

Lidlington to Flitwick		
1 <sup>st</sup> walk check	2 <sup>nd</sup> walk check	3 <sup>rd</sup> walk check
30 <sup>th</sup> August 2014		
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## Lidlington to Flitwick

**Start:** Lidlington Station

**Finish:** Flitwick station

Lidlington station, map reference SP 989 391, is 14 km east of Milton Keynes and 62m above sea level. Flitwick station, map reference TL 034 349, is 15 km north of Luton and 79m above sea level. Both are in **Central Bedfordshire**.

**Length:** 22.0 km (13.7 mi), of which 4.3 km (2.7 mi) on tarmac or concrete.

**Cumulative ascent/descent:** 380/363m. For a shorter walk, see *below* **Walk options**.

**Toughness:** 6 out of 10

**Time:** 5 hours walking time.

For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 8 hours.

**Transport:** Lidlington station is on the (Mon-Sat only) Marston Vale Line, requiring a change from either the West Coast Main Line at Bletchley, or from the Midland Mainline/Thameslink line at Bedford. Flitwick station is on the Thameslink line, stopping at West Hampstead, St. Pancras, other stops in Central London, and East Croydon. Journey times are from 73 to 83 mins from St. Pancras or Euston. The return from Flitwick to St. Pancras takes 41 to 51 mins. Buy a Lidlington return (any route) ticket.

Note that the fastest Bedford services from St. Pancras are usually East Midlands trains departing from the upper level platforms, and that Zone 6-extensions are not valid on those trains.

**Saturday Walkers' Club:** Take the first train after 9.30 hours if intending to lunch in Ampthill, and an earlier one for lunch in Maulden.

**OS Landranger Map:** 153 (Bedford & Huntingdon)

**OS Explorer Map:** 193 (Luton & Stevenage)

### Walk Notes:

This Central Bedfordshire walk starts in Marston Vale with an undulating ascent up the (Bedfordshire) Greensand Ridge, mainly through mixed woods. It then follows the waymarked Greensand Ridge Walk to open parkland in Ampthill, now with impressive views down into the Vale. Bedfordshire's largest remaining heathland is passed through en-route to Ampthill's delightful historic centre. From there it's back into the park and on to the picturesque ruin of Houghton House, again with commanding views into Marston Vale. After a stretch through ancient King's Wood the walk leads to Maulden, at times with panoramic views south to the Chiltern Hills, before finally descending from the Greensand Ridge.

The route to Flitwick is then entirely flat and leads through a couple of moors, including a captivating stretch along a narrow path through the very heart of Flitwick Moor, one of the most important wetland sites in the south east of England.

### Walk options:

**Three shortcuts** are possible, although they cut out some of the best parts of the walk.

SC I cuts 2.8 km, 49m ascent (and Cooper's Hill Heathland) pre-lunch in Ampthill (lunch is in Maulden);

SC II cuts 680m, 17m ascent and a visit to the picturesque ruin of Houghton House;

SC III cuts 1.1 km and 24m ascent through King's Wood.

Taking any combination of shortcuts involving SC I reduces the rating to **4/10**.

Taking any combination of shortcuts excluding SC I reduces the rating to **5/10**.

Detailed descriptions are contained within the main text.

Frequent buses leave Ampthill from near the recommended lunch pub to either Flitwick or Harlington stations. Some services also stop in Maulden outside The White Hart, 6.1 km from the end of the walk.

### Lunch (selected):

**The Queens Head** 20 Woburn Street, Ampthill, Bedfordshire, MK45 2HP (01525 016 292, <http://thequeensheadpub.com/>). Open 17.00-23.00 Mon-Wed, 15.00-23.00 Thu and 12.00-23.00 Fri-Sun. A Charles Wells pub.

