



**BRAKSPEAR**

**PUB  
TRAILS**



**FOX & HOUNDS  
CHRISTMAS COMMON  
OXFORDSHIRE**

**3 CIRCULAR WALKS  
2.8, 3.8 & 5.5 MILES**



## INTRODUCING BRAKSPEAR PUB TRAILS




We're delighted to present three circular walks all starting and ending at The Fox and Hounds. The Brakspear Pub Trails are a series of circular walks.

We thought the idea of a variety of circular country walks all starting and ending at our pubs was a guaranteed winner. We have fantastic pubs nestled in the countryside, and we hope our maps are a great way for you to get out and enjoy some fresh air and a gentle walk, with a guaranteed drink at the end – perfect!

Our pubs have always welcomed walkers (and almost all of them welcome dogs too), so we're making it even easier with plenty of free maps. You can pick up copies in the pubs taking part or go to [brakspearaletrails.co.uk](http://brakspearaletrails.co.uk) to download them. We're planning to add new pubs onto them, so the best place to check for the latest maps available is always our website.

We absolutely recommend you book a table so that when you finish your walk you can enjoy a much needed bite to eat too. At the weekend, please book in advance, as this is often a busier time, especially our smaller pubs.

And finally, do send us your photos of you out and about on your walk. We really do love getting them.

   @BrakspearPubs

## How to get there



**Driving:** Postcode is OX49 5HL with a car park for customers



**Nearest station:** Henley on Thames station is 9.5 miles away.



**Local bus services:** The Thames Travel bus service route T1 in Watlington.



*Brakspear would like to thank the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment and the volunteers who helped make these walks possible. As a result of these walks, Brakspear has invested in TOE2 to help maintain and improve Oxfordshire's footpaths.*

*Reg. charity no. 1140563*

## Respect – Protect – Enjoy

### Respect other people:

- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

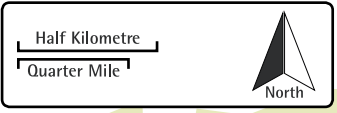
### Protect the natural environment:

- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under effective control

### Enjoy the outdoors:

- Plan ahead and be prepared
- Follow advice and local signs

For more info visit: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-country-side-code](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-country-side-code)



**Christmas Common**



**The Fox & Hounds**  
 Christmas Common  
 Watlington  
 Oxfordshire OX49 5HL  
 Tel: 01491 612599

- ▲ **Route 1:** Christmas Common – Watlington Hill – Christmas Common  
 Distance: 4.4km (2.8 miles) Time: 1.25 hours
- **Route 2:** Christmas Common – Hollandridge Farm – Christmas Common  
 Distance: 6.1km (3.8 miles) Time: 1.5 hours
- **Route 3:** Christmas Common – Northend – Christmas Common  
 Distance: 8.8km (5.5 miles) Time: 2.5 hours

 Brakspear recommends that all walkers bring a copy of the Chilterns Hills West Ordnance Survey map. You can borrow one from the pub for a refundable £10 deposit.

# Route 1

A short walk with lovely views but with some quite steep slopes.

## Directions

Distance: 4.4km (2.8 miles) Time: 1.25 hours

- 01 Turn right out of the pub car park and walk along the road until you almost reach the end of the hamlet of Christmas Common.
- 02 Turn right and go through the entrance to the drive of 'The Tower'. Walk down the drive and after 150 yards bear right into the woods where indicated by a white arrow on a tree.
- 03 Follow this path (following the white arrows) through mixed woodland, including some large old oak trees. This area and the beech woodland you walk through next are carpeted in bluebells in May.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Bluebells – Best in late April or early May depending on how mild the weather has been. They tend to grow on the clay soils on the top of the Chilterns rather than on the chalk soils of the steeper hillsides. The delicate, scented bright blue native British bluebell is facing competition in some areas from the coarser, paler more upright Spanish Bluebell.

- 04 The path goes down the slope through an even aged stand of beech, then bears to the left following the contour. You will come to an open grassy area; the large house Watlington Park is on your left, with a vista over the Oxfordshire plain below you.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Watlington Park – A brick house of Palladian design built in 1755, replacing an older house built by the Stonor family.

- 05 The path continues straight on over the grassland, then re-enters the woodland just before turning right.
- 06 Go through the wooden gate into a steep grassy field; there is a conveniently placed log bench here, a good spot to enjoy the views.

### DID YOU KNOW?

View – A fine Chiltern escarpment view with Watlington Hill to the north, and looking south-west towards Britwell Hill.

