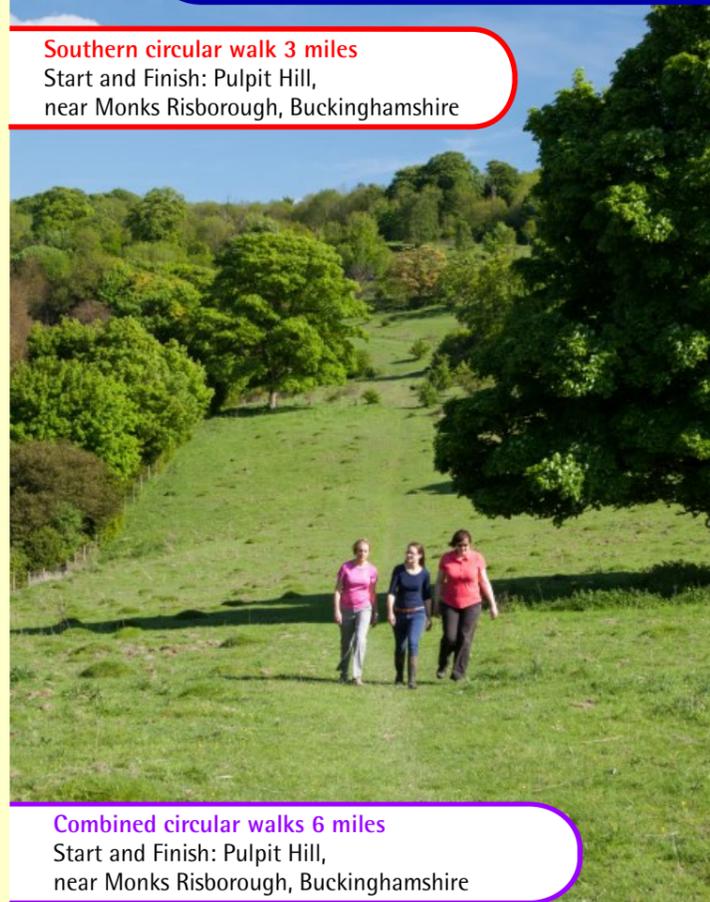


Chilterns Country

Box wood walks
Discover the largest native box woodland in the country

Northern circular walk 3.5 miles
Start and Finish: Great Kimble, Buckinghamshire

Southern circular walk 3 miles
Start and Finish: Pulpit Hill, near Monks Risborough, Buckinghamshire



Combined circular walks 6 miles
Start and Finish: Pulpit Hill, near Monks Risborough, Buckinghamshire

Visitor information

There are some steep ascents and descents, several stiles and unmade paths that are sometimes muddy. Take care, wear suitable footwear and allow time to rest and enjoy the views!

The nearest large towns are Princes Risborough and Wendover offering shops, public toilets, tourist information offices and numerous other amenities. There are pubs in nearby villages.

Pubs/restaurants on the northern circular walk:

The Swan, Grove Lane, Great Kimble, Buckinghamshire HP17 9TR. Tel. 01844 275288 www.kimbleswan.co.uk

Pub on the southern circular walk:

The Plough at Casden, Casden Road, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire HP27 0NB. Tel 01844 343302.

www.ploughatcasden.com

For details of places to stay, visitor attractions and other walks, contact the Tourist Information offices in Wendover (tel 01296 696759) or Princes Risborough (tel 01844 274 795) or visit www.visitbuckinghamshire.org

How to get to the start

Walks are located near Princes Risborough and Wendover in Buckinghamshire. Walks may start from bus stops, a cycle shelter, Little Kimble train station or small parking areas. Aylesbury is the nearest major public transport hub. To plan a journey by public transport from anywhere in the country to the starting point for these walks, call 0871 200 22 33 or visit www.traveline.info for information.

By bicycle: There is a cycle shelter at Little Kimble train station (un-manned). See www.visitbuckinghamshire.org on map.

