

Rural Rambler

By Steve

A series of walks around Marsworth and the local countryside.

All the walks in this series can be downloaded from the Marsworth website where a higher resolution map and in some cases photographs are available

<https://www.marsworth.org.uk/the-marsworth-news/rural-rambler/>

No. 8 Ashridge and Ivinghoe Beacon

We visit some classic localities in this month's walk, the Bridgewater Monument on the Ashridge Estate and the local landmark of Ivinghoe Beacon.

The total walk is about 6½ miles and takes around 2½ hours. The Ashridge section is easy going but the ascent of the Beacon and the section immediately afterwards is steep. There is one alternative route which includes an additional hill. No stiles but a few gates.

The walk starts at the Bridgewater Monument, (HP4 1LX) access to which is off the B4506 Berkhamsted to Dagnall road. Plenty of parking is available.

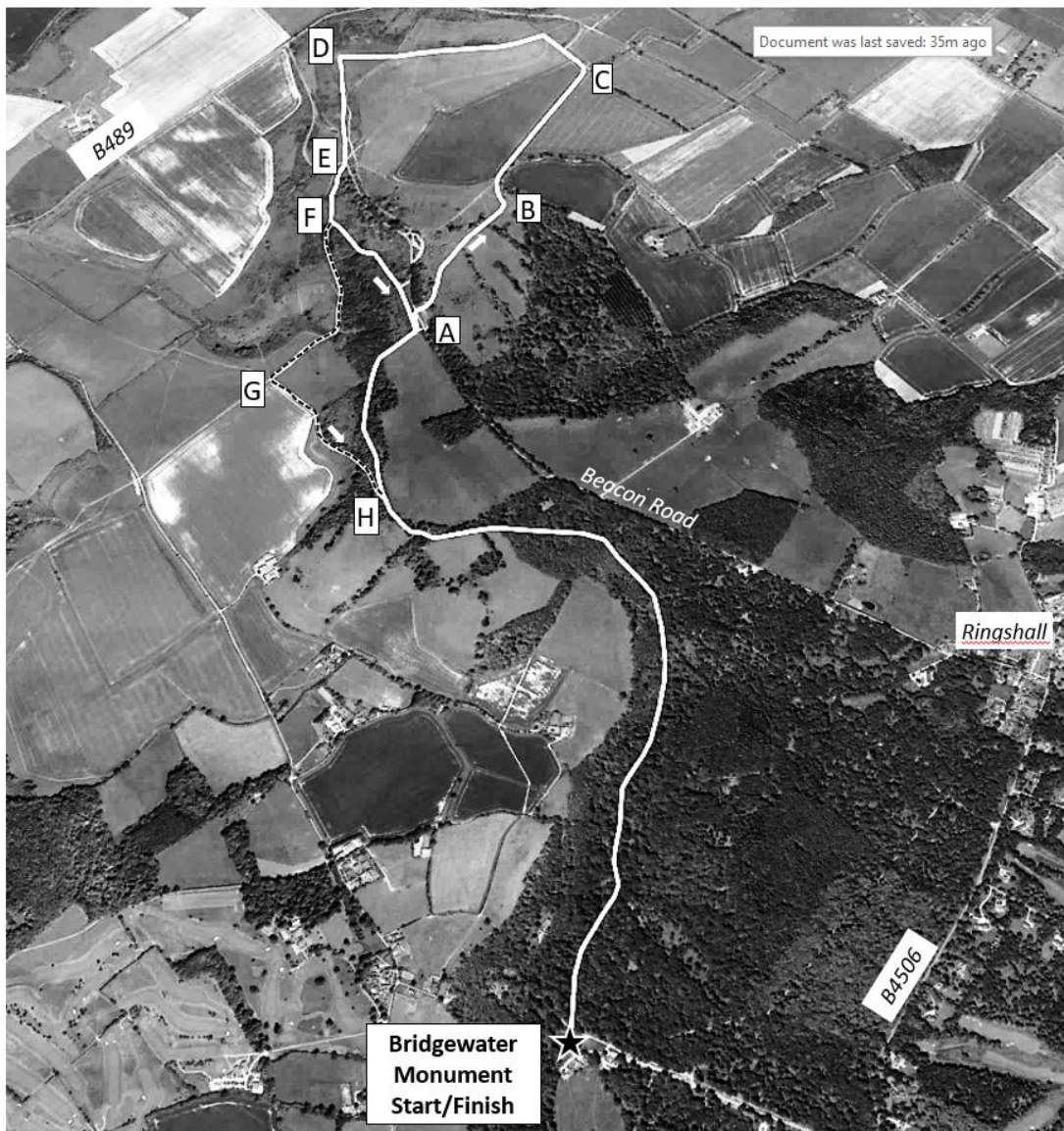
Standing at the base of the monument with your back to the café take the track marked 'Duncombe Terrace Mobility Track' straight ahead (the right hand of the two clear paths). This track is suitable for wheelchairs and mobility scooters and is straightforward to follow, after approx. 1.3 miles there is a sign marking the end of the maintained mobility section, carry straight on. After another couple of hundred yards, you will pass kennels on your right (always barking dogs!) and then at 1.9 miles pass straight on at a cattle grid. Continue ahead until you reach a small car park beside the Beacon Road, marked out with large logs (Point A). Turn diagonally left, between the logs in the corner of the car park, and head on a less well-defined path towards the large group of beech trees on the Beacon Road. Cross the road by the trees and take the trackway ahead, which leads downhill through sheep pasture (dogs on leads please!). After passing through a gate the path becomes slightly less clear but carry on downhill, bearing left and heading for a kissing gate in the left hand corner at the bottom of the field (B).

Passing through the gate take the track between the fields with the Ivinghoe Beacon ridge on your left. In spring and summer these fields are home to skylarks that can be heard singing as they fly up to great heights. This valley is also a regular haunt of many migratory birds of passage in spring and autumn. Continue along this track until reaching the first trees (C) then turn left up the steep hill with a partial hedge on your right. At the gate in the hedge turn left onto the ridge and follow this, through a gate, to the top of Ivinghoe Beacon (D). Take a few moments to admire the view, on a clear day you can see as far as the Snowdome in Milton Keynes.

Leave the top of the hill via the obvious paths (marked as part of the Ridgeway Trail) down to the Beacon Road, avoiding options that go off to the left. At the road cross over and follow the Ridgeway signs up the steps (Point E) A hundred yard or so from

the top of the steps a grassy bridleway goes off on the left (F), take this for the main route. Go straight ahead on the Ridgeway for an alternative route (see below). If on the main route follow the grassy bridleway, bearing right where signposted. This brings you out onto an area of rough grass beside the Beacon Road. Walk along a path through the grass until the small car park with logs is reached. At the car park turn right onto the track and retrace your steps back to the Monument.

For the alternative route go straight ahead at Point F and follow the Ridgeway through the trees until a gate is reached, after which the path descends rapidly along the edge of an impressive steep sided valley called Incombe Hole. Towards the base of the slope fences mark the right angle corner of a field (G). Turn left (straight ahead takes The Ridgeway to Pitsone Hill car park) walk beside the fence then bear left uphill. Enter the woods via a gate, pass the yellow capped way-marker post and continue diagonally uphill until the Mobility Track is met (H). Turn right and retrace steps back to the Monument.



Additional Photographs



The Start



1.3 Miles – end of Mobility Track



1.9 miles Cattle Grid



Point A



Point B



Sightseeing Chart on Ivinghoe Beacon



Road crossing at Point E



Steps past Point E on The Ridgeway



Junction of Paths at Point F. Straight on for Alternative route. Turn left onto bridleway for main route