

How to get to the start

The 17 mile circular walk starts and finishes at Berkhamsted railway station. To plan a journey by public transport from anywhere in the country to the starting point, call 0871 200 2233 or visit [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info)

**By bicycle:** There is a cycle shelter at Berkhamsted station.

**By train:** Call National Rail Enquiries 0845 600 5165 or visit [www.londonmidland.com](http://www.londonmidland.com)

**By bus:** Arriva bus 500 stops in Berkhamsted High Street, a short walk from the station. Tel 0844 800 4411 or visit [www.arrivabus.co.uk](http://www.arrivabus.co.uk)

**By car:** There is a car park at the station and in several other places in Berkhamsted.



Chalkhill blue butterflies



Aldbury Nowers

This is one of a series of walks through the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It mainly follows rights of way most of which are waymarked as follows:

- 'yellow arrow' Footpaths (walkers only)
- 'blue arrow' Bridleways (horseriders, cyclists and walkers)
- 'red arrow' Byways (open to all traffic)
- 'purple arrow' Restricted Byway (horseriders, cyclists, walkers and non-mechanically propelled vehicles).

If you have a problem using a public right of way, please contact Hertfordshire County Council, tel 0300 123 4047.

Please be considerate in the countryside

- Keep to public rights of way, and leave farm gates as you find them
- Keep dogs on leads near livestock and do not allow dogs into the river or canal



Bridgewater Monument

There are many other wonderful walks in the Chilterns:

- Visit [www.chilternsaonb.org](http://www.chilternsaonb.org) or call 01844 355500 for other Chilterns Country walks.
- Visit [www.chilternsociety.org.uk](http://www.chilternsociety.org.uk) or call 01494 771250 for information on the Chiltern Society's walk programme, to obtain Chiltern Society footpath maps or to join the Society.

Learn more about Chilterns commons at [www.chilternsaonb.org/commons](http://www.chilternsaonb.org/commons)

This leaflet has been produced by the Chilterns Conservation Board as part of the Chilterns Commons Project. The Project benefits from funding by the Heritage Lottery Fund and help from volunteers.



Points of interest

- Ashridge House.** The 7th Earl of Bridgewater commissioned the architect James Wyatt to build the neo-Gothic Ashridge House as his home. Completed in 1814, the house is regarded as one of the finest examples of early Gothic Revival architecture. During World War II, the building and the lawn in front of it was used as a hospital. Today the house is used as a management training college.
- Ashridge Estate.** The estate comprises 5,000 acres of woodlands, commons, chalk downland and farmland. Most of the land is open access to the public and is owned and managed by the National Trust. The area supports an amazing diversity of wildlife.
- Aldbury Common.** In the past, Aldbury Common was more open than it is today and chalk were dug to make bricks and tiles and lime the fields. Grazing ceased in 1926 resulting in the growth of the woodland which dominates the common today.
- Bridgewater Monument.** The Grade II listed Bridgewater Monument was built in 1832 in memory of Francis Egerton, 3rd Duke of Bridgewater (1736–1803), "the father of inland navigation". It is 108 feet (33 m) tall with 170 steps inside, and was designed by Sir Jeffry Wyattville in a Doric style.
- Pitstone Common.** Until the early 20th century, Pitstone Common was wood pasture where livestock grazed beneath mature trees. Ponds were excavated to provide water for the animals.
- Ingghoe Common.** Maps from 1762 show Ingghoe Common as open grassland with very few trees. The mixed deciduous woodland here today has developed since commoners ceased grazing their livestock.
- The Ingghoe Hills.** The chalk grassland in this area is nationally important for wildlife and is home to many species of plants and insects, especially butterflies. The mosaic of habitats also supports a wide variety of birds. The Beacon is the site of an Iron-Age hill-fort and commands spectacular views across the Vale of Aylesbury and into Oxfordshire.



Berkhamsted Common

The following points of interest can be found on the walks. See map for locations.

- Berkhamsted Castle.** The castle was built during the Norman conquest of England in the 11th century to control a key route between London and the Midlands. A motte and bailey design, the castle was surrounded by extensive protective earthworks and boasted a deer park for hunting. After 1495 the castle was no longer inhabited and gradually fell into ruin.

Points of interest

For details of places to stay, visitor attractions and other walks, contact the Tourist Information Office in Berkhamsted library (tel 01438 737333) or visit [www.visitchilterns.co.uk](http://www.visitchilterns.co.uk)

- Pubs in Aldbury - The Greyhound Inn (01442 851228) next to the Bridgewater Monument
- Brownlow Café at the Ashridge Estate visitors centre, numerous other amenities. En route you will pass pubs, shops, public toilets, a tourist information office and Berkhamsted is a historic market town offering cafes and Take a break with a picnic on the commons and/or refreshments at a pub or café along the route.