By train: Little Kimble train station (un-manned) is on the line between Aylesbury and London Marylebone, via High Wycombe. It is run by Chilterns Railways. Travel time from London to Little Kimble is approximately one hour. Call National Rail Enquiries 08456 005 165 or visit the Chilterns Railways website at www.chilternrailways.co.uk See www.visitbuckinghamshire.org on map.

By bus: Bus stops along the walk route are serviced regularly by Arriva bus 300, linking High Wycombe to Aylesbury, via Naphill and Princes Risborough. Tel 0844 800 44 11 or visit www.arrivabus.co.uk See www.visitbuckinghamshire.org on map.

By car: There are several small parking areas offering free parking. See www.visitbuckinghamshire.org on map.

Points of interest

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

A Look at the bark, leaves, flowers and seeds of box (*Buxus sempervirens*). It may be familiar as a plant often grown in gardens. Its timber is hard and close grained because it grows very slowly. The wood is so dense that it sinks in water! Boxwood was used in the past to make combs, printing blocks, chess pieces and rulers. Baroque music is associated with boxwood woodwind instruments of the 16th and 17th century, such as recorders and flagelets.

B Take the opportunity to venture off the path into the grasslands of 'Grangelands' and the 'Rifle Range'. Look for chalk-loving flowering plants, butterflies and snails in the spring and summer and dark green juniper bushes all year round. Juniper is an evergreen, as is box.

C Look for towering beech trees. Whilst box is not in this woodland, it can be found in other Chiltern beechwoods including several known as the 'Chilterns Woodlands SAC' which are of European importance for biodiversity.

D Many routeways in the Chilterns are historic. Look for a 'sunken' track off the bridleway which has been worn down by centuries of use.

E Large mounds and ditches form the ramparts of a D shaped hill fort dating from the Iron Age (700BC to 42AD). At a time when the hill was kept clear of trees, Pulpit Hill hill fort took advantage of far-reaching views.

F Great Kimble Warren is one of several narrow valleys between Great Kimble and Ellesborough where box grows thickly. These woodlands comprise the largest area of native box woodland in the country! In the early days of the nature conservation movement, Charles Rothschild proposed that these woodlands should be made a nature reserve in 1915. Today these woodlands are a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

About the walks

G The path takes you through a dense woodland of box trees. Other trees struggle to grow because the slopes are very steep and the chalk soils are thin, loose and dry. This ancient woodland has persisted because the steep slopes have discouraged people from clearing the wood for agriculture.

H There is a pillow mound on Beacon Hill - a man-made warren for farming rabbits. Rabbits were introduced by the Normans and farmed for their meat and fur. The ownership and consumption of rabbits indicated wealth. The name of the box woods is another link to warrening - Ellesborough and Kimble Warrens.

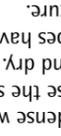
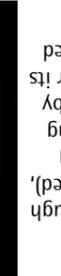
I There is a box tree in Ellesborough churchyard. The rosary bead (pictured), made to be held in the hand during prayer, displays small scale engraving on boxwood. Boxwood is favoured by engravers above all other woods for its close grain which makes fine detailed engraving possible.

J Looking at the escarpment from the vale, the valley of Ellesborough Warren is dark green with box and contrasts with Beacon Hill. The series of valleys along the escarpment were shaped by erosion during the Ice Age (up to 1.8 million years ago). Box trees grew in Europe in the Ice Ages.

K Wall paintings dating back to the 13th century can be viewed inside Little Kimble Church.

Lace making was a major industry in the 19th century. In the early years, bobbins used to make lace were 'whittled' by local men from boxwood and fruitwoods available locally. Boxwood bobbins were used to make the lace that the area was famous for - Bucks Point.

Ellesborough church and Beacon Hill from the vale



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 Buckinghamshire County Council, tel 0845 370 8090.

