

London Countryway 8: Great Missenden – Berkhamsted

Start Great Missenden Station HP16 9AZ (SP892013)

Finish Berkhamsted Station HP4 2JU (SP992081)

Distance 17.5km, 4½ hours

Difficulty Moderate

Route Great Missenden Station – Great Missenden Misbourne Meadows (600m, 10 mins) – Potter Row – Ballinger Bottom – Chartridge (5.7km, 1½ hours) – Asheridge – Bellingdon – Nut Hazel Cross – Ashley Green (6.7km, 1¾ hours) – Ashley Green Snowhill Meadows – Harriotts End – A41/A416 junction – Berkhamsted High Street – Berkhamsted Station (4.5km, 1¼ hours)

Region / Local authority South East England / Buckinghamshire – Chiltern, East of England / Hertfordshire – Dacorum

Terrain Clear, easy to follow but mainly unsurfaced paths. Several gentle to moderate ascents and descents, numerous stiles, a few steps.

Surroundings Country town, urban footpath, water meadow, rolling chalk hills, village street, woodland, field path, farm track, village green, country lane, playing fields, urban green space, residential street, market place, canal, ancient monument.

Transport Half-hourly trains (hourly Sundays) Great Missenden – Amersham, London Marylebone or Wendover, Aylesbury. Infrequent buses (not Sundays) Chartridge – Chesham. Hourly buses (not Sundays) Ashley Green – Berkhamsted or Chesham, Amersham, Slough. Half-hourly Underground Chesham (off route) – Chalfont & Latimer (change for Baker Street and central London). Frequent trains Berkhamsted – Hemel Hempstead, Watford, London Euston, at least hourly Milton Keynes, Northampton, Birmingham.

Maps OS Explorer 181; Chiltern Society Maps 12 Hughenden Valley & Great Missenden, 17 Chesham & Berkhamsted

<http://maps.google.co.uk/maps/ms?>

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*From **Great Missenden station** (refreshments, toilets in station): from Platform 2 (trains from London), climb the ramp to the road bridge and turn right along Station Approach (A4128); from Platform 1 (trains from Amersham) leave through the ticket office, turn left to the road and right along Station Approach (A4128). *The Chiltern Heritage Trail joins left from Chesham and Little Missenden.* Continue downhill to the T-junction with High Street. *Shops and services around the junction and right along High Street.* Turn left, leaving the Heritage Trail *which continues on an alternative route to Ballinger Bottom*, and take the first right, Walnut Close. At the end continue along the footpath, passing a car park on the right. Go through a gate into a long paddock. *The South Buckinghamshire Way joins right from Denham, Amersham and Little Missenden.* Turn left along the left hand field edge and through another gate. Keep ahead through a third gate and between hedges to a footpath sign in **Misbourne Meadows**. Here go over a stile on the right to the A413 road, leaving the South Bucks Way, *which continues ahead to the Ridgeway at Little Hampden.**

*From the previous section, in **Misbourne Meadows** cross the stile left to the road.*

*To continue on the route, cross the road (A413) carefully and take the broad track opposite, climbing gently along right hand field edges through several gates and under power lines. Through a kissing gate keep on an enclosed footpath which becomes a surfaced drive, continuing to a lane by allotments at **Potter Row**.*

Turn left and shortly take the footpath right by white cottages and a well. Bend left diagonally across a grassy field, following the clearly trodden path through a gap in a row of trees and across more grass. Over two stiles, cross a field and go through a gap by the corner of a wood, then across another path and another field. Reaching the corner, ignore the stile on the left and cross the stile straight ahead, keeping across the next field to a hedge. Follow the field edge right to a stile. Cross to reach a bench, and keep roughly ahead along a stony bridleway that joins from the right. Follow this left past **Field End Grange** and just before Home Mead Cottage take the gravel track on the right. Very shortly, where the hedge on the left ends, leave the track left on a short path across the corner of a field towards **Lee Common Woods**.

