

## WAYMARKING THE MILLENNIUM WALK

This paper is submitted by the Maidenhead Civic Society and has the support of East Berks Ramblers.

1. The Millennium Walk runs between Hurley and Maidenhead Riverside and was conceived by Maidenhead Civic Society and East Berks Ramblers as a project to celebrate the new Millennium. Over the years missing links have been put in place to improve the walk, most recently the route across Battlemead Common. A link from Marlow to connect with the Walk at Malders Lane in Pinkneys Green was opened in 2005. The only remaining missing link, across the rail track at Spensers Farm, north Maidenhead, may be achieved when this site is developed and better access to the proposed development is needed.

2. The MW is made up of a permitted paths, public rights of ways (PROW), restricted byways and country roads. In this respect it is similar to the Boundary Walk and the Green Way. Whilst both of these walks are individually waymarked, the Millennium Walk is not. The Royal Borough is rightly proud of its rights of way network and the named walks that it contains, which also include the Three Castles Walk shown on Ordnance Survey maps. The network makes a valuable contribution to physical and mental health as was evidenced during the pandemic.

3. It seems only sensible to accord the Millennium Walk the same status and signage as other named walks. This would supplement existing waymarkers and signposts. The initial Millennium Walk leaflet was published in 2012 and updated in 2022 to incorporate the link across Battlemead Common. It makes good sense for walkers following the map to also have reference to signage along the route.

4. A preliminary survey indicates that the following signage would be required

- signs on existing finger posts (estimate 5 required)
- waymarkers such as those used to sign the Boundary Walk. These could be plastic or adhesive roundels or adhesive (estimate 120 required)
- short wooden posts with roundels attached, such as used in Braywick Park (estimate 10 required)

5. It has not yet been possible to calculate costs but these would not be high. For example, waymarker discs cost approximately £2.50 each. Installation, apart from any new finger posts requiring excavation, would be undertaken by MCS and EBR members.

### **Recommendations**

1. LAF is asked to support the principle of signing the Millennium Walk

2. That officers of the Royal Borough be asked to identify any potential funding sources, including existing Council budgets; government initiative funding; grants.

3. That the project be taken forward by Royal Borough officers, MCS and EBR.

We hope the Local Access Forum will consider this proposal favourably. If so the Civic Society and the Ramblers will undertake to provide more detailed information on the waymarking required. We consider that the project to sign the Millennium Walk is relevant to the government aim to facilitate walking for which funds are apparently available. Certainly this aim would improve the physical and mental health of the population as it did during the pandemic.

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# The Millennium Walk

HURLEY TO MAIDENHEAD RIVERSIDE

This walk is a joint project between Maidenhead Civic Society and East Berks Ramblers. This leaflet aims to help walkers follow the route and enjoy the heritage, vistas and wildlife along the way.

**Distance:** 7¼ miles (12.5km)

**Start:** Hurley Village Car Park

**Finish:** Boulters Lock Car Park

The Millennium Walk connects at each end with the Thames Path National Trail. A footpath link, shown between the Millennium Route and Marlow, provides two additional circular walks using the Thames Path.

## Hurley to Prospect Hill

Tithecote House was a 14th-century Tithe Barn with dovecote – before conversion in 1950. St Mary the Virgin Church: A Benedictine Priory, as a cell to Westminster Abbey, was founded in this church in 1086 by the Norman Lord, Geoffrey de Mandeville. A smaller 14th-century Tithe Barn stands next to one of three Village Greens purchased, in 1976 by Hurley Village Association together with the lordship of the manor. Ye Olde Bell Inn was a guest house of the priory – dated 1135 over door but apparently it is 15th-century.

## Prospect Hill to Temple Golf Club

Vista over Thames Valley: Large white building is Danesfield Court, now a luxury hotel, requisitioned during WWII as a base for air photo-intelligence. Prospect Hill summit marks boundary of Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA). Hall Place, the mansion now owned by the college, was the seat of the Clayton East family, once Lords of the Manor of Hurley. This section includes a new permitted path granted by BCA.

## Temple Golf Club to Boundary Oak, Pinkneys Green

Vista is one of the best in the Thames Valley. Temple Golf Club was founded in 1909 by Capt G MacDonald of the Guards Club, Maidenhead, on fine chalk downland leased from the Temple Park & Bisham Estates.

## Boundary Oak to the Green Way

Boundary Stone at base of Boundary Oak, one of the stones marking 1934 boundary of Maidenhead. From now on the route largely follows the northern boundary of the town in 1934 and connects several Commons and the Brick & Tile Works Nature Reserve, all held by the National Trust.

## The Green Way to Widbrook Common

Heron, kingfishers, red kites and deer can be seen along this streamside walk.

## Widbrook Common to Maidenhead Riverside

Vista: Hanging Woods of Cliveden Reach with Cliveden House (NT) on the skyline. Until 2021 Commoners grazed their cattle on Widbrook Common from mid-May to mid-November for a seasonal fee that benefited the Cookham Educational Charity. Grazing may resume in the future. In 2018 RBWM purchased part of White Place Farm to create Battlemead Common providing public open space and one of the missing links in the Millennium Walk. To protect overwintering migratory birds the causeway path on the East Field of Battlemead will be open only from April until after Rotary Bridge's Boundary Walk in October, beginning in April 2022. This will allow the Millennium Walk and the Boundary Walk, which it follows from Pinkneys Green, to be routed close to the 1934 boundary of Maidenhead during those months as well as providing a circular walk.

## The Thames Path – Millennium Walk Link

Bisham Woods, including Quarry Wood, considered to be the richest ancient woodland in Berkshire, have been owned and sensitively managed by the Woodland Trust since 1990. The Wood is said to be the original "Wild Wood" of Kenneth Graham's book *Wind in the Willows*. He lived in Cookham Dean.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

Maidenhead Civic Society: aims to improve and protect many aspects of the environment, including creating new walks. [www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk](http://www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk)

East Berkshire Ramblers: helps to protect and restore public rights of way and seeks to develop new footpaths. [www.eastberksramblers.org](http://www.eastberksramblers.org)

Public Rights of Way, Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, email: [pro@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:pro@rbwm.gov.uk)

Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA)

To check on permitted paths, email: [enquiries@bca.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@bca.ac.uk)

**Note:** The completion of the Millennium Walk has been given high priority by the Local Access Forum (LAF) and is in the RBWM Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) of both 2005–2015 and 2016–2026. Work will continue to complete the remaining missing links.

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# The Millennium Walk

A footpath route linking  
Hurley with Maidenhead riverside





Just visible from the top of Prospect Hill; Marlow church spire and the tower of Bisham Church.



The permitted path may be closed for cross-country riding events. See Useful Contacts for BCA email address.



With care, follow the waymark posts across Temple Golf Course.



Widbrook Common

- Millennium Walk
- Permitted path
- Proposed millennium route not yet in place
- Link with Thames Path at Marlow
- Other public rights of way
- Country roads
- Boundary Stone

For more topographical detail see OS Explorer sheet 172 'Chiltern Hills East'

