



Little Missenden

Distance: 8 km=5 miles

easy walking

Region: Chilterns (Bucks)

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Author: Phegophilos

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Refreshments: Little Missenden,

Map: Explorer 172 (Chiltern Hills East) *but the map in this guide suffice*

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

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Country village and pubs, ancient tracks, high field paths, views, woodland

In Brief

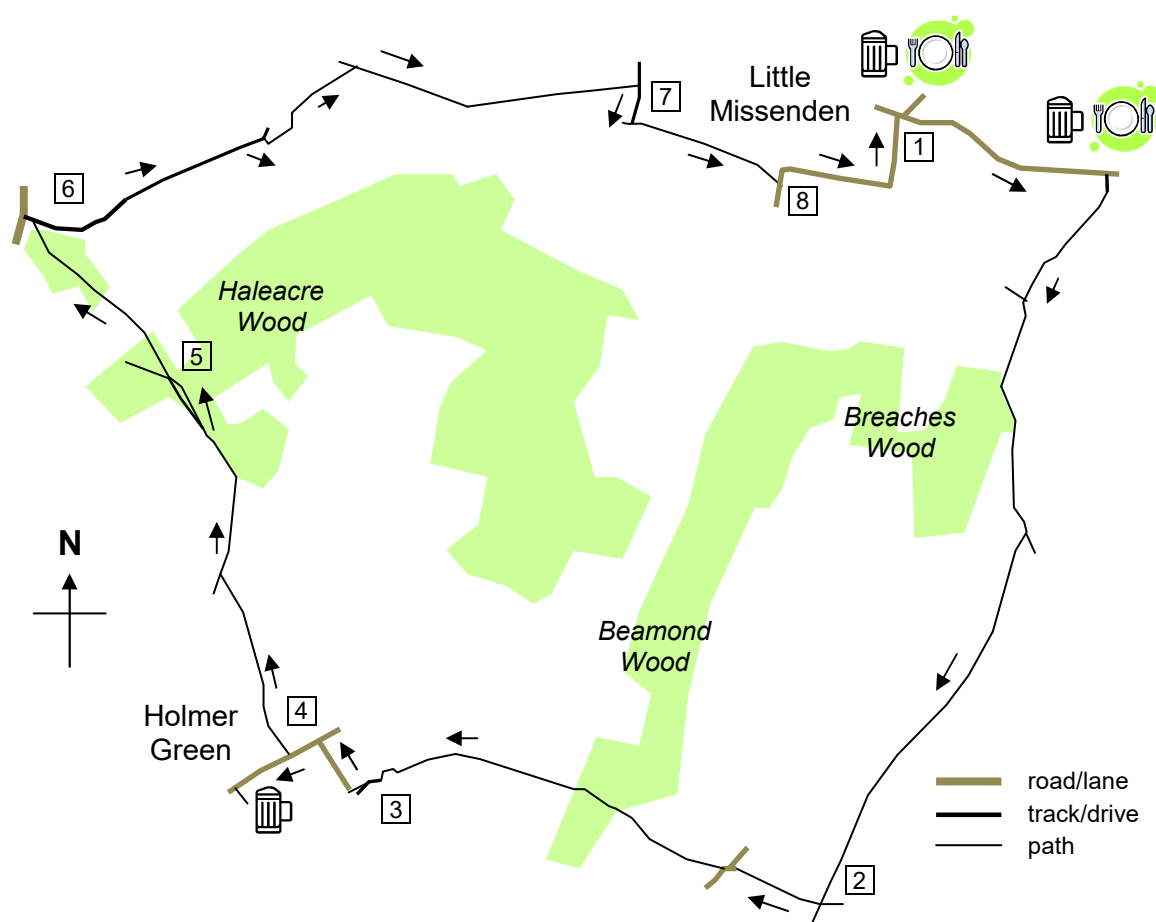
This is a mainly level walk with long straight sections which take you out into the Chiltern hills and meadows of this part of South Buckinghamshire. The village is a charmer with so many half-timbered buildings, many of them listed and this walk takes a deliberately angled course so that you see the best of the village.



The paths are all easy underfoot but some of them appear to be quite narrow because of the hedges on each side. In one or two places you can't easily avoid brushing against some nettles, so shorts are inadvisable. The terrain was fine for sensible shoes or trainers but in wet conditions it's easy to imagine that you might need boots. With **no stiles** and **no main roads**, this walk is perfect for your dog too.

