

Around the Hills

Chilterns Country

Galley and Warden Hills, near Luton



Warden Hill Walk: 1.75 miles, allow 1 hour

Galley Hill Walk: 2 miles, allow 1 hour

Streatley Fields Walk: 4 miles, allow 2 hours

Warden and Galley Hills is one of the most important areas of chalk downland in Bedfordshire, and lies within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The area is open for your enjoyment, and is Luton's oldest Local Nature Reserve.

The hills are home to a wide range of wild flowers, many of which will only live on the thin poor soils of the chalk downland. These flowers in turn attract over 20 different butterflies.

Chalkhill butterfly on Horseshoe Vetch



These very special, and rare, grassland landscapes are a result of traditional farming methods. Without man's intervention the grassland would return to woodland and the flowers and their butterflies would vanish. The traditional method of keeping trees and shrubs under control was by grazing them with cattle - and though this continues today, changes in farming means that this is no longer a profitable activity, and many slopes are no longer farmed. When this happens conservationists help by cutting down the scrub.

The field at the base of Warden Hill is part of the nature reserve and is rich in lime-loving wild flowers, including some quite rare species. You can also find the remains of Warden Hill Farm, still surrounded by bushes and garden plants.

Bunkers and Boundaries

From the top of Warden Hill there are excellent views over the town. Beyond the golf course and Cardinal Newman Catholic School at the foot of the hills, see if you can spot the flats at Five Springs and Hockwell Ring, Bramingham Woods, and the Sundon water tower. The hills on the opposite side of the Luton valley are Dallow Downs.

The South Bedfordshire Golf Club course borders much of the hills to the north and east. Around the top of Warden Hill you can still see a number of earthworks, which look like ancient archaeological sites but are actually the remains of golf course features abandoned many years ago!

Running east - west from the base of Warden Hill are Drays Ditches. These started as a Bronze Age boundary earthwork separating neighbouring tribal groups. Later, in the Iron Age, they were built up to control traffic along the Icknield Way.



Drays Ditches

Close to the top of Galley Hill there are two Bronze Age burial mounds, known as barrows. Although these are barely visible today, in the Middle Ages a gallows was built on one of the barrows. In the early 1960's the barrows were excavated and there remains of 14 burials were found in the larger of the two.

Streatley Village

As you walk along The Icknield Way, you are following an ancient trackway dating from Neolithic times. This was part of an ancient trading route stretching from Norfolk to the coast of Dorset. Later, in the early medieval period, the route was used as a 'salt way' from the East Anglian fen edges.



St Margaret's Church

Mentioned in the Domesday Book, Streatley's Anglo-Saxon name means 'the clearing by the street'. Much of the village is a designated Conservation Area.

The oldest building in the village is St Margaret's Church, dating back to the 14th Century. Close by is the Chequers pub - which was destroyed by fire in 1908, and had to be totally rebuilt.

Further down the road, and opposite the pond, you can find the 17th Century 'Thatched Cottage', and its neighbour which used to be the Red Lion pub, though this closed in the First World War.



The Chequers Pub

How to get there

The nearest bus stop for the Warden and Galley Hills route is on the A6, at Warden Hill Road.

For the Streatley walk you can get a bus from Luton to the Chequers pub in Streatley. Phone Traveline for bus times 0871 200 22 33 or visit www.traveline.info

There is parking at the Links Way pull-in or on Church Road in Streatley (as indicated on the map) and at the Chequers pub.

Once you are there

Please be considerate in the countryside

- There may be grazing animals along the routes - please keep dogs on leads in these areas
- Many of the routes are public bridleways, so you may meet up with horse-riders.
- Be especially careful when crossing the golf course and the A6, and when walking along country lanes.
- Paths can get muddy, especially through fields.







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.

