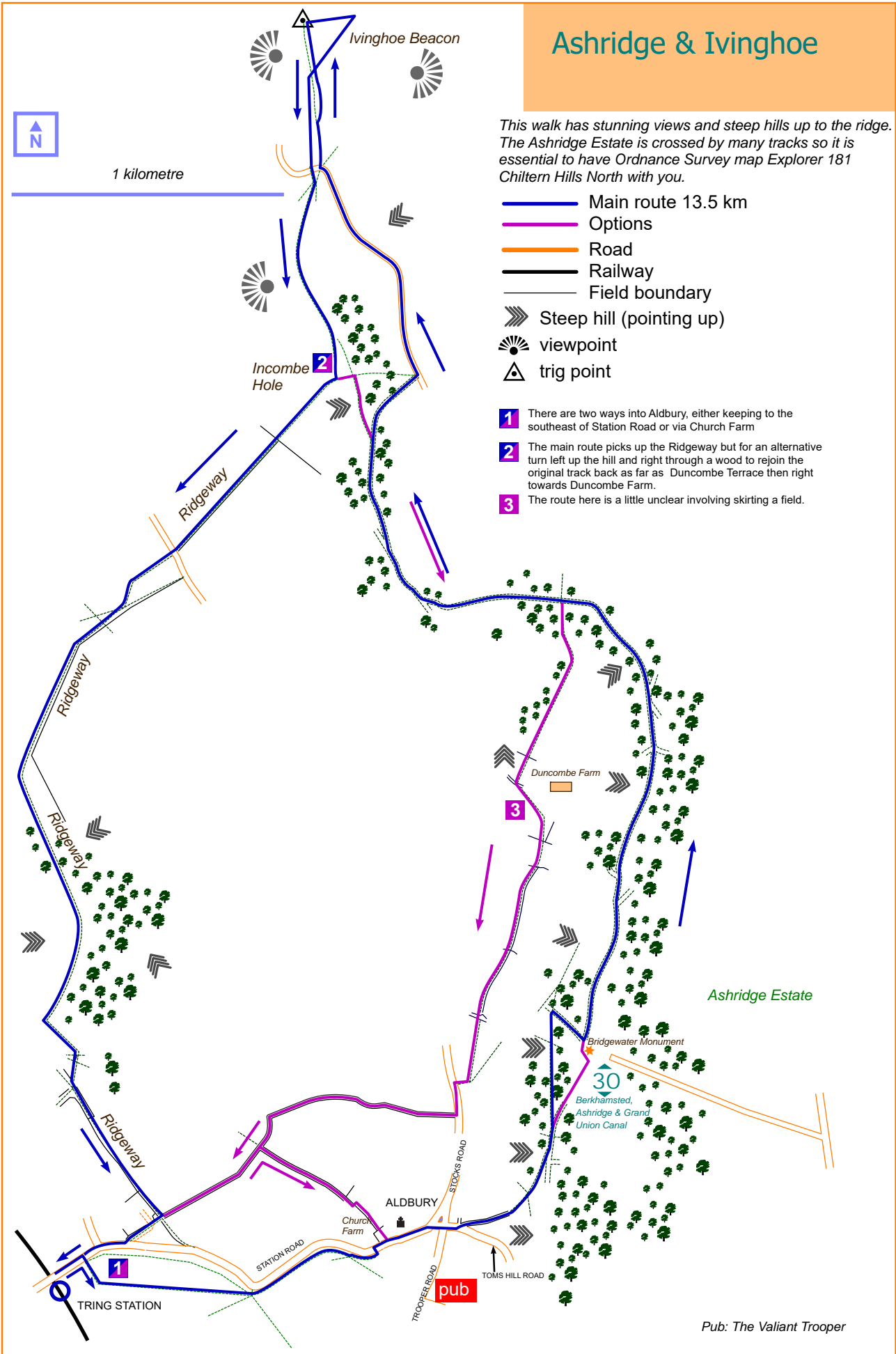


Ashridge & Ivinghoe

This walk has stunning views and steep hills up to the ridge. The Ashridge Estate is crossed by many tracks so it is essential to have Ordnance Survey map Explorer 181 Chiltern Hills North with you.

