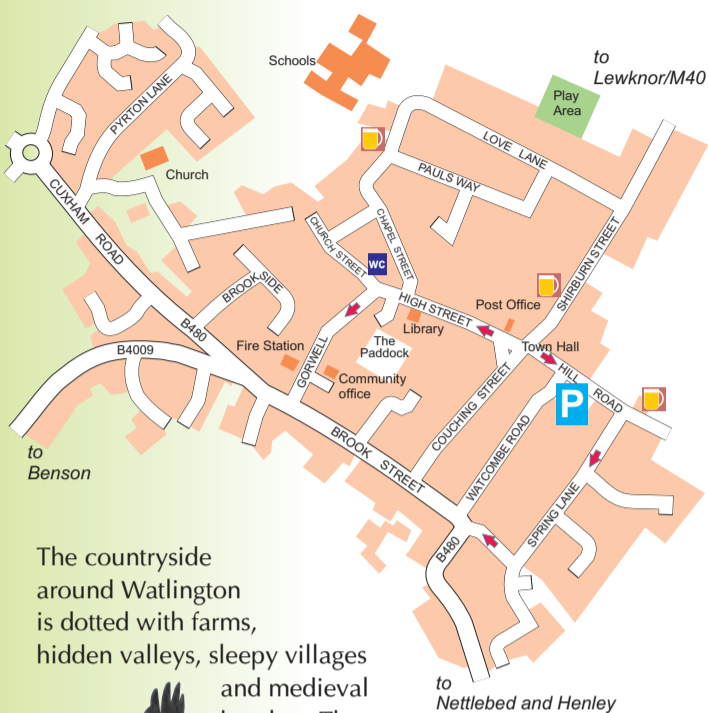


Watlington.. a really attractive market town

Lying at the foot of the Chiltern Hills, Watlington is an attractive rural market town. It is first recorded as a Saxon settlement in the 8th century and has many historic buildings. The town is skirted by the Icknield Way (part of The Ridgeway National Trail) making it a popular stop-off for walkers, naturalists, cyclists and horse riders. There are several pubs in the town and a number of shops offering a range of speciality foods and goods.



The countryside around Watlington is dotted with farms, hidden valleys, sleepy villages and medieval hamlets. There is a wonderful network of rights of way offering many possibilities for walking. You can either stick to the flatter routes in the Vale or climb up into the Chiltern Hills for magnificent views of surrounding countryside - the perfect place to watch red kites soaring overhead.



This Walk.. Cookley Green and Swyncombe

This circular walk starts at the car park in Watlington and takes you south to the villages of Cookley Green and Swyncombe. It is approximately 7 miles long over undulating countryside and includes a few moderately steep climbs and several stiles along the way. You should allow at least three hours to complete the walk.

The walk sets out through fields and farmland following a well defined and broad path up into the woods of Britwell Hill. Here it becomes a hollow way with a tunnel-like cover of trees, many of which have been undermined by years of erosion leaving a mesh of roots hanging in the air alongside the path. From the top of the hill the path skirts round farmland before following a track into Cookley Green, and on to Swyncombe.

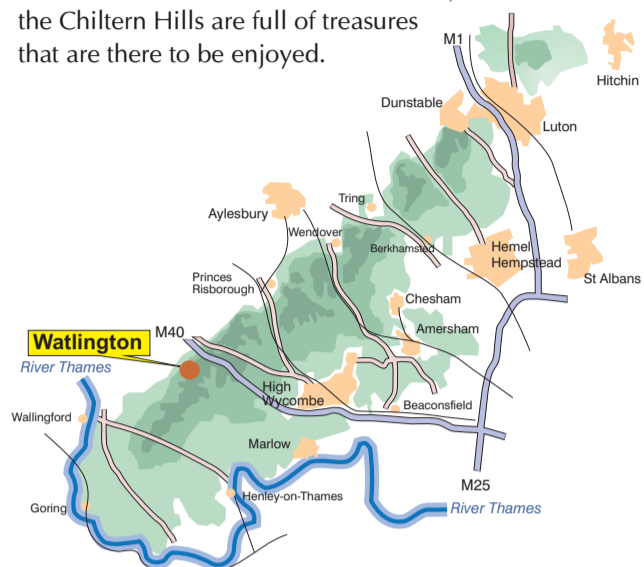
Swyncombe Church is early Norman with some Saxon parts and warrants more than a passing glance as you pass it. Leave your boots outside and take a look at the interior with its apse decorated with ancient paintings uncovered and restored in the 1850's. A visit in late January or early February will reward you with the churchyard blooming with a mass of snowdrops and winter aconites.

