

IMPROVING INKPEN'S RIGHTS OF WAY

The IRWC liaises closely with Inkpen Parish Council concerning rights of way issues in the village and has successfully continued its policy of upgrading paths and promoting their use. Many of the most frequently used ones have had the quality of the surfaces improved with hoggin, steps cut into steep banks and where appropriate gates have been installed in place of stiles to provide better access for the less mobile.

Funding for this work comes from grants, in the past from the Countryside Agency (PPI initiative), and most recently from West Berks Council for the erection of three map boards and the reprinting of this walks leaflet.

IRWC operates by seeking volunteers to keep a watching brief on Inkpen's rights of way, often ones which they frequently walk. Any problem such as broken stiles, obstructions etc., are reported to the local authority agency Babtie. If you are interested in "adopting" a particular path or want more information on IRWC & its work, contact any of the officers listed at the rear of this leaflet.

CONTACTS

Inkpen Rights of Way Officers

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INKPEN

Two Circular Walks
4 Miles & 5½ Miles

DONATIONS

Paintings: Gary Cooper
Design & Artwork: Geoff Howe
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Gary W. Cooper

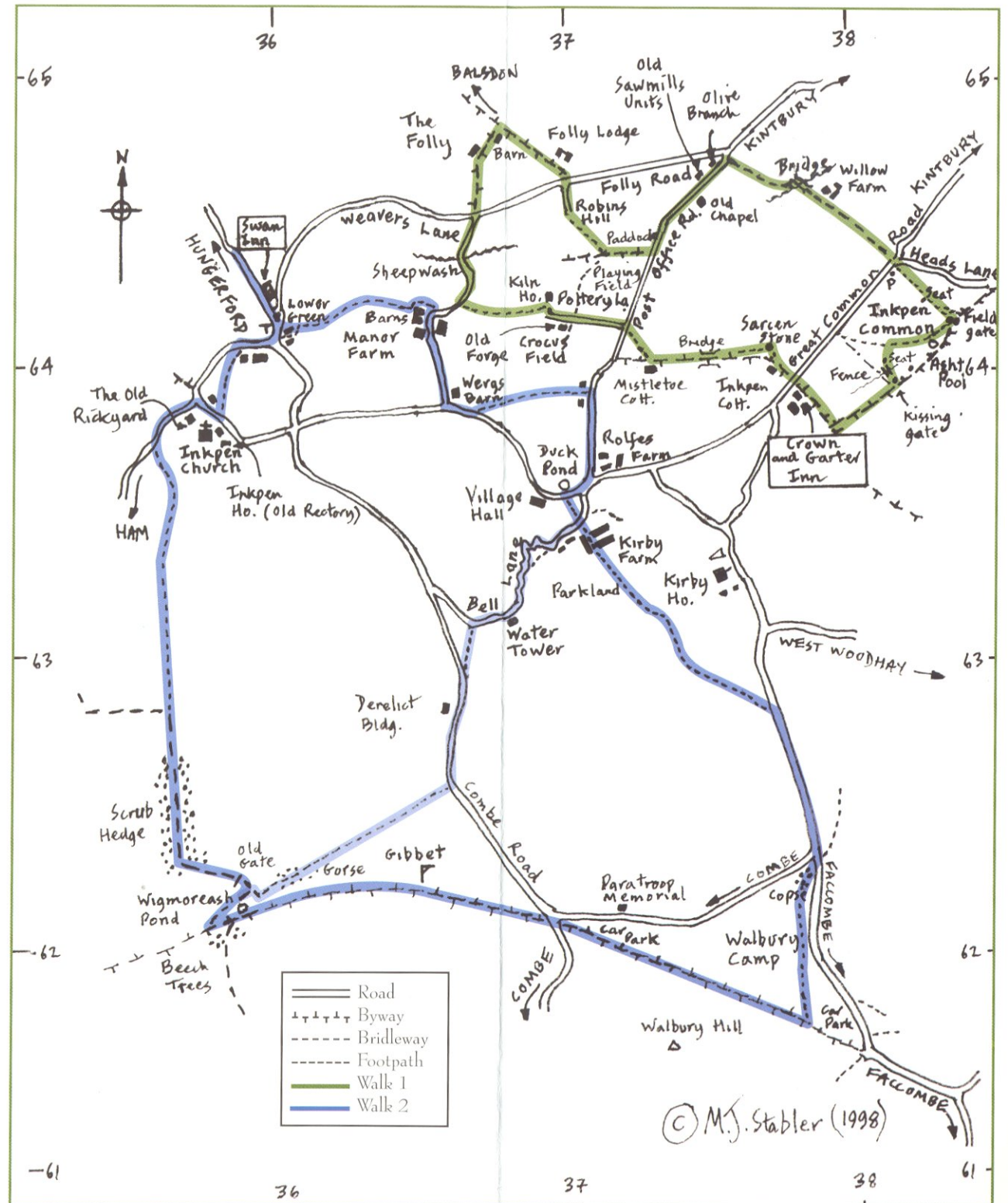
INKPEN RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE

The Inkpen Rights of Way Committee (IRWC), formerly known as the Footpaths Committee, has existed for around 30 years. It is made up of some dozen people representing a variety of interests such as horse riding, cycling, conservation and nature study as well as walking. It also includes a Parish Council representative to ensure good links between the two bodies.

