

Rural Rambler

All the walks in this series can now be downloaded from the Marsworth website where a higher resolution map is available

<https://www.marsworth.org.uk/the-marsworth-news/rural-rambler/>

No. 4: The Wendover Canal to Drayton Beauchamp

Distance: Main route 5.1 miles, 8.3 km; alternative route 3.5 miles, 5.6 km. Easy going, one busy road crossing

The Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal, recently informally renamed The Wendover Canal, was started in 1793 to provide water to the Grand Union Canal from the springs at Wendover. However it was never water tight and in the 1880s it was closed to navigation beyond Little Tring, the water for the Grand Union being carried by a pipe along the canal route to feed the reservoirs near Marsworth, then being pumped into the remaining section of the Wendover Arm to top up the Grand Union. The Wendover Canal Trust (<https://wendovercanal.org.uk/>) is restoring the canal and some of it's outstanding restoration work can be seen along the canal.

This month's walk follows the early part of last month's walk as far as Tringford Pumping Station. Follow the route as described in the 'Woods and Water' walk (in the October issue) to Point C.

From Tringford Pumping Station take the gravel path in front of the cottages to Little Tring Road. Turn right along the footpath behind the hedge then carefully cross the road, bearing right some 20m to the entrance of the Wendover Canal. Go through the gate and keep right to the towpath (Point D)

Follow the towpath, after approx. 600m a gate on the right marks a path through trees to Wilstone Reservoir (Point E). This offers an alternative, shorter walk (see below).

The main walk continues along the towpath, passing under the Drayton Beauchamp road bridge. After another 150m climb the embankment steps leading to St Mary the Virgin church at Drayton Beauchamp ((Point F). Exit the church yard via the front gate and walk along the track, through the side gate at the field exit. After another 50m take the wooden gate on the left and traverse the field. On reaching the road (Point G) turn left then cross the road to enter the field opposite. The path crosses this and the next field bringing you to the woodland at the rear of Wilstone Reservoir (Point H). Keeping left and crossing a small stream, enter the woodland and follow the path through the woods and out onto the north embankment of the reservoir. Walk along the embankment, ignoring the steps down to the car park, and turn onto the eastern side. Steps on the left (Point I) take you diagonally down the embankment and, keeping left at the bottom, a couple of gates lead you to a path around the perimeter of Meads Farm Shop.

If taking the alternative route go through the gate at (Point E) and follow the path downhill, turning right at the bottom and following the track, bearing left to take the

embankment path along the eastern side of Wilstone Reservoir until you come to the steps at (Point I) and re-join the main route.

Stop for refreshment at Meads Farmhouse Kitchen, or take a detour to the Half Moon in Wilstone. Continuing on.... carefully cross the road, past the farmhouse and enter the footpath beside Wilstone Green cottages (Point J); enter the next field with an orchard on your right. Follow the path beside the hedge (good views of Marsworth Church tower and Pitstone Hill in the distance) until it meets Wingrave Road (point I). Turn right (beware of traffic) and then left to take the path to the right of the fence beside and then diagonally across the next two fields. Pass through the gate, cross the recently restored footbridge over Tring Brook and along the path to re-enter Watery Lane at The Mill House. Straight ahead takes you back to the start at Marsworth Wharf



