bicester North station on the main line between Banbury and Marylebone. The route passes Bicester Village station (BIT), so shopaholic walkers may live the life of retail excess and depart directly from there.

Islip station was opened in 1850, and closed at the end of 1967. Services were re-instated in 1989, and direct trains to Marylebone came into service in 2015. The line to Bletchley and Bedford is being (re-)developed.

The station is simple, with no facilities other than shelters on the platforms and a ticket vending machine on Platform 1. Direct trains take 1 hour 10 minutes from Marylebone to Islip, with those requiring a change of trains at Oxford Parkway taking an extra 10 minutes. Trains from Bicester Village to Marylebone take a little over an hour, while the journey time from Bicester North to Marylebone is between 50 and 55 minutes.

Given the lack of intermediate facilities, provisions should be carried.

## Route

**2** Exit the station and turn right to reach Bletchington Road, where turn left into the village. The road swings left and then right; after the latter, turn left into North Street and follow it to Manor Farm (on your left).

Here, you will join forces with the Oxfordshire Way, which comes in from the right.



The Oxfordshire Way is a 108km long distance route which crosses Oxfordshire between Bourton on the Water and Henley-on-Thames. Full details may be found at

<https://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/countryside/the-oxfordshire-way/>

**3** Continue past the farm. Go through a gap between trees and turn half-left to cross the field on the diagonal.

This field is the site of a hunting-lodge of Ethelred the Unready. Islip was the birthplace of Edward the Confessor.

At the end of the field, pass through a gap on your right, and bear left to reach and cross a stream. Bear slightly left and make for a gap on the other side of the field, about a third of the way from the left corner to the right corner. Go through the gap, and make for a footbridge over the railway.

**4** Cross the railway, and bear off slightly to the left, with a hedge on the left; ignore a path going off to the left. At the end of the first field, pass through a gap on the left, and turn right to continue with the hedge now on your right; again, ignore a path which goes straight ahead from the gap. Follow the right-hand edge of the field to reach an access road for Barndon Farm, which is off to your left.

**5** Turn right along the access road, then turn left at the end of the hedge on the left. Take the path along the left-hand edge of a field, then continue ahead across four more fields to reach and cross a farm access road.

The Oxfordshire Way takes the access road to the left.

Continue ahead in the same direction across three fields to reach the right-hand corner of Weston Woods.

**6** Press on in the same direction across a field, then bear right to go through a gap, and bear left to pick up your line across two more fields. Bear right through a gap, then follow the left-hand edge of a field. At the end of the trees on the left, go ahead across the field and through some trees to join a road which crosses the M40.

Beyond the motorway crossing, follow the road into the centre of Wendlebury.

The village has a pub which opens at noon daily, and serves food at lunchtime and in the evening. From Friday to Sunday, there is no afternoon break in the food service, and breakfasts are served from 0800.

**7** Continue along the road through the village and out the other side. Beyond the access slip to the main road on the left, the road is fringed on the left by Bowler's Copse.

**8** About 330m after passing the slip road, take a left turn over a footbridge and stile, and bear half-right to cross a field, keeping to the right of an outbreak of mobile homes. Turn right onto the service road for the mobile home park, and right onto the

road (eastwards, away from the dual carriageway on your left). You will come to a T-junction.

Turn left (north) to reach a roundabout with a hotel on the left. Continue past a garden centre on the right to reach the point where Wendlebury Road joins the main road on the left.

**9** Follow the joint footpath/cycleway — a co-existence which occasionally works: you have been warned! — across Lakeview Drive (the access to a supermarket on the right), and past a lake (the one which may be viewed from Lakeview Drive, no doubt) and on to a large roundabout.

Go straight across the eastbound A41 using the divided pedestrian crossing, and continue to another roundabout. Cross Pingle Drive to reach its left-hand footway, and turn right.

There is a pub on the corner here. If you are intending to return from Bicester Village station, this may be a useful refuelling resource before the journey. The pub opens at 0900 and serves “pub favourite” foods.

Of course, if you are dazzled by the retail excess which is the shopping village, just turn right onto Pingle Drive without crossing to the pub — a brush-down with a clothes-brush may save you from looking too agricultural as you cruise the gilded lanes. There are catering outlets in the shopping centre.