**The Hide Bar & Lounge** 2b Woburn Street, Ampthill, Bedfordshire, MK45 2HP (01525 837 007, <http://www.thehidelounge.com/#about>). Open 09.00-15.00 Mon, 09.00-15.00 and 18.00-23.00 Tue-Wed, 09.00-23.00 Thu-Fri, 10.00-23.00 Sat and 10.00-19.00 Sun.

The Hide is located 8.0 km (4.9 mi) into the walk.

**The White Hart Ampthill** 125 Dunstable Street, Ampthill, Bedfordshire, MK45 2NG (01525 305 200, <http://www.thewhitehartampthill.co.uk/>). Open 08.00-24.00 Mon-Thu, 08.00-01.00 Fri-Sat and 08.00-23.00 Sun. Food served 08.00-22.00 Mon-Thu, 08.00-22.30 Fri-Sat and 08.00-21.00 Sun.

The White Hart Ampthill is located 8.0 km (4.9 mi) into the walk.

**The Prince of Wales** 24 Bedford Street, Ampthill, Bedfordshire, MK45 2NB (01525 840 504, <http://princeofwales-ampthill.com/>). Open 11.00-23.00 Mon-Thu and 11.00-24.00 Fri-Sat and 12.00-20.00 Sun. Food served 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-21.30 Mon-Thu, 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-22.00 Fri-Sat and 12.00-15.00 Sun. The Prince of Wales is located 8.1 km (5.0 mi) into the walk. It is a recently refurbished traditional red brick town inn, boasts a delightful restaurant, provides accommodation as well, and has a two-tiered garden, albeit subjected to some road noise.

**The White Hart at Maulden** Ampthill Road, Maulden, Bedfordshire, MK45 2DH (01525 406 118, <http://whitehartatmaulden.co.uk/>). Open 12.00-23.00 Mon-Sun. Food served 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-21.00 Mon-Fri, 12.00-21.00 Sat and 12.00-20.00 Sun. The White Hart at Maulden is located 16.5 km (10.3 mi) into the full walk and 11.9 km into it if using all three in-walk shortcuts. It is the 17<sup>th</sup> century thatched centrepiece of the village. The family friendly country dining pub restaurant has cosy beamed areas with real log fires, large gardens with a play area, and an outside dining area on a decking.

### Tea:

**The White Hart at Maulden** Ampthill Road, Maulden, Bedfordshire, MK45 2DH (01525 406 118, <http://whitehartatmaulden.co.uk/>). Open 12.00-23.00 Mon-Sun. Food served 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-21.00 Mon-Fri, 12.00-21.00 Sat and 12.00-20.00 Sun. The White Hart at Maulden is located 6.1 km (3.8 mi) from the end of the walk. It is the 17<sup>th</sup> century thatched centrepiece of the village. The family friendly country dining pub restaurant has cosy beamed areas with real log fires, large gardens with a play area, and an outside dining area on decking.

**The Crown** Station Road, Flitwick, Bedfordshire, MK45 1LA (01525 713 737, <http://www.crownflitwick.co.uk/>) Open 11.30-15.00 and 17.30-23.00 Mon-Thu, 11.30-24.00 Fri-Sat and 12.00-23.00 Sun. Food served 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-20.00 Mon-Sat and 12.00-16.00 Sun.

The Crown is located 700m from the station.

**China Inn** 7 Kings Road, Flitwick, Bedfordshire, MK45 1ED (01525 720 720).

**The Pearl of Bengal** 2A Station Square, Flitwick, Bedfordshire, MK45 1DP (01525 713 713/4, <http://pearlofbengal.com/>). Open Mon-Fri 17.30-23.00, Sat 17.00-23.00 and Sun 17.00-22.00.

**Bollywood Lounge** 8 High Street, Flitwick, Bedfordshire, MK45 1DS (01525 720 055, <http://bollywood-loungeonline.co.uk/>). Open 12.00-14.30 and 17.30-23.00.

**The Swan** 1 Dunstable Road, Flitwick, Bedfordshire, MK45 1HP (01525 754 777, <http://www.charleswellspubs.co.uk/home/pub-guide/pub/swan-flitwick>).

