

2 Cow Lane to Hyde Farm Path 3 mls

Note : This route can be very muddy after wet weather.

The walk begins at the junction of Howard Cornish Road and Longfields. The Allotment Path runs to the west of Longfields and emerges into Cow Lane at the eastern edge of the allotments. Turn right and walk along Cow Lane. The wooded scrub on the left is the site of Folly Quarry which was the last working quarry in the parish and produced stone for the Abingdon bypass before being closed in the '70s. It was then used as a landfill site.

On the right is the Dow Chemicals field station. On the left you pass the first of the gun emplacements or 'pill boxes', remains of WWII defences. At the end of Cow Lane the bridleway turns right and becomes Peat Moor Lane. (At this corner the permitted path on the left leads north to Gozzards Ford and the welcome refreshments available at the Black Horse pub.) As you turn the corner on the left is a second gun house and along the bridleway you will pass

some large blocks of concrete intended to slow the tanks in the event of an invasion. The marsh on the left is being managed as a wetland area, but was originally the site of the turf pits which gives the path its alternative name.

Just before the track reaches the road there is the remains of one of the many orchards that existed around Marcham. A few ancient gnarled trees are all that is left.

The bridleway emerges rather abruptly onto the main road, cross with care and take the path which leaves the cycle-track just to your left. Follow the Sandford Brook until

it crosses a wooden bridge. Turn right here and follow the ditch back to the road. Cross here and follow Howard Cornish Road back to the starting point.



3 South East of the village 2½ or 3 mls

This walk begins at the junction of Howard Cornish Road and the A415. Cross to the south side of the road and walk east towards Abingdon for about 200m. Hyde Farm path leaves the footpath opposite the nursery and follows the ditch to join the Marcham Common path just by a wooden bridge, don't cross the bridge but turn right and follow the Sandford Brook southwards.

On the other side of the brook is Marcham Common where, up until the early 1800s, villagers would have grazed their stock. Beyond here, in Georgian and Victorian times, was Abingdon Racecourse. Just before you reach the hedge, on your left across the brook is the remains of the old rifle butts. When you reach the hedge, turn right and continue along the line of the hedge. In spring time you may see frogspawn in the ditch. Cross the wooden bridge and continue in the same direction until you reach a track coming in from the right. Here you have a choice:

1 Meadow Farm Path If you turn right and walk up the track, following it round to the left and over the cattle grid, this will bring you out past the dairy and into Mill Road. Look out for yellowhammers, linnets and skylarks along this path. When you reach Mill Road turn right to return to the village.

2 Longmoor Path To follow this path for a longer walk, turn left through the hedge and then turn right through the gate to follow the hedge on the south side. On your left is Longmoor which now farmed organically. This is a good place to see linnets and skylarks and there are often snipe here in the spring and a cuckoo in summer. It's also a good place to see hares or roe deer. At the end of the field turn left and then right to go through the gate and over the bridge. When you enter this field, known as Squire's Lea turn left to follow the field boundary until you reach the gate which will bring you out into Mill Lane by the River Ock. Turn right and return to the village.

To return to your starting point you have a choice of two paths within the village that avoid the bends:

1 Just as you reach the village green at the top of Mill Road. turn right into Priory Lane and when you reach the field, go over the stile on your left. Cross the field and climb over the high stile at the other end. Cross the road and turn right to follow the footpath to Howard Cornish Road.

2 Continue to the main road, cross and walk up North Street until you pass the entrance to the Institute car park. Just past the next cottage is a flight of stone steps. Keep along this path until it emerges onto the main road, then turn left to reach the start point.

1 Trendles Path and Kiln Copse continued

Childrey Brook. Here it may have continued into East Hanney parish, but since on old enclosure maps these meadows are shown as ‘part of Frilford’ and still show the signs of medieval ploughing known as ‘ridge and furrow’, it may be that this was merely an access path to their strips of land.

During the spring we often see (or hear) curlew flying over the fields south of the river and throughout the year buzzards may also be around, (intriguingly wrocceshealh is Anglo-Saxon for buzzard’s nook, though there is a rock layer exposed along the river bank which may also account for the name). Leaving Rocksall meadow at your back, follow the track north to reach the green lane which runs from the Ark towards Marcham. Looking across the field to your left, towards the Wantage road, there is a slight dip in the field indicating the site of a circular Roman structure. Excavations on this site were begun in 2001 and are still ongoing.

