

Hound of the Baskerville's!
By Philippa Sanders, Pipsticks Walks

Summary

This undulating stile free walk explores the Chilterns countryside around the south Oxfordshire village of Binfield Heath. It passes through farmland, woods and the Crowsley Park. Part of the walk follows the Chiltern Way. Look out for historic cottages, a former deer park and evidence of past brick making. There is also plenty of flora and fauna to catch the eye.

Length: 5.5 miles

Terrain: Easy walking on mostly good paths, some of which can be muddy after rain. Three short moderate climbs up through the woods. Some short sections on country lanes. Stile free and 5 gates

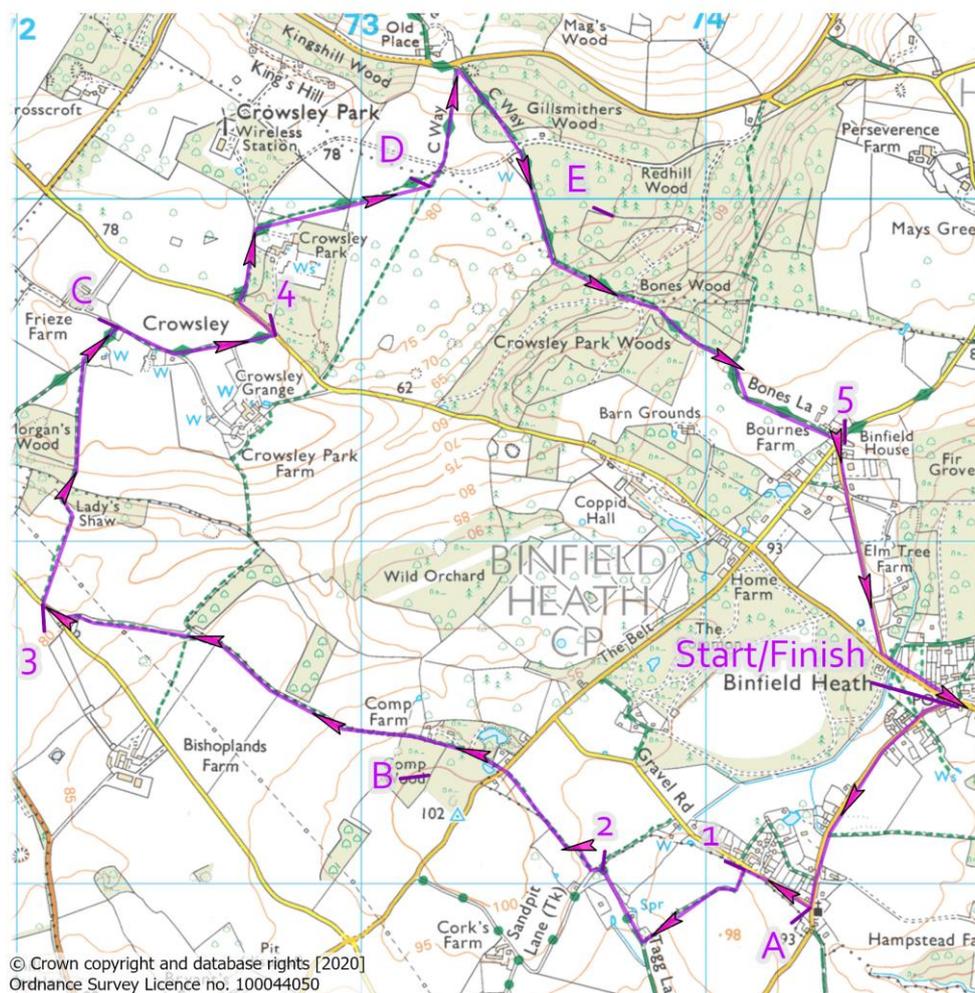
Start & finish: Binfield Heath Post Office & Stores, Binfield Heath, Henley on Thames RG9 4DU Grid ref: SU 746 785

Food & drink: The Post Office & Stores sells refreshments. On the route there's The Bottle & Glass Inn on the edge of Binfield Heath

Maps: OS Explorer 171, Chiltern Society 4

Parking: Roadside parking by the village playground or small car park behind playground off Kings Common Close.

Local transport: Bus 800 runs between High Wycombe, Marlow, Henley and Reading all week.



Route

Starting from Binfield Heath Stores walk along Dunsden Way (signposted to Playhatch). Stay on the lane until reaching the chapel (1/2 mile). Turn right into Gravel Road. After about 200 yards, take the footpath on the left.

Waypoint 1 –Follow the waymarked path along the field edge, switching fields through the tree belt, and continue on to join Tagg Lane. Turn right up the track, passing Spring Cottage on the right.

Waypoint 2 - Just beyond the bend take the path on the right across a small wooden footbridge. Continue over the field and cross Kiln Road into Comp Wood. Stay on the track through the wood and along the field edge. Keep the hedgerow on your right, ignoring other paths, to emerge on the lane at Bishoplands Cottages.

Waypoint 3 - Turn right along the lane and look for a gap in the hedge after about 100 yards, signposted to Crowsley. Cross the field and descend into the shady wood of Lady's Shaw. The path then rises alongside Morgan's Wood, nipping through the hedge and up to join the Chiltern Way at Crowsley. The Chiltern Way is a 135 mile circular trail around the Chilterns AONB, designed by the Chiltern Society. At the thatched Frieze Cottage turn right and follow the lane to its junction with Sonning Common Road.

Waypoint 4 - Turn left and then right at South Lodge, passing through the grand side-gate. Crowsley Park House soon comes into view. Keeping the house on your right, follow the Chiltern Way between the green railings, passing through two gates, into the park. Take the left fork and head toward the large horse chestnut trees. Continue through a kissing gate and across the open park. Bear left at the path junction and follow the waymark posts down to another kissing gate by the road opposite the large black and white house (Old Place).

Waypoint 5 – Go through the gate and turn sharp right, signposted to Binfield Heath (1.5 miles). The path, known as Bones Lane, leads up through Gillsmithers Wood past North Lodge and along the park boundary before dipping down, and then up, through Bones Wood ignoring other paths to left and right. Emerge from the wood, bear right and continue to the Bottle and Glass Inn. Cross the lane and follow Common Lane to its end. Bear left to return, past the village playground, the Binfield Heath Stores.

Points of Interest

A – Binfield Heath Chapel. A non conformist chapel built of Bath stone in the 1830's

B – Comp Wood clay pits (brick and tile making)

C – Historic cottages (note the different construction – timber and thatch and patterned brick)

D - Crowsley Park. A former deer park, once home to the Baskerville family and with association to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Hound of the Baskerville's! BBC receiving station.

E – Bones Wood. The Forestry Commission are gradually harvesting and replanting with deciduous trees.