From the church the walk follows the Ridgeway National Trail back to Watlington and at times offers views out over the Thames Valley towards Oxford, or perhaps less attractively, the cooling towers of Didcot power station. Much of the Ridgeway in this area follows the ancient Icknield Way which will take you back to Hill Road at the foot of Watlington Hill, and so back to Watlington.



The Chilterns.. an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Chiltern Hills stretch from the River Thames in south Oxfordshire through Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire to Hitchin in Hertfordshire. The area contains some of the finest countryside in the UK, recognised by its designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). From quiet valleys with medieval villages to dramatic viewpoints on the hilltops, leafy green woodlands to flower-covered meadows, the Chiltern Hills are full of treasures that are there to be enjoyed.



For more information visit www.chilternsaonb.org or call 01844 355500.



This Walk.. try this and our other Walks

This leaflet describes and illustrates one of 4 walks produced by Watlington Parish Council with the support of the Hidden Britain Project, funded through the Rural Enterprise Scheme, administered by Defra.

These walks start from the car park in Watlington

Walk 1 Watlington

A 2 mile walk through this historic market town

Walk 2 Cookley Green and Swyncombe

7 miles - discover hidden valleys and medieval hamlets

Walk 3 Watlington Hill

4-5 miles - a hilly walk with magnificent views

Walk 4 Lewknor and Pyrton

6 miles - a level walk through open countryside

Refreshments: There are a number of pubs and cafes in Watlington but none on this walk so enjoy a meal or drink on your return.

Parking: There is free parking available in the Hill Road car park, Watlington, where you start your walk.

Toilets: There are public toilets in Church Street (at the bottom of High Street).

Accommodation: Visit www.watlington.org

Watlington.. how to get there



By car: Leave M40 at Junction 6; in Watlington take the first turning on your left into Hill Road. The free car park is on your right.

By bus: X39 hourly from Oxford. The Oxford Tube travels between Oxford and London every 10 minutes and stops at Junction 6 (Lewknor).

Countryside Code:

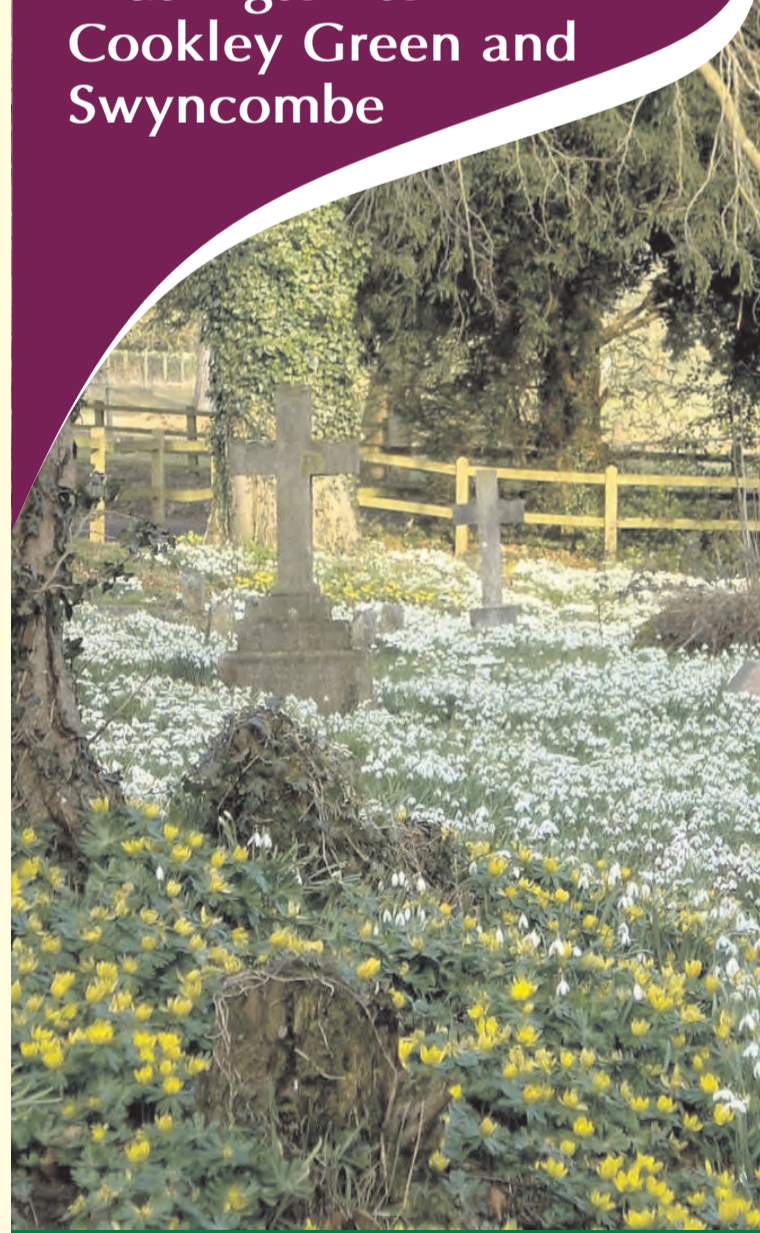
- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants & animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under control
- Consider other people

