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## Penn Woodlands, Tylers Green, Forty Green Gomm Valley, *Royal Standard of England*

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Distance: 10 km=6 miles

easy walking

Region: Chilterns

Date written: 9-may-2019

Author: Phegophilos

Refreshments: Forty Green, Penn, Tylers Green

Map: Explorer 172 (Chiltern Hills East) *but the maps below should suffice*

*Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: [feedback@fancyfreewalks.org](mailto:feedback@fancyfreewalks.org)*

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*Green valleys, woodland, historic inns, views, villages, skylarks*

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### In Brief

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This is a walk of great variety in ideal hilly but gentle Chiltern countryside. You will meet every kind of terrain, from green valleys, woodland, horse and sheep pastures, to wide open fields with easy paths and skylarks aplenty.



Central to the walk is one of the greatest pubs in the whole of England, the 900-year-old *Royal Standard of England*. But, be aware that this pub is incredibly popular and you will probably need to book if you want lunch (ring: 01494-673-382, or check their very colourful website). Fortunately, the pub is open every day and serves food all day from noon. There are other opportunities for refreshment, the final village having *three* pubs (although not all prospering).

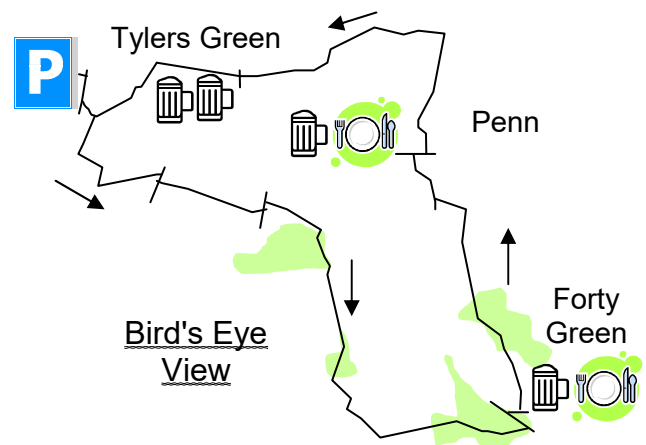


There are no nettles or scratchy undergrowth on this walk and all the paths are wide and clear (apart from one very brief crossing of a field), so any sensible attire is fine. In summery weather, trainers or walking shoes should be adequate, although serious hikers always wear boots of course. Your dog is welcome too.

The walk begins at the **King's Wood** car park off **Cock Lane**, Tylers Green, near **High Wycombe**, Bucks, nearest postcode **HP10 8DS**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

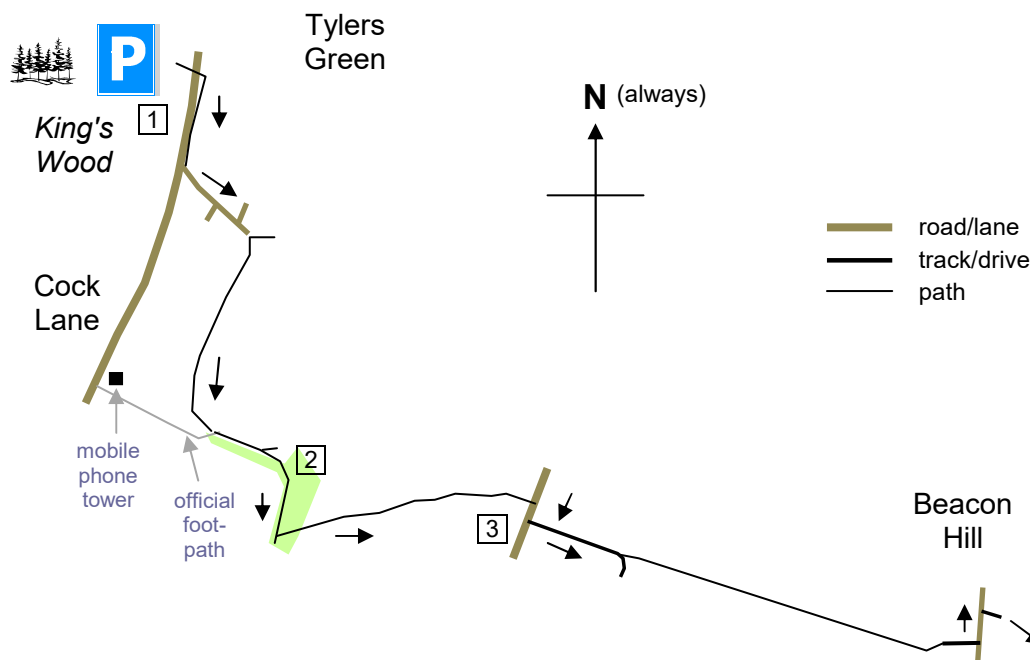


A new possibility is to combine this walk with the **Forty Green pub walk**, with a 1-km self-guided hop each way to connect with Beaconsfield station.



