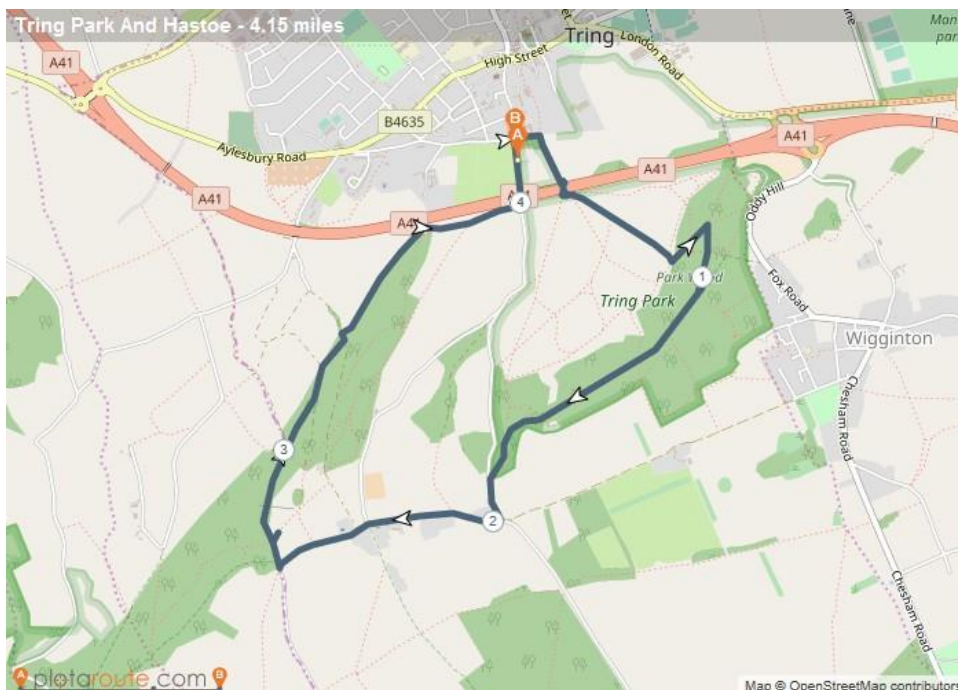


## 2018 WALK 1 TRING PARK AND HASTOE

This circular walk of a little over 4 miles starts and finishes in Tring, just off the A41 in the west of the county. The route takes in the designed landscape of grassland and woodland in Tring Park, then reaches the highest point in Hertfordshire at 803 feet (244 metres) above sea level, before descending the wooded Chilterns scarp to return to Tring. All of the route is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Along the way there are far-reaching views, and the route overlooks Green Belt countryside on the edge of Tring which will soon disappear under housing.

The route involves a climb through the woodland in Tring Park, then a high-level section along the Ridgeway long-distance path, which offers lovely views. After following a mainly quiet country lane through Hastoe, there is a steep descent down the scarp slope which may be very muddy and slippery for a short distance (you might find walking poles useful here). The final section follows the base of the hill before a final short climb reaches another viewpoint. There are numerous pubs and cafés in Tring, including the Zebra café in Tring Museum.

You might like to combine the walk with a visit to the Museum, which houses the collection assembled by Walter Rothschild, begun in the 19th century. It remains the largest private natural history collection ever put together by one person, and is now part of the Natural History Museum.



To reach the start of the walk, go into the centre of Tring, then follow signs for Tring Museum in Akeman Street. Just past the Museum, at the end of the road, turn right then immediately left into Hastoe Lane to reach the Tring Museum/Woodland Trust car park a short distance up the lane on the left. At the time of testing this walk (January 2018) the car park was closed pending surface repairs. If it is still closed there is roadside parking in Hastoe Lane.



From the car park go through the kissing gate on the far side and turn right onto the path (see photo right). If the car park is closed, or you would like to visit the café first, go back down Hastoe Lane and turn right. The Zebra café has a separate door to the left of the museum entrance. To start the walk go straight on along Park Street leaving the museum buildings to your left. In a short distance take the public footpath to the right signposted to Tring Park.