The main purpose of the IRWC is to ensure that the 51 rights of way in the village are clearly signposted and way-marked and are maintained in a state which enables them to be used at all times of the year (albeit with wellies). Inkpen is fortunate not just in having so many paths but also in that, in general, local landowners and occupiers are co-operative and respond positively to suggestions for improvements and way-marking.

IRWC is also committed to increasing residents' awareness of the existence of Inkpen's rights of way and promoting their use. It is with this aim in mind that this leaflet has been produced. The two walks shown take in some of the best features of Inkpen's path network and include Inkpen Common, Walbury Hill and the Gibbet, Inkpen Church, the Crocus Field and The Folly, not to mention Inkpen's two pubs, the Swan and the Crown & Garter. We hope you find this leaflet useful and enjoy these walks.

The IRWC



WALK 1

A mainly flat walk through some attractive and varied countryside around Inkpen. The walk with a mix of heathland, light woodland and farmland, mainly uses tracks (*which can be muddy after rain*).

Distance : 4 miles

O.S. Map : Pathfinder 1186 / Explorer 158

Grid Ref. : 378639

START : The byway alongside the Crown & Garter P.H. at Inkpen Common, Inkpen.

From the Crown & Garter car park with your back to the pub, turn RIGHT and head down the byway. Turn LEFT at the path junction onto a winding path which runs through a narrow tree belt towards Inkpen Common Nature Reserve.

The Reserve is owned by BBOWT and is an important heathland site with a wide variety of bird and plant life.

Where the field on the left ends and fencing begins, take the first gate on the LEFT to enter the Common. Follow the path straight ahead over the boardwalk to meet a wide grassed track by two large trees on the right. Turn RIGHT and follow this path across part of the Common, through a gate and then fork RIGHT where the grass path divides. Immediately turn RIGHT again onto a small path into trees and shortly take another small path on the LEFT. Follow it to descend steps to a gate which leads into Ashton's Pool.

Ashton's Pool is a very quiet peaceful spot, formed into a heathland pool from an old gravel extraction site.

Follow around the left-hand bank bearing LEFT at the far side by the information board onto a narrow path running alongside the Reserve fence which leads up to the Reserve gates.

Go through these then fork RIGHT to follow a grassed path to a junction of paths.

A slight detour here onto the path to the LEFT leads to a clearing with an information board and seat with views up to Inkpen Beacon.

Continue straight on to reach a gate. Exit the Common by a post box at a minor road. Go straight over the road onto a wide gravelled track signposted to P.O. and Folly Roads. After crossing a bridge, keep to the LEFT at the top of the rise & continue on this track to reach Post Office Road. Turn LEFT to walk along the road.

Of interest on this stretch:

- *the first house on the right called "Olive Branch" used to be one of Inkpen's four inns*
- *the area of small industrial units, originally the site of Inkpen's once thriving sawmills*
- *the house called "The Old Chapel" on the left, once Inkpen's 3rd Methodist chapel (1872)*

After passing a paddock on the right, turn RIGHT off the road at the footpath signpost onto a path which runs along the edge of the Memorial Playing Fields. At the far corner at a junction of paths turn RIGHT and continue along the tree-line into Robins Hill. Keep straight on down to the T-junction ahead. Turn RIGHT into Folly Road and then very shortly LEFT onto a byway. Follow this wide rough track through light woodland known as The Folly. Once a modern barn on the left is in view, take a sharp LEFT turn onto another wide track.

There are good views at this point over to Lower Green and beyond to Ham Hill in Wiltshire.

Continue on this track until it reaches a road. Turn LEFT and almost immediately RIGHT onto a small road signposted "Manor Farm". This pleasant lane drops down to cross a stream (an area once known as Sheepwash). Just before the farm buildings turn LEFT over a stile. Go straight across the field to a kissing gate in the far hedge then continue straight ahead along the edge of the large garden of "Kiln House", veering slightly right at the end to a gate partially hidden by bushes. Turn RIGHT onto a rough track which then bends left to become Pottery Lane.

A short detour turning RIGHT just past "The Old Forge" cottage leads to Inkpen's Crocus Field. Another BBOWT site, it is one of only two in this country containing Mediterranean crocuses, believed to have been brought here by the Knights Templar over 500 years ago.

