

Lambourn Valley Walks
Walk #2: Lambourn – Long Hedge - Lambourn

Circular Walk #2 – Lambourn – Long Hedge – Lambourn

Length: 6 km (3.5 miles)

Typical Time: 1 hour

All on marked public rights of way, some on surfaced roads, no stiles to cross. Some rutted tracks. Wear stout boots or shoes. Can be very muddy in wet weather. Spectacular views of Lambourn.

start The walk starts in Mill Lane, Lambourn. On street parking is normally available.



1 The walk starts opposite the metal gate to the children's playground. Follow the track up alongside the wooden fence and turn right when you reach the junction of the path after about 200 yards.



2 Continue along this path for about half a mile. The path is a permissive path which means that it is a public right of way agreed with the landowner. The difference between this and a normal footpath is that a permissive path can be removed after a period of time whilst a normal footpath is there in perpetuity.



3 The footpath turns uphill after a while along side a made up road. This is Long hedge. On the other side of the road is a famous training gallop. Continue up the narrow track – do take care in case there are any horses coming along the track – it is very narrow and you may have to squeeze into the hedge. Half way up the track joins with the road – continue up.

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4 From here you can enjoy spectacular views of Lambourn. The village nestles in the valley alongside the river Lambourn – which in Saxon means Lamb Bourn – the stream of lambs – probably the place where Lambs were bathed.



5 As you continue up the hill you pass Ben De Haan's training Yard on your left. Racehorse training is an integral part of life in the Valley with over 1500 horses in training at any one time. The springy Downland turf creates a perfect training environment for racehorses. To your right you can see the open gallops (private property) where the horses are exercised.



6 Continue up the hill – the track changes to a rougher un made up surface. The broad tracks, fenced by hawthorn were thought to have been used to drive the sheep to market from the pastures. Hence the sheep related names of many of the local landmarks including Sheep Drove Farm towards which you are heading.



7 At the top of the hill the track makes a sharp left turn. On your right you can see the end of the gallops. Directly ahead you are looking across open Downland towards Sheepdrove organic farm. The local landmark – red barn – is slightly towards your left as you look through the gate.

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8 As you continue on the track you can see a number of different types of rock peeping through the soil. These are flints which in the stone age were sharpened and made into hand axes and spear heads. The origin of flints is still not very clear. They are imbedded in chalk as thin horizontal seams and rise to the surface through ploughing.



9 Continue along the very rutted track. On your right you will pass another large racing yard where Clive Cox trains fine horses. Listen carefully and you may hear the distinctive twitter of the skylark. The open Downland is amongst the favourite habitat for this tiny bird which is normally only heard but not seen as it soars high above the fields.



10 At the junction cross the made up road and continue along the byway directly opposite. Above you are the many rooks nests which are so common in the larger trees in the Downland.



11 Proceed along the track until you come to another made up road. Turn left and start heading down the hill towards Lambourn.

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12 After a while you start to descend and a track on your right branches off running parallel to the road. Although not marked at this end it is a permissive path and thus a public right of way.



13 Continue along this track descending as you go. You will pass the Lambourn mobile phone mast which is a sign of the inevitable modern progress in an otherwise mostly unspoilt Downland landscape. Looking to your right you can see the valley stretching towards the top of Sincombe Hill. The training yard of Barry Hill is visible about a mile in the distance. It is one of the largest yards in the area with over 180 horses in training.



14 The path rejoins the road and then descends steeply into the village. Take the turn into a footpath on your left.

Finish After a while you will arrive back where the walk started and you can turn right into Mill lane.