Entering the woods, turn right on a broad track which curves left. Ignore the first track on the right, between benches, and very shortly turn right along a clear track just inside the woodland strip. *The Chiltern Link and Chiltern Heritage Trail join here: both go left to The Lee where the Link continues to the Ridgeway at Wendover while the Heritage Trail curves back via Lee Clump to Chartridge.* Follow this track all the way to its end, crossing a stile to a T-junction with a lane at **Ballinger Bottom**. *The Chiltern Heritage Trail turns right just before the lane back towards Great Missenden.*

Turn right on the lane then left by a footpath sign along the drive to Rose Cottage. Very soon go right on a signed footpath, following a stony track around to the left. Reaching a junction, take the left fork of the two paths ahead, following the left hand edge of the woodland. *Here you leave the Chiltern Link which follows the right hand fork towards Chesham, though it's not clear from the signing.* At the end of the wood keep ahead along the now-enclosed path, bending left to reach **Bellows Wood**. Just inside the wood turn left downhill at a waymark post along a bridleway and at the corner fork right just before a stile. Keep right just inside the edge of the wood. Keep ahead where two corners of woodland meet, now with woodland on the left. At the next corner follow the woodland edge left uphill and at the next crosspaths turn right, now on an enclosed bridleway along a ridge between hedgerows. Reaching a T-junction by a stile turn left, then left again at the next T-junction along a roughly surfaced drive that soon becomes a residential street (Cogdells Lane), passing a cricket ground on the left to reach Chartridge Lane in **Chartridge**. *The Chiltern Heritage Trail joins from Lee Clump left at the cricket ground.*

Turn right along Chartridge Lane, *passing bus stops*, to a footpath sign on the left just before the a small chapel. *Pub a little further along the lane.* Take the path left past cottages and along an enclosed path downhill then uphill again, continuing ahead on a trodden path through rough ground and along the right hand edge of an overgrown field. Through a gap keep ahead downhill and uphill on a path cut through crops then alongside a hedge on the left to a lane (Asheridge Lane) at **Asheridge**. *Pub a little*

along the lane to the left. The Chiltern Heritage Trail turns left here towards Cholesbury before curving back on an alternative route to Ashley Green.

Turn right, then left at the footpath sign along a concrete track at Widmore Farm. Follow the track through the kissing gate, keeping ahead along a right hand field edge to **Widmore Wood**. Just inside the wood fork slightly right downhill, away from the concrete track. At the bottom turn right through a woodland strip. Shortly at a waymark post cross a stile left to leave the wood and walk uphill on a trodden path across pasture. Keep ahead across a feint crossing path into the next field between a hedge and a horse paddock. Through a kissing gate join an enclosed farm track to emerge on a lane (Chesham Road) at **Bellingdon**.

Turn right and very soon left at a footpath sign by the Old Croft along a narrow fenced path. Reaching a T-junction go left, cross a stile onto a house drive and turn immediately right along a broad unsurfaced track. Follow this round several bends and along the edge of **Ramscott Wood** on the left, eventually reaching a horse barrier where the track bends left downhill into the wood. Near the bottom fork left over a stile into a field. *The Chiltern Heritage Trail joins from the right, where it takes an alternative route to Ashley Green via Chesham Vale.* Turn left, with the wood on your left, to the corner of the field, cross a stile and turn right uphill along a right hand field edge. *The Chiltern Heritage Trail keeps ahead here towards Cholesbury.* Follow the trodden path which veers slightly left of the field edge past a picnic bench towards a stile. Over the stile, keep ahead along the field edge, across a crosspaths at the summit and downhill again, soon going through a gap on the right and then immediately left, continuing in the same direction but now along the left hand field edge. Keep ahead across two stiles and along an enclosed path by a farm building to reach a junction of minor roads at **Nut Hazel Cross**.