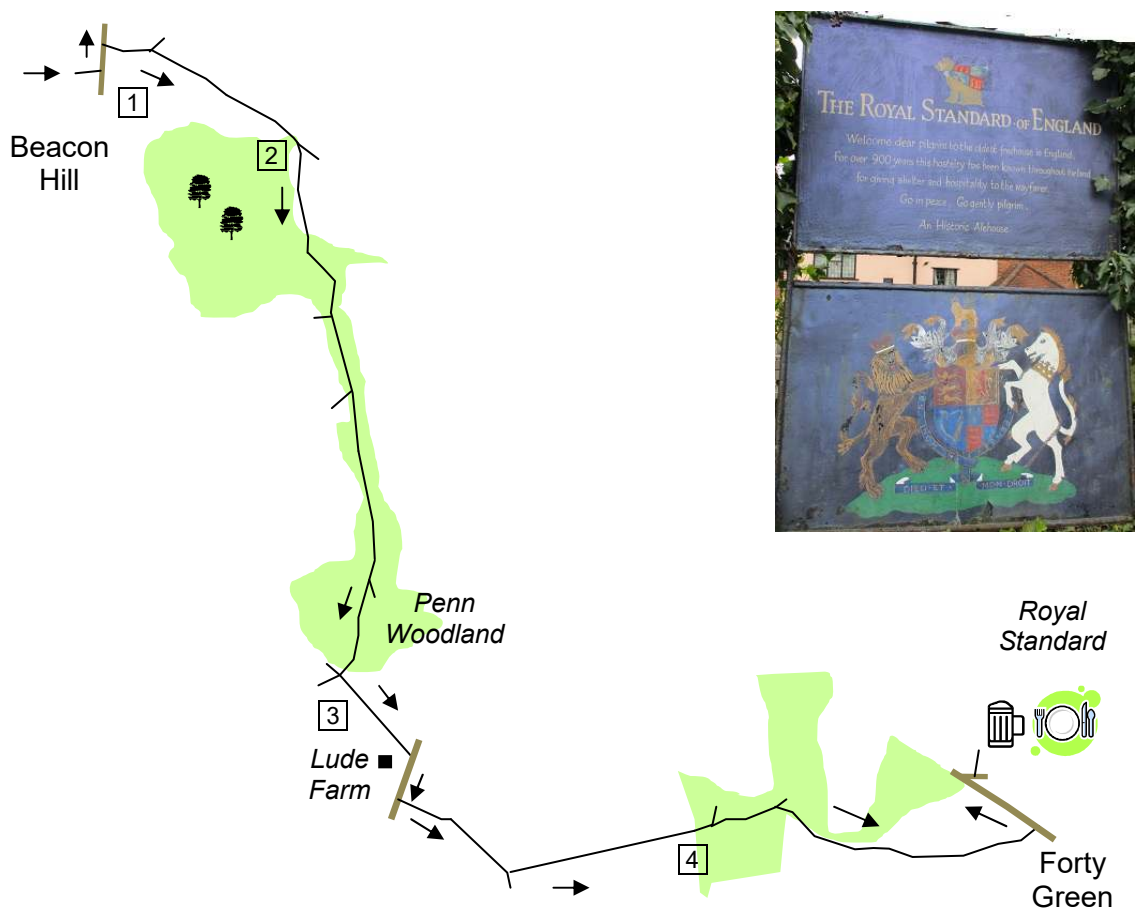
## The Walk

### Leg 1: King's Wood to Beacon Hill 1¾ km=1 mile



- 1** From the King's Wood car park, cross the road and turn **right** on a tarmac path which runs beside the road through trees on the other side. In 100m or so, turn **left** on a classy residential side road, Ashwells. Proceed to the end of the road and go through the smaller of two gates, out onto a green meadow. (Note: in future years, there may be *new houses* here: if your way is blocked, go back to the main road, continue till you pass a mobile phone tower and, just *after* a flight of steps, go **left** up a bank on a signed footpath, follow the left-hand edge of a field, veer **left** at the top and go through a modern kissing-gate and straight ahead to join the route at (\*) below.) Ignore a marker post on your left and follow a well-used path at first near the right-hand edge of the meadow and then across the centre, heading for the far end. (As a check: there's a mobile phone tower 100m over to your right.) **You have great views over the town of High Wycombe.** In the far corner, go through a gap and (\*) continue along the right-hand side of an open meadow.
- 2** As you approach some overhead low-tension wires, fork **right** to go through a modern kissing-gate and follow a path between dense hollies. At the end, turn sharp **left** on a path which runs beside some fenced paddocks on your right, usually with horses grazing. Your path soon runs between high garden fences and finally takes you down steps to a main road. Turn **right** on the road.
- 3** In only 20m, turn **left** on a gravel drive marked as a footpath. Where the drive bends right, leave it by continuing straight ahead through a metal barrier\* onto a straight downhill path. (\*The barrier is nicely bowed to make a seat for a quick pause to admire the view.) **Ahead of you is the picturesque Gomm Valley, a patchwork of green meadows and sheep pastures, with views right to the Thames valley.** The path descends and rises, taking you through another kissing-gate, followed by a short gravel drive, leading out to a lane in the pleasant rustic hamlet of Beacon Hill. Turn **left** on the lane.

Leg 2: Beacon Hill to Forty Green 2¾ km=1¾ miles



- 1 In only 40m, just after a redbrick house, go **right** on a shingle drive marked as a footpath. In 70m you come to a signposted fork by a fence. Take the **right** fork, staying on the drive and joining the Chiltern Way (CW). *The Chiltern Way is a very long (12 day) circular walk providing a comprehensive tour of this range of hills.* Keep **right** past a white house on a narrow path and down a corridor formed by dark cypresses. A small wooden gate leads to a narrow fenced path between pastures, making a bright contrast to the dusky path. A stile takes you into a large green meadow.
