



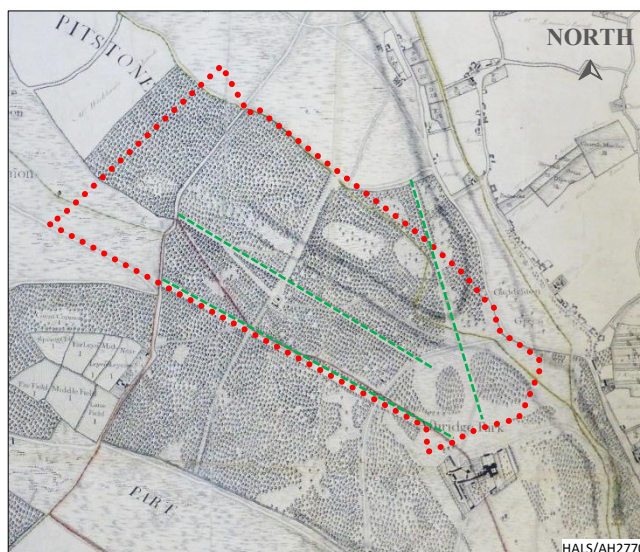
E. Brown's Golden Valley

Head left down the road to the white gate at the far end of the house grounds. Ignore the footpath to Cromer Close. Follow the road to the next bend and strike off down the grassy slope towards the war memorial on the skyline ahead. At the bottom of the slope turn left along the Golden Valley (E) towards the road.



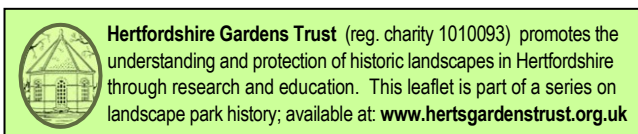
F. The autumn rut

Veer right until you see a post waymarked 'Boundary Trail'. Cross the road and head up the hill on a stony sunken track to the golf course. Continue straight ahead and pick up the track again as it enters the trees. The track becomes a tarmac road between large houses and emerges onto the B4506. Turn left and cross the road at the post box and take the first rutted track on the right into the woods. When you reach a public footpath, turn left and follow the track back to Monument Drive.



G. Ashridge Estate Map - Grey, 1762 (walk in red; (ridings in green)

A longer walk can be made by adding one of the National Trust trails from the monument (leaflets available at the Bridgewater Monument shop).



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Hertfordshire Landscape Parks

Ashridge Park



'no one can deny, a spectacular composition'
Nikolaus Pevsner, 1953

A. Ashridge College and grounds

The Walk is a circuit of about 3½ miles (5.5 km). OS Explorer Map 181. Paths through the woods can be muddy.

Access via Monument Drive off the B4506 (Dagnall to Berkhamsted road). Two car parks **P** under the trees. Grid Ref. SP970130.

Refreshments: The Bridgewater Arms ☕ in Little Gaddesden (HP4 1PD) and Brownlow Café at Bridgewater Monument.



The house at **Ashridge** was originally a College of the Bonhommes, founded in 1238 by Edmund of Cornwall, and closed in 1535. Henry VIII's children spent part of their childhood there. In 1554 Princess Elizabeth was taken from there to the Tower on the orders of Queen Mary. Ashridge was sold in 1604 to Thomas Egerton whose family owned it until the 1920s.

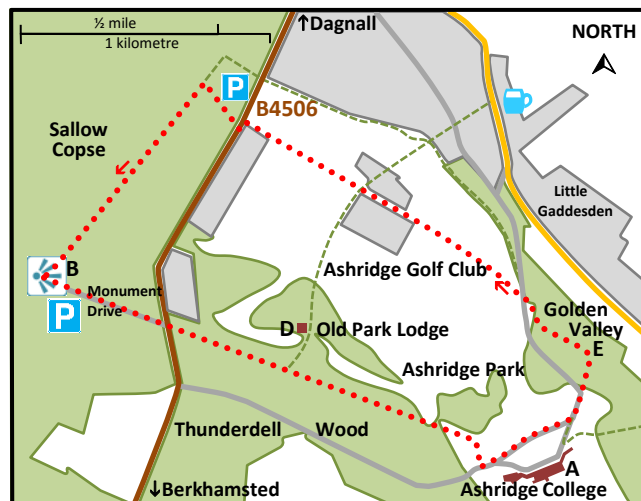
The wider estate was laid out by Lancelot Brown, who oversaw the planting in the Golden Valley and improved the landscape and rides between 1759 and 1768. A contemporary map shows the layout of the estate (F).

The 3rd Duke of Bridgewater (The ‘Canal Duke’) asked Henry Holland, ‘Capability’ Brown’s son-in-law, to build him a new house at Ashridge in the 1760s. The house we see today was designed for the 7th Earl of Bridgewater by James Wyatt in 1808. Following Wyatt’s death the house was completed by his son Benjamin and then his nephew Jeffrey Wyattville. In 1813 Humphry Repton produced a Red Book for the grounds, with 15 small gardens, which was a break from the wide sweeping lawns of Brown.



B. *The Bridgewater Monument*


The gardens were created by Jeffrey Wyattville and altered in the 19th century with the addition of an Italian Garden and in the 21st by some more modern planting. The Bridgewater Monument (B) was built in granite in 1832 to commemorate the Canal Duke, and perhaps the completion of the Grand Junction Canal. It is a 33m tall fluted Doric column designed by Jeffrey Wyattville and sited on the highpoint of the estate to be seen from Ashridge House. Open at weekends, there are 172 steps rising inside to a platform with a panoramic view of the estate.



On the death of the last Earl Brownlow, the estate was sold and a developer, Thomas Place, laid out a golf course in 1929-31 on 12 hectares of land. Further development of the Estate was prevented by the purchase of 700 ha by the National Trust in the 1920s, now increased to some 2035 ha. After 700 years the House and Gardens came full circle with their purchase by Andrew Bonar Law and the establishment of a new College in 1929.



C. *Beech wood in springtime*

Start from the Bridgewater Monument  and head towards Ashridge College seen in the distance, across the B4506 and along Prince’s Riding. Three main Ridings were cut through the woodlands in the 17th century (G). Ashridge Golf Course will be on your left and Old Park Lodge (D) may be glimpsed through the trees. Near the College there is an estate fence blocking the riding. Follow the marked route round to the right and emerge on the sward in front of the College.



D. *The Old Park Lodge*