A Charles Wells' village local & commuter pub, located next to the railway station.

**The Bumble Bee** Coniston Road, Flitwick, Bedfordshire, MK45 1QY (01525 717 212, <http://www.gkmeetandeat.co.uk/locations/bumble-bee-flitwick>). A Greene King pub.

**The Lounge Coffee Shop** 2 Coniston Road, Flitwick, Bedfordshire, MK45 1LX (01525 716 177, <http://www.theloungeflitwick.co.uk/>). Open 7.30-17.30 Mon-Fri, 8.00-17.30 Sat and 9.00-16.00 Sun.

## Notes:

### Marston Vale Line

The Marston Vale Line was originally opened in 1845, and at one time formed a part of an Oxford to Cambridge railway, which acted as a key strategic transport link across the country. After extensive cuts, the Marston Vale Line is the only remaining section of this link, operating an hourly service in each direction Mon-Sat, although the East-West Rail Consortium plans to reopen the whole – and by then electrified – Oxford to Cambridge line.

### Marston Vale Timberland Trail

Marston Vale in Bedfordshire has a strong history of manufacturing bricks, and at one time the Coronation Brickworks was the largest brickworks in the world. The Timberland Trail is a 21 km (13 mi) waymarked circular route through it. The walk passes Ampthill Park, Jackdaw Hill, Marston Mortaine, Stewartby Lake and King's Wood and also visits the English Heritage owned ruined Houghton House, which commands excellent views of the surrounding area.

### Millbrook Vehicle Proving Ground

It was first designed by Vauxhall and Bedford Trucks with construction beginning in 1968 and operations starting in 1971. It's a purpose-built proving ground with an overall area of 700 acres, 50-60 km of tarmac and around the same off-road, and high-speed bowls. Now operated independently, the company has put many of today's top sports cars through its paces here. The track has also been the location for many episodes of the popular BBC Two series Top Gear.

Military is about one third of the business.

### Greensand Ridge

The ridge of Greensand is a distinctive feature that rises markedly from its surrounding clay vales through Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. It is an area of gently rolling hills and small valleys, heavily wooded in parts. In many places it has been planted with conifers, but there are still areas of important habitats such as heathland, acid grassland and ancient woodland remaining. The valleys of the rivers Flit and Ouzel cut through the area.

### Greensand Ridge Walk

A linear way-marked 66 km (41 mi) walk, following the outcrop of the Cretaceous (142-65 million years ago) Lower Greensand through Bedfordshire, starting at Leighton Buzzard, passing Woburn Abbey and Ampthill Park (where it connects with the John Bunyan Trail) and finishing at Gamlingay on the border with Cambridgeshire.

### John Bunyan Trail

The John Bunyan Trail is a way-marked 124 km (77 mi) circular Long Distance Path. It starts and finishes at the Sundon Hills Country Park just north of Luton and is almost entirely in Bedfordshire, while briefly passing through Hertfordshire near Hexton. The route visits many sites associated with John Bunyan, the seventeenth century Puritan evangelist and writer. He lived in Elstow, just south of Bedford, and travelled this area extensively, first through his trade as a tinker and later as a non-conformist preacher. He was arrested and tried at Harlington for preaching illegally and imprisoned at Bedford, which is where he wrote his best known work 'Pilgrim's Progress'.

### Stewartby

Known until 1935 as Wootton Pillinge, Stewartby is a model village and owes not just its name, but its very existence to the Stewart family. Owning the then London Brick Company, the Stewarts believed that good working and living conditions for the employees of their brickworks were essential. Their dream was to create settlements with all amenities included, with large houses with electricity to every home, and good sewerage. Stewartby, which rose from a few farms and a handful of buildings in 1926, was born. The results of this can be seen today, with brick buildings prevailing in a well-planned and picturesque village. The brickworks closed in 2008, as it couldn't meet UK limits for sulphur dioxide emissions. The four chimneys remaining have since been listed for preservation of Bedfordshire's brick-related history.