**10** Follow the left-hand footway of Pingle Drive for about 400m, passing two pedestrian crossings on the way. Here the road bends to the left: follow it round past yet more car parks, the one on the right being a two-storey affair. Follow the road round to the right until, faced with the maw of the multi-storey car park ahead, you are able to slip through a gap on the left-hand side of the entrance.

Here, a choice must be made. You may end the walk at Bicester Village station straight ahead, or you may visit the centre of Bicester *en route* to Bicester North station, 1.6km away. Trains from Bicester North will have a smaller proportion of passengers loaded down with multiple shopping bags (and taking up multiple seats) than those from Bicester Village. It is probably worth that extra 1.6km for the relative peace of a return from Bicester North.

**11** To complete the entire route to Bicester North station, turn left along Station Approach to its end on London Road. Turn left onto the left-hand footway of London Road, and follow it to a mini-roundabout. Cross over the end of Wessex Way here, and continue on London Road. At the approach to Market Square, cross to the right-hand footway using the pedestrian crossing.

Carry on ahead into the pedestrianised Sheep Street.

The southern end of Sheep Street hosts a weekly market between 0800 and 1600 on Fridays. All the usual facilities are available on Sheep Street.

At the northern end of the pedestrianised area, continue along Sheep Street's right-hand footway and continue onto North Street (marked with a *No through road* sign). when you reach the bollards preventing vehicular traffic from reaching the mini-roundabout on the left, pass through and take Buckingham Road ahead, the right-hand of the two roads off the north of the roundabout.

**Hint:** Buckingham Road is *not* the road ahead on which a pedestrian crossing may be seen from the roundabout.

Follow the right-hand footway of Buckingham Road to Station Approach, on the right just before the railway bridge. Cross over Station Approach and turn right up its left-hand footway to reach Bicester North station.

Station facilities, including ticket office, coffee shop and toilets, are on Platform 1; London-bound trains depart from Platform 2.

|                         |                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Start                   | Kings Sutton station (KGS) — <b>OX17 3RR</b>                                                        |
| Finish                  | Kings Sutton station (KGS) — <b>OX17 3RR</b>                                                        |
| Distance                | 10.9km                                                                                              |
| Duration                | 2 hours 24 minutes                                                                                  |
| Ascent                  | 145m                                                                                                |
| Transport and ticketing | Train from Marylebone; day return to Kings Sutton                                                   |
| Facilities              | Pub at Charlton <i>en route</i> ; pubs and convenience shop in Kings Sutton                         |
| Map                     | <a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/13186102/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/13186102/</a> |

## Introduction

The walk begins and ends at Kings Sutton station, on the line between Marylebone and Banbury.

The station was opened in 1872, and was downgraded to a halt in 1964. The only exit is from Platform 2 (which serves trains to London and Oxford): if you are arriving from London, you will need to cross the line by the footbridge. Some journeys require a change of trains in Banbury, in which case you will arrive at Kings Sutton onto Platform 2. Direct trains (roughly every two hours) take a little more than an hour between Marylebone and Kings Sutton, while changing trains at Banbury adds about half an hour.

*Awaiting the Oxford train at Kings Sutton station*







*Wales — the original site of Kings Sutton Spa*

## Route

**2** Exit the station and proceed along Wales Street. Turn left to pass between 52 and 50 Wales Street onto a path which leads into a meadow. Pass to the left of a circular enclosure.

This enclosure is the Bog Spring — it is not bog water, but a spring which overflowed to make the area boggy. It is one of three sources of mineral water in and around the village, the others being St Rumbald's

Well and one at Astrop. The water (of which one doctor advised consuming between four and six litres per day) stained mouth, teeth and clothing black. When Henry Jephson commercialised the spa business in Leamington (about 40km away) in the early part of the nineteenth century, Kings Sutton's days as a spa resort were numbered. The Leamington waters were more pleasant, and delivered fewer unwanted side-effects, than those at Kings Sutton.

At the end of the meadow, do not continue ahead, but turn right onto a path which leads out to Banbury Lane to the right of some modern housing.

