

Whiteleaf walk

With **Paul Weller**

A beautiful walk along a very scenic stretch of the Ridgeway and through woods blanketed with bluebells in the spring. Fine views over the Prime Minister's country retreat at Chequers. The route links up with the Brush Hill walk, which can be downloaded from the Society's website.

START: Whiteleaf Hill car park, Peters Lane near Princes Risborough. Grid ref: SP 823 036. Nearest postcode HP27 0RP

DISTANCE: 5.7 miles, with c900ft of ascent over the length of the walk

TERRAIN: A moderately demanding walk, with one fairly steep descent and two moderate ascents. One stile. Look out for the painted waymarkers on the trees

MAPS: OS Explorer 181 and Chiltern Society 3

REFRESHMENTS: The Plough at Cadsden on the walk. The Red Lion in Whiteleaf village is nearby and worth a visit

PUBLIC TRANSPORT: Risborough Area Community Bus Service 4 stops nearby at the top of Kop Hill. It runs on a Tuesday and Saturday from Princes Risborough.

Route

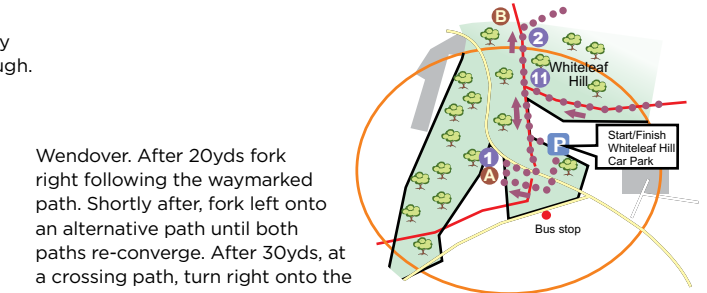
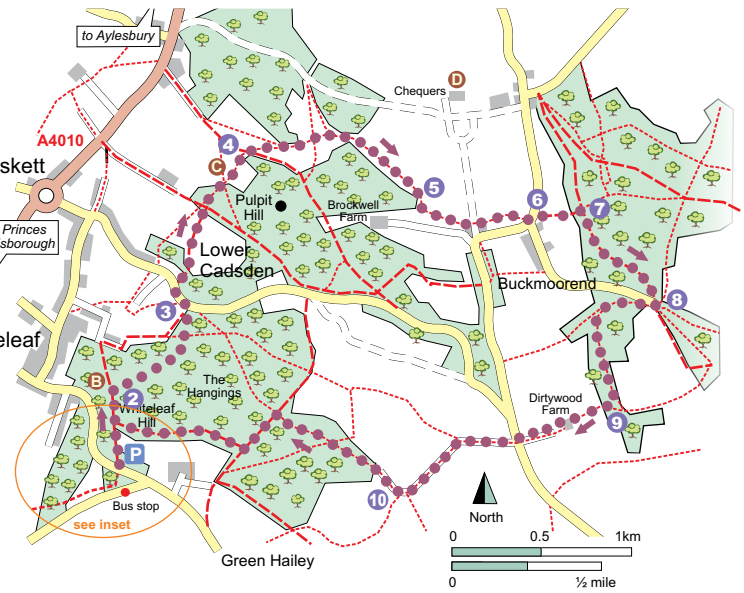
At the car park entrance cross the road to join a footpath. Pass through a kissing gate and turn right at a crossing path. A Brush Hill information board is located here. Walk through the wood for c200yds to another kissing gate. Pass through and admire the magnificent view from Brush Hill.

