

Close to the Cow Roast Inn lies the source of the River Bulbourne, once a full and fast flowing river. Like the other chalk streams in the Chilterns, the Bulbourne today is little more than a trickle, due in part to the increasing quantity of water needed by a growing population.

The Bulbourne Valley Water Walk

The Bulbourne has been the main source of water for the Grand Junction (now Grand Union) Canal since it was completed in 1797. The new canal linked London with the coalfields of the Midlands and was the only one to be built across the Chilterns. Ensuring a constant supply of water in a region of permeable chalk was an engineering challenge which required the building of reservoirs, pumps and boreholes.

Water was extracted in this area for industrial purposes as long ago as the first century, when iron was produced at Cow Roast, drawing from 14 well shafts. This important Roman settlement grew up along the Roman road, Akeman Street, now the A4251.

Water is still extracted from a borehole situated at the top of Tom's Hill. This is the site of the family owned business that bottles Chiltern Hills Natural Mineral Water. Having spent more than 50 years slowly filtering through layers of chalk, Chiltern Hills Natural Mineral Water is drawn from the source 300 feet below the unspoilt National Trust woodland. The countryside here is uncultivated, and the water source is consequently low in nitrates yet rich in other minerals that have valuable functions in maintaining a healthy life. The water is particularly high in calcium due to its journey through the chalky countryside and this is the principal mineral for healthy bones and teeth.

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



Footpath (walkers only)



Bridleway (horse riders, cyclists and walkers)



Byway (open to all traffic)



Please be considerate in the countryside – keep to footpaths, especially through crops, and leave farm gates as you find them.

The Cow Roast Inn offers a selection of real ales and a varied menu. Traditional English dishes and speciality Mexican food is served lunchtimes and evenings. There is a large, peaceful garden. Walkers and cyclists are welcome.



The Countryside Management Service

works with communities in Hertfordshire and north London to care for and enjoy the countryside.

For more information contact us at:

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Supported by the Chilterns Conference and Aldbury Parish Council

Chilterns Country

Pub Walk: The Bulbourne Valley Water Walk

Walk Description:

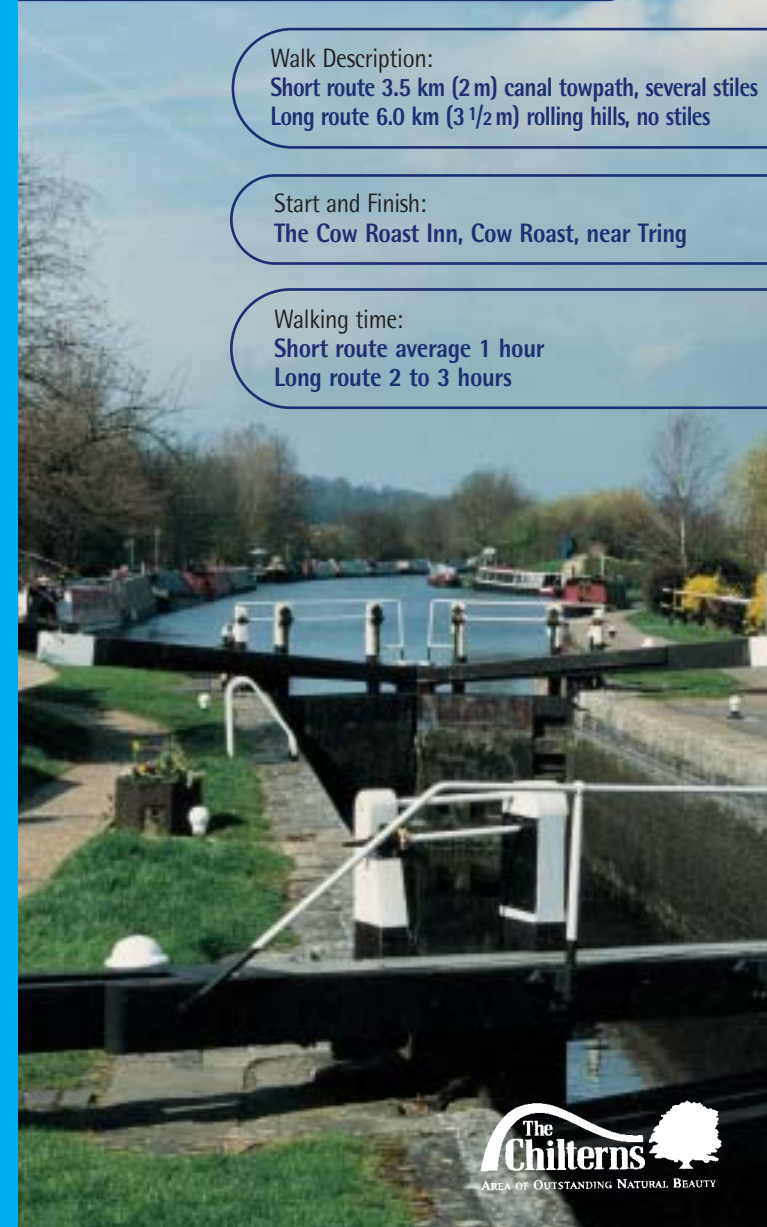
Short route 3.5 km (2 m) canal towpath, several stiles
Long route 6.0 km (3 1/2 m) rolling hills, no stiles

Start and Finish:

The Cow Roast Inn, Cow Roast, near Tring

Walking time:

Short route average 1 hour
Long route 2 to 3 hours



How to get to Cow Roast

Tring station is a 2.5 kilometre walk away along the canal towpath. Bus numbers 30 and 322 stop outside the Cow Roast Inn on Mondays to Saturdays. For bus and train details call the Hertfordshire Traveline on 0845 7244344. Cyclists can use the canal towpath but should obtain a cycle permit from British Waterways on 01442 825938. If you need to come by car, please park in the Cow Roast Inn car park. Cow Roast is between Berkhamsted and Tring on the A4251.

Notes on the walk



From the Cow Roast Inn cross the road to the canal lock, taking great care of fast traffic, and go left along the canal towpath



From Newground Road, the first road crossing, take the second track on the right after the railway bridge. On the far side of the field turn left and go up towards the wood.



For the shorter walk, turn right just before the wood, and over the stile into the next field. From here follow the footpath down to Norcott Court Farm and return to Cow Roast via the footbridge over the railway.



For the longer walk, go into the wood and up Tom's Hill (a byway open to all traffic). After the Chiltern Hills Natural Mineral Water bottling site take the first footpath on the right into the National Trust's Ashridge estate.



Keep to the boundary of the wood until you see signs for the Icknield Way, then follow these south, skirting the edge of Northchurch Common.



Go down the lane past Norcott Court and over the railway, until you reach the canal. Turn right along the towpath to return to Cow Roast.