This part of Kings Sutton was traditionally known as Wales, probably because the local people were pushed out of the more desirable parts of the area following the settlement of Norman families after the Conquest.

Cross Banbury Lane, and take Sandringham Road opposite. At the junction with Windsor Drive on the left, bear diagonally left across the green to reach the far right-hand corner and take up a path which runs between house-backs. This path executes a right turn to bring

you out onto Hampton Drive: at the time of writing (2026), this is the edge of the built-up area of Kings Sutton.

Cross Hampton Drive to take a footpath ahead: it passes to the right of a gate and advances, keeping close to house-backs on the right. After 160m, when you have entered a second field and where a public footpath comes in from the right, take a path off to the left, bending to the left at the far side of the field

*View back to Kings Sutton after the first field crossing*





to keep a hedge on the right. After passing a tree, and before you reach buildings ahead, pass through the hedge on your right, and head half-left to the corner of Cobbler's Pits Spinney.

**3** Continue ahead, pretty much on a straight line, keeping near the left-hand side of the spinney, taking a public footpath off half-left which clips the corner of a field.

If you find yourself at the far end of the wood, turn left onto a path just within the wood and follow the right-hand edge of a field to reach the gap in the hedge. Turn right to regain the route.

Pass through the hedge. Cross the next field on the diagonal, making for a small gate to the right of a wider gate. Pass through the gate, making for the end of a track ahead. Follow this track out to the road, with Keeper's Cottage to your right.

Cross the road and take the track ahead (to the east-north-east), ignoring a path on the left which bisects the angle between road and track. There are medium-voltage power lines on your left. At the far end of a wood on the right, bear right with the track, again ignoring a path on the left. This track leads to Astrop Hill Farm.

In some publications, the name of the farm is given as Astrophill, which looks at first glance like a means of generating chlorophyll in outer space. Astrop comes from East Thorpe (it means East Village, but it is neither the one in New York City, nor is it the terminally beige housing on the site of the 2012 Olympic Games in London). Down in the valley, the hamlet of Astrop is, to be fair, on the east side of Kings Sutton.



*Cobbler's Pits Spinney*

*Below — timber gathered at  
Keeper's Cottage*

*Bottom — view north-west  
towards Rosamund's Bower*







*Oxpen Buildings*

**4** Continue along the track beyond Astrop Hill Farm, soon with woodland (known as Rosamund's Bower) on your right. At the far end of the wood, turn right, keeping the trees on your right. The path then turns to the left, with the trees still on your right. At the corner of the wood, head off half-right, thus prising yourself away from the wood, descending across two fields on the diagonal to reach and cross a stream in the bottom

left-hand corner of the second field.

Continue ahead with a hedge on your right: you will be travelling a little south of east. After the path bends to the right, you will come to Oxpen Buildings (in a state of disrepair) on your right.

**5** Continue along the path, now running approximately in a south-easterly direction, to reach some woodland ahead. Turn half-left, then turn to the right, to keep the trees on your right. With industrial buildings on your left, follow the path out to Newbottle Road at Newbottle.

*The Crown Inn, Charlton*



**6** Turn right along the road. Just after you pass a road on the right (which leads to a church), turn left, passing a bollard, onto a tarmac path which runs between fields, all the way to Green Lane. Turn left onto Green Lane, following the left-hand footway (such luxury!) past the school. Just before a junction ahead, the footway crosses to the right-hand side of the road.

Bear right with the footway at the junction, and head along Main Street to reach the pub in the middle of Charlton.

The pub is open from 1200 until 2330 (closing at 1800 on Sundays), but is closed on Mondays. The pub serves a range of food, including burgers, pizza, pub favourites, and larger meals.

**7** Just beyond the pub, and before the next house on the right, turn right to cross a stile, and cross another one straight ahead to bring you into a field. Once the field opens out, descend to the far left-hand corner, and continue ahead over a bridge and across a field. Pass through another gate which seems to sit



on top of a spring — prepare to get wet and muddy shoes — then cross the next field.

Turn right and then turn left, taking a path to the right of a tree, where it bends left, as if its line is influenced by the tree's gravity. The new line (south-westerly) passes into the next field, and bounces half-right when it comes into contact with a track.

