



Ballinger and The Lee By Richard Bradbury, Chiltern Society

Summary

A mixed route on footpaths and tracks through fields and woodland, visiting the picturesque village green at The Lee.

Length: 4.5 miles with a shorter 2.5 mile option

Terrain: Easy terrain, mainly level. One short, moderately steep descent and one short, moderately steep ascent near the finish. 4 stiles and 6 gates

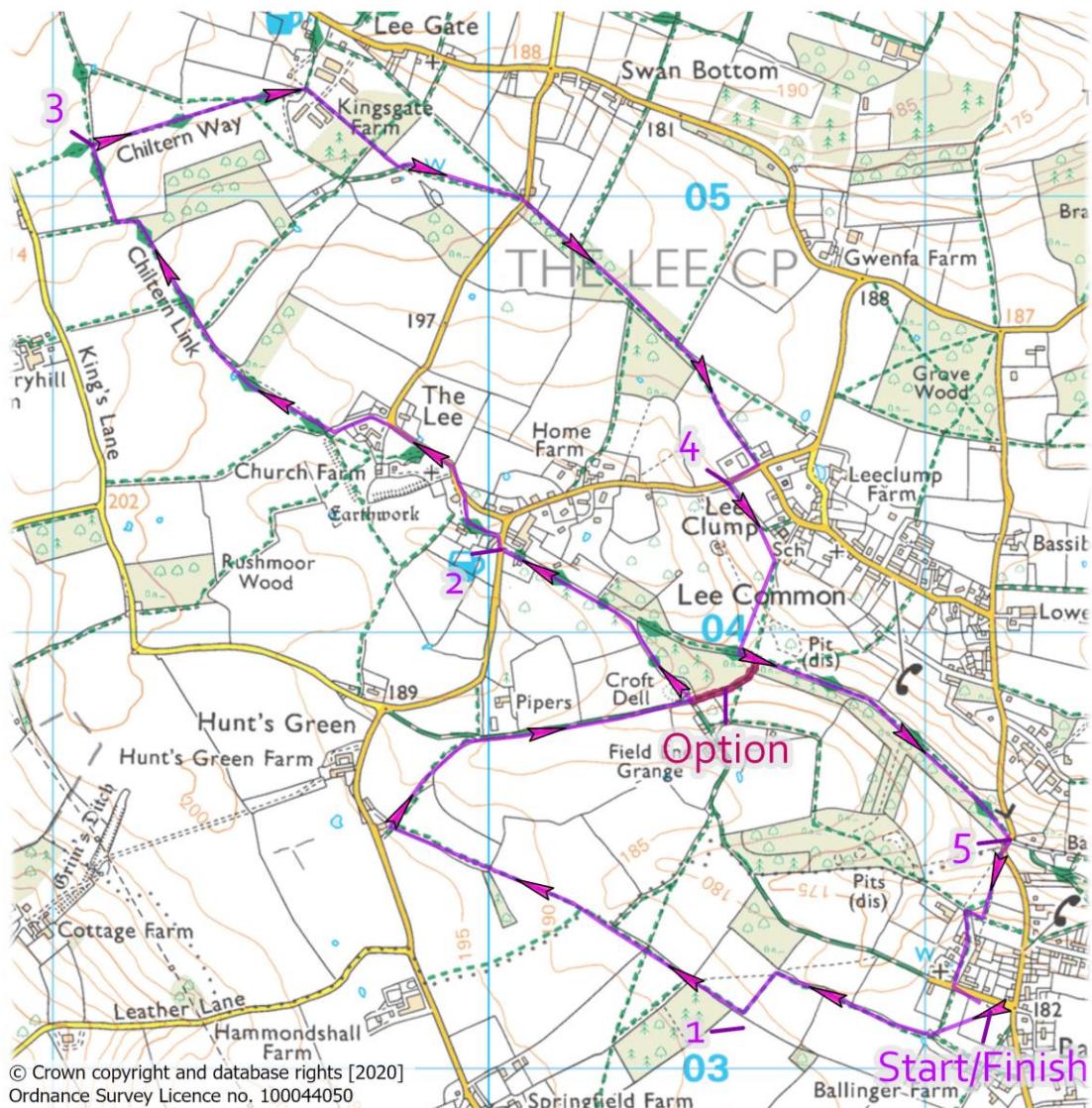
Start & finish: Ballinger Common Recreation Ground, Blackthorne Lane, Ballinger HP16 9LN Grid Reference SP 911 031