- 07 Walk straight down the steep hill, to a wooden gate. Go through the gate and carry straight on down the track for almost half a mile/0.8km.
- 08 Walk past a brick lodge. Take a path on the right by a brick pillar about 50 yards before a road that goes off at an acute angle. This narrow path between hedgerows goes through 2 gates and starts climbing up a hill.



© The Dewdrops – Entrance to The Tower

- 09 At the next gate, continue straight on; this is the back of Watlington Hill which is owned and managed by the National Trust. Go through a metal kissing gate.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Watlington Hill – This site of scientific interest is owned and managed by the National Trust. Look out for flower rich chalk grassland, scrub areas that are good for birds and areas of dense yew woodland.

- 10 Keep following the same path as it continues to climb up the hill going through open chalk grassland, scrub and woodland.
- 11 Almost at the top of the hill, go through a wooden gate and walk straight on, past the car park on your left, to a road.
- 12 At the road turn right, and walk to the junction; turn right again. At the Y junction take the right fork (towards Nettlebed and Henley) and you will soon return to the Fox and Hounds.



© Steve Daniels, Wikimedia Common

View from Watlington Hill

# Route 2

An easy walk with no steep gradients.

## Directions

Distance: 6.1km (3.8 miles) Time: 1.5 hours

**01** Turn right out of the pub car park and walk along the road for about 130 metres. There is a beech hedge on the left in front of a row of houses; just after the end of the hedge there is a footpath on your left marked Oxfordshire Way.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Oxfordshire Way – A 65 mile walk from Bourton on Water in the Cotswolds to Henley on Thames in the Chilterns.

**02** Take this path into the woods. Keep following the white arrows through woodland of beech with some oak and cherry. At the next junction, opposite a house with a wooden double gate, go left.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Hollandridge Lane – Dating from Saxon times, this lane once formed part of a route going from near Little Haseley in the Oxfordshire plain to near Stonor in the Chilterns.

**03** After about 20 metres you will reach a tarmac lane; turn right. This is Hollandridge Lane; follow this ancient lane (now an unpaved track) into Queen and College Woods for about 1 mile/1.6km, until you come out of the woods.

**04** Just before Hollandridge Farm the Oxfordshire Way/Chiltern Way footpath crosses your track. Turn left onto the Oxfordshire Way. In winter you can see a farm and a pond in the woods to your right.

**05** After about 110 metres the path bears left (indicated by a finger post) going downhill across a field, then more steeply downhill into a wooded valley.

**06** At the crossroads in the valley bottom turn left, again following the Oxfordshire Way. Follow this path through the woods along the valley bottom for almost a mile. At a clearing in the woods take the right fork of the path continuing along the bottom of the valley and following the white arrows.

**07** At a path junction the route bears to the left, becoming a narrower path through the trees leading to Hollandridge Lane where you turn right.

**08** Take the next footpath on the right, which goes between post and rail wooden fences across a small field and then through a wood.

**09** The path starts to go downhill before reaching a metal kissing gate. Go through the gate and walk across a pasture. The path goes slightly uphill; when the ground levels out you



© Andrew Smith, Wikimedia Common

### Hollandridge Lane

will see the next metal gate ahead of you. Go through this gate and head towards the next metal kissing gate which will take you on to a road.

**10** Go straight over the road and follow the footpath alongside a metal fence bordering a wood.

**11** Bear left at the end of the metal fence, following a deer fence on your right. This leads in to a beech woodland. Continue walking through the wood following the white arrows.

**12** When you reach a junction with a path going to the right, keep going straight, past some steep hollows on your left.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Chiltern hollows – There are many hollows or dells such as this on the top of the Chilterns, probably dug out to supply clay or flint for building.

**13** At the next junction bear left; the path goes through a raised bank and then into an area of more mixed woodland, excellent for bluebells in the late spring. Look out for fallow deer in these woods.

**14** The path winds through the wood and then reaches a junction at a track. Turn left, walking along the track and across the front of a house and then between hedges.

**15** When you reach a fence bordering the field ahead of you, turn right. This path then goes round to the left, taking you to the road.

**16** At the road take the second left (road sign to Nettlebed and Henley); the Fox and Hounds is a short way along on the right hand side.

# Route 3

A medium length walk  
with some steep climbs.