With these two introductions to physics behind us, the path clips the corner of the field and turns half-right. At the second tree, it takes up a line slightly left, to the west-north-west. Cross the field, and pass through the hedge. Cross the next field on the diagonal to its far corner, and pass through the hedge.

By small changes of direction at each field boundary, the path is now facing west. Cross the next field on the diagonal and pass through the hedge. Descend to the north-west (not on the path to the right which tracks off to the north before you go through the hedge) to reach a footbridge with the unmistakable olfactory evidence of a sewage works hidden behind bushes to your left.

Follow a path with rubber matting laid along its length as you pass the works. Ascend the next field on the diagonal and continue ahead as you descend to reach Mill Lane. Turn right onto Mill Lane, and follow it to The Square, with the White Horse Inn, in the middle of Kings Sutton.

The pub is open between 1100 and 2300 (opening at 1200 at the weekend, and closing at 2000 on Sundays). There are weekday set meals and sandwiches at lunchtime, and a full-meal *à la carte* menu is available.



*Top — Descent on departure from Charlton*

*Above — straight through the hole in the trees*

*Below — White Horse Inn, Kings Sutton*







There only remains 600m to walk in order to reach the station, where (you will remember) there are no facilities.

**8** Turn to the left at the pub (straight ahead if you are coming out of the establishment) and make for the church ahead. Pass to the right of the church, onto Red Lion Street. Turn left onto Church Avenue, and follow it through a right turn. Descend



to Wales Street. Turn left to follow Wales Street to the station.

Walkers returning by train to London will be pleased that they do not need to negotiate the footbridge ... unless the timetable directs them to travel via Banbury.

*Kings Sutton*

# Lapworth, Baddesley Clinton and Packwood House

LPW

|                         |                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Start                   | Lapworth station (LPW) — <b>B94 6JJ</b>                                                                                                |
| Finish                  | Lapworth station (LPW) — <b>B94 6JJ</b>                                                                                                |
| Distance                | 15.7km                                                                                                                                 |
| Duration                | 3 hours 19 minutes                                                                                                                     |
| Ascent                  | 114m                                                                                                                                   |
| Transport and ticketing | Trains from Marylebone ( <i>often, change Leamington Spa</i> ); return to Lapworth; bus W of Aylesbury Rd turn to Dorridge or Solihull |
| Facilities              | Shop and pub near start and end; café at Packwood House                                                                                |
| Map                     | <a href="https://explore.osmaps.com/route/15048181/">https://explore.osmaps.com/route/15048181/</a>                                    |

## Introduction

The walk starts at Lapworth station, on the Chiltern line between Marylebone and Birmingham.

Lapworth station opened in 1854: today it is an unstaffed halt.

In almost all cases, you will need to change trains at Leamington Spa. Look out for the possibility of a direct train from Marylebone on weekend mornings, which gives a journey time of less than two hours. There are afternoon direct trains for the return journey at the weekend. Depending on the wait for a connection at Leamington Spa, that time might be extended by up to an hour.

## Route

**2** Exit the station and turn right to follow Station Lane to its end at a small green.

*Across the street, there is a convenience shop.*

Turn left and follow Old Warwick Road, crossing the canal and passing the Navigation Inn. About 150m beyond the pub, at the end of a picket fence, take a farm driveway on the left. There is a waymark for the Heart of England Way.

The Heart of England Way is a 160km route between Cannock Chase and the Cotswold Hills — between Milford and Chipping Campden, to be precise. It keeps to the rural gap between Birmingham and Coventry. Full details are available at

<https://heartofenglandway.org/>

**3** Follow the path to the left of the main farm buildings, and continue ahead to the end of the field. Go through the gap, and bear right on a path which passes beneath high-voltage power lines to reach the far right-hand corner of the field, then continues in a north-westerly direction to reach the access road for Baddesley Clinton manor house.

The house, a moated manor house dating from the fifteenth century, is 200m off to the right. The estate church is at the far end of the car park. Full details of the property may be found at

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/warwickshire/baddesley-clinton>

**4** Turn left to follow the driveway out to a road at a junction. Take the road straight ahead, then in 150m turn left on a path, then half-left at the end of the field, to reach a road (Rising Lane) at a canal bridge.

