



**Old Warden, Northhill and the Greensand Ridge**

**A woodland and country walk with gentle gradients and some muddy paths. There are three picturesque villages and an aircraft museum en route, with open views from part of the Greensand Ridge Walk**

<b>Essential Facts</b>	
▪ Route distance:	12.0 km (7.5 miles)
▪ Approximate time:	3 hours 15 mins
▪ Approx. total ascent:	61 metres
▪ Start point Grid Ref:	TL 149 465
▪ GPS Ref:	TL 14949 46585
▪ Recommended O.S. Map:	Explorer 208
▪ Toughness Rating	The Chilterns 2

Please see the notes on Toughness Ratings at the end of this report

**Up For A  
CHALLENGE ?**  
 Take a Great Walk and **HELP**  
 your favourite charity with  
**A Donation**  
**An Individual Walk**  
**A Team Effort**

Full Info from the Great Walks web site

## THE ROUTE

The walk starts outside Northill Church on Ickwell Road.. Park beside the church, or on Ickwell Road, near the duck pond.

From the start point at Northill Church, **S**, turn right and follow Ickwell Road heading south for about 1 km. Approaching Ickwell village green, keep left on the footway, cross Caldecote Road and continue along a lane down the left side of the village green. At the corner of the green the lane becomes a bridleway (the Sheepwalk). Follow this until you reach a road. Cross the road, half left, to join a footpath. Continue over two footbridges as the path skirts the edge of the airfield on the right. Reaching a metalled track, turn right for 100 metres and then left into a field. Follow a bridleway skirting the field, with a dogleg left and right approaching a wood. On reaching a road, at **A**, turn right. The lake and landscaped gardens of Southill Park are visible through trees on the left.

After 500 metres, just beyond a cottage, turn right on a wide footpath into a wood and climb gently. Continue through the wood for about 1 km. Descend to a road and turn left into the picturesque village of Old Warden. Just past the pub and the Post Office, turn right on a footpath marked 'Old Warden Circular Walk'. Keep right around a walled garden. Continue until you reach the village church. Turn left and pass through a kissing gate at the end of the church car park. At a second kissing gate, go straight on, ignoring the footpath on the left. After 300 metres cross over a private track and into a wood.

Leaving the wood, follow the path briefly right and then left, following a hedge. Where the hedge turns left, pass through it and continue with the hedge now on your left until you reach a path crossing. Turn right at **B**, now following the Greensand Ridge Walk, which is waymarked all the way back to **S**. Here there are wide open views over Bedford, and Cardington Airship Hangars, where the R101 was built. After 450 metres turn right briefly, cross a footbridge and turn left onto a track. After 800 metres, turn right onto a footpath at **C** and descend a hill.

Pass through a spinney and in the next field climb half left. Skirt around a farm, using a series of gates and waymarkings, and then cross an avenue of trees to a kissing gate. Through the gate follow the path through a wood briefly and then skirt the edge of a field. Approaching a wood ahead, dogleg left, then right to enter the wood. At a T-junction, turn left onto a track. At a plank bridge on the right, turn right and cross a stile. After a short, twisting path through trees, reach another track and turn right.

After 300 metres, leave the wood near a pond on the right and a decorated post and bench on the left, commemorating the Golden Jubilee. Follow a fenced-in path uphill through an equestrian centre. Ignore paths to left and right and continue ahead through a gate onto a track. Reaching a road, turn right and follow the road back to Northill Church, at **S**.



Squirrel Cottage



The Memorial On Ickwell Village Green



Shuttleworth House

## Refreshment

The Crown  
Public House  
2 Ickwell Road, Northill  
Tel: 01767 627337  
Meals and bar snacks

The Hare and Hounds  
Public House  
Old Warden  
Tel: 01767 627225  
Meals and bar snacks

The Shuttleworth  
Collection  
Visitors Centre  
(Refreshments)  
Old Warden Park  
Tel: 01767 627 927  
Meals and snacks



**The Crown**

## LOCAL INFO

The **Shuttleworth Collection** was founded in 1928 by Richard Ormonde Shuttleworth, then owner of Old Warden Park and the Victorian mansion, Shuttleworth House, which is now an agricultural college. It is based at an old-fashioned grass aerodrome. The hangars now contain a world-famous collection of over 40 aircraft ranging from the early days of flight in the early 1900s to the 1940s and it includes many aircraft which are the only surviving examples of their type anywhere in the world.

