

Walking in
West Berkshire

4

*Stanford
Dingley*

5

mile circular route
for walking

Introduction

The walk is approximately five and a quarter miles long (8.5km) and should take about three and a half hours to complete. The walk is marked with the Countryside Agency's standard arrow waymarks bearing the words 'Recreational Route'. The walk is waymarked in both clockwise and anti-clockwise directions. Every change of direction is clearly marked. Parts of the route can be muddy and stout boots/wellingtons and waterproofs are recommended.

The walk has been described from the Pot Kiln public house in Frilsham.

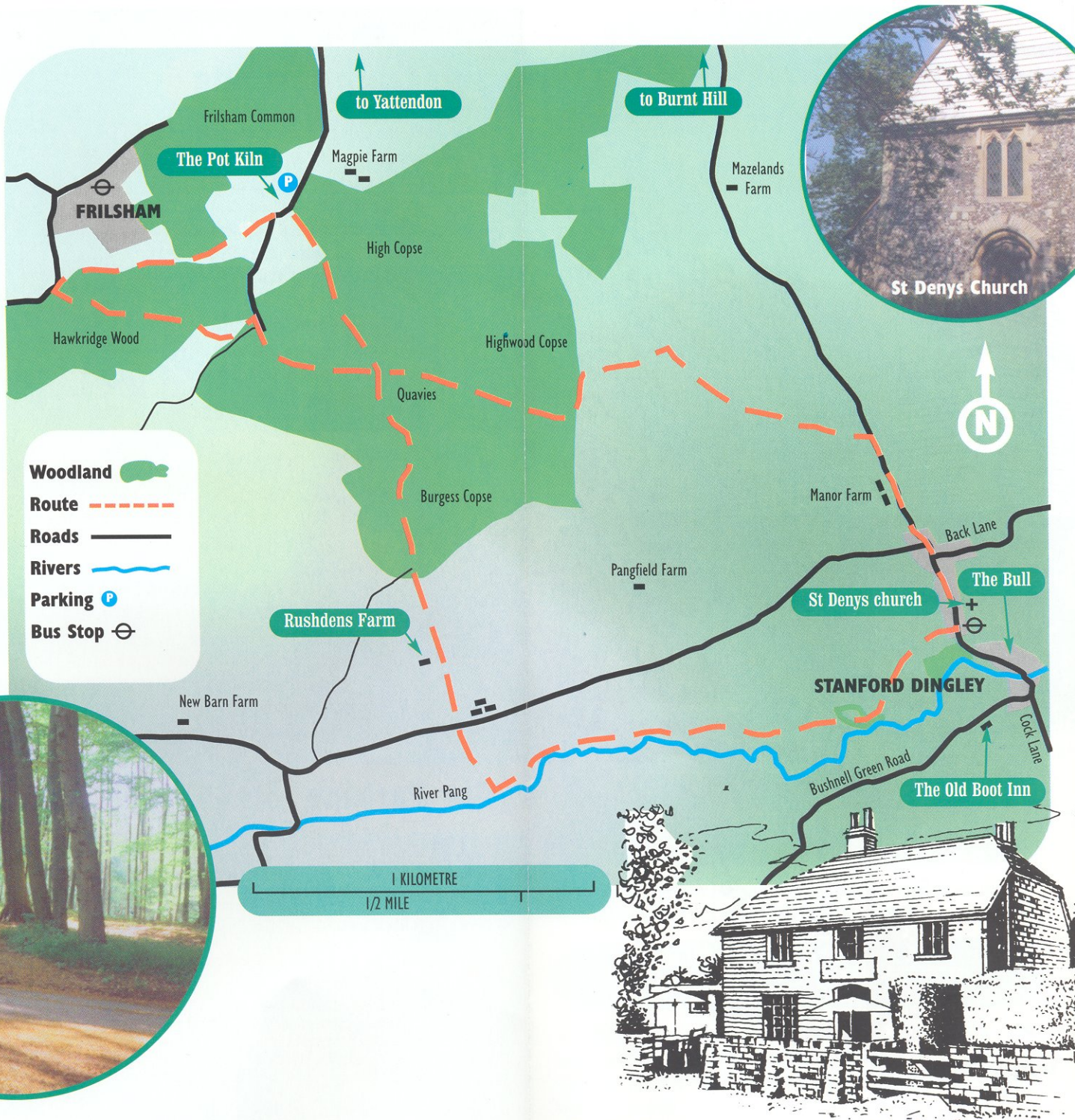
The Pot Kiln: what nicer place to start and finish a walk! The pub is charmingly located overlooking woodland to the south. The strange circular depression in the field opposite is a relic of the brick industry that once abounded in the area. No doubt many of the dwellings in the village of Frilsham and the settlement of Marlston were built with the locally produced brick. During the construction of the M4 motorway a claypit some 35 feet deep and one third of an acre in size was filled with spoil. Lorry movements of up to thirty 32 ton loads a day went on for several weeks.

