

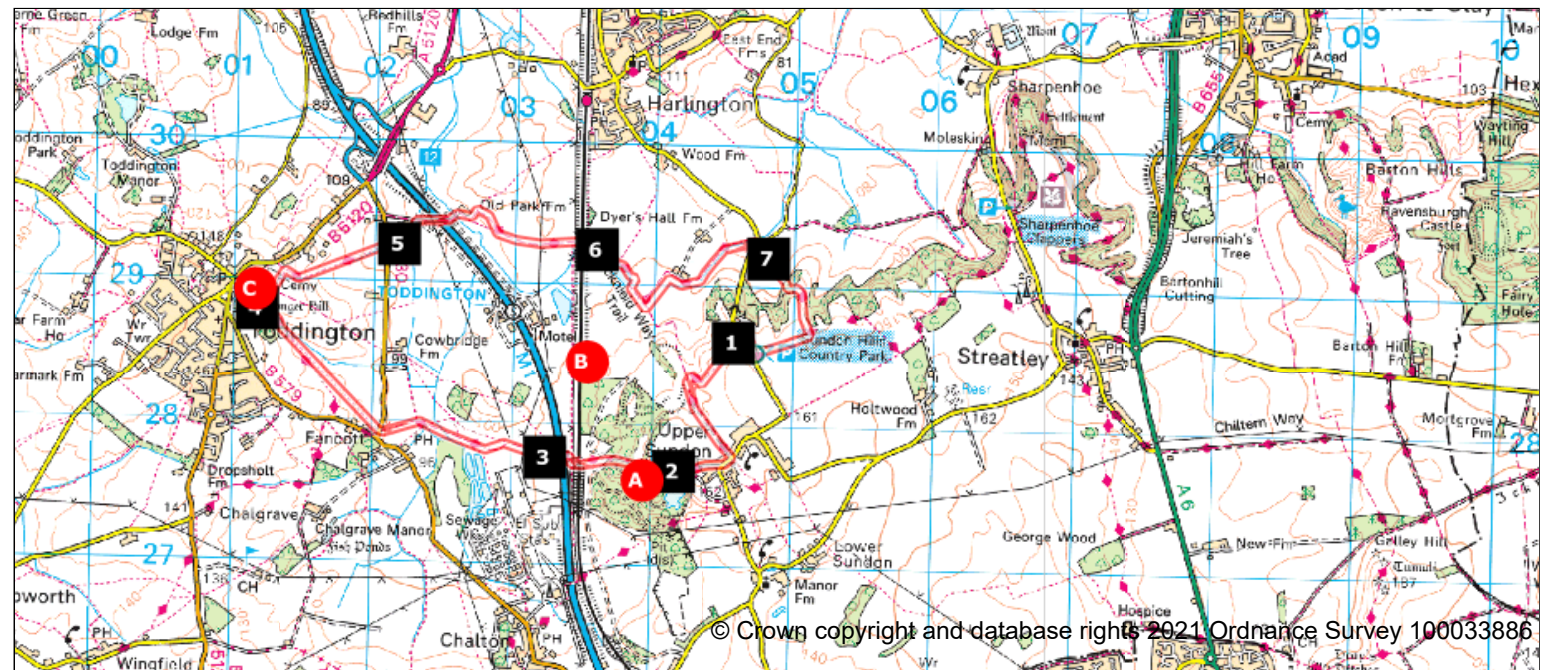
Print route

Icknield Way: Sundon Hills & Toddington Circular. Bedfordshire

3 hours 30 minutes 11.6km / 7.2mi Leisurely

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Route Summary:

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

Start location:

Sundon Hills country park, Upper Sundon

Getting there:

By car: 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 turn right towards Upper Sundon for several miles, after a steep hill the car park in on the left.

Parking is free at the country park.

By bus: Services run from Luton to Harlington and Toddington, for details see [Traveline](#). Toddington, at waypoint [4] is at the terminus of Busway E from Luton.

By train: Harlington railway station is three quarters of a mile walk on footpaths from waypoints [5] and [6].

Description:

[1] From the car park, follow the hedge downhill and parallel to the road on your left for about 50 metres, pass through a kissing gate on the left, cross the road carefully and turn right. Continue on the verge for about 20 metres before passing into a field on the left. Follow the ridge keeping the hedge on your left. Continue into the next field and cross diagonally left downhill towards a sewage works. Turn left and follow the track from the sewage works up the hill to Upper Sundon.

