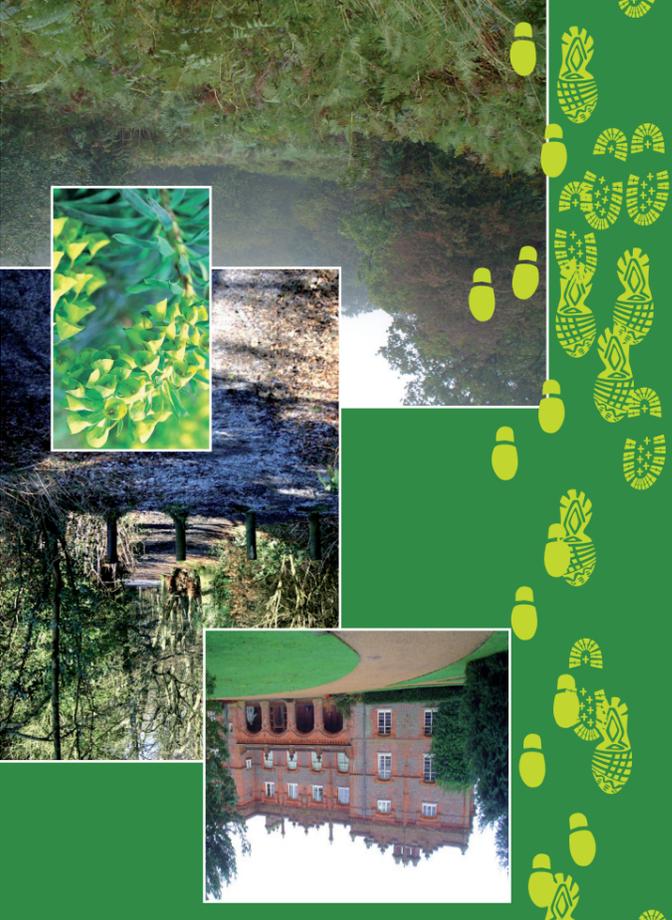


# Chiltern Trails Hughenden to Downley Common

a 2.5 mile/ 4km circular walk



We gratefully acknowledge the LHI and the CCB funding that made it possible to develop these trails.

Chiltern Archaeology, 13 Pusey Way, Lane End, Bucks, HP14 3LG  
 www.chilternarchaeology.com  
 email: chilternarchaeology@btopenworld.com

A book, *The Chiltern Trails*, will provide more information about the Chilterns, with intriguing stories and many more interesting places to visit. Each route highlights the interesting geology that makes the landscape, as well as the wildlife, history, local stories and folklore which give insight into what makes the Chilterns an interesting and beautiful area.

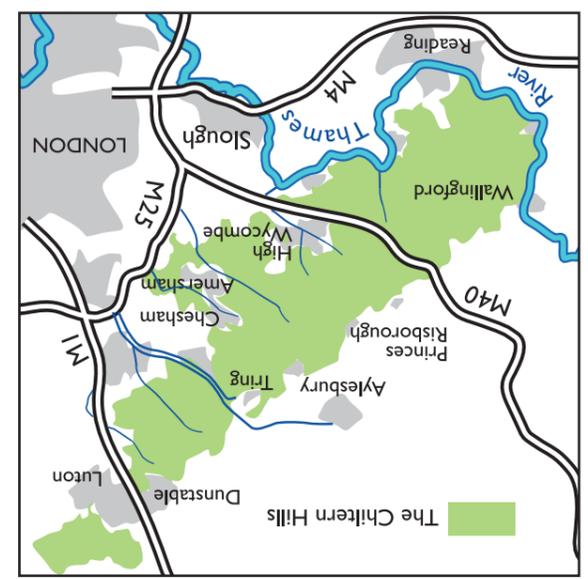
**About the Hughenden to Downley walk**

This is a pleasant walk through an attractive landscape with lots of history, woodland and common land, as well as an unusual geological story for this part of the Chilterns. The route is fairly level, with two main inclines. It may be muddy in wet weather.

The route as described starts at HUGHENDEN CHURCH off the A4128 in the Hughenden Valley (OS grid ref: SP 863 956). Buses on the A4128 pass the entrance to the Manor, and there is parking in front of the church). Remember, you could begin at any point or walk in reverse: it's your choice!

**Refreshments**

When Hughenden Manor is open there is The Stables Tearoom (opening times may be found in the 'Hughenden Manor' entry on the National Trust website, [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)) or there are good lunches at the Le Despencer Arms pub on Downley Common (Point 11 on the trail).



The Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a unique place of great beauty and wildlife interest. It incorporates a wide range of landscapes shaped by its geology and history.

The Chilterns geological story began c. 100 million years ago when sea levels rose more than 300m due to global warming. The chalky muds deposited on the sea floor eventually became today's Chalk. The rounded hills and deeply dissected dry valleys of the Chilterns are actually very recent, sculpted by melting glaciers about 450,000 years ago.

Stone Age hunters and gatherers lived in the Chilterns. Neolithic settlers cleared trees to grow crops, leaving behind their burial mounds and starting the process that created flower-rich chalk grassland. The Anglo-Saxons knew this area as *Ciltrenseten*, a 'god-forsaken place that no-one in their right mind would want to settle'. But settle they did, leaving Anglo-Saxon names such as Goring, Bleddow, Wycombe, Chesham and Luton to remind us of the many groups of people who have lived, farmed, traded and died in the Chilterns.



**Key**

- Route of walk
- Alternate route
- Public footpath
- Public bridleway

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Entrance and chalk stream | 7, 9, 12, 13. Downley Common |
| 2. St. Michael's             | 8. The Old Smithy            |
| 3. Hughenden Valley          | 10. The Dells                |
| 4. Hughenden Manor           | 11. Le Despencer Arms        |
| 5. Oak trees                 | 14. Beech woodland           |
| 6. Well Cottage              | 15. Manorial boundary ditch  |

**What's in a name?**

Place names often describe what was happening, where, who by and the size of settlements many centuries in the past. Here they tell us that the Anglo-Saxons knew **Downley** as a clearing on the hill (*down* meaning 'hill' and *ley* 'clearing'). In Anglo-Saxon times much of the Chilterns must have had wooded hilltops for *ley* to be significant.

**Hughenden**, recorded as Huchedene in 1086, is 'Hycga's valley' from the name *Hycga* and *denu*, 'small, sinuous valley'. Who was Hycga? We shall never know, but we know where he and his family or tribe lived.

**Naphill** is written as *Nappel* on old maps from the 1600s onwards, probably from 'napping' of the many flints to be found at this location.