Turn left from the car park. The first waymark is 100 metres down the lane on the right hand side. Cross the field to the wood.

On either side of the Pang Valley, the sandy hills have long been wooded. Much of the old deciduous woodland was felled in favour of fast growing conifer. Many acres of the older woodland now support 'Norway Spruce' (Christmas trees). This older woodland remains as shelter belts for conifer plantations. The value of the traditional broadleaved woodland has been known for many generations, both in an ecological and in a commercial context. Timber such as oak, beech and ash was 'pollarded' or 'coppiced' on a cyclical basis, over a 7,15 or 20 year period providing a renewable resource. In contrast, conifers die off when felled and replanting will need to take place if the intention is to maintain the size of the crop.



Hawkridge Wood



The Pot Kiln

At the path junction you have a choice. For a short walk back to the Pot Kiln, turn right. To complete the full walk, go straight on and follow the woodland path. When the path starts to go down hill (behind Hawkridge Cottage), you will see a waymarking post. Turn left here. Follow this path carefully down the steep hill and through the paddocks until it emerges at Rushdens Farm. Follow the gravel track until it reaches the road junction. Continue straight on along the deeply hedged lane leading down to the river Pang.

For a mile or so the walk follows the river between the villages of Upper Bucklebury and Stanford Dingley. Flora and fauna thrive in the clear waters. Small trout dart back and forth at the merest sight of a human being. Elm trees once lined the water-course, but due to the Dutch Elm beetle they died and had to be felled. One hopes the trees will make a comeback.

Turn left at the river and follow the waymarks from the river across the meadows towards Stanford Dingley. At the next path junction go over the stile and turn right along the RUPP. Take the next footpath on the left and go across a field, through a copse and across a further meadow to meet the road opposite St Deny's Church.

Stanford Dingley has existed as a village since before the Norman Conquest. Its mill and ploughlands were mentioned in the Domesday Book. As well as boasting two pubs, the Bull and Old Boot Inn, the village also has two ghost stories. The Old Boot Inn is supposed to be haunted by a man who hung himself from the boughs of a tree in an orchard behind the pub. Doors are said to close without human assistance. Jennets Wood is reputed to have the spirit of a shrouded lady, who walks the woodland paths at midnight.

Turn right for The Bull or Old Boot Inn, or left to the church of St. Denys and to continue along the main route.

At the northern end of Stanford Dingley is the church of St. Denys. Possibly Saxon in origin it has many features to delight 'old building buffs'. The main door retains the original 13th Century iron work and like one or two other small churches in this part of Berkshire the nave has several wall paintings, including a depiction of 'The Last Judgement'. The brick chancel and attractive weatherboard bell turret were built in 1768. In the churchyard a small sundial can be seen: whether it tells the correct time or not is a matter for debate! Nonetheless, an unusual feature.

**View towards Stanford
Dingley from the north**



Walk up the lane for approximately a third of a mile: the next signpost is on the left hand side of the road. Turn left. This path traverses arable farmland. Many oak trees mark the field boundaries. At the next path junction, turn left up the bridleway, follow the bridleway for a short distance and take the next footpath on the left. On entering the wood turn left and follow the track as it bears right and up the hill.

The path soon broadens into a forest track and runs through an area of woodland known as the 'Quavies'.

At the path junction (for the Pot Kiln turn right) go straight on until you meet the road. Here turn left and follow the road for 100 metres. Turn right on to a bridleway.

Many fine beech trees line the path and unlike conifer plantations, the woodland floor has an abundance of plant life.

When you emerge at the road turn right: the next waymark is only 10 metres away.

This footpath traverses some fine grazing land. Cattle may be in the field, so please keep all dogs on leads. The end of the walk is in sight, the Pot Kiln will be on your left. Climb the stile and you have finished the walk.



St Denys Church

The Country Code

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Leave all gates as found
- Keep your dogs under close control
- Keep to public rights of way across farmland
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges & walls
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
- Take your litter home
- Help to keep all water clean
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees
- Take special care on country roads
- Make no unnecessary noise

Public Transport

Newbury Bus services: No.118 runs from Beenham to Newbury via Frilsham (Beechcroft), Stanford Dingley (church) and Yattendon on Thursdays only. Nos.100 and 110 run from Newbury to Reading via Yattendon, Monday - Friday. Tel. (01635) 567500.

Weaveaway Travel: No.74 runs from Compton to Reading via Yattendon (Royal Oak) on Mondays and Tuesdays only. Tel. (01635) 820028.

Bus stops are both a short walk from the Pot Kiln public house.

Car Parking

The Pot Kiln, Frilsham village.

The carpark at the Pot Kiln has very limited space. As the pub is liable to be busy at weekends please avoid using it between 12.00 - 3pm unless visiting the Pub.



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For further information about this and other leaflets, please contact West Berkshire Council, Countryside and Environment, Faraday Road, Newbury RG14 2AF. Tel: (01635) 519808