### Ampthill Park/Katherine's Cross

Ampthill Park is situated on the top of the Greensand Ridge with impressive views to the north over the Marston Vale. It has probably been parkland since the 15<sup>th</sup> Century when Ampthill Castle was built on the crest of the ridge, which can now only be identified by a slight unevenness in the ground. Katherine's Cross (a monument erected to commemorate Catherine of Aragon's imprisonment in the Castle, while her marriage to Henry VIII was annulled) is erected upon the buried foundations of the castle. By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the Park was associated with Ampthill Park House and was landscaped by 'Capability' Brown. In late 2015 a 5 year Landscape Improvement project was started.

### **Amphill Park House**

Is one of Bedfordshire's grand country houses, Grade II\*-listed and, despite major alterations by Sir William Chambers in 1769, still basically the house built by Cambridge architect Robert Grumbold in 1687-9 and completed by John Lumley of Northampton in 1704-6.

### **Amphill Camp Memorial Cross**

A memorial to the hutted World War I camp built by the Duke of Bedford, known as the Bedfordshire Training Depot, to train volunteers for the front line in France and Italy. The memorial is located at the site overlooking the hollow down which a total of 2235 officers and men passed when, on completion of their training, they left the camp.

### **Houghton House**

Houghton House is a ruined three-story stately home built by Lady Pembroke. The architect is presumed to be John Thorpe. The house was complete by 1621 when King James visited and was reputedly the model for "House Beautiful" in John Bunyan's masterpiece, *Pilgrim's Progress*. A grand frieze on the western front, one of the first examples of the emerging Jacobean style in Britain, may have been the work of Inigo Jones. Later it was sold to the Russell's, Dukes of Bedford. The 5<sup>th</sup> Duke leased the adjoining hunting park to a neighbouring estate, however, he could then not rent the house separately (and the house was very expensive to maintain, anyway). The solution? Pull down the house. So in 1794 the Duke stripped Houghton of its furnishings and removed the roof.

It is now a Grade I- listed ruin, an ancient monument administered by English Heritage.

Its staircase survives in the Swan Hotel in Bedford.

### **Flitwick**

Flitwick, pronounced /'flɪtɪk/, is a small town and civil parish in Central Bedfordshire, England. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book as "a hamlet on the River Flitt". Flitwick is famous for its Flitwick Manor House, currently used as a hotel. There is also physical evidence of a Norman era motte-and-bailey castle site, locally known as "The Mount".

### **Ailesbury Mausoleum & Crypt**

The impressive octagonal mausoleum and crypt were built in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century by Thomas, Earl of Elgin, in memory of his second wife Diana, daughter of the Earl of Stamford.

Mausoleum and crypt are occasionally open to visitors during the summer months.

### **Two Moors Heritage Trail**

A way-marked 8 km (5 mi) walk along the Flit River as well as through the remaining parts of Flitton and Flitwick Moors, part of what was once a much larger wet moorland, long used for peat extraction.

### **The Flit River**

The River Flit flows through Flitwick, then past Greenfield and Flitton, then through Clophill, Chicksands, and Shefford, before meeting the River Ivel at Langford. Its name is not ancient, but rather a back formation from Flitton.

### **Flitwick Moor Nature Reserve**

Now a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and one of the most important wetland sites in the south east of England, it is managed by the Wildlife Trust who owns the majority of it. It has formed where the Greensand Ridge lies close under the clay and chalk, allowing water in the underlying aquifer to come to the surface in a series of mineral-rich chalybeate springs. Deep deposits of peat built up here during thousands of years of growth of reeds and sedges, which died and fell into the relatively oxygen poor mud and water where they did not fully decay. The outcome was a series of "mires" along the river Flit. Flitwick Moor, the largest valley mire in Bedfordshire, is the sole survivor of these.

