

TRING GRAND TOUR (NORTH)

This route reveals some of the most spectacular scenery in the Chilterns, taking you to Ivinghoe Beacon, on through the wooded uplands of Ashridge and back past the edge of Wigginton to the town centre. It can be undertaken on its own – around 14 miles or combined with the Grand Tour (South) to form a big circular walk of approximately 30 miles. It is a wonderful walk at any season.

1. The starting point is the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul. Take the cobbled path behind the Church, cross the car park, past the Local History Museum and walk up Mortimer Hill.
2. Turn left into Chiltern Way
- 3 & 4 When you reach Grove Road, turn right and, after a few yards, left into Marshcroft Lane. This crosses both the canal and the impressive railway cutting at Park Hill Farm (now Honeysuckle Farm).
5. Those following the Grand Tour South may join this tour, here at the Canal bridge
6. On reaching the road, turn left.



7. Then take the next public footpath on the right.



Follow this uphill past the worked-out chalk pit, which supplied the Pitstone cement works, until you meet the signed Ridgeway Path. Turn left onto it, over bracing, open grassy downland and ancient ditches on Pitstone Hill.

8. Coming to a car park, cross the road.



and follow the Ridgeway signs.



You will pass the impressive Incombe Hole on your left, continue towards Steps Hill.

9. Turning north (left) along the ridge



Then bear right:



10. You will come to a road and looking ahead enjoy the view of Beacon Hill and beyond.

Cross the road and follow the paths:



You eventually ascend to the high point of Beacon Hill with its Iron Age fort earthworks and unrivalled vistas across the Vale of Aylesbury. A pathway due east takes you to Gallows Hill.

11. Turning south you will soon rejoin the Ridgeway and should re-trace your steps back to a crossroads of paths at the bottom of the hill.



Beware – this area was once used for military training and unexploded ordnance still turns up occasionally.

Bear left (south) at this crossroads and you will traverse the lower part of the National Trust's Ashridge Estate.

12. Follow the path past Clipper Cottage to rise at Clipper Down and up into Ashridge forest. Bear right and follow the path towards the Monument.

The estate covers six square miles of woodlands, commons, downland and farmland in Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Saved from the threat of development in the 1920s, it centres on a former monastery, where Queen Elizabeth I was held by her sister Queen Mary. Largely rebuilt as a Gothic-style mansion for the Bridgewater (later Brownlow) family, the architects were James Wyatt and Jeffry Wyattville and the grounds were landscaped by both Brown and Repton.



The house is now a management college, sometimes open to the public. Most of the estate is accessible to the public and supports a considerable diversity of wildlife including goldcrest, lesser-spotted woodpecker, wild fallow and muntjac deer and badgers.

13. Bridgewater Monument, built in honour of the third Duke of Bridgewater, generally considered the 'father' of the canal network. It is sometimes possible to climb to the top to enjoy stunning views. The nearby tearooms provide a very enjoyable light lunch.



Turn left at the monument in front of the tea shop



Keep right at first junction:



Then forking left and following this bridleway until it meets a road.



14. Turn right along the road



shortly coming to a hairpin bend where you turn left



You will soon pass Tom's Hill House, before going downhill and turning ninety degrees right to New Ground Road. (From there, a detour to the right will bring you to the Valiant Trooper in Aldbury.)

15. Turn left and cross the railway to the canal bridge.

16. Turn right (north) along the canal, noting the warehouses of the Buffer Depot which once held food stocks to keep us going through a nuclear winter.

17. At Tring Station go up onto the bridge and left along Beggars Lane until the Ridgeway path leaves the road



18. Follow the path through the paddocks of Pendley Farm. You will catch glimpses of Pendley Manor, a Victorian country house, now a hotel. It was once in the family of the sports commentator Dorian Williams, who ran adult education courses for many years and started the renowned open-air Shakespeare Festival.

19. Continuing uphill, cross the old A41 and climb steeply to the edge of the cutting of the new A41.

20. Cross the pedestrian bridge, where there is an impressive vista to west and east from the walkers-only bridge. Over the bridge, continue uphill past ancient parkland chestnuts to a road - The Twist.



21. The path crosses the road to the right then moves on through woodland and open downland, with spectacular views of Ivinghoe Beacon.



22. Cross the next Road.



Passing to the north of Wigginton, enter the woodland of the upper level of Tring Park at Ladderstile Cottage, designed in the Rothschild Estate manner by William Huckvale.



Nearby there are underground water tanks which used to operate lifts in the Mansion.

23. The path turns left onto the track known as King Charles' Ride, an avenue of lime trees extending through Bull's Wood for over a mile.

24. You will soon reach the 'rondpoint' where carriages could turn round and return.



To your right there are wonderful views over Tring and the countryside beyond, taking in Mentmore Towers and Ivinghoe Beacon.

After a while you will spot an intriguing wooden gateway on the left, leading to an area with timber sculptures and interesting activities for children.



25. To conclude this itinerary you should look out for the path leading down to your right, marked 'Woodland Walk'.



This winds to the edge of the parkland; aim for the lime avenue which leads to the footbridge, Park Street and the town centre. For the combined walk, stay on the Ridgeway towards Hastoe, joining the Grand Tour (South) at Wayoint 4.

26. Cross the footbridge

27. Turn left in Park Street

28. Turn right at The Natural History Museum – this will take you back to Tring Town Centre