

Countryside Walk 4: Oakley – Brill – Oakley via Leatherslade Farm (6.4 km, 4.0 miles, approx. 100 to 120 minutes)

Walk 4 is a circular walk via Leatherslade Farm, the hideout used by the Great Train Robbers on 8 and 9 August 1963 after robbing the Royal Mail Train at Ledburn near Mentmore on 8 August 1963. The farm was supposed to be burnt down by one of the robbers after their departure on 9 August 1963, but this failed to happen and incriminating evidence left at the farm led to the eventual arrest and conviction of most of the gang. The original farm house was later demolished and has now been replaced with a modern house.

Gumboots or walking boots are needed for this walk. Several sections involve passing over grassland, and in wet weather, gumboots are the best option for walking through the long wet grass. Behind Leatherslade Farm there is a stretch that gets boggy in winter and overgrown with nettles and other vegetation in summertime.

The walk starts at Oakley church. Follow the pavement on the left hand side of the B4011 heading towards Long Crendon and then after 200 metres turn left up Brill Road. Continue up Brill Road for 200m and opposite 21, Little London Farm pass over a stile into a field which should be crossed diagonally in the direction indicated on the public footpath sign. At the far side of the field is a kissing gate – proceed through this and cross a second field, walking parallel to the upper fence line until a gate is reached in the far corner. Pass through the gate and walk straight across a third field aiming for the lower end of a line of trees and a telegraph pole. Go through the kissing gate and turn left onto the track that leads to Leatherslade Farm. Walk up this track for 100m and on reaching a wooden gate, enter the public bridleway on the left hand side. The bridleway continues for 1000m, turning first right, then left and up the hill between hedge/tree rows. On this bridleway, ignore two wooden gates opposite on your left and right. Half way up the hill a gate is reached – pass through this and continue up the hill following the hedgerow on the right. At the top of the hill pass through a further gate and walk along a track with two houses on the right hand side. At the end of the track one arrives at the road leading from Brill to the B4011. Look back and admire the view!

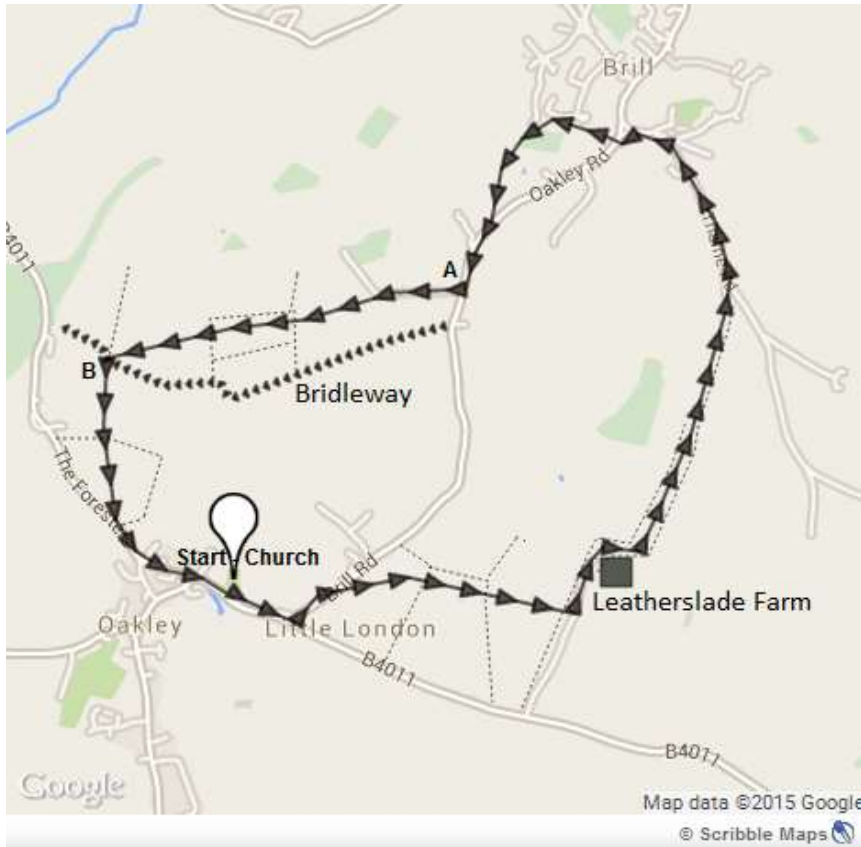
Turn left onto the road and walk up the right hand side keeping a careful lookout for approaching traffic (best to step onto the grass verge when vehicles approach). After reaching the Brill Surgery walk along the pavement on the left hand side of the road. Enter Brill, pass the Pointer pub and when arriving at The Square continue along the pavement on the left hand side. On reaching a grass area cross the road and enter an alley way marked “To Harris Close” beside house 27. Continue down the alley way for 100m until a wooden kissing gate is reached. Pass through the gate and follow the path down a grass/nettle field. At the end of the field walk down some steps and through a second kissing gate. Veer left and follow a small pathway marked “Circular Walk” that starts between two cottages (no^s 17 and 19). After crossing a section with water springs, the path rises up and then descends sharply. At the end of the descent go over two sets of stiles and proceed across the field to a further stile to the left of the house, “The Wrens” on Brill Road.

Turn right onto Brill Road and walk down the road for 200m, reaching a Public Footpath sign (point A on the map) pointing down a farm track to the right leading through cropped fields. Proceed down this track (that has very good views to the south and west) for 300m and when the track starts veering to the right, turn down the footpath through cropped land on the left. The footpath continues down the hill with Beckley telecommunications tower on the horizon straight ahead. At the end of the cropped land cross two stiles and proceed down a grass field following the hedge on the right. At the bottom of the field cross a footbridge across a small stream and enter into a further field. Rotate slightly to the left and cross diagonally across the field passing an electricity pole to the left. Pass over the stile in the corner of the field, turn left and proceed over a second stile to the right of a gate (point B on map). Continue straight forward across a grass field following a hedge/tree row on the right. At the end of this field cross another stile into a second field. Walk across the field following the clearly visible path. At the far side of the field pass over a first stile in a gap in an earth bank then a second stile 30m further on, whereupon one reaches

the B4011. Cross the road carefully (problem of fast traffic) and walk along the verge on the right-side towards Oakley. Continue along the B4011 back to the church.

Instead of walking across the fields from Point A it is also possible to take the public bridleway down Brill Hill. This is accessed by going down Brill Road a further 150m from Point A and turning right into the bridleway. Continue down the bridleway for 1200m until reaching the gate with the stile on right hand side (point B on map) and then proceed back to Oakley as above.

July 2015, updated January 2020



The Countryside Code (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code>) must be observed when walking:

Respect other people:

- consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

Protect the natural environment:

- leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
- keep dogs under effective control

Enjoy the outdoors:

- be safe, plan ahead and be prepared
- follow advice and local signs

For all the walks in this series it is best to use Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 180 (can be purchased at the Book House and Martins in Thame). This provides clearer mapping than the mini-map accompanying the text above.