The whole of the Flit Valley from Westoning to Shefford would have been largely peat bog 200 years ago. The peat deposits are under 2,000 years old however, as Roman finds in the area are from below the peat layer. Peat was later dug from the moor for industrial use as a filter for coal gas. It was extracted via wagons that ran on movable rails and then taken to gas depots in towns to the north. This only stopped with the advent of North Sea gas.

The moor was at one time famous for its water: Flitwick Water, which between the 1890's and 1950's was bottled and sold as an iron rich blood tonic. The moor is now exceptionally important for its mosses with over 130 species of bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) – more than Wicken Fen in Cambridgeshire which is four times its size. It is also nationally important for its fungi with over 500 recorded species – again more than Wicken Fen. You can also see Cotton Grass, more usually seen on upland peat bogs, and in late spring some areas are carpeted with Golden Saxifrage.

## WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train in **Lidlington Station** and make your way back to a road running between the split platforms. Turn into the village along **Church Street** (140°) [i.e.: *turn right* if arriving from Bedford, *turn left* if arriving from Bletchley], gently uphill, soon passing **Bye Road** on the right. In 30m *turn left* at a small triangular green along **Lombard Street**. In 100m *turn right* with the road, ignoring a tarmac lane ahead. In 165m cross a road at a T-junction and walk a little to the right through bollards to continue up a grassy path with a bridleway signpost, gently ascending.

In 80m the path *turns right* and up along a fence with a **Marston Vale Timberland Trail** (MVTT) marker on a yellow-topped pole. In 195m the path *turns left* at a fence corner, then in 220m levels out briefly before descending and in 25m it *turns right*, now with a wooden fence on the left. The route now broadly follows the boundary of the **Millbrook Vehicle Proving Ground** for nearly 3 km up to and along the **Greensand Ridge**, mostly through woods, but sometimes along the boundary fence: in 250m *turn left* with the fence and the path, now with trees on the left (130°). In 160m *turn left* and steeply down with the fence, where a MVTT marker on a pole (confusingly) guides you straight ahead into the trees.

In 150m the path crosses a brook and it then meanders through a varied wood, with the also wooded **Jackdaw Hill** (on the OS map) on the right. In 630m *turn right* with the path at a boundary of wooden and barbed wire fence in a corner of the proving ground and in 50m start ascending a steep path in the wood. In 120m *turn right* at a T-junction of paths (175°) and in 25m continue in the same direction at a three-way bridleway junction at a pond, where the **Greensand Ridge Walk** (GRW) and the **John Bunyan Trail** join from the right. In 70m *turn left* at a boundary fence around a golf course (30°), ignoring a footpath through a fence gap into the golf course.

In 220m a grassy path joins from the left through a gap in the tree line and along a fence, where the path *turns right*. In 110m a narrow grassy path forks left to a viewpoint with benches, offering vistas down into the valley to the left across the **Proving Ground** and to the old brick factory in **Stewartby**, as well as some old quarries now turned into lakes. In 140m the path *turns right* before descending steeply in 75m and in another 75m it *turns left* with the fence. Eventually the fence line veers off left and you continue with a sloping hillside on the right, often through trees.

In 590m you'll see a church up on a hill on the right through a gap in the trees, this is our next destination. In 135m walk to the right of a redundant metal gate and *turn left* with the path. In 80m *turn right* at a T-junction with **Station Lane** along its grassy boundary, with the entrance of **Millbrook Vehicle Proving Ground** on the left. In 140m *turn right* with a **GRW** signpost along the grassy verge of **Sandhill Close**. In 110m pass **The Chequers** freehouse on the left, just before passing the approach lane to the golf course on the right, and continue along the pavement

In 220m *turn left* and up with a **GRW** signpost between bike barriers and along a narrow gravel path towards the church seen earlier. In 110m pass the entrance to the church yard of **St. Michael and All Angels Church, Millbrook** on the left (a footpath joins through the church yard) and continue in the same direction along a gravel lane. In 100m another footpath joins from the left through a metal gate. In 160m continue in the same direction at a four-way farm lane-, and three-way footpath-junction. In 200m continue along a narrow grassy path with a tall hedge on the right past some buildings of **Ossory Farm** (on the OS map) and with an A-road audible about 50m to the right.