Food & drink: The Cock and Rabbit, The Lee HP16 9LZ

Maps: OS Explorer 181, Chiltern Society 3 & 8

Parking: Ballinger Common Recreation Ground car park, details as above

Local transport: Buses 177 & 190 runs from Chesham on an infrequent basis



Route

From the car park cross the sports field to the far right-hand corner. Go through the gap in the hedge and follow the path straight ahead along the edge of the field. Soon after going through a wide gap into a second field, bear half left on the path that passes to the right of the telegraph pole. (Please note: this is a well-used path but is not the official right of way, which is shown in blue on the map).

Waypoint 1 - At the corner of the field cross the stile and turn right, following the hedgerow, to reach two stiles. Go over the one straight ahead and continue, initially with a hedgerow on your right, across the open field towards the right-hand side of a small wood. At the far side of the field cross the stile and bear half right to the corner of the hedgerow. Stay on the path beside the hedgerow as it curves round to the right, eventually leading to a stile. Cross it and continue ahead along a wide track. When you get to a crossing track turn left up the slope. (*For shorter option see below). Stay on this tarmac track all the way to the road at The Lee, opposite The Cock and Rabbit Inn.

Waypoint 2 - Turn right then immediately left along the road beside the village green, following it as it curves right. At the far side of the green turn left along the road, passing the church and the cemetery. Just after the large barn conversion (Church Farm House) on the right-hand bend, turn left along a track. When you reach a path junction turn right. Stay on this track for some distance as it runs along the edge of three fields. Eventually it turns sharp left then right, and soon leads you to a path junction where The Chiltern Way crosses.

Waypoint 3 - Turn right along The Chiltern Way. At the far side of the field go through the gate and turn right along a path between wooden fences. Continue ahead into the wood to reach a path junction. Go straight on to emerge from the trees onto a path that soon joins a wide track. Follow the track across the field towards a white cottage. Cross the road by the cottage and continue ahead on the path through the woods, which eventually reaches a field. Fork right on the path that heads across the field to the corner of the hedgerow. Walk along the right-hand side of the hedgerow. Go through a gate, pass a row of cottages, and turn right along the road with The Lee village hall and shop on your right. Cross the road and go through the kissing gate opposite the Scout hut into a field.

Waypoint 4 - Follow the path ahead along the line of the telegraph wires, with an isolated cottage in the valley to your right. When you get to a barbed wire fence on the left (after the fourth telegraph pole) turn right downhill on the path into the valley, passing to the right of a dell containing a large copse of trees. Just before the hedgerow at the bottom turn left and go through the kissing gate ahead. Follow the track along the valley, with fields on your left and woodland on your right, eventually passing through a kissing gate onto a road.

Waypoint 5 - Turn right and, where the road curves left up the hill, turn right through a gap in the hedgerow next to two metal gates. Turn left on the path directly uphill (ignore the wider track to your right). At the top, pass through a gap in the hedgerow and continue ahead on a grassy track which soon becomes a road with houses on both sides. At the T junction cross over and go through the kissing gate into Ballinger sports field. Turn left to return to the start.

***Shorter Option – At the crossing track keep straight ahead for 170m to a T Junction. Turn right to rejoin the main route as described in the last sentence of Waypoint 4.**

Points of Interest

The Lee is one of the most beautiful villages in the Chilterns. Its name derives from the Old English leah meaning 'a clearing in a wood'. The village encircles its large green, and has many beautiful brick houses. One of them is Lee Manor, once home to the Liberty family (owners of the Liberty department store in

London). Sir Arthur Liberty bought the last two wooden hulks from the Royal Navy and used timber from them to construct the shop's 'Tudor' facade. Only one ship had a figurehead, that of Admiral Lord Howe, hero of the battle of Ushant in 1794. It was brought to The Lee and positioned at the top of the rear drive to the Manor. Following the death of Sir Arthur's nephew in 1952 it was moved to its present site at Pipers, a few hundred metres from the green. The Lee has been used many times as a location, most notably for the TV series *Midsomer Murders*.

The Chiltern Way was set up as a millennium project by volunteers from Chiltern Society. It's a circular walking route of 134 miles with two optional extensions and an additional loop taking the total route to a maximum of 220 miles. It's enjoyed by thousands of walkers each year.