

St John the Baptist, Little Missenden – St Peter & St Paul, Great Missenden – The Red Lion, Little Missenden



St John the Baptist, Little Missenden

Little Missenden is a quiet backwater village tucked away off the busy A413. The church is evocatively small and ancient. Further up the road, its big brother Great Missenden requires a larger church that, for all its merits, is most famous as the last resting place of writer Roald Dahl. The longer route takes in both churches, a shorter version just visits Little Missenden.



Though founded in 975, St John's history spans 2000 years. Most visitors marvel at the remarkable 13th century wall paintings (St. Christopher, St. Catherine and the crucifixion) uncovered in 1931, but there is a lot more history to hold your attention from the Norman, Saxon and medieval eras.



The ongoing development of the church is represented by the Roman building materials reused by the Saxons (look out for the recycled bricks) and there is a theory that the base of the font might be an upturned capital of a Roman column.

From the lychgate (1) turn right going away from the village and right again on the footpath that follows the side of the churchyard and then a line of pylons. You will cross over the River Misbourne and reach the A413.

This is a busy and dangerous road. Cross to a stile on the other side and continue uphill away from the road. You then cross the Marylebone – Aylesbury railway line and quickly go left following a path through trees.



Continue until you get to a post indicating a footpath forking left. Take this path and descend until you reach open ground. Cross to a pylon opposite and bear right following the edge of Mantle's Wood.

The well worn path eventually leaves the edge of the wood to go left across the field to a post on the edge of Hedgemoor.

After reaching the post go right following the edge of the trees.



Ignore the first footpath you get to, continue a short way and take a track to the left and immediately go right over a stile. Go $\frac{1}{2}$ left over the field to **Point A** - the arrow covered corner post of an old wooden and wire fence that you reach just as you are passing a clump of trees on your left masking an old pit.

Short version:

Follow the old fence up to a stile and into trees. Continue along the narrow shaded path until you reach Hyde Heath Road. Turn right and after a short distance turn left onto a lane. After a similar distance turn right over a stile onto the first footpath you reach.



*You now have a garden on your left and open fields on the right. When you meet a wide track you have reached **point B**, where the shorter route meets the longer version, and you turn right.*

Long version

From **Point A** go left around to the far side of the clump of trees masking the pit. You will see a large timbered house visible on your right as you descend to the track that you walked along earlier. Cross a stile and turn right onto the track. When you reach Hyde Farm turn right following the Circular Walk sign, go past Chapel Farm (the large timbered building) and turn left on the footpath opposite Rowen Farm.



Go over a stile and left following the edge of the field. Cross the next stile at the field boundary and keep straight on. At the next field edge follow the sign straight on to the left of a hedge heading towards a large tree and a line of pylons.

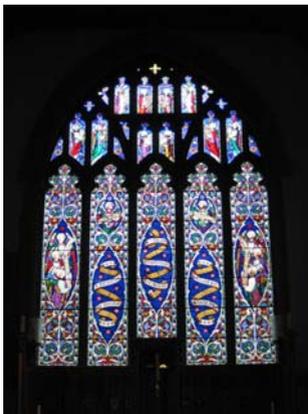
Once under the pylons continue forward along the edge of the field until you reach a stile.

Cross the stile then go half left and descend to another next to a track leading to Rook Wood. Cross the track, go over the stile and follow the path that veers slightly right uphill initially and continues to an old metal gate into Great Missenden churchyard (2).



St Peter & St Paul, Great Missenden

Dating largely from the 14th and 15th centuries, this is a spacious church with some interesting features. There are medieval floor tiles in the chancel and a 12th century Aylesbury font with fine carving. Also look out for the carved heads on the nave pillars that are caricatures of local personalities.



Cream teas are served between 3.00-5.00 on Sundays during the summer and, after visiting Roald Dahl's grave, the Roald Dahl museum is in easy walking distance on the village high street.



From the church entrance turn right onto the tarmac drive that goes uphill into trees (not the one that goes into the graveyard) and continue a short way until you reach wooden railings.