In 150m the path *turns left* and takes some more turns for 160m before entering a wood along a stepped path up an embankment (deep underneath runs the **Thameslink**

**Line** in a tunnel). In 30m pass a yellow-topped pole and follow the path to the right and in 50m walk through a metal kissing gate into a grassy field to follow a clear path towards a yellow-topped pole on the opposite side (115°). In 80m cross a two-railed wooden plank bridge over a ditch and go through a wooden kissing gate into a wooded area. Ascend on a clear path and in 35m cross a sandy track in **Amphill Park** and continue with various markers on a yellow-topped pole to the right of a chestnut tree.

In 120m continue in the same direction at a footpath cross paths before the path levels out. In 40m pass a bench and enjoy open views to the left and down from the steep escarpment into **Marston Vale**, across a reservoir towards **Amphill Park House**. In 75m find **Katherine's Cross** on the right, a monument erected to commemorate Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII's first wife, who was imprisoned in **Amphill Castle**, while their marriage was annulled. It is erected upon the buried foundations of the castle. In another 80m and further set back is the **Amphill Camp Memorial Cross**.

In 250m you reach a five-way junction of grassy paths. **Here you have a choice:**

**For a shortcut**, cutting out 2.8 km and all lunch options in **Amphill**, continue along the ridge, past a set of benches, and in 180m reach a footpath signpost (**Bedford Street**) and a wooden kissing gate on the left. Pick up directions at the asterisk \*).

**For the main walk [!]** *turn right* off the main grassy path (165°) and away from the escarpment along the *second right* grassy path, through a dip and later to the left of a wooded area. In 100m continue in the same direction at a junction of grassy paths, the right of which leads into trees, broadly heading towards the right of a large playground. In 80m walk through a wooden kissing gate in a fence line with a sign for the **Woolnough Trail**, between the playground on the left and tennis courts on the right. In 40m *turn right* at the tennis court fence corner and head to the left of a wooden shack containing the **Amphill Park Hub** (refreshments) towards a car park (220°).

In 90m enter the car park and in 20m leave it to the left towards a road. In 50m you cross the road and *turn right* along the opposite pavement. In 85m *turn left* with a bridleway signpost along a tree-lined avenue and in 120m continue in the same direction with a footpath marker on a yellow-topped pole, where the bridleway forks left. In 40m pass an information board for **Cooper's Hill Nature Reserve**, Bedfordshire's largest remaining area of heathland. Continue along a sandy path between trees along the right hand boundary of the heathland. In 400m [!] *turn left* at a footpath cross paths (initially 75°). In 70m start descending and in 80m enter trees.

Pass a war memorial in a clearing and in 30m continue along a tree-lined avenue. Ignore all ways off and in 440m walk through a metal gate to the right of a large metal gate – or through a wooden gate to the right of it – into a cul-de-sac. Continue on the right along the tarmac pavement of **Alameda Road** between **The Alameda** restaurant on the right and a car park on the left towards a main road. In 80m *turn right* along **Woburn Street**. In 40m pass **The Queens Head** pub on the right and then **The Hide Bar & Lounge** in a back yard before reaching the first of two adjacent mini-roundabouts opposite the newly refurbished **The White Hart Amphill**.

The walk route *turns left* to the recommended lunch pub at the second mini-roundabout, but there are **plenty of other options** close by: on the right along **Dunstable Street** **The Coffee Pot**, **Amphill Tandoori**, **Lydia's Bakehouse**, **Dew Drop Inn**, **Fratelli** (Cucina Italiana), **Donatello's** (Pizza & Pasta), **Amphill Fish Shop** and **The Old Sun** pub. Or straight ahead along **Church Street: The Olde Coffee Shop** and **The Cottage Bakery**. *Turn left* along **Bedford Street** and in 90m pass a bus stop on the right. In a further 50m reach the lunch stop **The Prince of Wales** (for a quiet and scenic picnic spot continue the walk to the escarpment in the park or even to Houghton House).