- 2 Avoid the faint path straight ahead and instead follow a footpath along the **right**-hand edge of the meadow, close to woodland. Where the edge of the meadow curves away left, go **right** over a stile into the woods. Stay on the main path, shortly passing a deep hollow on your right. The path leads over a stile into a more open area. Ignore a permissive path here on your right. As you approach more woodland ahead, avoid a path that forks off to your right and keep **left**, going through a gate into the wood. After 250m under tall pines you reach a very clear waymarked fork in the path. Take the **right** fork. This path finally leads out to a signposted junction of paths with a slanting info tablet describing the *Penn Jubilee Woodland*.
- 3 Turn **left** here over a stile, in the direction *Chiltern Way Berkshire Loop (CWBL)* and take a very faint path across the pasture, heading to the left of a large grey barn of Lude Farm. Go over a stile to a road and turn **right**. Opposite the farm entrance, go **left** over a stile and across a small meadow to cross another stile. Veer **right** now on a wide farm track. *Lude Farm was part of the Lude Estate, owned by the old Wessex Godwine family one of which*

was King Harold who fell in 1066. Tiles were baked here for centuries and the soil here still contains fragments of tiles from an old Roman brick kiln. In 100m, just after passing a hedge, as the main track curves away right, leave the track by forking **left** on another track, downhill, with the hedge on your left. At the bottom, go straight ahead across the centre of a crop field. (The path is normally obvious, depending on the presence or absence of a growing crop – quite short fortunately.) At the far side, go straight ahead over a stile into woodland, still on the CWBL.

- 4 Immediately ignore a footpath on your left. Follow the winding woodland path for 100m to reach a sloping field. Ignore a footpath left here into the woods and keep straight ahead down the left-hand side of the field. At the top left-hand corner, go over a stile and veer a fraction right to go over a stile in the fence. Keep straight on to cross another stile (ouch!) and continue through a horse pasture, plus another stile and pasture, to find a modern kissing-gate, leading out to a road in Forty Green. Turn **left** on the road and, in 150m, at the top of a slope, go **right** to be greeted by “England's Oldest Freehouse Pub”, *The Royal Standard of England*.



