

Ashridge Estate

8.5m (13.7km), mostly easy and rising no more than 48ft (14.6m); devised by **Roger Bangs**.

Note: If you have a GPS mapping device, the GPX files for this and most other routes in our collection are now available via the Area website (see front cover) on the Walk Routes page.

The accompanying map shows a walk on the attractive Ashridge Estate, best done when the ground is dry. It is mainly on National Trust land. I am not giving a step by step description of the route, which is on the paths close to the indicative blue line. If you are familiar with using the Ordnance Survey (OS) maps, hopefully you will be able to follow the route. But do check that after a junction you are on the intended path.

Although you could start this walk at several places and walk in either direction, my suggested starting place for walking in an anticlockwise direction is the car park opposite the war memorial NW of Berkhamsted (GR: TL 005093) marked with a P, bottom right on the map.

From the corner of the car park furthest from the war memorial (Inns Of Court Training Corps) take the right hand bridleway in a northerly direction. This takes you through the golf course. Bearing left you join the Hertfordshire Way. At the next junction go right, still travelling north. You now have woodland on the right and an open space on the left. Follow the Bridleway until you come to the Estate Road, which you cross and follow up Frithsden Rise (driveway to a house and permissive bridleway), past the house then down towards Capability Brown's Golden Valley.

The Golden Valley (see below) is one of the finest areas of the Ashridge Estate, and is a nod to its aristocratic past. Originally not a valley at all, this feature was built by celebrated landscape architect 'Capability' Brown between 1759 and 1768 to highlight the impressive grounds of Ashridge House.

In the Golden Valley, you bear left heading NW along the bottom of the valley for one mile before turning left again, just after passing cottage gardens on the right. Head SW, uphill to another golf course, down past the clubhouse and greens, then up past barns, for nearly one mile. Now turn right onto a broad avenue called the Prince's Riding. Walk westerly along the avenue through the trees for nearly a mile (crossing the B4506) towards the Bridgewater Monument. Here you can stop at the visitor centre for refreshments and toilets. On a clear day at the weekend you may be able to climb the monument.

The monument sits on top of the Chilterns Plateau and is a great focal point for discovering the Ashridge Estate. It was built in 1832 to commemorate the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater, a pioneer of 19th century canal building.

(If you are wanting a slightly longer walk or a pub lunch, you could walk down the escarpment into Aldbury, where there are two pubs and the old village stocks by the pond.)

Leaving the monument, continue the walk along the top of the escarpment in a southerly direction for half a mile and then turn left, following the Chiltern Way to Woodyard Cottages. Here you bear right following the track to Coldharbour Farm, then bear left either on the Hertfordshire Way path or at the side of the open common to Brickkiln Cottage. Make sure you keep on the Hertfordshire Way in a SE direction, getting good views, until you come to the recently excavated WW1 trenches on your right.

The Inns of Court Officer Training Corps trained over 12,000 men at Ashridge to serve as commissioned officers in the Great War of 1914 to 1918.

Continue along the Hertfordshire Way almost to New Road, turn left, and in 150 metres you are back at the start.





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