The route is marked using Icknield Way waymark discs and roadside signs



[2] When the track joins the road, cross and turn right on the footway. The road bends right, then immediately after it bends sharply to the left, take the dead-end road on the right, called Common Lane, passing right of an Indian Restaurant, follow this lane straight on as it becomes a footpath. Much of the surrounding land, in the vicinity of an old quarry [A] is designated as 'Open Access' and worthy of exploring. The footpath joins an access road with minimal traffic, turn right and follow this for some distance, continuing downhill to a T-junction. Continue straight ahead on a footpath. The path crosses over the railway [B] on a footbridge.

[3] The main route continues straight on to cross a bridge over the M1, then follows the Icknield Way on a bridleway. This is the route Toddington workers at the former quarry took to get to work. The bridleway, which is well waymarked, follows a grassy track passing right of an electricity station. The track then crosses a ploughed field to reach a concrete bridge over a stream on the left boundary. Cross this and turn right to reach a footbridge with high wooden hand rails. Continue between a hedge and fence to emerge on the B530 road. Carefully cross the road taking the footpath on the right (on a short section which does not follow Icknield Way). Follow this footpath diagonally right up and over the field. Continue to follow this path, which is well marked with yellow posts, up and down hills and through a series of gates, catching glimpses of the tower of Toddington church ahead. The Icknield Way path rejoins from the left, then the path passes through a wooded area as it climbs up into Toddington village.

The fields beyond the B530 to Toddington may be grazed by cattle and sheep.

For a shorter alternative route, cross the railway and turn right to follow the path adjacent to the railway for one mile north to rejoin the route at [6].

[4] 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 is a little further up the road towards the church. Pass through the kissing gate on the right, cross the field diagonally right (these fields normally have horses grazing), pass through two more gates, noting the earthworks of Conger Hill [C] to your left. Turn right along the farm track, then very soon turn left when the hedge turns left. Keep following the hedge on your left, there is a cemetery on the other side of it. Appreciate the views back towards Sundon Hills to your right. After 100 metres the Icknield Way path turns right at a junction. Follow this path as it passes downhill.

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

[5] At the B530 road, cross carefully, and keep straight on along the path opposite. Immediately after a footbridge turn left and continue to a gate leading onto an 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 left hand bridge parapet recording the 50th anniversary of the opening of motorway in 1959. Once over the bridge take the left hand road towards Old Park farm, then before the farm house entrance gates take the bridleway on the right. Follow the track around the buildings, at the T-junction follow the track to the right. After a quarter of a mile a waymark post indicates that the bridleway goes left past a pylon and towards the railway by a second pylon.

[6] 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 turns left on the bridleway, following a hedge on the right towards Dyers farm. Just before the farm buildings, turn right, keep in the field and follow a hedge on the left. When the hedge turns left, go through a gap in it and continue following the hedge, now on your right. Continue until the path emerges on a road, cross carefully and turn right through a kissing gate onto what is signed as a permissive path.

[7] The permissive path leads uphill between two fields. Continue through another kissing gate into a wooded area. After few hundred metres, by a big wooden marker post with coloured bands around the top, turn left on a path. The path soon goes up some steps, then through part of a former quarry, at the top of further steps on the far side, 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 across the field up the hill to the hedge at the top, then turn right following the hedge to return to the car park.

POI information:

(A) The 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 an SSSI. Either side of the roadway is a fascinating Open Access place to freely explore.

(B) 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 enables stone freight trains from the Peak Forest quarries to 'pull over' while allowing Thameslink passenger trains to pass.

(C) Conger Hill - 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!

Notes:

Maps: OS Explorer 193, Landranger 166

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

Accommodation: Inns & B+B in Toddington, Inn at 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:

The **Ickniel Way Association** promotes the 110 mile long route from Ivinghoe Beacon in Buckinghamshire to Knettishall Heath on the Suffolk/Norfolk border. The Ickniel Way links the **Ridgeway** and **Peddars Way** National Trails.

This walk links with another circular walk following the Ickniel Way. Search for Ickniel Way from the routes available on **Ramblers**