Visitor information

# Chilterns Country

Walks on commons near Berkhamsted  
Discover some Chiltern commons in these circular walk while enjoying extensive and varied views

17 mile circular walk  
from Berkhamsted railway station



8 mile northern circular walk  
from Bridgewater Monument, Ashridge

8.5 mile southern circular walk  
from Berkhamsted railway station





#### Description of route:

The route follows paths and forest tracks on commons and across fields. Some paths are steep and can be muddy in places. There are no stiles. Take care, wear suitable footwear and allow time to rest and enjoy the extensive and varied views.

Map: OS Explorer 181

**1** Leaving the main entrance at Berkhamsted station, turn left under the bridge onto Brownlow Road and cross over the mini roundabout. Pass the castle on your right.

At the fork in the road keep left (turning into Castle Hill). After approx 50m take the footpath through Kitchener's Field car park.

**2** Follow the path out of the far side of the car park and pass Well Farm on your left. Continue up to the tree line and take the footpath directly in front of you. You are now on Berkhamsted Common.

**3** Proceed uphill until you reach the second waymarked crossing. Turn left onto bridleway 55, passing the edge of Berkhamsted golf course. After approx 100m, look at the hollows to your left. These are the remains of training trenches dug by the Inns of Court Officers' Training Corps during WWI.

**4** Continue along the bridleway for approx 1 mile until you reach Brickkiln Cottage. Turn right onto the track for 20-30m and then turn left onto the bridleway waymarked Ashridge Estate Boundary Trail.

**5** Continue along the bridleway for approx ½ mile to the track leading to Coldharbour Farm. Turn right onto the track waymarked bridleway 47.

**6** After passing Woodyard Cottages, go through the kissing gate on your left and follow the path across the field, keeping close to the fence on the right.

**7** Leave the field at a kissing gate, turn right and then almost immediately left. Follow the footpath as it crosses a paved road and continue to Ashridge golf course.

**8** Follow the path with the course perimeter fence on your right until you reach Prince's Riding. Turn left towards the Bridgewater Monument. After crossing the B4506 you are on Aldbury Common.

If you are walking the shorter Southern circular walk, now return to Berkhamsted by following directions from point **25** to point **30**

Start here if you are walking the shorter Northern circular walk and follow directions until point **25**

**9** At the Bridgewater Monument turn right onto the Ashridge Estate Boundary Trail. You are now on Pitstone Common.

**10** After approx 1 mile turn right onto a footpath leading to Beacon Road. The footpath crosses Ivinghoe Common.

**11** Cross the road, take the footpath along the drive to Ward's Hurst Farm and pass between the farm buildings. (NB if walking during the bluebell season, Dockey Wood is worth a detour.)

**12** On the far side of the farm and after passing a pond on your left, go through a gate and follow the Ashridge Estate Boundary Trail until you meet the Ridgeway.

**13** After approx 70m follow the path through a kissing gate into the woods. Go down the steps.

**14** Leave the woods at a gate and follow the path to the right to another gate into a large field. You will have a view of Ivinghoe hills to your left.

**15** Follow the straight path keeping the trees on your right. When you reach the second path on your left take it to the top of Gallows Hill.

**16** After passing through a gate at the top of the hill, turn left up the ridge. Continue to the summit of Ivinghoe Beacon (the highest point on the ridge).

**17** The path then turns left. Proceed down the steep hill following the Ridgeway (identified with an acorn symbol) to the road (Beacon Road).

**18** Cross the road and follow the Ridgeway uphill. After approx 50m fork right, continuing on the Ridgeway (not the wide chalky track). Follow the path over the hill. On the descent pass Incombe Hole on your right. Continue ahead and cross the road.

**19** Pass through the car park and continue uphill. You will re-join the Ridgeway after descending this hill.

**20** Follow the Ridgeway to the woods and enter via a kissing gate.

**21** After approx ¾ mile and at a path crossing, take the left hand path (leaving the Ridgeway). After about 50m take the right hand fork.

**22** Leave the woods at a kissing gate and enter the golf course. Take the sign-posted footpath towards Aldbury.

**23** Join Station Road. Turn left and pass St John the Baptist church on your left.

**24** Approx 50m after passing the village pond, take the uphill footpath on your left, sign-posted Bridgewater Monument, across Aldbury Common. Continue until you reach the Bridgewater Monument.

**25** Pass the Monument on your left and the visitors' centre on your right and follow the drive for approx 200m before turning right at the footpath sign. (Turn left if you are approaching from point **8**)

**26** After approx 1 mile and having crossed a road to Aldbury, the waymarked footpath narrows.

**27** (Note that care should be taken on this section to confirm the correct path/direction.) After a short period of time, the path branches to the left and then joins a bridleway. Turn right onto the bridleway and follow it to Northchurch Common. Continue following the bridleway, keeping the wooded area on your right. After approx 200m the bridleway (waymarked Ashridge Estate Boundary Trail) re-enters the woods for a short stretch and then forks first to the left and then to the right onto a waymarked bridleway.

**28** Leave the woods through a small car parking area and follow Norcott Hill downhill. The road has no pavement, but is quiet.

**29** When you reach the Grand Union Canal, turn left onto the canal footpath.

**30** After approx 2 miles, you reach a black and red road bridge across the canal. Leave the canal and turn left onto the road to return to Berkhamsted station.

