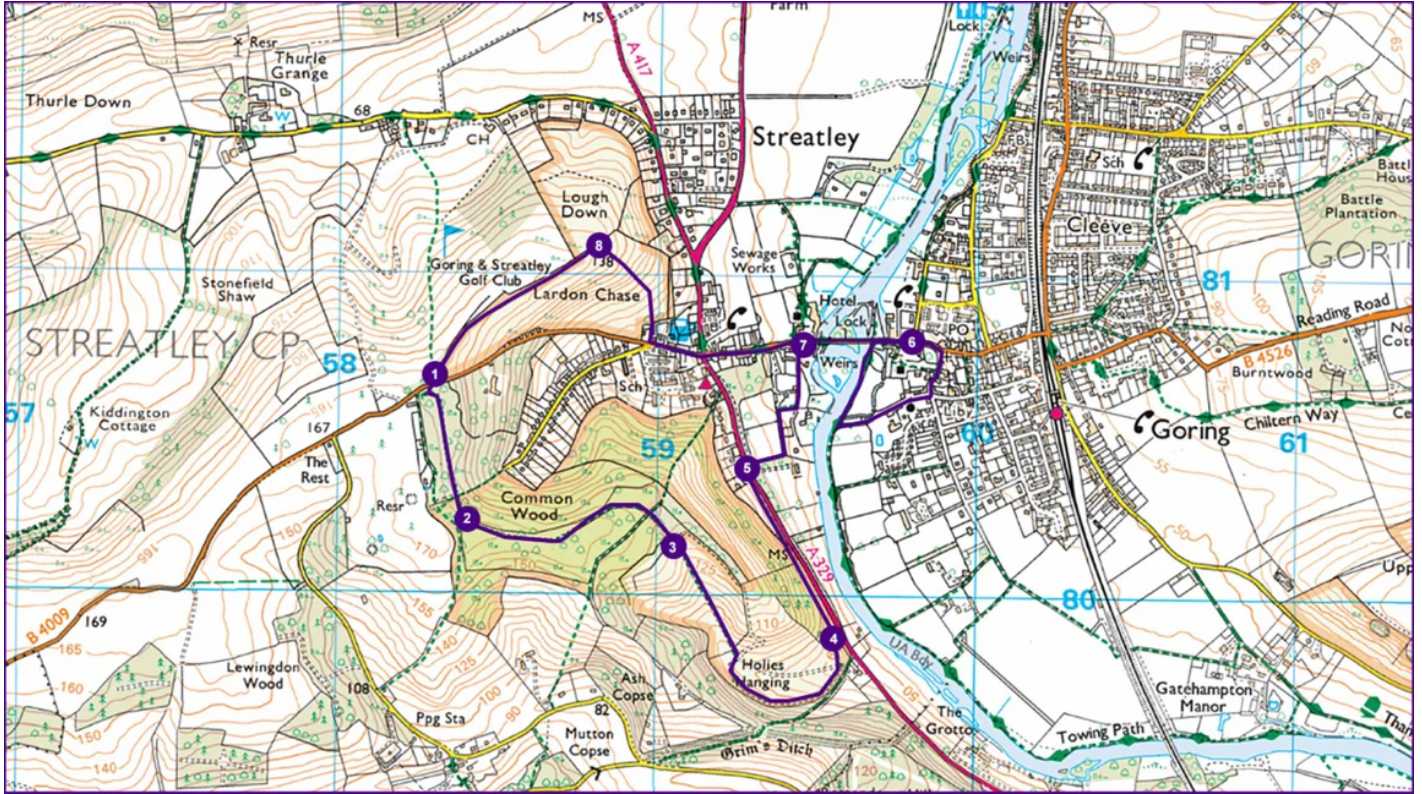


OXFORDSHIRE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE & BERKSHIRE

The meadows and woodlands of Streatley

This is a 3-mile circular walk around the meadows and woodlands that form the backdrop to the village of Streatley on the west side of the Goring Gap in West Berkshire. You will visit one of Britain's largest areas of rare and endangered chalk grassland as well as some woodland habitats. The walk offers panoramic views towards the Chiltern Hills, the North Wessex Downs and the Oxford Vale, along with glimpses of the River Thames as it passes through the Goring Gap.



