

# Rural Rambler

## By Steve

A series of walks around Marsworth and the local countryside.

All the walks in this series can now be downloaded from the Marsworth website where a higher resolution map and in some cases photographs are available  
<https://www.marsworth.org.uk/the-marsworth-news/rural-rambler/>

### No. 6 Cooks Wharf and the Grand Union Canal North of Marsworth

A local walk across the fields, returning via the Grand Union Canal. Distance 3 miles. Flat ground but with many stiles, some in poor state of repair. This walk is therefore unsuitable for the elderly or infirm.

Starting outside the Red Lion walk downhill, cross the canal bridge and turn right into Ship Lane. After a hundred yards a signpost points to the left at the entrance to Manor Farm (Point A). Climb over the stile (*i*) and follow the path bearing right across the fields beside the horse paddocks. Note that the horse paddocks are marked with electrified tape which should be avoided. At the end of the first field cross two stiles (*ii*, *iii*) and an intervening concrete bridge over a stream. Take care on stile (*ii*) as the hand post is loose.

In the next field pass more fenced off horse paddocks, bearing left to the far corner of the field at the beginning of a belt of trees. Here our footpath crosses another footpath running between Manor Farm to the right and Church Farm to the left (B). Ignore the metal gate near the trees and take the adjacent stile (*iv*). (For a shorter walk take the Church Farm path straight ahead, across pasture and between buildings to turn left onto Church Farm Lane and leading back to Lower End, approx. ½ mile back to the Red Lion). For the main route turn sharp right immediately after stile (*iv*) to yet another stile (*v*) in the corner of the field by the hedge.

On the other side a large field has been divided by tape fencings – cross diagonally to the left and pass over 2 more stiles (*vi*, *vii*). Once again cross this field diagonally - with a good view of Southend Hill ahead – towards the metal farm gate. Take the stile (*viii*) to the right of the gate, cross the stream by the small bridge and then over yet another stile (*ix*), this stile has the lower step missing and is a high step to get over. Ahead is a long narrow field with another stile (*x*) at the far end followed by a wooden bridge with a metal handrail.

Turn left over the bridge and walk around the field margin – a yellow capped way-mark post can be seen across the field. At the post go straight on and follow the path past some concrete drain segments (C) after which it turns left beside a beech spinney and heads into a concrete area used for storage of straw bales. Strictly the path heads across the ploughed field here but it is easier to pass to the right between the bale stacks and then turn left to follow the metal track. This bears right behind the hedge (D) and provides an alternative route, parallel to the waymarked path along the field margin, to Cheddington High Street which is accessed to the side of a farm gate by a squeeze between gate posts. This is a bit

tight; an alternative is to turn right some 125 yds before the gate onto the formal path on the margin of the adjacent field and reach the road by this route. Once on the High Street, if refreshments are required, a detour to the left of approximately 500 yds brings you to The Old Swan public house (NB check opening hours, it was shut when I scouted this walk).

Carefully cross the road (E) and turn right on the footpath with the railway on your left. Head towards the traffic lights at Cooks Wharf bridge, ignoring the side road that passes under the railway.

At the Cooks Wharf signpost cross the road to the car park and enter the canal towpath (F). Turning right follow the towpath back to Marsworth, walking under Bridge 129 at Manor Farm and on to the Red Lion Bridge. Turn right immediately after this bridge and right again to take you back to the starting point.