## Directions

Distance: 8.8km (5.5 miles) Time: 2.5 hours

- 01 Leave the pub car park and turn left along the road. Just beyond the T junction you will see a path on the right hand side of the road bearing to the left, follow this grassy path between two fences.
- 02 As you approach a hedge, the path bears round to the right and at the next path junction turn left between two hedges.
- 03 This path goes right past a house and its garages before becoming a track.
- 04 Follow the track until you see a path going to the right into the woods; follow this path which leads through a mixed woodland with some ancient coppiced oak trees, and carpets of bluebells in May.
- 05 The path begins to go downhill; at the next path junction go to the right. Note the long bank here, probably an old boundary.
- 06 As you move down the slope the woodland changes to a stand of mature beech trees. On your right you will notice some hollows, perhaps where building materials, clay or flints were dug up.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Beech Woodlands – The Chiltern Hills are one of the most wooded areas of England. They are perhaps best known for their beech woods, planted for the local furniture industry.

- 07 The path continues gently downhill through woodlands for about 1.25 miles/2km. You gradually leave the beech woodland and move into a younger mixed woodland, with glimpses through the trees of this quiet, remote feeling valley where there are no public roads.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Wormsley Estate – This 2,500 acre (1,000 hectare) estate in a secluded valley is only open to the public along the local rights of way. The red kite, now a common sight in the area, was first re-introduced on this estate.

- 08 The path crosses an area of open grassland, a vista with an old stone urn on the left, and beyond that a Haha and a walled garden.
- 09 Soon after this the path bears round to the left, passing between coppiced hazel trees with a brick and flint wall on the left. The path is now on the route of the Chiltern Way.
- 10 When the path meets a lane, bear slightly right on the lane then turn left through a wooden kissing gate and cross the field to another wooden kissing gate in a hedgerow.
- 11 Go through the gate and walk straight across the lane and through another kissing gate.
- 12 Walk straight on across a large pasture, enjoying views of the valley and the wooded hillsides all around.

- 13 On the other side of the field, go through the kissing gate and turn right onto a bridleway between two hedgerows. Note the pheasant release pens on the left, planted with trees and seed bearing plants.
- 14 Follow the bridleway until you reach a lane where you bear slightly left and then turn immediately right up a very steep hill with banks and hedgerows on each side, and glimpses of fine views each side.
- 15 The path levels out slightly and joins a track; follow this through a gate and then onto a lane in the village of Northend.
- 16 Cross the road and take the lane ahead across the village green, heading towards Fingest and Turville Heath. There is a pond on the right hand side.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Northend pond – Water is a scarce resource in the chalky Chilterns, but ponds can be found in several communities on the top of the hills where impervious clay overlies the chalk. This pond was probably used for washing wheels and as a watering hole for livestock.

- 17 On the other side of the green turn right along the lane towards Northend Common.
- 18 The lane becomes a track, passing several houses on the left, afterwards look out for a fingerpost footpath sign on the right hand side, which sends you left down a very narrow path between two gardens bound by hedges.
- 19 The hedges come to an end and you will see an open field with woodland beyond. The path goes between two fences and then through a metal gate.
- 20 Turn left and walk downhill along the field margin and then turn left onto a path following down the valley across the field heading towards a mature woodland.
- 21 The path enters the woodland and continues downhill, when you reach the valley bottom, turn right onto a track which is on the Oxfordshire Way.
- 22 Where the track opens out, ignore a path branching left up a slope, and continue to walk straight ahead along the valley bottom, marked with a white arrow.
- 23 The route continues through woodland, bearing to the left where the track becomes a narrower path which leads on to a lane (Hollandridge Lane).
- 24 Turn tight and continue along here until you reach the road, bear left at the road then turn left again at the junction and The Fox and Hounds is on your right.

## The Fox & Hounds

### Opening Hours:

Monday–Saturday: 12pm–late

Sunday: 12pm–7pm

### Kitchen Open:

Monday–Saturday: 12pm–2:30pm & 6:30pm–8:30pm

Sunday: 12pm–3.30pm

- Dog Friendly • Family Friendly • Garden/Patio
- Park the Car • WiFi Access

## The Fox & Hounds

Christmas Common, Watlington

Oxfordshire OX49 5HL

Tel: 01491 612599 [www.topfoxpub.co.uk](http://www.topfoxpub.co.uk)



## Download the App



To follow Brakspear Pub Trails on your smartphone, simply download the free ViewRanger app from the Apple App Store or Google Play, then visit [www.viewranger.com/brakspear](http://www.viewranger.com/brakspear) to find the full collection of walks. Pick your favourite route, download it in the app, then follow it using ViewRanger's offline GPS navigation.

[www.pub-trails.co.uk](http://www.pub-trails.co.uk)

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