

BUGGY FRIENDLY WALKS
in The Thames Valley
by Catharine Gregory

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1. Ewelme

Glorious Chiltern views

The historic village of Ewelme is a delight to explore. The longer walk gives you some lovely country air and great Chiltern views, passing fields edged with poppies and thistles, but it is one of the more strenuous walks in this book and not for the faint-hearted. The short walk gives you all the delights of the village and more besides, including the lovely Cow Common

DISTANCE: 5 miles; short option: 3 miles.

TIME: 2½ hours, plus stopping time for the full route; short option: 1½ hours.

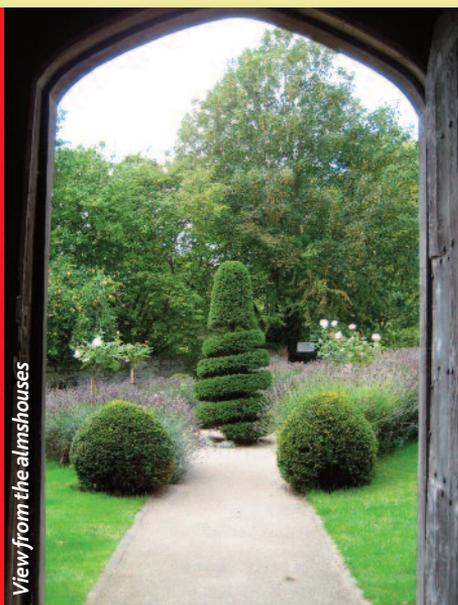
TERRAIN: Lanes, footpaths and bridleways. The long walk includes some rougher paths and is suitable in summer only. The short walk should be do-able most of the year, except after prolonged periods of rainfall, as long as you don't mind a bit of mud.

START/PARKING: The free public car park by the recreation ground on Ewelme High Street. Take the A4074 towards Wallingford and, at the roundabout with the A4130, follow the signs towards Ewelme. On entering the village, turn right along the High Street and look for the car park ahead, next to the sports ground.

OS MAP: Explorer 171 Chiltern Hills West; GR SU646912.

REFRESHMENTS: The Shepherd's Hut pub in Ewelme has highchairs and a garden with a play area. Telephone: 01491 836636. Ewelme Store sells ice-creams and light refreshments, and has a couple of tables inside and out.

SUGGESTED PICNIC SPOT: Cow Common, near the start of the walk.



View from the almshouses

THE WALK:

1. From the car park, head down the grassy slope to the left of the cricket pitch towards the large kissing-gate. Go through the gate and straight ahead through Cow Common, along an obvious grassy track. At the trees, go through a large kissing-gate and emerge onto a lane.
2. At the lane, **either (short route)** turn right along the lane for 500 metres and then turn right along a bridleway, signposted Chiltern Way. Skip to point 4. **Or (long route)** turn left along the lane and at a junction turn right along a bridleway towards Down Farm. Pass the farm and continue along the track. At a cross-tracks turn right along a bridleway (chalky track).
3. After ½ mile, reach cross-tracks and turn right, slightly uphill. After 400 metres the path forks and you head left but soon turn right (along the Chiltern Way) at the next junction and continue in this direction for about ½ mile, to reach a lane. Turn right along the lane and then immediately turn left along a bridleway, signposted 'Chiltern Way'.
4. (The **short route** rejoins here.) The bridleway is a grassy path on the left-hand edge of a field and then continues along a path between fences with a quarry on your left. At the end of the bridleway, emerge on a lane and turn right. Pause to admire the view of Ewelme and then continue down the lane into the village.
5. Turn left along the High Street. After passing the village duck pond, turn right up Parsons Lane. Ewelme Store is on your left. As the lane bears right, look out for Chaucer Court

>> Buggy friendly walks



(cul-de-sac) on your left. Turn left here and turn left again along a gravel path. Skirt round to the left of 'The Hyde' to continue along a bridleway in the same direction for 600 metres to reach a lane and turn left. You soon reach the Shepherd's Hut pub on your left.

6. Take the next left into the High Street. Notice the watercress beds on your right.

Ewelme watercress beds have now become a local nature reserve. This runs the whole length of the village and contains many wild flowers.

Continue along the High Street, passing an interesting variety of architecture, eventually passing the lane you came down earlier and then the splendid Ewelme Church of England primary school on your left.

The school and almshouses were built in 1437 by William de la Pole and his wife Alice, who was the granddaughter of Geoffrey Chaucer. The school is sometimes open to the public. Telephone 01491 839240 for dates.

7. Continue to reach the cricket pitch and car park on your right.



Ewelme, viewed from across the fields