Follow the path and climb up onto the footbridge over the A41. From here take a moment to enjoy the view of Tring Park, including the fine avenue of trees (see photo right). The Park is a rich wildlife habitat looked after by the Woodland Trust. The Mansion at Tring Park was designed by Christopher Wren and built in the late 17th century for Henry Guy, Groom of the Bedchamber for Charles II. A later owner commissioned Charles Bridgeman to lay out the grounds: many of the features survive. James Gibbs designed the summer house and obelisk.



From the bridge take the left-hand diagonal path heading towards the distant woodland - you should have some trees in large wooden tree guards to your left (see photo right).



In the summer months the grassland in the Park is renowned for its butterflies.

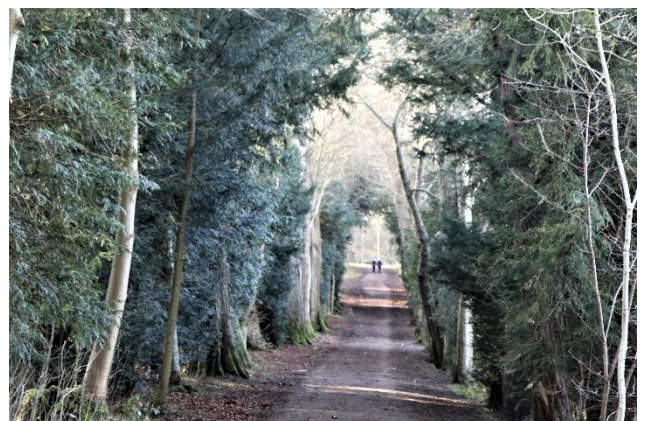


When you reach the woodland edge go through the gate (see photo left) and walk up the ride towards the distant obelisk (see photo right).



When you reach the obelisk you might like to walk up to the summer house a little further up the hill ahead (see photo below left). Then return to the obelisk.

With your back to the obelisk take the ride immediately to the left of the one you have just walked up (see photo below left) - this goes uphill to join the wide ride running through the high woodland (see photo below right). Turn right to follow the entire length of the ride. From here there are views through gaps in the trees out over Tring to the countryside beyond.





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There is an especially good view of the Tring Park Mansion (see photo right). After the house was built it changed hands several times before the freehold was acquired by the Rothschild Family in 1872. They made major changes to both the house and the estate, providing housing and public buildings in Tring and the surrounding villages. Two other houses once owned by the Rothschild family are visible from here - Mentmore Towers is on the far hillside in this photo. Waddesdon Manor (not in this photo) can also be seen on a hilltop beyond Aylesbury.



The high ride, known as King Charles' Ride, is also the route of the Ridgeway. The central section (see photo right) runs between an avenue of mature trees, including limes which have distinctive red buds and young twigs in winter.



The ride eventually narrows and turns to the left (south) through woodland (see photo left), eventually reaching a gate (see photo right). Go through the gate to the lane and turn left.



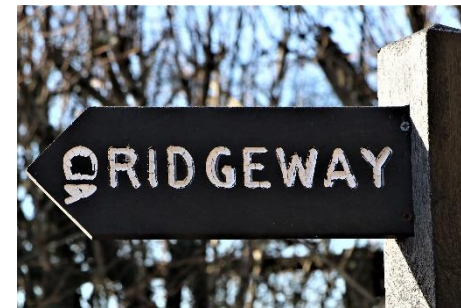
Stay on the lane and look out for traffic. At the first road junction (see photo left) turn right onto Church Lane (also signposted to Hastoe Village Hall) and follow the lane into Hastoe (see photo right).



You will soon pass on the left Hastoe Village Hall, one of the largest village halls in the Chilterns (see photo right). The hall was built and endowed by Lady Emma Rothschild in 1898 and housed one of the earliest lending libraries in the area.