Information

Address: Lardon Chase National Trust car park at SU583806

OS map: OS Explorer 170 and 171, SU583806

Activity: Walking

Moderate

Dog friendly: Dogs are welcome, but must be kept under strict control with mess bagged and binned off site. In the presence of livestock, all dogs must be kept on short leads.

Full trail: Miles: 3.8 (km: 6.08)

Short trail: Miles: 2.9 (km: 4.64)

Access: Challenging

Duration: 1 hour 30 mins - 2 hours

Terrain

The walk is mainly on soft footpaths and gravel tracks with some short stretches on village roads in Streatley. There are some fairly steep slopes. There are a number of gates on the route, but no stiles, and you will need to cross busy roads at several places. Stout walking shoes or walking boots are recommended in wet or frosty conditions or after heavy rain as some paths can become muddy and slippery.

Total steps: 8

Start point: Lardon Chase National Trust car park at SU583806

1. Leave the car park by the road entrance. Cross the road (B4009) to a footpath taking you into the National Trust woodland called the Holies. Follow the path up a short slope by a hand rail. The path soon widens to become a clear track through the woodland. In late spring look for carpets of bluebells in the adjacent woodlands. The track soon starts to dip towards a gate as it crosses the head of a dry valley to your left called The Coombe. Continue straight ahead through the gate.
2. Soon the track starts to curve to the left, and on your right, the woodland gives way to open acid grassland with views to the south.
3. Continue on the obvious track passing through two gates and ignoring any side paths. At the second gate you will emerge at the top of a broad dry valley. This is the Holies Down Wildlife Conservation Site. Continue to follow the main track down into the valley. After passing through another gate bear right long a short uphill stretch as the track heads for the side of the valley. Follow the track around the curve of the side of valley around to the left.
4. At the foot of the hill, in the far corner of a wood, there is a gate. Go through the gate to follow a permitted footpath running parallel with the main Reading Road (A329). Continue until the path meets the Reading Road.
5. Taking great care, cross the road and continue in the same direction for 219 yards (200 metres) until you reach a sign-posted footpath on your right. Follow this path between paddocks, hedges and fences until it emerges into Vicarage Lane. Turn left and follow the lane for 150 metres until you reach the High Street in Streatley. Turn right to reach the river bridge where you can enjoy fine views of the River Thames and Goring Lock. If you wish to explore Goring village, continue across the river, otherwise, go straight to step 7.

6. Explore the village of Goring and the riverside at your leisure. For a suggested route, continue along the High Street to Manor Road. Here turn right and continue until you reach the junction with Ferry Lane. Turn right again and follow Ferry Lane to its end. Continue in the same direction a footpath until you reach the Thames Path. Turn right once more and follow the Thames Path until you meet the road bridge. Turn right again, past Goring Mill to reach some steps on your left which take you back up to the bridge. Turn left to cross the River Thames back to Streatley.
7. From the bridge, retrace your steps and continue up Streatley High Street on the southern (left) side. Look out for Streatley Church and Streatley Meadow on your right. Streatley Meadow was purchased by the local community in 2011 and conserved as open space. At the far end of High Street, cross the main road using a traffic-light controlled crossing opposite the Bull Inn, and with great care, follow the narrow Streatley Hill road past the Bull Inn. There is a pavement on the left side of the road after you pass the inn. Continue up Streatley Hill until you pass the Old School House on your right. At this point, cross the road and follow the track between fences, garages and houses to reach a gate on your left leading into Lardon Chase. Go through the gate and take the steep, grassy path straight up the hill. You will eventually reach the first of two wooden benches at the top. Here you can enjoy a fine view across the Goring Gap and the River Thames, with the twin villages of Streatley on the nearside of the river, and Goring on the far side.
8. To visit the top of Lough Down, follow the hedgerow behind the bench to the left to reach a gate in the corner of the field. Go through the gate to overlook Lough Down with distant views to the north. If visibility is good, you should be able to see the twin wooded hills called the Wittenham Clumps, one of which has an Iron Age hillfort on its summit. When you are ready to continue, return through the gate and turn right. Keeping the hedge on your right, follow the path to the Lardon Chase car park where you began the trail.

End point: Lardon Chase National Trust car park at SU583806
