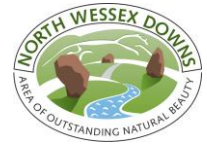


# North Wessex Downs

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



## Walks in Berkshire

### Ladle Hill and the Sydmonton Estate

A circular walk from Old Burghclere up to Ladle Hill, with magnificent 360 degree views, including Beacon Hill and the Highclere Estate (to the west), and Watership Down and Hannington (to the east); then continuing down and through the Sydmonton Estate before returning to your start point.

#### Useful Information

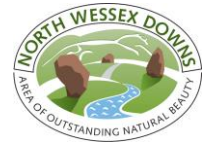
- 4.3 miles/ 7km circular walk
- Start point and parking: Layby by Entrance to Sydmonton Estate.
- What3words: Sandwich.overjoyed.fires
- Grid Ref: SU477579
- OS Explorer Maps: 144
- Public Transport: None available.
- Hills in parts, mostly rough ground.
- Refreshments: Number of village pubs nearby. Pub/café at Kingsclere 4 miles. Various at Newbury or Whitchurch, both approx. 7 miles
- GPX: file available to download from our website

#### Route Directions

- 1) From the start point cross over the road and walk towards the 3-way signpost at the junction. Just past it, turn right onto a wide track between trees, which is marked by a fingerpost. Head up hill to the top of Ladle Hill. (The first part of the track can get rutted and muddy, there is a drier, narrow path between the trees on the left-hand side in places). There are a couple of places with good views across to the right to Beacon Hill. When you walk clear of the trees, follow the path straight on until you reach a tree with a man-made pile of stones (called a cairn) with footpath signs directing you left and right.
- 2) Turn Left (you are now on the Wayfarer's walk) and follow this grass path. You will come to a wire fence on the left, which encloses the site of an Iron Age hillfort. Further along the fence is a gate where you can go through to explore the hillfort. Afterwards, retrace your steps back to the gate and then continue left on the path.
- 3) When you come to the field boundary, meeting a fence and a line of trees, turn left.
- 4) Soon after the path bends round the corner, turn right through a gate. Continue along the Wayfarer's Walk (WW). Follow the top edge of this field, next to the fence, and then straight on keeping to a (just visible) path and heading towards some large trees. Just before you reach the far end of this field, head down to the bottom corner, walk past the base of an electricity pylon.
- 5) Turn left to join a sunken lane, A fingerpost on a nearby gate also marks the path. The lane takes you down through trees to reach a metal barred gate with a stile - cross over the stile and continue to follow the track as it bends to the right and continues downwards, then levels out. After a short distance, pass around a wooden gate and follow the track as it continues, with trees and hedgerow bordering fields on either side as it now levels out. Pass around another wooden

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gate and after a few meters you will reach the Old Burghclere/Kingsclere road, going through the gate or crossing the stile on the left side.

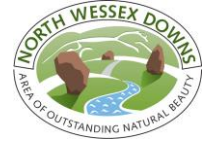
- 6) Turn left to walk along the road for just 2 to 3 minutes until you reach some farm buildings on the left.
- 7) Opposite a finger post, turn right, passing between stone mushrooms and take the gate to your right before you reach a barn. You are now in the Sydmonton Estate. Continue on this path, through the estate along an avenue of trees to your left, passing a post box on your right and until you reach a black metal pedestrian gate on the left side of a wide gate and cattle grid across the road. Carry straight on along a tarmacked road across another cattle grid until you reach a sharp left hand fork in the road.
- 8) Turn left on the road. You will also see a footpath post showing a sign to turn left. Follow this track to the end, where it meets a road at Wergs Manor.
- 9) Turn left along the road and in 5 minutes you will be back at your starting point.

## Points of Interest

- Ladle Hill iron age Hillfort – is a scheduled monument, a unfinished hillfort, a saucer barrow, a disc barrow and sections of two linear earthworks. The site was abandoned during construction which allows the researcher to see very clearly how other sites were laid out. There are wonderful views from the hillfort: From the northern side, on the edge of the escarpment, there are great views of Beacon Hill and you can see the central tower of Highclere Castle above the trees to the west. To the east you can see the sweep of Watership Down and the transmitter mast at Hannington. Below you to the north is the Sydmonton Estate.
- Beacon Hill - One of the best known hill forts in England and the site of one of the beacons that formed a network across Hampshire. [Beacon Hill](#)
- Wayfarer's Walk - a 70-mile, long-distance walking route starting from Inkpen Beacon. [Wayfarer's Walk](#)
- Sydmonton Court – owned by Andrew Lloyd Webber [Sydmonton Court](#)
- Watership Down– the area that inspired the author Richard Adams to write his famous tale of the rabbits. There is a 24-mile trail starting from Whitchurch, Hampshire [Watership Down Trail 24 Mile Circular Walk](#)
- Highclere castle – of Downton Abbey fame. Highclere offers different tours throughout the year, which reflect the seasons, the history and of course Downton Abbey. [Highclere Castle](#)

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## Ladle Hill: Map