- Return to the last kissing gate and continue ahead on the Ridgeway, following the acorn symbol. After c100yds pass through another kissing gate on the right and take the sloping path down to the road. Head up the road for c15yds and turn left onto a footpath passing the bottom end of the car park. Bear right at a fork and continue along the Ridgeway, through woods, for c300yds to pass through a gate. Here take time to look at the Neolithic barrow and admire the view.
- Ignore the bridleway ahead and turn right downhill on the Ridgeway. Continue down a steep hill, through a kissing gate and bear right at a crossing track. Turn left past The Plough at Cadsden and up to a road.
- Being mindful of the traffic, continue ahead down the road for c75yds and take the second path on the right onto the Ridgeway. Continue for c100yds and turn left after a gate. Head uphill through a field to another gate. Continue ahead over a crossing bridleway and through a kissing gate near the top of the hill. Head through a field keeping a hedge on the right. Look out here for orchids and also Roman snails. Continue over a crossing path, up steps to a kissing gate and up more steps to a path T-junction.
- At the junction turn right, after 20yds turn left through a kissing gate and then right up a slope. Continue on this path as it winds down the hill. Ignore paths left and right. After a short incline go over a crossing path and immediately through a kissing gate into a field. Stay in the same direction to go through gates on the far side. Continue along the Ridgeway with the Prime Minister's country residence, Chequers, on the left. After the path bends to the right look out for a gate on the left.
- Go through the gate, through fields and two further gates to the Chequers driveway. Continue over the driveway, through a gate into fields and on to another gate at a road.
- Carefully cross the road and bear left onto the Ridgeway, signposted

Points of Interest

A Brush Hill: A Local Nature Reserve and wildlife site. There is evidence of the Wood being in existence for over 400 years. The viewpoint looks out towards the Chiltern escarpment and in the distance the Oxfordshire plain. In the far distance are the Berkshire Downs and the Cotswolds.

B Whiteleaf Hill: A Nature Reserve with views over the old market town of Princes Risborough, a neat patchwork of fields in the Vale of Aylesbury and on to the rolling Wessex Downs in the distance. The chalk hill-figure of Whiteleaf Cross has dominated the local landscape for several centuries. It was first officially noted by Francis Wise in 1742 as being constructed by the Saxon king Edward the Elder to commemorate a battle. Its full history is unknown and is the subject of much local speculation and folklore. The Bronze Age earthen burial mounds date back to c3500-2500 BC - see details on the site notice board. Several WWI practice trenches are at the



Map: Glyn Kuhn

- Wendover. After 20yds fork right following the waymarked path. Shortly after, fork left onto an alternative path until both paths re-converge. After 30yds, at a crossing path, turn right onto the South Bucks Way.
- Stay on the main track uphill through a wood and continue for nearly half a mile. Branch left at a fork to shortly meet a five-way path junction.
 - Do not go into the junction but turn immediately right to follow a well-defined track. After c30yds turn left onto a designated path, go over a small mound and pass by the side of a stile to enter the next wood. Inside, bear left and follow the sometimes indistinct path for c250yds along and down to a waymarked junction. Bear left, after c50yds left again and after a further c100yds turn left uphill. Follow the path through the wood keeping a field in view on the right for about a third of a mile. At a fork in the path, where a yellow arrow on a tree points straight ahead, bear right downhill for c100yds to reach a crossing path.
 - Turn right onto it and shortly reach a field by a gate. Go downhill keeping a hedge on the left. Follow the grassed Permissive Path around Dirtywood Farm and turn right down the farm's driveway to a road. Cross the road to the metalled driveway opposite. Follow it up to the entrance to Solinger House, ignoring paths to left and right.
 - At the house entrance turn left over a stile and follow the main track uphill for c300yds. Just after passing under some transmission cables, fork right and continue ahead along the path for c400yds. At an unmarked fork bear right downhill to a wooden barrier. Pass through to a bridleway, turn left and left again. Head straight up a moderate hill, cross a track after c20yds, and continue uphill for c250yds ignoring a path on the right.
 - At a T-junction at the top turn right and, after c800yds, meet a broad track. Turn left past the WWI trenches to return to the car park.

southern end of the site adjacent to the Ridgeway. The shallow irregular ditches were originally constructed just before the start of the war.

C Wildlife: At this location, orchids can be seen in June and July. Also the largest British white Roman snail is evident after wet weather.

D Chequers: The country house retreat of the Prime Minister. The house was given to the nation by Lord and Lady Lee of Fareham in 1921. There has been a house on the site since the 12th century. The house guarded a royal prisoner - Lady Mary Grey - younger sister of Lady Jane Grey and granddaughter of King Henry VII. She had married without her family's consent and was banished from court by Queen Elizabeth I. During WWI the house became a hospital, then a convalescent home for officers. It contains one of the country's largest collections of art and memorabilia about Oliver Cromwell.