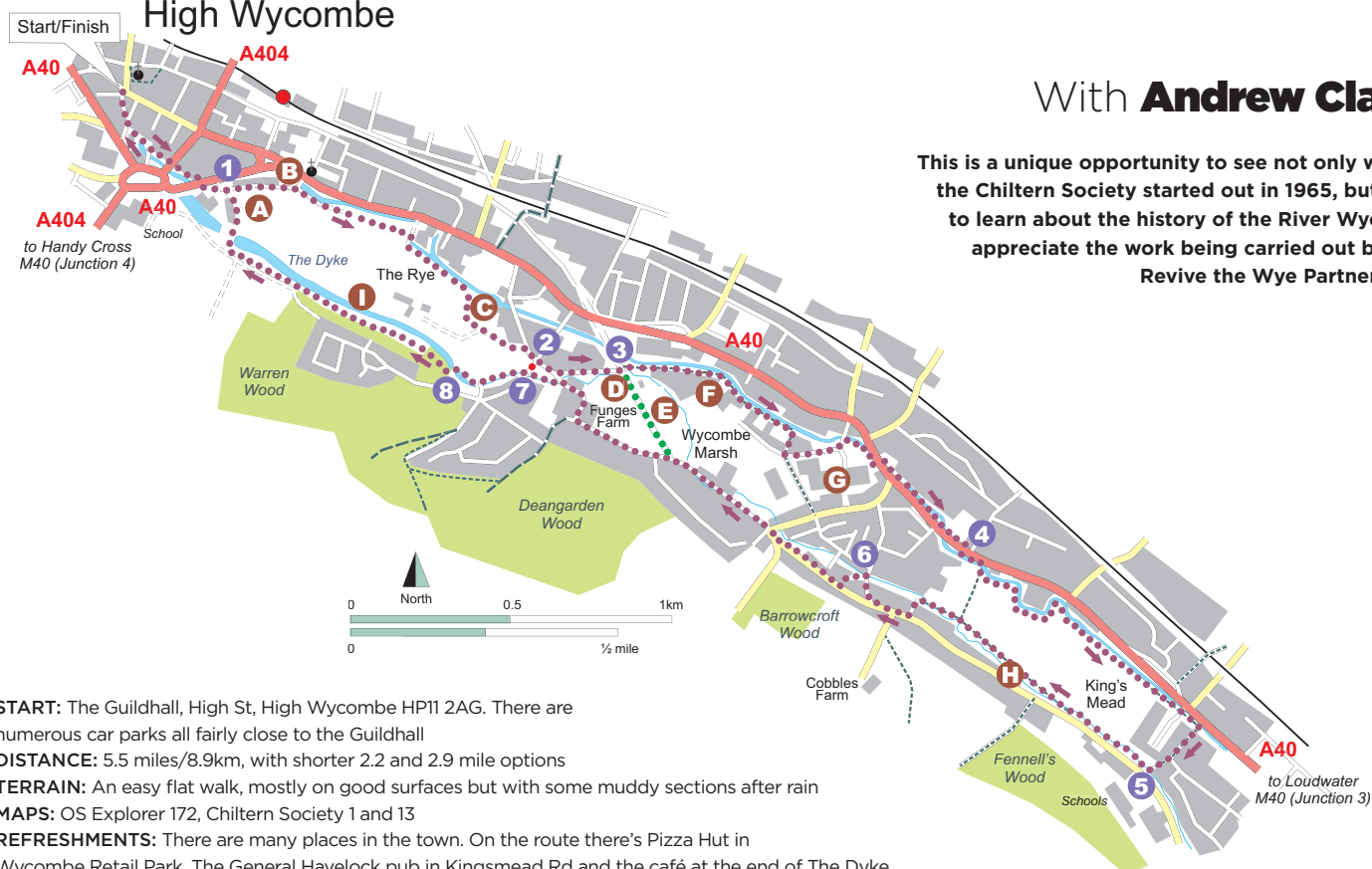


River Wye walk

High Wycombe



With **Andrew Clark**

This is a unique opportunity to see not only where the Chiltern Society started out in 1965, but also to learn about the history of the River Wye and appreciate the work being carried out by the Revive the Wye Partnership.

START: The Guildhall, High St, High Wycombe HP11 2AG. There are numerous car parks all fairly close to the Guildhall

DISTANCE: 5.5 miles/8.9km, with shorter 2.2 and 2.9 mile options

TERRAIN: An easy flat walk, mostly on good surfaces but with some muddy sections after rain

MAPS: OS Explorer 172, Chiltern Society 1 and 13

REFRESHMENTS: There are many places in the town. On the route there's Pizza Hut in

Wycombe Retail Park, The General Havelock pub in Kingsmead Rd and the café at the end of The Dyke

PUBLIC TRANSPORT: The bus station is next to the Eden Shopping Centre. High Wycombe is served by Chiltern Railways from London Marylebone.

Route

When facing the Chiltern Society plaque, take the archway on the right and walk down the pedestrianised street behind. Turn left along the right-hand side of St Mary Street, cross at the bend and walk down the steps to Queen Victoria Rd. Cross it, turn right then left through the paved gardens. Go over the pedestrian crossing and turn left to the information boards at the entrance to The Rye and Holywell Mead.

