

Prestwood walk

With Helen Lodge

A wonderful opportunity to combine a stroll round Prestwood Nature Reserve with a lovely walk in the surrounding area.

START: Prestwood Nature Reserve car park, Grid ref SU 866 991

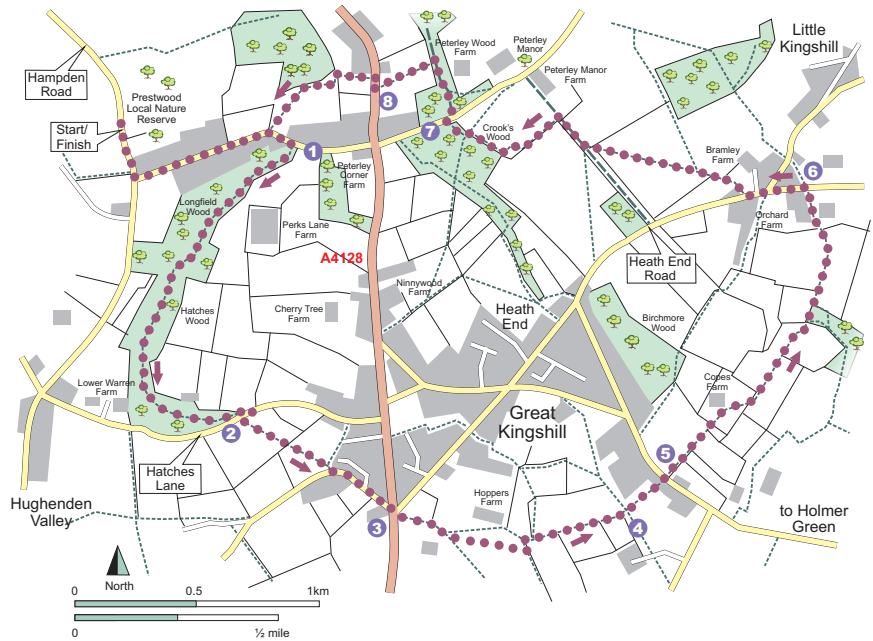
DISTANCE: 5.8 miles, with c110m of ascent

TERRAIN: A moderate walk, with the main climb at the start. Can be muddy in places. Four stiles

MAPS: OS Explorer 172 and Chiltern Society 12

REFRESHMENTS: The Polecat and Kings Head pubs at point 8 on the map. Otherwise, picnic in the Nature Reserve

PUBLIC TRANSPORT: Bus 48 (Great Missenden-High Wycombe-Lane End). There are stops near point 3 on the map and on either side of the crossroads just south of point 8.



Route

Exit the car park onto the road, turn left and then left again into Perks Lane. Walk up Perks Lane for c600m, going past a footpath on the left on a sharp right-hand bend.

- As the lane nears the top of the hill, turn right into Longfield Wood. Follow the white arrows on the trees through the Wood, staying on the main path for c1,500m until it meets a tall wood and wire stock fence on the left. Continue along this fence line until it meets a driveway and the brick gateposts of a large house. Follow the driveway until it reaches Hatches Lane.
- At the lane turn right and after c50m take the footpath on the left. Follow it uphill, to the left side of the copse. At the brow of the hill, continue in the same direction and look for the field gate in the hedge line ahead. Continue through this gate into the next field, heading for the far right corner. Go through the kissing gate and turn right towards the lane. Once on the lane turn left.
- At the end of Pipers Lane head directly across the road junction and through the footpath gate behind the Cockpit Road sign. Follow the path across the field and through the hedge line. In the next field, with the hedge on the right, continue to the footpath marker post in the corner. Here, cut straight across the corner of the field towards the gap in the hedge line. Do not go through the gap, instead turn left and follow the edge of the field with the hedge on the right.

- After c250m two footpaths join from the right. Take the second of these paths heading through the kissing gate. Ignore the path joining from the left and continue down, then up the hill to a kissing gate. Go through it and at the path junction continue straight ahead between two fences to a road.
- Cross the road and follow the lane to Copes Farm. At the end of the drive go between the brick pillars and take the path to the right-hand side of the gate. Follow this path over a stile and through a kissing gate, continuing with the fence line on the left over a further two stiles. Once in the woods, head straight up the hill with the fence on the left, ignoring other paths, to the next road.
- Cross the road and then turn left on the pavement. Continue past Hare Lane on the right and after 200m turn right into Shepherds Gate. The footpath starts from the left-hand side of the driveway straight ahead. Go through the kissing gate and follow the path into a field. At the path fork take the left path diagonally crossing the field. At the track turn right on the bridleway. Continue to a kissing gate on the left, go through it and follow the perimeter of the field and wood for c400m. Then take the gate on the left into the woods. At the first path junction turn right to meet a road.
- Cross the road into the woods. Follow the bridleway waymarks and keep to the left-hand edge of the woods for 250m. Just

- before the dell, take the first footpath on the left and follow it all the way to a road.
- Cross the road and turn right, passing in front of the Polecat Inn. Take the footpath on the left at the end of the Polecat car park. Head across the gravel to the paddock beyond and through the kissing gate in the far right-hand corner. Then follow the telegraph poles down the hill, heading to the far left corner of the field. Go through the kissing gate onto Perks Lane. Turn right and head down the hill back to the nature reserve car park.

Points of Interest

Prestwood: The name has Anglo-Saxon origins and means priest-wood. It was formed as an Ecclesiastical District in 1849 from parts of Great Missenden, Hughenden and Hampden. Major industries were based on agriculture and furniture making. This part of the Chilterns was famous for its cherry orchards and in the 19th century Londoners took day trips to see the spring blossom.

Peterley Manor Farm: Farm shop, nursery and pick your own.

Helen Lodge saw the advert asking for volunteers to design walks for the Chiltern Society via Hughenden Valley Residents' Association. While researching potential routes, it was a pleasant surprise to find footpaths she had not previously walked. She hopes that this route has managed to capture some of the stunning views in the area round Prestwood Nature Reserve.

Map: Glyn Kuhn