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



Tawny owl - boxwood print by Thomas Bewick © The Bewick Society

There are many other wonderful walks in the Chilterns:

- Visit www.chilternsaonb.org or call 01844 355500 for other Chilterns Country walks.
- Visit 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 box heritage, events and volunteering at www.chilternsaonb.org/box

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



Photographs kindly provided by © Chris Smith and the Chilterns Conservation Board

Downloads for your walk

Supplement your walk with further information, images, music clips and more at www.chilternsaonb.org/box



Walking gets you fit and keeps you healthy!

Spend at least two sessions of 15 minutes each walking briskly enough to raise your heartbeat, get warm and breathe harder. A 15 minute session of brisk walking will burn about 100 calories. Consult your GP if you have not exercised recently or have a known medical condition.

Downloads for your walk

Supplement your walk with further information, images, music clips and more at www.chilternsaonb.org/box

Northern circular walk ●●●

Discover chalk grassland, box woodland, extensive views, village churches, streams and boxwood objects.

Distance: 3.5 miles; up to 2 hours.

Access information: Mainly un-made paths which can be muddy. One steep ascent and descent, several stiles and steps.

Start/finish: Great Kimble A4010 parking layby or bus stop.

Route description:

1 Take the brideway signposted off the A4010 Aylesbury Road layby. Walk up the steep hill to reach a kissing gate on your left.

2 (For the combined circular walk, refer to the alternative directions under 2 below). Follow the worn path into Chequers Knap grassland with the perimeter fence on your left and after about 100m two old box trees on your right. Keep to the fence as it curves right and continue straight ahead.

3 Upon reaching a junction of paths and a Ridgeway signpost, turn left to follow the Ridgeway.

4 Pass through the kissing gate on your left to walk along the other side of the valley. Follow the worn path along the edge of the valley and then right, over the top of the hill and down. Look for the gate into the adjacent field.

5 With the fence on your left, walk straight on into the trees to a gate.

6 At the crossroads of tracks, go over the private track and straight ahead along the public footpath into the woods. Head across the open grassland to reach steps down into a valley thick with box.

7 Take care on 58 steps.

8 Pass through the kissing gate and follow the worn path around Beacon Hill and down through fields towards the church. To view the pillow mound, climb Beacon Hill.

9 Go through the gate and take care crossing the road! Enter the churchyard and pass to the left of the church. Go down the steps - take care! Pass through a gate and head straight across the field to a stile (ignore the stile nearby to the right). Now walk ahead to the two kissing gates and take the left gate.

10 Continue straight ahead. Pass through a gate, over a single plank bridge and then through another gate.

11 Walk along the edge of the field with the watercourse on your right. Pass through another gate. Continue along the field edge and, ignoring the field gate, follow the edge of the field round to the left. Go through two gates, taking care on several steps. Cross a stile and keep to the fence on your right.

12 Pass over two stiles to cross a private track near with houses. Head diagonally across the field to find a roadside stile. Turn left along the A4010.

13 Look for a footpath on your left near to the bus stop. Go down this tarmac track between houses and Brookhouse Farm and through a private garden to reach a kissing gate.

14 Head across a series of fields, passing through gates.

15 Reaching the Ellesborough Road, turn right to walk along the pavement and pass Little Kimble church.

16 At the large T junction, turn right along the A4010. Look back to enjoy views of the escarpment and head for Little Kimble train station on the left.

17 Take the footpath signposted to the left of the train station. Pass alongside the railway line and through a gate into a field. Continue along the edge of the field with the railway line on your right to reach a kissing gate on your right in the hedge. Head through this gate to reach a nearby pub or continue the walk by turning left across the field with the railway line behind you.

18 Pass over the stream and through a gate to follow a fenced path. Pass beside the school on your right, through a gate and out onto the road of Great Kimble village.

19 Turn left along the road, taking care as there are no pavements! At the T junction, turn right onto the A4010 to pass Great Kimble church and reach the parking area or bus stop.