*The first Royal Standard of England was a banner depicting a gold dragon, as used in battle by the royal house of Wessex long before the Normans. It was King Charles II who rewarded the pub for supporting his executed father after the Civil War by agreeing to change the name of the pub from “The Ship” to “The Royal Standard of England”, the only pub in the country with such an honour. But there was a more human reason: Charles had met his mistresses in the rooms above the pub and was obliged to the landlord. The pub had long served as a refuge from the Vikings and the narrow lanes enabled the tile-makers and cattle drovers to avoid the fees at the Beaconsfield Turnpike on the main road. The pub was also a refuge for highwaymen. One of them, an ex-royalist named James Hind, robbed the wealthy Parliamentary appointees (often following a tip-off from the landlord). To fool their pursuers highwaymen would reverse their horseshoes. Hind avoided capture by using circular horseshoes. But he came to a gruesome end. By the early 1700s, most pubs like this one had become sweaty candle-lit dens where whoreing, drinking and gambling went on all night. The sign over the doorway here bears the well-known legend: “Drunk for a penny, Dead drunk for two pennies, Clean straw for nothing.” The inn’s trade revived by supplying rail-workers with illegally strong country ale, “Owd Roger” made from an old recipe, eventually sold on to Marstons brewery but still available here today!*

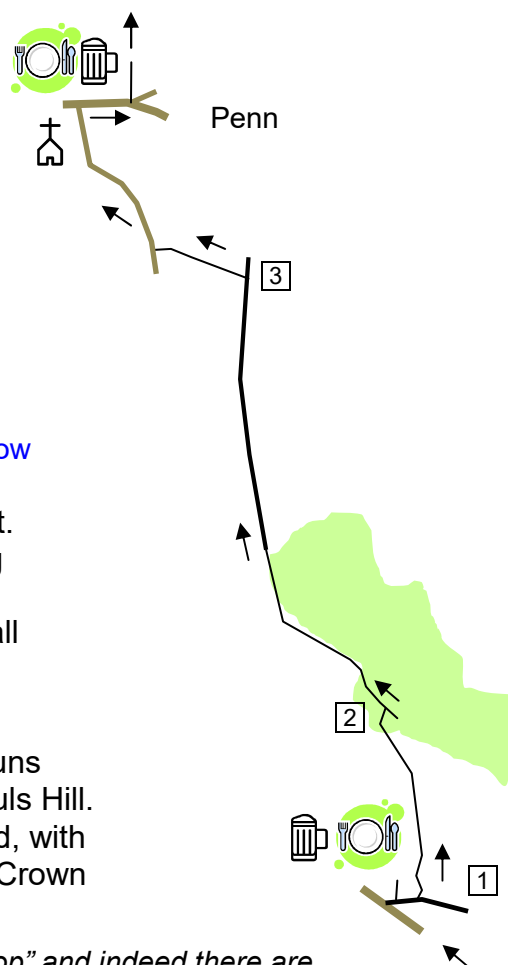


*The pub is haunted. One is by the ghost of a 12-year-old drummer boy killed by the Roundheads along with some Irish cavaliers. Then there is the ghost who walks through walls. The ghost in the bar, a shadowy figure striding across the bar and then disappearing in the wall next to Edmund Burke’s old fireplace may be a traveller accidentally killed by the notorious coach-hijacker, Earl of Barrymore. Most recently in 1944, “Tomahawk Warrior”, a US B17 bomber Flying Fortress crashed over the road with the loss of all nine crew members.*

Walkers who are feeling energetic can extend the walk now by an extra 1½ miles by doing the circular **pub walk** in this series centred on the *Royal Standard*.

### Leg 3: Forty Green to Penn Church 2 km=1¼ miles

- 1 After your break, going back from the car park, turn **left** just before the main road on a narrow lane which runs beside the pub on your left. Immediately after the pub, turn **left** on a narrow signed footpath. Go through a small wooden gate and along the left-hand side of a long green meadow. When you reach the top, avoid some large metal gates in the left corner by keeping dead straight to a small wooden gate leading into woods.
- 2 Almost at once, at a T-junction with a marker post, turn **left**. *In late spring you will soon be greeted by a show of bluebells.* Your path runs along the edge of the wood and soon farm buildings are visible on your left. Ignore a footpath on your left and continue on a long straight track, going through a large open wooden gate (in the rare case when it's closed, there's a small wooden gate on its left).
- 3 As the large meadow on your left ends, at a 3-way signpost, go **left** on a narrow path. The path soon runs through woods and discharges to a tarmac lane, Pauls Hill. Turn **right** and follow the lane to reach the main road, with the Holy Trinity Church in Penn on your left and the Crown Inn opposite to your right.