- Follow the access road to the left then continue straight ahead on the wide paved footpath to the historic Pann Mill and River Wye. Stay in the same direction for a further 400m past a playground to a junction of paths. Continue straight on with the stream to the left, then follow the path to the right, passing the bowls club, to the entrance road to the Lido. Stay in the same direction to Bassetsbury Lane and turn right to the junction with Keep Hill Rd. *For the shorter 2.2 mile option see below.*
- After a further 60m, bear left along Bowden Lane towards a disused railway bridge. Go under it and the large pipe, to view the pond on the right. *For the shorter 2.9 mile option see below.*
- Continue in the same direction along the river bank, with the new Wye Dean development on the right. Cross the entrance road and, after 200m, follow the footpath round to the right to a roundabout in Wycombe Retail Park. Turn left along Ryemead Way and cross it via a traffic island by the river bridge. Continue straight ahead on the wooden walkway to the left of the Pizza Hut building and walk beside the river to a metal artwork. Turn left and take the pedestrian crossing over the main road. Turn right along the pavement past the Grade II listed St Anne's Church and Wycombe Marsh Baptist Church to a pedestrian crossing just before Gomm Rd.
- Cross the road, turn left for a few metres and right over the wooden footbridge into Kingsmead Recreation Ground. Turn immediately left and follow the riverbank path to the end of the playing fields, continuing

ahead on a short section of The Chiltern Way. Cross the entrance to Kingsmead Business Park and follow the rough track to a T-junction. Turn right on the surfaced footpath for 130m to the next T-junction.

- Turn right again along the bank of Marsh Brook (the Back Stream). Go past a car park on the right and stay in the same direction along the edge of the recreation ground for 630m. Bear left over a bridge just after the playground up to a road - Kingsmead Rd. Turn right on the pavement for 100m and bear right down Beech Rd to the ford at the bottom.
- Do not cross it, but take the surfaced path to the left and follow it back up to Kingsmead Rd. Turn right along the pavement and stay on it to the road junction with Abbey Barn Rd. Taking care, cross it to continue along Kingsmead Rd for 200m, and go over a footbridge into Bassetsbury Lane. Follow the lane for 600m through an S-bend, cross the bridge over the Back Stream and climb the grassy slope on the left to meet Keep Hill Rd.
- Cross the road, follow the stream to a waterfall and take the surfaced path behind it up to a path junction at the top.
- Turn right along the wide path, keeping to the left of The Dyke, for 800m to reach the boating site and café at the end of the water. Bear right, follow the path to reach the entrance to The Rye and turn left to retrace the route back to the Guildhall.

Shorter options

2.2 miles Turn left up Keep Hill Rd for 70m to the brick wall on the right. Turn right onto the grass and follow the stream as described from point 7.

2.9 miles After the large pipe, climb the steps on the left up to the disused railway line above. Turn left and walk along the old track to the end. Bear right down to Bassetsbury Lane. Turn right and follow the route between points 6 and 7.



The High Wycombe Guildhall

River Wye, northern side of The Rye



Wycombe Marsh Baptist Church, London Road



Waterfall at The Rye Dyke. Southern side of The Rye



Café at the northwest end of The Rye

River Wye walk

Points of Interest

The Chiltern Society: The plaque at the Guildhall was unveiled in 2015 to commemorate the inaugural meeting of the Society, which took place there in May 1965. The meeting was prompted by local protest over the proposal to cut the M40 route through the Chiltern escarpment. There was also a need to re-establish the Rights of Way network, which had become overgrown, inaccessible and unsigned during and after WWII.

The River Wye is a chalk stream, an internationally rare habitat which supports a wide variety of wildlife. It flows for 10.5 miles (17km) from West Wycombe through High Wycombe, Loudwater and Wooburn Green to its confluence with the Thames at Bourne End.

Revive the Wye Partnership was founded in 2007 to protect and improve the natural environment of the River Wye, its adjacent corridor, back streams and tributaries, for people to enjoy and wildlife to flourish. Other key aims are to improve public access to the river, to research and record its rich industrial and social heritage, and to make people of all ages more aware of its many attributes (www.revivethewye.org.uk).

A The Rye and Holywell Mead cover more than 53 acres. Rye Mead was used by local people for grazing cattle. Holywell Mead was the site of a Roman villa and watercress beds.

B Pann Mill: Although only 10 miles long, the Wye has supported over 30 mills in its time. Although most have now disappeared, a notable exception is Pann Mill. There's evidence of mills on this site dating back to the 9th century. The current mill was restored after the main building was pulled down for road widening in 1971 (www.pannmill.org.uk).

C Bassetsbury Manor: The Manor of Bassets Bury was granted by King John to Alan Basset in 1203 and comprised a manor house, a mill and a farm. It has an ancient tithe barn. The present building dates from c1746. Behind the bowls club is the still-intact Bassetsbury Mill, complete with water wheel.

D Funges Meadow Nature Reserve is owned by Wycombe District Council and managed by Chiltern Rangers. It's home to many different species of flora and fauna.

E Disused railway was built during the 1850s and ran between High Wycombe and Maidenhead. The section to Bourne End was closed in 1970.

F Wye Dene has been developed on the site of an old sewage treatment works. Both the Wye and Marsh Brook flow through it and are a major feature. Look for the bubbling spring in the pooled area of Marsh Brook just on the right after the railway bridge. Sewage is now piped for processing at Little Marlow and the treated water returned into the Wye to augment its natural flow.

G Wycombe Marsh Mill once stood on what is now Wycombe Retail Park. The work of art represents the paper-making machines, and is engraved with the story of the Machine-breakers Riot of 1830.

H Marsh Brook (the Back Stream) flows from the spring-fed watercourses in the grounds of Wycombe Abbey to join the main river in Boundary Park at Loudwater.

I The Dyke is an artificial watercourse supplied by the spring-fed watercourses in the grounds of Wycombe Abbey and eventually becomes Marsh Brook. There are more details on the information boards.

This walk is based on a route devised by Roger Wilding, and the notes have been compiled with the assistance of Mike Overall and Judy Sonley (all volunteers with the Revive the Wye Partnership) and Jane Dunsterville of Flackwell Local Area History Group.

Map: Glyn Kuhn

Photos: Colin Drake