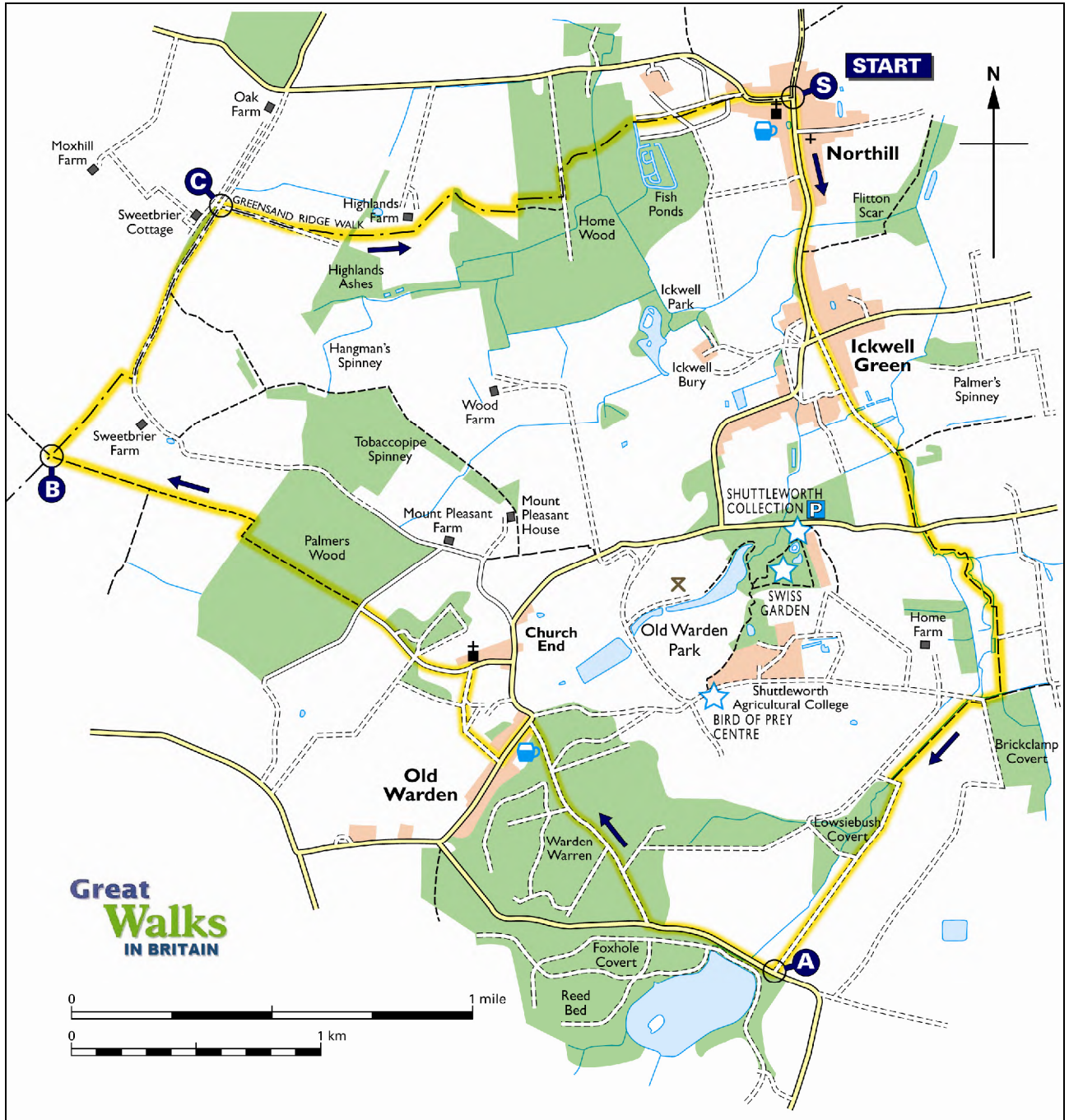
There is also a collection of historic motor vehicles, motorcycles and bicycles. The Collection is unique in that everything is kept in working condition and aircraft are regularly flown on 'flying day' events throughout the summer. Airborne craft can be viewed from the walk on flying days but it is not permitted to loiter under the flight path where the footpath passes the end of the runway. Local roads can get very congested on flying days.

See our What to See appendix for contact details.

The **Swiss Garden** is a 10-acre romantic Victorian garden built around a Swiss-style thatched cottage. It has an abundance of rare shrubs and trees in a landscape of pools, islands, and wrought-iron bridges. There are exotic structures such as an Indian pavilion, a chapel, a fernery and a grotto decorating the garden. The gardens were built by Lord Ogle in the early nineteenth century as a romantic gesture to his Swiss mistress. The garden is most striking in the spring, when flowering bulbs emerge beneath azaleas and rhododendron bushes.