Continue along Pottery Lane to the end, then go almost straight over the road to a footpath opposite. Follow the path diagonally right across open land until you reach a track. Turn LEFT and follow this track over a small bridge to a fork. Take the LEFT fork to reach an old stone marker post, turn RIGHT to exit the wood past Inkpen Cottage to arrive back at the starting point.



WALK 2

In quiet, beautiful countryside, climb a high chalk ridge to follow an ancient drovers track across the top. The tracks are flinty but a few farm paths may be muddy or slightly overgrown.

Distance : 5.5 miles (shorter option 4 miles)

O.S. Map : Pathfinder 1186 / Explorer 158

Grid Ref. : 359643

START : Car park of the Swan P.H. at Lower Green, Inkpen.

From the Swan turn LEFT onto the road and walk past the Green. Take the road RIGHT at the junction by the telephone box and before the road divides again turn LEFT onto a footpath alongside drive of "Brook House". Continue ahead where the path narrows to run between two properties, then bear LEFT to follow an obvious grass path around two sides of rough pastureland. At the end go over a bridge and onto a winding path which leads to Manor Farm. Follow the path around the fields, turn LEFT through a farm gate just before the barns and follow the edge of the buildings to exit at the farm lane. Turn RIGHT towards the farmhouse and follow the lane to a T-junction by Wergs Barn. Turn LEFT onto another lane for a short distance, then LEFT again onto a fenced path. At the top of the rise continue ahead to reach a minor road. Turn RIGHT to follow road to Upper Inkpen. At the T-junction by Rolfe's Farm turn RIGHT again. Where the road divides, keep to the RIGHT until the duckpond. Turn LEFT before Pond cottage onto the path across to Kirby Farm.

In the breeding season ducks can often be seen crossing the road to nest in the gardens of the nearby cottages.

For the shorter 4-mile circuit, turn RIGHT here into Bell Lane, known as Berkshire's most winding road. At the first bend turn LEFT up a slight bank to take a footpath diagonally right across a field to rejoin the lane. Turn LEFT to continue on lane past the water tank then take a footpath on the LEFT leading down to a road. Turn LEFT to walk along the road for a short distance; at the bend turn off RIGHT onto a path which climbs steadily up the side of Inkpen Hill. Towards the top where the path levels off above the gorse, follow an obvious sheep trail westwards to a cleft in the hillside. Turn RIGHT to rejoin the main route. (If wishing to visit the Gibbet from this shorter route, turn LEFT up the cleft to the top of the hill. Walk westwards past Wigmoreash Pond to reach a stile on the LEFT. Cross this and turn LEFT onto the chalk track to head eastwards to the Gibbet).*

For the longer route, cross Bell Lane, bear RIGHT over a stile into the farmyard to walk between the barns onto a wide track leading down into the parkland of Kirby House. Continue straight across to a gate at the far side, then follow a track bending left at the rise until it reaches a minor road. Turn RIGHT and follow road a short distance to a junction; then take LEFT-HAND fork signposted "Faccombe". Almost immediately turn RIGHT onto a footpath which climbs up through a copse and out onto the open side of Walbury Hill.

The climb is steep but the views are impressive. The earthworks on the hill form part of the Iron-age hillfort dating from 750 BC. There is an information board at the parking area on the far side of the hill.

*⊕Indicates joining point back to the main route. (next panel)

Continue to climb to a stile some way ahead then carry on over the brow of the hill aiming slightly left to reach a stile in the hedgerow at the top. Turn RIGHT onto the wide chalk track and follow it west over the top of Walbury Hill and then across to Inkpen Hill.

There are wonderful views on all sides from this high-point. Another information board on Inkpen Hill tells the story of the Gibbet and the Long Barrow on which it stands.

Continue on this track beyond the Gibbet towards a clump of beech trees: just past the trees turn RIGHT over a stile, keep to the RIGHT across the top of the hill past Wigmoreash Pond up to a dry bowl surrounded by small trees. Look for a cleft in the hillside to the left at this point. Turn LEFT to follow this soon obvious path ⊕ which descends steeply, veering RIGHT near the bottom of the hill to an old gate in the hedgerow. The path then enters a hedged section; where the trees end continue straight ahead on this path which runs between fields down to a minor road. Turn RIGHT onto the road then RIGHT again at the next lane and walk up to a footpath signpost on the left.

A short detour to the right is Inkpen's beautiful church dating from the 13th century but largely restored 100 years ago. The Old Rectory (or Inkpen House) which stands above the church is a William & Mary house with interesting gardens laid out in the style of Versailles.

At the signpost, cross the stile into the paddock and head for the far left-hand corner to another stile. Continue across the next field and over a further stile to a lane. Turn RIGHT, follow the lane round to the LEFT at the T-junction to reach the Green and retrace steps back to the start.