Southern circular walk ●●●

Discover a hill fort, chalk grassland, box trees, beech woodland, boxwood objects and historic routeways.

Distance: 3 miles; up to 2 hours.

Access information: Mainly un-made paths that can be muddy. Several steep ascents and descents and several stiles.

Start/finish: Pulpit Hill roadside parking area, near Monks Risborough

Route description:

1 From the roadside parking area, walk with the road on your right along the adjacent track and at a signpost, turn left up the slope. At a crossroad of paths, turn left up the hill along the public footpath. Keep on up the hill until you reach a crossroad with a wide track.

2 Turn left along this wide permissive track.

3 At a crossroads, follow the sign straight ahead to Pulpit Hill hill fort. Follow this permissive track.

4 Follow the sign for the hill fort, turning right along a permissive path with the boundary mound and ditch on your left. Look for a wide, flat entrance on your left into the hill fort.

5 Cross the ditch into the hill fort.

6 Continue into the central flat area of the hill fort and take the right hand fork.

7 Upon exiting the hill fort and finding a steep drop ahead, turn right at the T junction to put the steep slope on your left. Continue along this path to reach a crossroads with a public bridgeway.

8 Walk straight ahead over the bridgeway to follow a public footpath and pass through a gate. Continue down the hill to reach the corner of the field.

9 (For the combined circular walk, refer to the alternative directions under 9 below). Ignore the stile and gate, turning left to keep the fence on your right.

10 At a Ridgeway signpost, turn right to follow the fenceline along a worn path straight ahead and then left at the corner. Pass two old box trees and reach a gate.

11 Turn left up the bridgeway and continue ahead to reach a right turn signposted for the Ridgeway. Climb the steps to a gate.

12 Follow the Ridgeway straight ahead across the Rifle Range grassland and through gates to cross a bridgeway into Grangelands grassland. Continue along Ridgeway with the fence on your right.

13 Upon reaching a gate on your right, follow this path down to the Cadsden Road.

14 Turn left, taking care on the road. Pass the pub and find a stile to the left of the pub parking area.

15 Follow the wide track to a junction of numerous paths and take the steepest (middle) path ahead. There are numerous permissive paths in this woodland so take care!

16 Take care on the steep path and head on through woods, ignoring several turnings along forestry tracks and footpaths.

17 Upon reaching a waymarked bridgeway, turn left along the bridgeway and then almost immediately sharp left again to keep to the bridgeway.

18 Continue along the bridgeway to reach a junction with a footpath and sunken routeway.

19 Follow the bridgeway straight ahead to the Cadsden/Longdown Road.

20 Take care crossing the road and turn left along the track parallel with the road to reach the parking area.

Combined circular walks ●●●●●

Distance: 6 miles; up to 4 hours.