### OLD WARDEN, NORTHILL & THE GREENSAND RIDGE G.P.S. WAYPOINTS

WAYPOINT NAME	MAP REF	CO-ORDINATES	ELEVATION: Metres
OLD S	S	TL 14949 46585	33
OLD A	A	TL 14870 43065	40
OLD B	B	TL 11961 45128	73
OLD C	C	TL 12654 46051	60



MAP LEGEND					
	Great Walks route		Church with tower		Spot height - metres
	M6 Motorway		Church with spire		Information centre
	A23 Main road		Other place of worship		Parking
	B2116 Secondary road		Cathedral / Abbey		Public convenience
	Minor road		Building		Public house
	Other road		Built up area		Picnic site
	Track		Woodland		Camp site
	Footpath		Sand, shingle or mud		Major tourist feature
	Bridleway		Water feature		Other tourist feature
	National trail				
	Railway				

## Safety First

**Safety should always** be your first priority in planning and undertaking a walk, whether on your own or leading a group. Please read these Safety First and Walking Our Routes notes.

**Lead a group** of other walkers only if you have leadership and navigational experience adequate for the 'worst case' conditions which may be encountered on the particular walk, bearing in mind the terrain, possible weather and navigational demands.

**Weigh up the capabilities** of your party, in terms of fitness and walking speed. Adjust your time expectations accordingly.

**Ensure** all your party are adequately clothed for the weather and conditions. Footwear is particularly important. Clothing must protect against cold, wet or strong sun according to the time of year.

**Emergencies** are quite rare, but it is essential to think ahead about what to do if someone in your party sustains an injury. Will you have a First Aid kit? Is there a qualified First Aider in the party? How could help be summoned in a serious eventuality?

**Refreshment**, particularly water, can be vital. Dehydration in hot summer conditions can be rapid, and frequent intake of fluids is essential.

**On tougher walks** it is a good idea to tell someone where you are planning to go – and when you expect to be back. Remember - mobile phones often lose reception in mountainous or isolated areas.

**All our walks use legitimate routes:** Public Rights of Way, Public Footpaths, Bridleways, Permissive Paths, Access Land, Byways and Roads.

**Road** walking calls for particular care. When there is no defined footpath or verge wide enough for safe walking it is usually best to walk on the right – facing oncoming traffic. An exception may be a tight bend, where walkers would be more visible on the left.

**Occasionally** you may find a public footpath blocked or unuseable. It is perfectly in order to take the shortest available diversion without damaging crops, perhaps around a field margin.

**It is courteous** to close gates after passing through, sometimes even if the gate was open when you arrived – particularly if it is obvious livestock may escape.

**Mutual respect** for farm animals is to be encouraged! Don't frighten or annoy them, but equally don't put your party members in danger or discomfort. You certainly wouldn't be the first walkers to go round the outside of a field of frisky bullocks.

**Dogs** should always be kept on a lead anywhere near farm animals, and under close supervision elsewhere in the countryside.

## Walking Our Routes

**Our walks** are designed to be negotiated using the route directions in conjunction with the map section provided. We suggest walkers also take the Ordnance Survey Explorer or Outdoor Leisure map recommended for each walk.

**On mountain, moorland and open heathland** walks it is **ESSENTIAL** to have navigational expertise and tools, including the recommended Ordnance Survey map(s).

**Take care** to observe any cautions in the route description; exposed paths, areas liable to flooding etc.

**Consider conditions before setting off.** Will heavy rain have made a water meadow impassable? Will frost or snow make a path slippery?

**When navigating the route** look for clues to confirm you are in the right place. Are map features where you would expect on the ground? Are features mentioned in the text where expected? If you suspect you may have taken a wrong turn, take action sooner rather than later. It is better to re-trace to a known point rather than carry on regardless with the possibility of becoming increasingly confused.

**All our routes are carefully checked** before publication, but features can change on the ground – sometimes surprisingly quickly. Footpaths may be re-routed, buildings can appear or change significantly and these days pub names seem to change frequently.

**The approximate time** given for each walk is based on an average walking speed of 2.5 miles per hour (4 km/hour), plus an allowance for ascent, descent and any difficult terrain.

**Total ascent** is the approximate total ascent over the whole walk.

**GPS users** can enter in the waypoints provided in each of our walk reports. It is important to read our guide **Introducing GPS for Walkers**, available as a PDF file from the Great Walks in Britain web site.

**Remember that GPS** is a great navigational tool, but only one of those available to the navigator. Never dispense with conventional map and compass – and the training and skills to use them, especially on mountain, moorland or open heathland walks.

### TOUGHNESS RATINGS

All our **Chilterns** routes can be undertaken by reasonably fit walkers able to utilise our map segments, together with the route guidance notes. Always consider recent and forecast weather.

Each walk has been allocated a **Toughness Rating**:

1. Easier walks with modest ascent and generally on well defined paths. There may be stiles or narrow gateways to negotiate.
2. Routes which are more demanding. They may include more ascent and possibly paths which are looser or more difficult underfoot.
3. More strenuous walks with some steep sections, higher paths or places which may be wet and boggy.
4. The most demanding walks in this edition. There may be prolonged steep ascents. Conditions may be challenging underfoot.

Toughness Ratings are allocated in the context of the terrain in the edition area. For example a walk rated as demanding in the Chilterns may be equivalent to an easier or moderate route in the Brecon Beacons.