Galley and Warden Hills are managed by Luton Borough Council. For information contact the John Dony Field Centre. Tel 01582 486983

This is one of a series of Chilterns Country walks through the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

To download this and other Chilterns walks and rides leaflets visit www.chilternsaonb.org/activities.asp or call 01844 355500

Rights of way markings:

-  Footpath (walkers only)
-  Bridleway (horse riders, cyclists and walkers)
-  Byway open to all traffic
-  Restricted Byway (horseriders, cyclists, walkers and non-mechanically propelled vehicles)

The Chequers of Streatley (Pub, restaurant and B&B)

The Chequers is a traditional country pub offering a warm welcome and a wide selection of real ales. We serve good, home made, hearty food as well as lighter meals and chunky sandwiches. Colin's Steak & Ale Pie is famous locally, along with daily changing specials to be tempted by. All are meals are made fresh from order. Open for food seven days a week.

The Chequers offers B&B accommodation, there are 5 spacious en-suite rooms.

Tel 01582 882072 www.thechequers-streatley.co.nr



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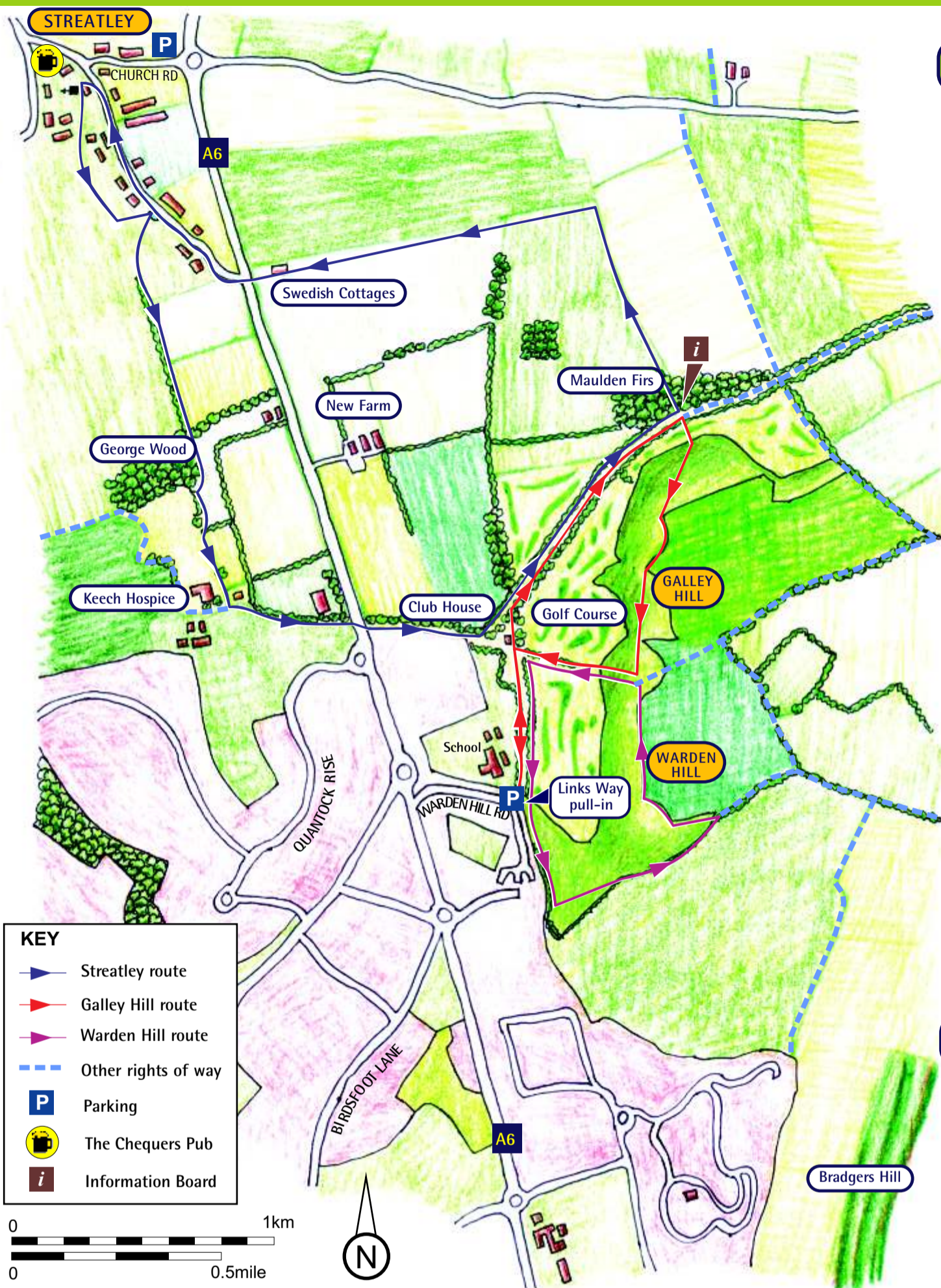
www.chilternsaonb.org