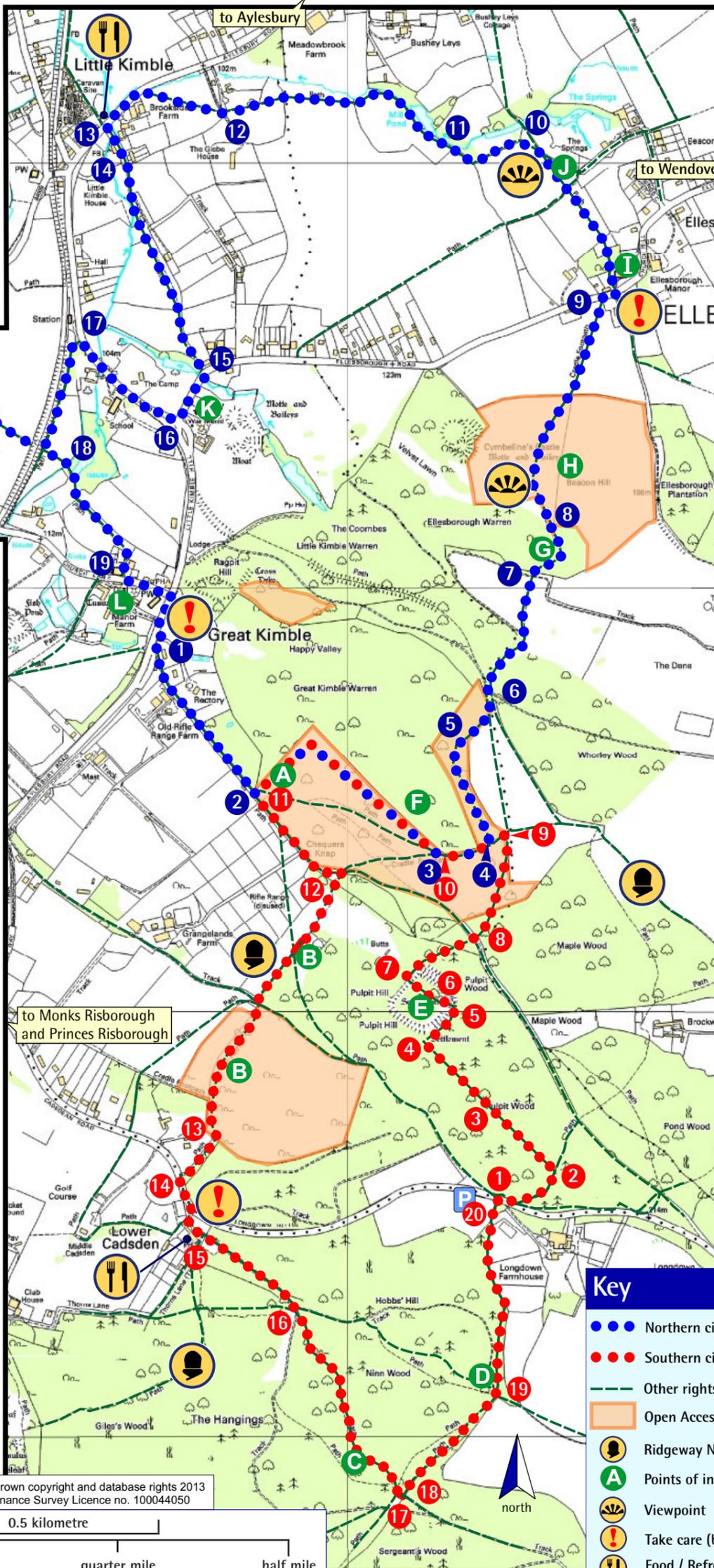
Access information: The walk is mainly on un-made paths that can be muddy. There are several steep ascents and descents, several stiles and steps.

Follow the directions for the southern circular walk from 1 until you reach 9, at which point follow the alternative instructions below for 9. This will take you on to the northern circular walk. Upon reaching 2 on the northern circular walk, follow the alternative instructions below for 2. This will take you back on the southern circular walk to return you to the starting point.

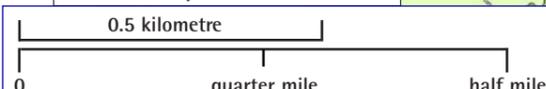
Start/finish: Pulpit Hill roadside parking area, near Monks Risborough

2 Continue up the bridgeway until there is a path on your right, signposted for the Ridgeway. Go across the steps to pass through a gate into the Rifle Range. Follow instructions from 12 under the Southern circular walk.

9 Ignore the stile and gate, turning left to keep the fence on your right and then pass through the gate in this fenceline. Follow the worn path across the open grassland along the edge of the valley and then right, over the top of the hill and down the slope into the head of the adjacent valley. Look for the wooden kissing gate which takes you into the adjacent field. Follow instructions from 5 under the Northern circular walk.



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Key

- Northern circular walk
- Southern circular walk
- Other rights of way
- Open Access land
- ! Ridgeway National Trail
- A Points of interest (see over)
- Viewpoint
- ! Take care (busy road)
- Food / Refreshments