

## 2018-05 Marsworth

### Walk

Walk is approx 4.5 miles. Mostly on canal paths and paths across fields. There is one slight incline otherwise flat. There are 11 stiles although 4 may be by-passable.

### Directions

Turn left out of Stratford Road layby then right at the roundabout.

Continue round the bypass to the A413, turn left towards Aylesbury.

Continue through Winslow & onto Whitchurch.

Just before leaving Whitchurch turn left, signposted Wing & Cublington.

In Cublington look out for the Unicorn pub on right hand side.

After passing Unicorn pub turn right to Aston Abbotts at a cross roads (sign post is hidden on left hand side of road).

Continue through Aston Abbotts.

At staggered junction go straight across, signposted Wingrave & Long Marston.

Continue through Wingrave & Long Marston (& Grubblecote).

At roundabout turn left (signposted Ivinghoe) and enter Marsworth.

Pass turning to the left & park in Anglers Retreat car park.

Other routes are available, post code of Anglers Retreat is HP23 4LJ.

Notes re following directions:

- these start from the National Waterways car park on the other side of the road to the Anglers Retreat. At the time of writing this is a pay & display car park.
- the White Lion pub mentioned is being sold for housing so may not be there much longer. So join the tow path on the Anglers Retreat side of the canal bridge.

### Directions

- From the car park, carefully cross the B489 and join the canal towpath beside the White Lion public house.
- Follow the canal in a north westerly direction, eventually branching left for a short distance to follow the Aylesbury Arm (the left canal fork) and cross over the Watery Lane bridge.
- Re-join the main branch of the canal at the next bridge, and then leave it once more to head north across the fields, passing to the left of Manor Farm.
- At the old airfield the route turns towards the east. Follow the waymarking to the road, heading south before turning left to pass under the railway line.
- Keep the railway to your right and rejoin the Grand Union by a swing bridge. Having re-crossed the railway line, the canal should now be followed for a little over a mile before reaching the bridge at Manor Farm. Continue along the towpath to the next bridge, then turn left through the village of Marsworth.
- Bear right along Church Lane and then turn left at the signpost, pass an old nissen hut to the left and head out across fields back to the canal.

There are several public houses along the route, which serve food at lunch time.

Refreshments are also available at the towpath shop at Marsworth.



## Features of Interest

- 1 The Aylesbury Arm of the Grand Union Canal was opened in 1815. The canal engineers soon realised that the new branch would impose a severe strain on the water supplies in the main canal and the Tringford and Startops End Reservoirs were dug to meet the extra demand. The reservoirs have taken on many features of natural lakes although some plants found here such as orange foxtail and mugwort are relics of a time when the Marsworth district was undrained and marshy. Many interesting birds are present including the great crested grebe which has come back strongly after being driven to the brink of extinction by the millinery trade.
- 2 An unusual feature in this section of canal is the staircase lock; two locks with the bottom gates of one forming the top gates of the next.
- 3 The earthworks are all that remains of De La Hay Manor House and associated village. From the air, the village plan can clearly be discerned.
- 4 The route crosses the site of the wartime Marsworth Airfield, home initially to a squadron of Wellington bombers, followed by the USAF with their Flying Fortresses and Liberators. There was also an underground bunker and Churchill was a regular visitor towards the end of the war.
- 5 Southend Hill is the site of an Iron Age Hill Fort, and the trees on the south facing slope conceal a series of cultivation terraces or lynchets formed around a thousand years later. The lynchets developed when arable land was scarce and the hillside was ploughed, shifting the soil so that it built up into terraces.
- 6 The walk passes under what was originally the London and Birmingham Railway completed in 1835.

7 The route now follows the Grand Union Canal, opened in 1805. Towards the middle of the 19th century, the canal began to suffer severe competition from the adjacent railway and in order to increase the speed at which barges could pass along the canal, new locks were dug alongside existing ones and bridges were rebuilt to give double arches. The canal in this area is very popular with local anglers; several species of coarse fish being found including bream, roach and tench.

8 Marsworth's Church of All Saints was renovated in 1880 by the Rev. F W Wragg, the work being undertaken by the vicar and some of his parishioners.

Among other notable buildings are the 17th century Old Manor and its associated timber-framed barn which can be seen in Church Lane.

9 The bridge by the White Lion was altered in 1838, when a second arch was built to cross a duplicate lock, since filled in.

# Marsworth Circular Route