For further information on Watlington visit www.watlington.org

Other Watlington Walk leaflets can be obtained from the Community Office, Library and the Paper Shop. Photography by © Robert Barber and the Chilterns Conservation Board



Watlington to Cookley Green and Swyncombe



Watlington
Oxfordshire Chilterns Country



Watlington to Cookley Green and Swyncombe

a 7 mile walk - discover hidden valleys and medieval hamlets

1 Leave the car park via the footpath exit at the back of the car park, (opposite the entrance), turning left, then right into Spring Lane.

2 When the road turns sharply right, go left (before Stonor Green), to follow a path behind houses and past garages on the left. The path then crosses open ground, with trees on the right, then between hedges.

3 At an iron gate turn right through a slab stile and, with a hedge on the left, continue to a second stile. Cross the road to a field gate with a footpath sign and go through a gap at the side to join a field track.

4 Follow the track and at a T junction turn left. The path turns right at a hedge, shortly turning left over a stile just before a concrete road.

5 Walk beside a hedge on the right to cross a stile onto a metalled road junction. This is the Icknield Way, part of the Ridgeway National Trail and also of Swan's Way.

6 Cross the Ridgeway, take the brideway (marked W22) ahead and to the right, passing a farmhouse on the right. The road rises gently past a farm on the right and a cottage on the left, becoming a footpath and steepening as it twists and climbs towards Britwell Hill.

7 Emerging onto a metalled road at Woods Farm, continue half left to cross another road and take the road ahead, waymarked Cookley Green, (with a sign indicating private road) past a farm and houses to Cookley Green.

8 At the junction, with the green ahead, turn right. With the cricket ground on the right, and in about 250 yards, past a double farm gate, turn left through a white gate (marked as a brideway) and immediately bear right through a wood.

9 Follow the path straight through the wood, emerging at a kissing gate into parkland. The path descends towards Swyncombe Church, hidden in the trees ahead. Go through an iron kissing gate at the corner of a fence (waymarked Chiltern Way). With the fence on the right cross a drive, go through trees and turn into the churchyard through the south gate.

10 **Swyncombe Church** is tucked away in a secluded valley a couple of miles from Ewelme. The church is dedicated to St. Botolph who lived in the 7th century; it is thought that Swyncombe was a resting place for the Saint's remains in their three caskets on their journeys to the Abbeys of Ely, Thorney and Westminster.