The walk begins in the village of **Little Missenden**, Buckinghamshire, postcode **HP7 0RB**, www.w3w.co/burn.remembers.cake. For a half-way break in Little Missenden, another good start is the village of **Holmer Green**, postcode **HP15 6XW**, where there is plenty of space to park. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



Little Missenden pulls easily as much weight as its Great sister. (You'll find an interesting derivation of the name "Missenden" in the adjoining walk.) The Little Missenden Festival of Music and Arts takes place each October with piano and chamber music recitals, poetry readings, talks and merry making. The lovely timbered houses provide a setting for numerous TV programmes including Midsomer Murders. Little Missenden House was used in the Vicar of Dibley with the Red Lion appearing in three episodes. One famous son of the village was Herbert Austin, founder of the Austin Motor Company (compare nearby Nuffield and William Morris).


The church of St John the Baptist is the oldest "working" church seen on any of the walks on this website. Its Saxon nave was built in the late 900s and some of the bricks have Roman origin. The interior has wall paintings, including a large St Christopher shepherding the people by the south door.

*Little Missenden is blessed with **two** pubs. The **Red Lion** (01494-862876) is a family pub with reliable ales and the usual pub favourites. The great feature of the Red Lion is the big garden, the back of which you reach by crossing a bridge over the pond. The **Crown Inn** (01494-862571) is a great place for real ales. Nourishment is in the form of snacks with (sensibly) just a handful of well-chosen hot dishes.*

1 Walk along the road in the centre of Little Missenden, with the *Red Lion* on your left. You pass *Little Missenden House* on your left. After 400m total, you reach the village's second pub the *Crown Inn* (an equally good stopping place). Just *before* this pub, turn **right** on a track, known as Toby's Lane, marked as a byway. Where the wide track ends at a timbered house, keep straight ahead on a narrower sunken path. In 400m, ignore a small metal gate and footpath on your right. In a further 200m, you pass the deep woodland of Breaches Wood. The path is now hedged on both sides and the hedges may seem to encroach, but don't worry: the way will be clearer soon and many people come this way – so press on regardless! Ignore a small gate and footpath on your left. After a small clump of trees, you pass under two sets of power lines and your path runs along the left-hand side of a field. Your path shortly runs through a dense strip of trees. At this point, look for the corner of a garden fence on your right, opposite a metal kissing-gate on your left. (*Don't miss this junction!*)

2 Turn **right** here on a footpath which runs tightly between hedges, later a fence. In 200m you come out through a small metal gate to a junction of lanes beside Oaklands Farm. Turn **left** on the tarmac and, immediately as it bends left, go straight across to go through a small metal gate onto a footpath. This path runs along the right-hand side of a large green pasture, continuing straight down into woodland. A metal kissing-gate here leads to a path through a section of beautiful Beamond Wood. (The *Private* notice refers to the woods on the right, not to the path!) After the wood, your path goes up beside a wooden fence on your left, under some tall pines, between green meadows, under more trees. Finally, a surfaced path winds its way to a cul-de-sac in a residential road in the village of Holmer Green.

Holmer Green is an area of new development and is now larger than Great Missenden, to say nothing of its governing village of Little Missenden. It is connected seamlessly to Hazlemere and High Wycombe. But it was not always so. This village-on-a-hill was a small farming settlement, centred on a medieval manor house, with houses going back to the 1500s. The mid-Victorian pre-Raphaelite brother and sister painters and poets Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti used to visit an elderly relative here. Hence "Rossetti Place" and "Rossetti Hall". As a further historic morsel: your grandparents might well have played tennis with rackets made in Holmer Green.

3 Turn **right** in the cul-de-sac, keep straight ahead on a tarmac footway beside a terrace of houses, and turn **right** on a residential road, *Winters Way*. Turn **left** at a T-junction with *Penfold Lane* (cutting across the grass). Your next turning is on the **right** in only 50m, a signposted footpath almost opposite a small development called *Penfold Cottages*, just before *Altavia*.  However, if you would like a break possibly relaxing by the Green or drinking in the *Bat and Ball* pub, you will find them just 150m further along the road.

4 Having turned **right** on the footpath, go through a wooden swing-gate into a hayfield. Follow the right-hand side till the corner bends away right and keep ahead following a clear path that curves a fraction left to the far corner. Your path leads through a wooden swing-gate, joining a wider path, into another hayfield. In the far corner, exit the field through a wooden swing-gate, crossing a tarmac drive, and straight ahead through a wooden gate. Your path runs between the boundary wire fence of Haleacre Wood

on your right and a sunken parallel bridleway on your left. After 250m, your path comes down to meet the sunken bridleway at a junction.