On reaching the end of the field turn right and follow what might have been an old Roman track towards Kiln Copse. Just before you reach the road, turn right and follow the footpath along the edge of the wood. A coppicing project has been ongoing here since 1986 and when you first enter the wood you can see the re-growth from the first hazels we cut down. Recently we have had to cover the hazels when we have cut them down to prevent the deer and rabbits from eating all the re-growth and killing the trees. The number of deer has increased and they are now becoming a pest. The wood isn’t ancient, having been planted on old ‘ridge and furrow’ to provide fuel for the Victorian brick kiln which produced Marcham bricks. There are a few interesting plants, early purple orchids and twayblade, an insignificant green orchid, as well as the occasional spectacular fungus such as giant puffballs. Any bluebells we see are the result of plantings or from seed that has been scattered there.

At the end of the path, cross the main road with care and walk along the path at the edge of the arboretum. At the end of this path where it joins the path to Frilford, turn right, walking between the cemetery and the edge of Denman. In the spring we often take a stroll around the cemetery to enjoy the carpet of snowdrops and primroses. We always stop to look over the wall at the lake where we have sometimes seen kingfishers or little grebes. Arriving at the church there is a choice of routes back to the village green, via Church Street and the main road, via New Road and North Street or down through Parkside to emerge in North Street next to the garage.

These paths have been opened on land belonging to W. Cumber & Son (Theale) Ltd. We are grateful to Will and Janey for making this project possible. Please keep to the headland around the fields, keep dogs under control and avoid disturbing livestock or damaging crops.

Countryside Code advice for the public

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

More information on many of the topics mentioned here can be found in the Marcham Society Journals (Coral Rag) on sale in the Post Office, North Street and Cumbers Farm Shop, Mill Road, Marcham.



The Marcham Society is grateful to the Trust for Oxfordshire’s Environment, who administers the Landfill Tax, Innogy, the owners of Didcot Power Station, The Vale of the White Horse District Council and Marcham Parish Council for financial assistance in opening the footpaths and to TOE for a grant towards producing this leaflet.



Published by
The Marcham Society
Manor Farm, Marcham, OX13 6NZ
© 2006 text and illustrations

December 2006

Marcham Jubilee Walks



produced by



1 Trendles Path and Kiln Copse 2¼ mls

Begin the walk at The Crown and go south down Mill Road, past the village green. On the right the modern house shows the site of the old school which was abandoned in the sixties and subsequently pulled down. Further down on the same side just after the entrance to Manor Farm is the site of the old pound. This is now an unkempt area, with a high wall on the north and west sides and a low wall on the side nearest the lane. When it was in use as a pound it would probably have been surrounded by high walls to contain any stray animal found wandering. Just beyond the pound on the opposite side of the road is Mill Cottage and then the entrance to the organic dairy. South of this is a short stretch with trees on both sides where, on summer evenings, pipistrelle bats can be seen hawking for insects.

Having reached the bridge over the Marcham brook, turn right along Trendles path. The field on the left of the path is a county wildlife site where the wild celery grows (merece in Anglo-Saxon) from which Marcham gets its name. In the summer the river bank is overgrown with Himalayan Balsam with its striking pink flower and sweet, almost sickly, smell. In the autumn, when the seed pods are ripe, the slightest touch makes them explode, sending the seeds flying in all directions. It’s also one of the food plants of the Elephant Hawk moth and we have over the years found a few caterpillars on it.



When you reach the bend in the river follow the track round to walk along the north side of a high old hedge. Counting the species of shrub in this hedge it is estimated to be at least 800 years old. In the spring you may be lucky enough to see a patch of vivid yellow upstream where the Marsh Marigolds are in flower, or a patch of cowslips or violets on the bank at the base of the hedge. After following the track for some way it makes a dogleg and it is just past here that for many years there has been a clutch or two of frogs-spawn in the ditch in the early spring.

At the end of this field the track turns right but there is a public bridleway shown on the new definitive map running left across Rocksall or Rocksill meadow. This footpath crosses the River Ock and the Nor Brook where it enters Garford Civil Parish and stops abruptly at the