Continue along Church Lane. When you reach the crossroads, keep straight on into Gadmore Lane (see photo left) which is still the route of the Ridgeway (see photo right). The lane climbs steadily.





Where the road turns to the left and at the edge of a wood you have reached the highest point in Hertfordshire, at 803 feet (244 metres) above sea level, although there is no indication of this on the ground (see photo right). This is also on the county boundary with Buckinghamshire.

Turn right towards the entrance to the wood, but don't go into the wood.



Instead take the public byway between the metal barriers (see photo left), then shortly afterwards go up the bank to the right and through the kissing gate (see photo right) into the field. Go a little way into the field keeping close to the right-hand hedge.



From this viewpoint you can look out over a wide arc of countryside. In the middle distance (see photo left) you can clearly see the fields in the Green Belt on the western edge of Tring where houses are due to be built shortly. The two fields closest to the existing built-up area will be covered in houses. In the remaining fields to the left, within the AONB, there will be a children's playground and possibly sports pitches. Views across the area will lose their rural feel.

When this picture (see photo right) was taken in the summer of 2017, of one of the fields due to be built on, there were larks singing overhead. They will certainly be displaced by the development.

Located a mile from the centre of Tring and nearly three miles from Tring Station, traffic generated from the development will add to the congestion in Tring's High Street. This development has been approved despite the government's commitment to protect the Green Belt.







Retrace your steps through the kissing gate to return to the byway, turn right and go downhill (see photo left). All along the edge of the Chilterns long thin parishes ran from the flat clay land up the scarp to the hilltop pastures. For centuries villagers from settlements on the lower ground herded livestock along tracks crossing the scarp, gradually deepening these routes into distinctive hollow ways.

Keep bearing right at the next junction of paths (see photo above right).



In January, when this route was walked, this section of the path (see photo left) was wet and slippery, so take great care. At the next junction of paths take the right fork (see photo right), which climbs slightly then runs along a level ledge through the steeply sloping woodland. This section of path is dryer underfoot. Another path eventually joins the route from the right.



Beyond this junction of paths keep going downhill and towards the edge of the woodland (see photo left). From the edge you can again see the area which will soon be covered in houses (see photo right).



When you reach the post with three red byway roundels (see photo left) bear right along the path to stay in the woodland (see photo right).



At the next crossing of paths, take the public footpath and go into Stubbing's Wood (see photo right). The path follows the edge of the woodland along the base of the steep scarp slope, getting closer to the A41 road.







Take the path going uphill and to the right at the next waymark post (see photo left), which emerges from the wood and runs alongside it with a field to the right, still going uphill (see photo right).



You will soon reach another viewpoint and be rewarded with more far-reaching views. In the distance Ivinghoe Beacon is a prominent feature at the end of the line of the Chilterns scarp running north from the wooded area of the Ashridge estate (see photo right). The chimneys of the Tring Park Mansion are also visible.

To the right of this view (and not in this photo) you can also see the Bridgewater Monument, which stands out against the adjoining woodland.



Just to the left of the previous view Tring's mediaeval church dominates the view of the town centre (see photo right).



To the right there are equally fine views over the wooded slopes and parkland of Tring Park (see photo right).



From this final viewpoint the path goes downhill (see photo right) to meet Hastoe Lane just by the bridge carrying the A41 over the lane. Turn left into the lane to complete your circuit.



If you have enjoyed this walk, please consider supporting CPRE Hertfordshire in our efforts to protect and celebrate the Hertfordshire countryside for everyone to enjoy. Our website [www.cpreherts.org.uk](http://www.cpreherts.org.uk) contains more information about our work and how you can donate and perhaps volunteer.

This route was last walked by CPRE in January 2018.

Note: all walkers do so at their own risk. Suitable footwear and clothing are recommended.

CPRE Hertfordshire is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered charity no. 1162419, address: 31a Church Street, Welwyn, AL6 9LW, tel: 01438 717587.

We are the county branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England.