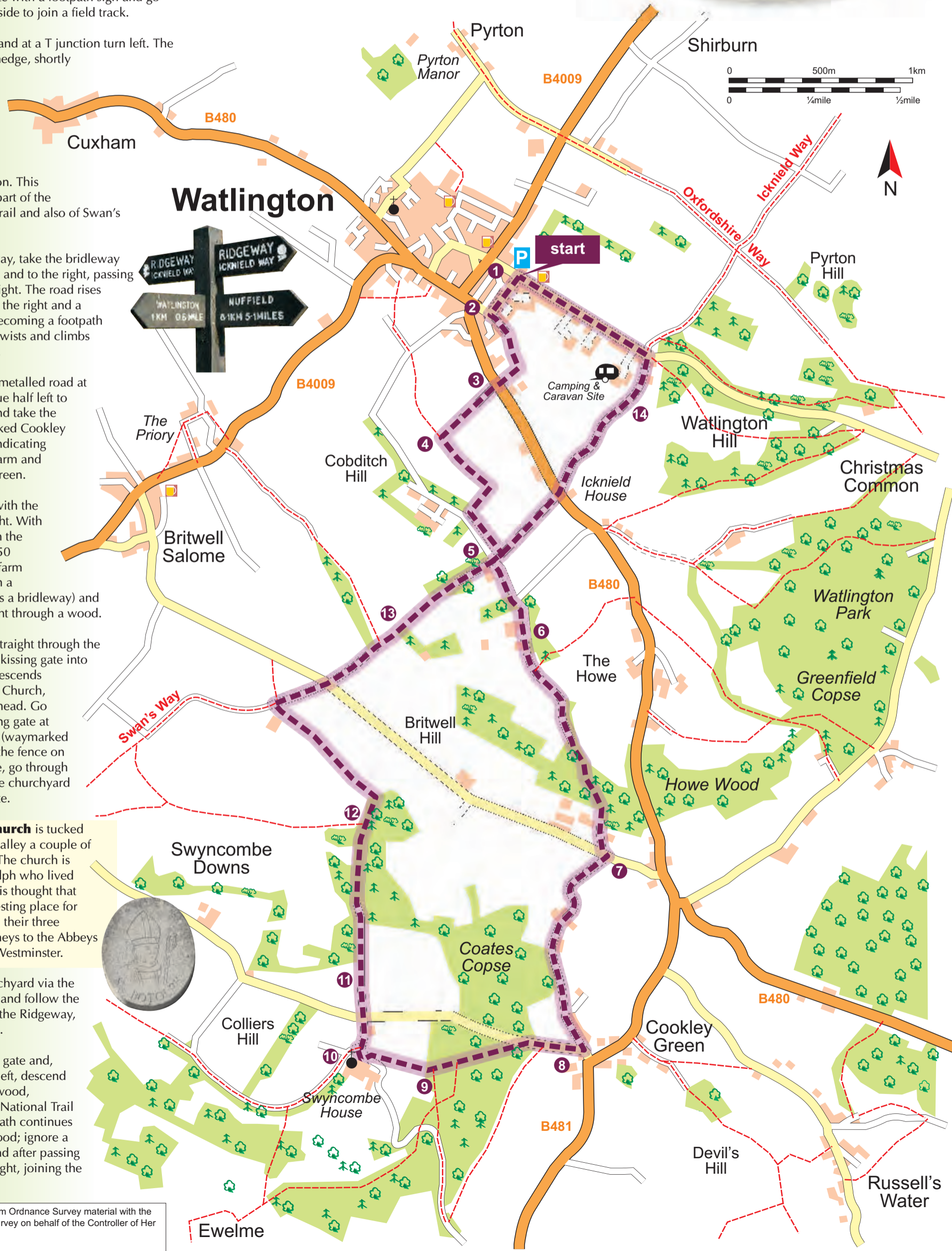
11 Leaving the churchyard via the north gate, turn right and follow the road, which is again the Ridgeway, uphill to a T junction.

12 Cross to a kissing gate and, with a hedge on the left, descend and then climb to a wood, waymarked with the National Trail Acorn symbol. The path continues down through the wood; ignore a footpath to the left and after passing farm buildings turn right, joining the Icknield Way.

13 Cross a road, continue along the Ridgeway to reach the junction crossed earlier in the walk, where a sign indicated a permissive path to the right, avoiding the road. Cross the stile, follow the path along the left edge of a field and, after another stile, rejoin the Ridgeway.

14 Cross a road and continue along the Ridgeway to a road (Hill Road). At the junction turn left downhill to arrive at the car park.

Now explore Watlington



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