

Rural Rambler

A series of walks around Marsworth and the local countryside.

All walks will be circular and the first couple will be relatively short, 2-3 miles, starting and finishing in Marsworth. Later there will be some longer walks and the occasional one requiring transport to the start/finish.

No. 1 Bulbourne and the Grand Union Canal

Distance 2.8 miles, easy going, some muddy sections in wet weather.

Starting at Marsworth church walk southeast along Vicarage Road to the Village Hall (point A), turn left along Lower Icknield Way following the pavement along the main road to the end of the houses (B). Cross the road (beware of traffic) to the marked bridleway, signed College Farm, and take this path past the farm house and other buildings on your left. This part of the bridleway is colloquially known as 'Dog Poo Alley', for obvious reasons – mind your step for the first few hundred yards! The path climbs a small incline before levelling out again. This is an attractive section; in spring and early summer there are many flowers in the hedgerow and various butterflies can be seen. Later in the year berries in the bushes are abundant and look out for the large College Lake through the fence on your left. After approx. half a mile the path turns sharp right (C) heading southwest, in wet weather this section can be very muddy and slippery. Continue on the path, turning left just before the canal, passing the Bulbourne Wharf development on your right and on to the Bulbourne Road.

At the main road turn right (D). For the next 50yds or so there is no footpath so beware of traffic. Cross the canal by the road bridge (a new pedestrian footbridge is under construction) and turn right immediately after the bridge onto the towpath next to the Grand Junction Arms (E), walking down the slope past the pub garden on your left.

The walk now follows the towpath along the Grand Union Canal (GUC) nearly all the way back to Marsworth. At the junction with the Wendover Arm (F) pass over the bridge and stay on the main towpath, with the Toll House on your left and the boatyard across the canal on your right. Just past Lock 42 the vista to the left across Marsworth Reservoir is one of the best viewpoints on the reservoirs. Continue to follow the towpath to point G where the path divides, keep right with Startops Reservoir on your left, descending a slight incline, bearing right avoiding the path into the car park and staying on the towpath behind The Waters' Edge café until the Lower Icknield Way is reached once more (H).

Cross the road and take the footbridge over the GUC. At the end of the bridge immediately turn right and descend the steps, turning right again at the bottom and step up to the field gate (tricky in wet weather). Cross the field by the clear path to a gate in the far corner and then across the second field to a third gate. This leads to a path between Stable House and the Old Manor. Follow the path down to Church Lane, turn right and return uphill to the church.