- 5 Turn **right** at the junction, thus avoiding a rising footpath straight ahead. (As a guide, your path is marked **LM24** in white on a tree.) This rather stony path leads downhill, then runs in a strip of trees. It now gradually rises under a tall Chiltern tree canopy of beeches and hornbeams. In late spring this area is ablaze with bluebells. Finally, the path runs up beside a wooden fence to reach a wide tarmac drive.

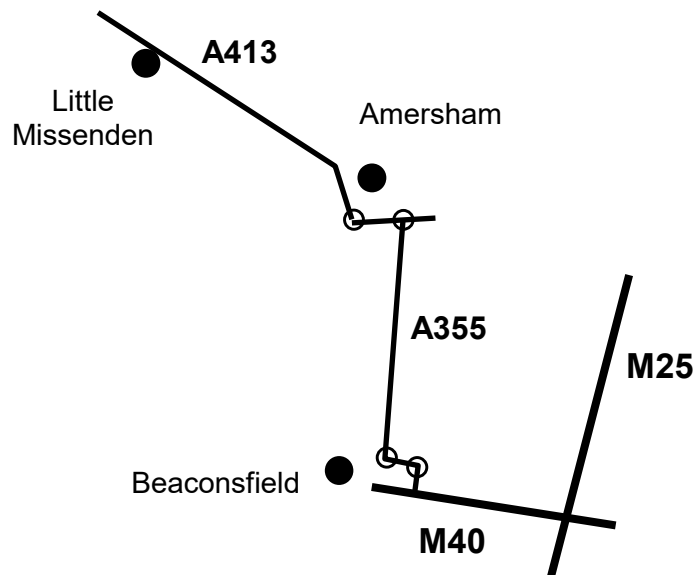
- 6 Turn very sharp **right** on the tarmac drive. The drive leads through the buildings of Affricks Farm. When you come out into the yard, keep ahead, a fraction right, and continue on a farm track beside a hedge on your right. At the end of the field on your left, where the track bends left, **leave** the track by keeping **right** through a small (usually open) old metal gate that is adjacent to an equally old stile. You come out onto the edge of a field. Turn **left** on a bordering grass path downhill. Where the edge of the field turns sharp left, **leave** it by keeping straight ahead on a well-marked path up the centre of the field. At the crest of the hill, you meet a level path that runs along the contour. This path is part of the South Bucks Way (SBW). *The South Bucks Way is a 23-mile=37-km path which runs between Combe Hill and Denham.*

- 7 Turn **right** on the SBW across the field, along the top of the hill. At the other side, your path leads through a patch of shrubbery and across a similar field, crossing under power lines. Keep straight ahead, aiming for the far left-hand corner. When you reach it, turn diagonally **left** and go through a gap via a narrow path. In only 10m you reach a crossing bridleway, known as Kingstreet Lane, which runs under a band of trees. Turn **right** on this bridleway. In under 100m you meet a crossing farm track. Turn **left** on it and follow the edge of a crop field. In 350m, at the end of the field, exit to a tarmac lane. Turn **left** on the lane which bends immediately right, passing a welcome sign for Little Missenden.

- 8 Follow the lane, passing some restored farm buildings and turning **left** in the corner. This is Beamond End Lane, the most attractive part of Little Missenden, lined with historic timbered houses: on your right *Town Farm Cottage* and *The White Cottage*, on your left *Town Farmhouse*, on your right *Dering Cottage*, *Ridgewell House*, *The White House* and the former Village Stores. You reach a T-junction opposite the *Manor House*. The Church of St John The Baptist is on the left. Turn **right** on the main village street, avoiding a junction on the left, soon reaching the *Red Lion* where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: Little Missenden is just off the A413 trunk road. If coming from the London or M25 area, take the M40 to Beaconsfield (junction 2). Go north on the A355 (**left** and **right** at roundabouts). Near Amersham go **left** and **right** again at roundabouts onto the A413. Little Missenden is signed **left**. There is plenty of parking space on the roadside, but possibly the best place is just beyond the church where there is a dirt strip. **(Warning! isolated car park: leave car visibly empty - see Guidelines.)**



By bus/train: bus 177 from Amersham Station (Chiltern Railways from Marylebone or London Underground, Freedom Pass zone). Check the timetables.

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