Turn right along the road to reach the end of Station Lane.

To make the circuit without visiting Baddesley Clinton, turn left out of the station to reach this point after 700m (a saving of 3.4km).

**5** Continue westwards on Rising Lane and cross the railway. Immediately beyond the bridge, turn right to take the driveway to The Grove, passing a house on the right.

Just in front of the forecourt of The Grove, take a path on the right which bends left, skirting the property. At another driveway, take the path opposite, with a hedge on your left. Follow the path out onto Chessett's Wood Road.

Turn right on the road, and follow it for 200m. A few metres before you reach a house on the left with white semi-circular gateways (there are two of them, the other is farther along the road), turn left through a gate.

The gate gives access onto a long avenue of trees which leads to Packwood Lane at Packwood House.

Packwood House is a Tudor manor house which is in the care of the National Trust. The estate is famous for its garden, and particularly for its topiary, which includes a representation of the Sermon on the Mount. Full details of the property may be found at

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/packwood-house>

There is a café at Packwood House which does not require that you have entry tickets to the house.

To shorten the walk by 6.5km, turn left onto Packwood Lane and follow it south, past the end of Rising Lane, almost as far as Old Warwick Road, then turn left along the access road to Lapworth Farm, where turn right to reach the canal (at waypoint 10 in the notes below).

**6** Turn right onto Packwood Lane. About 80m after a road comes in from the left, turn left and pass through a kissing-gate to



the left of the main gate. Continue ahead to reach the buildings of Church Farm, then turn right to keep the church on your left. Turn left (with the church still on your left) and follow the lane out to Glasshouse Lane.

Turn right and follow Glasshouse Lane to its end at a triangle, where turn left onto Vicarage Road. Follow Vicarage Road to its end at the junction with Grange Road, where the street-name becomes Aylesbury Road.

**7** Follow Aylesbury Road for 60m. Just beyond a lamp standard, turn left onto a path: behind the houses there is a wood on your left. At the end of the wood, cross into the next field ahead, turn left then right to keep to the left-hand side of the field. Cut the corner of the next field and pass through the hedge. Turn right and follow the right-hand edge of the next field to reach a T-junction of paths next to a couple of ponds.

Turn right, cross a footbridge, and enter woodland. Take the path ahead which eventually eases to the left and comes out onto Old Warwick Road. Turn right along the road for 110m, then turn left to cross the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal by a swing bridge. Turn left to follow the towpath (with the water on your left) to reach Wharf Lane.

**8** Continue eastwards along the towpath to the next bridge, where turn right to pass Drawbridge Farm. The path continues past the farm and, about 500m beyond the farm buildings, bears right to reach a path junction. Turn sharp left here, and follow the path (just south of east) to Lapworth village, aiming for the blocky church tower.

**9** Turn right onto the road, and immediately turn left into the churchyard. Pass through the churchyard with the church to your left. Cross Tapster Lane, and follow the path ahead for 500m to a crosspaths, where turn left to reach the canal. Turn right along the towpath, with the water on your left, until the towpath changes sides. Cross the canal at Lapworth Farm cottages.

The short-cut from Packwood House arrives at this point from the opposite direction.

**10** Continue eastwards along the canal, the water now on your right, and descend past seven more locks. Cross the canal to pick up the towpath on the other side (the water now on your left). Descend five more locks; at the sixth, cross over to the other side of the canal and follow the path over another canal — the Kingswood Cut.

The Kingswood Cut links the Grand Union Canal with the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal, thus saving huge distances for barge traffic.

**11** Follow the Kingswood Cut, with the water on the left. When you reach the junction with the Grand Union Canal, cross

the Cut by a bridge, and follow the Grand Union Canal to reach Old Warwick Road at the next bridge.

Across the canal to your right, the Navigation Inn serves food and drink from noon, the menu being short and consisting of simple pub fare, including sandwiches. The pub has an extensive garden for outdoor eating and drinking, at least when the canal is not frozen.

Turn left along Old Warwick Road, then right along Station Lane to the station at the end of the walk.