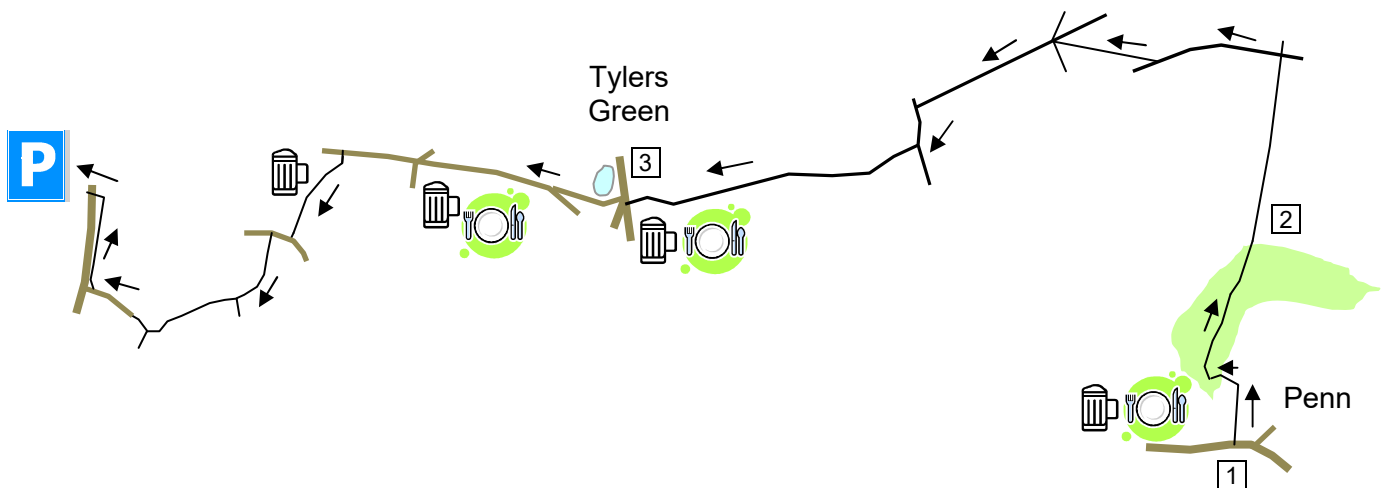




*The name "Penn" is Welsh where "pen" means a "hilltop" and indeed there are views here into several counties. The village is spread out over several hamlets. Famous residents include sports presenter Gabby Logan and Karl Popper, the philosopher who wrote on free will, evolution and a philosophy of science versus "pseudo-science". Another resident was Ernest Saunders, jailed in 1990 for manipulating the Guinness share price. He was released early with incurable Alzheimer's disease from which he promptly recovered.*


*Penn church dates from the late 1100s, with many later additions. William Penn, the Quaker, who founded Pennsylvania, had close connections with this parish. His first wife was living at Tyler End Green in Penn for two years before they were married and he assumed, wrongly, that he was related to the Penn family who owned the church and much of the parish.*



Leg 4: Penn Church to King's Wood 3½ km=2 miles



**1**   Cross the main road and turn **right** to the *Crown* inn, a worthy redbrick roadhouse with tempting offers on food. Immediately after the pub\*, under the *Crown* sign, turn **left** on a footpath along the left-hand side of a crop field. The path bends **left** to meet the edge of some woodland. Keep **left** into the woods and turn **right** on a woodland path. *At the time of writing there was a large red plastic “mushroom” here.* (\* You can also reach this woodland path by walking to the far end of the pub car park.) Follow this path through beech and holly until finally you come out into a crop field with great views ahead.

**2**  Go straight ahead on an excellent path between fields. Your path descends into a valley and here you meet a wide crossing path running in the valley. Turn **left** here. *In summer, the sky here resounds with the tweet-tweet of skylarks.* In 200m or so, after the path wheels a bit to the left, look to your right for a path that cuts diagonally up across the field. Fork **right** on this path opposite a waymarker. At the top you come to an oblique T-junction with various paths and horse rides leading off. Ignoring a permissive path sharp left, veer **left** on a long straight path running between crops on your left and a hedgerow. When you reach the corner, go **left** and follow the path round to the **right**, passing on your right the long barn of Puttenham Farm. Stay on the wide farm track, finally passing playing fields and emerging in the village centre of Tylers Green, next to the *Red Lion* pub, with the pond opposite.