Keep ahead across the road and the triangle of grass and along a fenced footpath uphill towards a wood. Cross a stile and go through the wood then into a field. Turn right along the woodland edge then right along a cinder track across a field away from the wood. The track soon turns chalky underfoot. Reaching a hedge corner follow the track around it and ahead across a footpath. Where the track reaches a fence and bends left, turn right along the fence, following a narrower track signed as a permissive route. Shortly go through an aluminium kissing gate on the left and ahead across a smaller field, past a solitary tree. Go through two more gates onto a fenced path which bends right. Entering another field turn right on a narrow field edge path, then through a gap at the next corner to join a broad farm drive. After only a few paces turn left at the waymark post into a rough meadow. Follow the next post through a kissing gate, through a gap in an electric fence and diagonally right towards another gate. Keep ahead across the next field towards a wooden gate onto a lane (Hog Lane). Turn right along the lane. *Just past Old Oak Farm the Chiltern Heritage Trail rejoins right from Chesham Vale.* Continue to the T-junction with Chesham Road (A416) at **Ashley Green**. *Pubs, shop and bus stops; you can end the route here by catching a bus to Berkhamsted or Chesham (not Sundays). From the Green there are connections with the Ashley Green Stile-free Walk.*

To continue on the route, cross to the green and pass the little well house and cottages along a gravel track. Through a gate fork right along a fence, through another gate and along a fenced path, ignoring a stile on the right and keeping left

past an enclosed wooded area with deep water warning signs. Down some steps and through a gate, you reach a path junction at the end of trees at **Snow Hill Meadows**. *The London Countryway and the Chiltern Heritage Trail turn right here.*

For Berkhamsted station, continue ahead, following a right hand field edge to the valley bottom and then bend left with the field edge uphill again, passing a byway sign that indicates you're now in Hertfordshire. Curve left to join a concrete drive and then bend right on a broad gravel track between houses at **Harriotts End**, which becomes a concrete track descending to a lane (White Hill). Turn left along the lane and follow it for some time, passing **Haresfoot Farm** on the right. Eventually the lane swings sharply left, parallel to a busy road. Follow the lane left then right to a T-junction with a main road (Chesham Road A416). Cross and turn right, crossing a dual carriageway (A41) on a bridge at the **A41/A416 junction**.

Immediately on the other side of the bridge go left on a stile over the crash barrier through woodland. The path at first parallels the A41 but soon curves right and emerges through a gate onto a street (Kingshill Way A416). *The British Film Institute National Archive is a little way along to the left here.* Cross, walk left a few paces, and take the footpath on the right, following the line of trees between sports pitches through **Berkhamsted School Playing Fields**. At the end of the playing fields keep ahead downhill on a fenced path with occasional steps, continuing on the left hand edge of open grassland at **Butts Meadow** with views of Berkhamsted ahead. Go through a gate and along the right hand edge of a playing field, then on a tarmac path between a hut and school buildings. Turn right then left along a residential street (Prince Edward Street) to emerge on **Berkhamsted High Street** (A4251). *Full range of shops and services along the High Street.*

Go slightly left, cross by the town sign and follow narrow Water Lane opposite. Keep ahead across the car park, *with toilets on the left*, and bend left then right along Mill Street. Keep ahead past a green space, **The Moor**, on the left, to reach the **Grand Union Canal**. Turn right along the towpath and almost immediately go left up the ramp onto the bridge, crossing the canal. *The Grand Union Canal Walk runs left along the towpath to Tring, Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and Birmingham, and right to Kings Langley, Watford and London.* Reaching Lower Kings Road, cross ahead and then turn left, parallel to the railway viaduct. **Berkhamsted Station** is immediately ahead of you. *Toilets and refreshments in station.*

*To visit **Berkhamsted Castle***, turn right under the railway just before the station along Brownlow Road and then right along White Hill on the other side, almost immediately reaching the entrance to the castle on the left. There is an alternative entrance to the station on this side of the railway.

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