www.chilternsociety.org.uk

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Red route - Galley Hill

A two mile route incorporating the historic Icknield Way

- The start point is the pull-in at the end of Links Way at the top of Warden Hill Road, by Cardinal Newman RC School.
- From the Links Way pull-in, head left on the grass path, following the hedge-line alongside the golf course.
- Follow the path past the clubhouse on your left and bear right onto a substantial track, which runs through the golf course. Follow this until you reach the Icknield Way information board by Maulden Firs where paths join from left and right. Turn right across the golf course- **keep a look out for flying golf balls.**
- Pass through the bridle gate in front of you and follow the track up the hill.
- Keep to the crest of the hill with the golf course below you to the right. Eventually you will see a bridleway which crosses your track and leads down to the valley below you. Turn right onto this bridleway and cross the golf course again.
- Near the clubhouse turn left around the edge of the golf course and retrace your steps back to the pull-in.



Skylark

Purple route - Warden Hill

A one and three quarter mile circuit, with great views of Luton from the ridge of the hill.

- The start point is the pull-in at the end of Links Way at the top of Warden Hill Road, by Cardinal Newman RC School.
- From the pull-in, head right and follow the field boundary along the bottom of Warden Hill.
- At the first fingerpost, turn left and follow the right-hand side of the earth bank, and on up the hill. Head towards the kissing gate on the right
- Go through the kissing gate and follow the fence line keeping it to your right, keep on past the steps.
- Ignoring the kissing gate to the right, turn left and follow a new fence-line up the hill, which in time turns to the right as you arrive at the crest of the hill.
- Follow the hilltop, with Luton and the golf course to your left. Through the kissing gate and straight on for another 100 yards to the next waymark post.
- Turn left, and follow the footpath down the hill, aiming towards the red club-house building.
- Through another kissing gate, and onto the golf course - beware of flying golf balls - keeping to the wide track.
- At the bottom of the hill turn left and walk along the edge of the golf course by the hedge, back to Links Way.

Blue route - Streatley

A longer route of four miles across the fields from Streatley village, this time avoiding the hills

- The start point is the Chequers public house in Streatley.
- Facing the front of the pub take the footpath to the left hand side of the pub, enter the churchyard and follow the path towards a gate and lamp post.
- Through the gate take the left hand fork and head between the houses to a kissing gate. Continue ahead on the right hand side of the hedge, then through another kissing gate and turn left.
- Go through the kissing gate into Bury Lane, turn right, follow the footpath signs past the pond and through the kissing gate into the field opposite.
- Cross the field to a kissing gate in the far corner, then cross the next field to another kissing gate, follow the hedge-line ahead of you, walk underneath the pylons and through a kissing gate. Keep on, passing George Wood on your right, and at the end of the wood bear right, through a hedge gap, then left and continue on across an arable field.
- Follow the path until you reach the Hospice, cross the road by the Hospice entrance and go up a small ramp into the field opposite. With the road to your left, follow the path down to the A6 and cross over into the bridleway opposite.
- Take the first turn on your left and the path will soon join the Icknield Way, a substantial track, which runs ahead of you through the golf course. Follow this until you reach the Icknield Way information board by Maulden Firs where paths join from left and right. Turn left into Maulden Firs.
- After passing through the woods follow the path along the edge of the field and turn left under the electricity pylons onto the Icknield Way Trail past the Swedish Cottages and across the A6 again.
- Head through the village and return to the pub for a well earned rest.