- Main route 13.5 km
- Options
- Road
- Railway
- Field boundary
- Steep hill (pointing up)
- ☀ viewpoint
- ▲ trig point

- 1** There are two ways into Aldbury, either keeping to the southeast of Station Road or via Church Farm
- 2** The main route picks up the Ridgeway but for an alternative turn left up the hill and right through a wood to rejoin the original track back as far as Duncombe Terrace then right towards Duncombe Farm.
- 3** The route here is a little unclear involving skirting a field.



Pub: The Valiant Trooper

walk notes

Ashridge and Ivinghoe Beacon

Unfortunately this walk does not start from the London Transport area and the nearest station is Tring. The views from the ridge near Ivinghoe beacon (233m above sea level) are absolutely stunning and in the autumn so are the trees. The land is owned by the National Trust and there are many designated walks. An OS map (Explorer 181 Chiltern Hills North) is essential for the first half of the walk.

Ashridge

The Ashridge estate consists of 5000 acres of outstanding natural beauty. In 1283 Edmund of Cornwall founded a monastery for the Bonhomme monks. With the dissolution of the monasteries the land passed to the crown and then on the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, to her Lord Chancellor, Thomas Egerton. His son John was created Earl of Bridgewater. In 1823 the titles passed to the eighth Earl a patron of science as well as a great eccentric. He never married and on his death in 1829 his titles became extinct. In 1921 the land passed to the National Trust. The house in neo-gothic style was built on the site of the priory in 1814. It is in private hands but tours of the house and grounds are available at certain times of the year. Ashridge is rich in butterflies - speckled woods, gatekeepers, meadow browns, ringlets and small Essex and large skippers, brimstones, commas, peacocks, dark-green fritillaries, painted ladies, Duke of Burgundies, chalk blues, small tortoiseshells, common blues, small heath, brown argus, marbled white and red admirals at the right time of year.

Bridgewater Monument

The 108ft high Bridgewater Monument was built in 1832 in memory of the third duke, designer of the Bridgewater Canal in 1761, Britain's first proper canal. During weekends from April to October it is open to take the challenge of climbing 172 steps to see stunning views at the top.

Ivinghoe Beacon

The Ivinghoe and Pitstone Hills are designated as a site of special scientific

interest (SSSI) for its very special wildlife. The whole area falls within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Together with the rest of the Ivinghoe Hills the site is the largest complex of Chalk grassland on the Chilterns escarpment. This includes several nationally rare plants such as early gentian, the pasque flower, field fleawort, fine leaved fumary and greater pignut. Butterflies include the chalkhill blue, the small blue, the Duke of Burgundy, Essex skipper, adonis blue, marsh fritillary and silver-spotted skipper. The woodland comprises beech and ash with extensive areas of hawthorn scrub. The archaeological interest is largely the Neolithic Pitstone flint mines, the Later Bronze Age linear dyke system known as 'Grim's Ditch' (probably territorial or farm estate boundaries), and the Beacon Hill summit Bronze Age round barrow and Iron Age hillfort (Scheduled Ancient Monuments).

The Ridgeway

Following a route used since prehistoric times by travellers, herdsmen and soldiers the 87 mile long Ridgeway passes through ancient landscapes through downland, secluded valleys and woodland. It provided a route over the high ground for travellers which was less wooded and drier than routes through the springline villages below. We make use of its easternmost end.

Incombe Hole

Incombe Hole is a dry valley to the south of Steps Hill at the northern end of the Chiltern escarpment. This valley was created by a process called "nivation" dating back to the Ice Age. Firstly water freezes within the cracks, holes and fissures in the rock resulting in the rock fracturing, (gelifraction). The second stage occurs due to gravity dragging the fractured rock particles down the slope of the hill, scoring the valley into the hillside as it descends with the ice and snow (solifluction). At the end of the Ice Age, the ice and snow disappeared leaving the dry valley that we see today with no stream or river at its valley floor.