Take the path that follows the railings to a gate and then onto Frith Hill.

Go straight over and climb the South Heath leg of Frith Hill. Just before it bends sharply right take the track on the left and you will reach Frith Hill Stables. Next to a paddock you will see a driveway in front of you, take the path through a gate on the left of the drive and follow the wooden fence. At the end of the fence go into trees and follow arrows until you reach a stile near a metal 5bar gate.

Cross the stile and then go immediately right over further stile following another wooden fence. Continue through a kissing gate and follow the edge of the wood on your left. When you reach the corner of the wood veer off $\frac{1}{2}$ right towards a row of pylons. Go over a stile and follow the barbed wire fence under the pylons and up to a wood.

Follow the Circular Walk signpost into the wood. This is a clear path and when you reach a stile on the other side head slightly left between two white houses in front of you to a metal 5bar gate. Cross the lane and you will get to a small wooden gate. Now go $\frac{1}{4}$ right heading to the right of a distant white house, although your objective is much nearer than the house, a stile leading into a small wood. This is not a clear path but you should just about see the stile that you are heading for.

Go over the stile into the wood and follow the path to a stile at the far side. Now go to the left of a broken down barbed wire fence under telephone lines to a set of stiles hidden just inside a clump of bushes. Turn right and follow a wooden fence with South Heath in view in front of you.

Climb a stile and then follow the path that will go left through the hedge over two more stiles and $\frac{1}{2}$ right towards a large cream house. Take the stile just to the right of the cream house and then go $\frac{1}{2}$ right diagonally across a field to a stile in the far corner.

Cross the road and follow the circular walk sign opposite, to the left of 'Willow Lodge'. Follow the narrow path and when the houses end and a wood begins, turn right onto a wide path. Following arrows and a signpost you will reach a lane where you turn left.

Go past a sign for Littlewood Corner and go over a stile next to the eponymous house. The path passes a pond and then comes out into the open where you go right following the edge of the field. At the next field boundary cross a stile and go $\frac{1}{2}$ left across the next field, heading just to the left of the farm buildings (Middlegrove Farm) in front of you. Over the stile you continue $\frac{1}{4}$ left past a scrapyard and then follow the drive to the Chesham Road.

Go over this busy road to the footpath on the other side and turn left. Continue over Browns Lane and past the Timber Yard on your left until you reach a footpath going off on your right. Go into the trees and follow a fairly indistinct path that circles an old pit and meanders to a post where you turn right onto a wide track.

Along the track you will pass **Point B** where the shorter walk joins the longer one.

When the track reaches two modern cottages, take the narrow sunken path shaded by laurel and holly that goes between the cottages. When you reach another cottage go straight past the front door and back into the trees. Ignore the footpath that goes right and the path soon splits with a bridleway going left.

Ignore the bridleway, keep on the footpath and you will reach Hyde Heath cricket club. Follow the edge of the pitch around to the road, where you can take a diversion up to The Plough and maybe watch some cricket, or turn right, then quickly left on a bridleway that is Bullbaiters Lane.



When the tarmac road ends at 'Field House' continue straight along the track that will narrow to a path until you reach Mantles Farm and 'Mitchells Cottage' where you turn left on Chalk Lane.

Just past 'De Fontenay' turn right downhill past Spindles Farm, underneath the railway and onward to the main road. Turn right and quickly left down Taylors Lane to Little Missenden.



At the end of the lane turn left to the Red Lion (3), further on The Crown, or right to the church past the 17th century manor house.



The 16th century Red Lion is all that a good country pub should be and is now up and running again after a severe fire in 2006. The food is home made, good beer is on tap and there is a crowd of yokels on hand to regale you with country yarns.

Location: SU921990 Explorer Map 172 Chiltern Hills East

Length: Long Version: 6¾ mls / 10.9 kms Short Version: 3½ mls / 5.6 kms

Terrain: An easy walk taking in open fields and woodland with moderate climbs

