



# THE ICKNIELD WAY ASSOCIATION

## Icknield Way: Sundon Hills – Toddington circular

2 hours 22 minutes | 7.2miles 11.6km | Leisurely

Extensive views across Bedfordshire on a stile free rural circular walk following the Icknield Way path. This diverse route crosses an ANOB, the M1 and the midland mainline railway. Dogs to be kept under close control where livestock are grazing.

### Starts at

Sundon Hills country park, Upper Sundon. Grid ref: 51.945922, -0.477934; TL 047 285

### Getting there

The A6 north of Luton and south of Barton passes Streatley, drive through Streatley and Upper Sundon following brown direction signs for Sundon Hills Country Park car park.

From the M1 junction 12 briefly use the eastbound A5120, take the right turn at the roundabout towards Harlington village, at the cross roads in the village turn right towards Upper Sundon for several miles, after a steep hill the car park in on the left.

Bus services from Luton, Harlington and Toddington, for details: [Traveline](#). Harlington railway station is three quarters of a mile walk on footpaths from the route.

### Route instructions

From the car park walk, follow the hedge downhill and parallel to the road for about 50m, pass through a kissing gate on the left, **cross the road carefully**. Continue on the verge to the right passing into a field on the left, follow the ridge keeping the hedge on your left. At the end of the hedge the official path does a bit of a dog leg, continue into the next field and cross diagonally left downhill towards a sewage works. Follow the track up the hill to Upper Sundon. *The route is marked using Icknield Way waymark discs and roadside signs*

When the track joins the road, cross and turn right on the footway. As the road bends sharply to the left, take the dead-end road on the right (Common Lane), follow this lane as it becomes a footpath. Much of the surrounding land is designated as 'Open Access' and worthy of exploring. The footpath joins an access road with minimal traffic, turn right continuing downhill to a T-junction, continue straight ahead on a footpath. The path crosses over the railway on a footbridge.

The main route continues straight forward on a bridge over the M1, following the Icknield Way on a bridleway. This is the route Toddington workers at the former quarry took to get to work. Continue over fields until the route emerges on the B530 road. **Carefully cross the road** taking the footpath on the right (on a short section which does not follow Icknield Way). Following this footpath diagonally right up and over the field, **beware as these fields normally have animals grazing**. Continue to follow this path up and down hills, through a series of gates, catching glimpses of the tower of Toddington church. The Icknield Way path re-joins from the left then the path passes through a wooded area climbing up into Toddington village.

The path emerges at the end of a road, continue up the road to a farm entrance on the right. At this point on the left, note the walkers directional sign post giving distances along the Icknield Way. Toddington village centre (with shops, bakery, pubs and café) is a little further



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up the road towards the church. Pass through the kissing gate, cross the field diagonally right (these fields normally have horses grazing), pass through two more gates, turn right along the farm track, then almost immediately left, keeping the hedge on your left. Appreciate the views back towards Sundon Hills to your right. After 100m the Icknield Way path turns right. Follow this path as it passes downhill.

*Toddington has a number of pubs and cafes which serve food and drink.*

At the B530 road, **cross carefully**, continuing to follow the path to the M1 service road, turn right to cross over the motorway. **Traffic on the service road does not expect to encounter walkers**. Note the plaque on the bridge parapet recording the opening of motorway. Take the left hand road towards Old Park farm, then before the farm house entrance gates take the bridleway on the right (*not* the footpath that goes toward Harlington railway station). Follow the track around the buildings, at the T-junction follow the track to the right. After quarter of a mile a waymark post indicates that the bridleway goes left past a pylon towards the railway.

Follow the bridleway under the railway and straight on along a hedged path, continue around to the right along the field edge. A waymark post indicates where the Icknield Way continues on the bridleway left towards Dyers farm, it continues on the field edges to the right of the farm buildings, continue following the field edge until the path emerges on a road, **cross carefully** and turn right through a kissing gate.

The permissive path leads uphill between two fields. Continue through another kissing gate into a wooded area, after few hundred metres a path to the left goes up some steps, through part of a former quarry, at the top of further steps appreciate the easterly views to Sharpenhoe Clappers. Now turn right to continue climbing, through a gate, keeping the hedge on your left. Sheep may be grazing. Continue climbing across the field up the hill to the hedge at the top, then turn right following the hedge to return to the car park.

*The jagged hill formation is a geological feature known as coombes which formed under glacial conditions.*

## **Additional information**

Sundon Quarry is a former quarry is being progressively reclaimed by nature. The area is a haven for insects and wild flowers, there are species at Sundon which are specific to this chalk environment. Much of the area is designated a SSSI. Either side of the roadway is a fascinating Open Access place to freely explore.

The Midland Mainline runs from St Pancras to the East Midlands and Yorkshire. In 2014-15 a fifth rail loop line was added to the southbound direction. This will enable stone freight trains from the Peak Forest quarries to 'pull over' while allowing Thameslink passenger trains to pass.

Conger Hill in Toddington village - At one time believed to have been a motte-bailey-castle then latterly used as a rabbit warren. Now a rather un-impressive scheduled ancient monument. Until recent years, on pancake day, village school children visited the hill to listen for the witches cooking pancakes!



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## Notes

**Maps:** OS Explorer 193, Landranger 166

**Eating & drinking:** Pubs, bakery and cafe in Toddington, pubs in Upper Sundon, Fancott, Harlington and Streatley

**Accommodation:** The Griffin Inn & [B+B](#) in Toddington, [Chequers](#) in Streatley

**Water for dogs:** Available from natural water courses along the route.

**Livestock:** A number of fields on this route may contain animals. Keep a safe distance from them and dog walkers should take particular care.

## Acknowledgements

Developed by: *Tom Chevalier*

The [Icknield Way Association](#) promotes the 110 mile long route from Ivinghoe Beacon in Buckinghamshire to Knettishall Heath on the Suffolk/Norfolk border. The Icknield Way links the Ridgeway and Peddars Way National Trails. Search for other Icknield Way walks, for example this route links with a circular walk to Sharpenhoe and Upper Sundon. This route follows the Icknield Way path and parts of the [Icknield Way trail](#) a multi-user route.

[National Trust](#) maintain the Sundon Hills area jointly with Central Bedfordshire Council.