*Tylers Green is often linked with Penn next door, but in fact it's in a different parish (Chepping Wycombe). The name refers the roof tile industry, dating from Roman times, which made it so prosperous. One notable feature of the village is its **three** pubs!*

*After a campaign by locals, the “Red Lion” pub which had been in the doldrums was taken over in April 2019 by a new team: Sean and Lou who also run the “Blackwood Arms” in Burnham Beeches. At the time of writing they had just sorted out the kitchen and this village pub now offers food and drink in its ideal location.*

**3** Cross straight over the main road in the direction *Kingswood, Loudwater*, with the pond on your right, a pleasant place to while away a little time observing the ducks and herons. *The village store on your left closes at 5pm on Sunday, 8pm on other days.* At the next junction, on your left is the *Old*



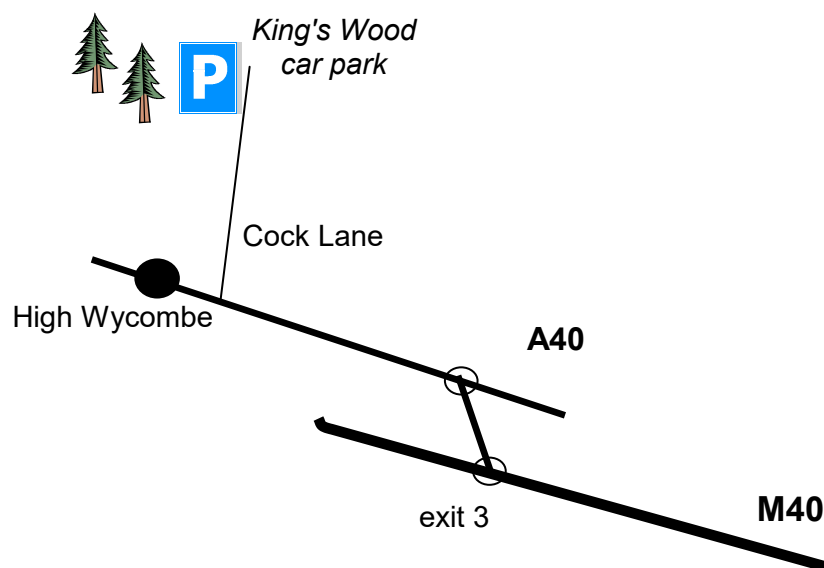
*Queens Head* (“OQH”), a foodie pub. On the other side of the junction is the church. *St Margaret's* is a Victorian church built in 1845 by the efforts of local benefactor *Philp Rose*, usually open to visitors and very pretty inside. Continuing straight ahead, on your left, looking a little the worse for wear, but a nice surprise is Tyler Green's third pub. *The Horse and Jockey*, which re-opened in April 2019 after three months' closure, is a quiet, friendly ideal local, with a warm fire in winter. At the time of writing they were just about to sort out the kitchen fare. Beer is Marlow plus standards.

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Immediately before the *Horse and Jockey*, turn **left** on a track and immediately keep **right** round the side of the pub onto a path between fences. It leads out to a superior new housing development. Cross straight over, a fraction right, onto Carter Walk. As the road bends left, keep ahead on a tarmac footpath. As you come out onto open ground (as stated, there may be new houses here by the time you do this walk), keep **right** following a yellow arrow. After you come through a small metal gate, continue to a electricity transformer pole and go **right** through the smaller of two gates. (Or, if you did *not* start the walk in the King's Wood car park, keep **left** and rewind this text to just after the blue text in section [1](#).) Go down this residential road (which may be familiar from your outward journey). At the main road at the bottom, turn **right** using the parallel tarmac path, back to the car park where the walk began.

## Getting there

By car: the King's Wood car park is near the end of **Cock Lane**, between Beaconsfield and High Wycombe, in Buckinghamshire, easily reached from the **A40** trunk road. If coming from the London area, take the M40 motorway and come out at Exit 3 (*High Wycombe East*). Join the A40 as for *High Wycombe* and follow it for 1½ miles through Loudwater until you are approaching High Wycombe. Cock Lane is marked by a small white road sign and a **right** filter with traffic lights. It runs over the railway, single file assisted by lights, and on a narrow road with passing places. The excellent car park is very obvious on the left as you come out of the narrow section into a verdant area.



By train?: see page one.

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