From the **Prince of Wales** *turn right* back along **Bedford Street** and in 25m *turn right* up along **Brewery Lane**. In 50m *turn right* along a tarmac lane (**Park Hill**) between houses and in 60m *turn right* at a four-way lane and path-junction with a footpath signpost and a **MVTT** marker along a narrow gravel path (with a wall on the left and a tall hedge on the right). In 110m walk through a wooden gate into **Ampthill Park** and continue in the same direction along a forest path. In 115m go through a wooden field gate, where a track joins up from the right, and veer left into an open grassy area.

Continue uphill along the middle of three paths towards a gap in a tree line (275°). In 100m walk through the trees and in 90m continue in the same direction at a cross paths. [!] 10m further along (just before you reach two young trees) [!] *turn right* along an indistinct grassy track and walk to the left of a small mound (345°) towards the edge of the escarpment not far from where you left it earlier before lunch. In 65m *turn right* along it past a set of benches (80°). In 180m reach a footpath signpost (**Bedford Street**) and a wooden kissing gate on the left.

\*) Walk through the wooden kissing gate into **Laurel Wood** and continue along the right of two car wide forest tracks (45°), ignore all paths off and follow occasional **GRW** and **Bunyan Trail** markers on poles. In 180m *turn right* at a T-junction of tracks at the wood's fringe and in 30m continue in the same direction at a cross paths. In 40m leave the wood through a wooden kissing gate onto a road pavement. *Turn left* and up along the pavement and in 90m *turn right* and cross the road at a bend to continue along a concrete farm lane with a **GRW** and footpath signpost on the right. In 50m continue on a narrow path to the left of the lane.

In 640m pass an information board for **Houghton House** (the 'house beautiful' in **John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress**) on the left. Ignore a farm lane turning right at a garden fence corner, and pass a car park area on the left. In 135m reach a yellow-topped pole on the right by a gravel lane turning right. The walk *will turn right*, but not before visiting **Houghton House**: in 70m *turn left* through a wooden gate to the right of a wooden field gate and walk along a tree-lined avenue towards the ruin. In 200m pass an information board and in 35m enter the house. Have a look around (there are two more info boards) and check out the commanding views from the garden on the other side, then *return back* along the tree-lined avenue and to the yellow-topped pole.

*Turn left* along the gravel lane, which in 35m curves left around a barn. In 60m *ignore* the **Bunyan Trail** turning right through a small metal gate in the fence. In 540m pass a house on the left and walk through a metal kissing gate to the left of a metal field gate to continue through a grassy field. In 70m walk through a metal gate (as part of a metal field gate) left of a metal kissing gate into **King's Wood and Glebe Meadows Local Nature Reserve**, ignoring the metal field gate to the right of the kissing gate.

[Unless a sign tells you that the Permissive Paths through the wood are temporarily closed, in which case follow this **Shortcut to cut out 1060m through King's Wood: do not** walk through the metal gate (as part of a metal field gate) left of a metal kissing gate into the wood, **but rather** walk through the metal kissing gate to the left of another metal field gate and continue in the same direction along a wide grassy field boundary with footpath and **MVTT** markers and with the wood on your left. In 370m a path joins from the left out of the wood through a gap in the trees. This is the main walk. *Turn right* and pick up directions one paragraph down at the double asterisk \*\*).]

In 30m *fork left* along a forest trail (40°), ignoring the right hand Permissive Footpath along the fringe of the wood. The path bends left through the wood and eventually starts descending deeper into the wood. In 750m [!] *turn right* (75°) at a four-way junction with a Permissive Footpath marker on a wooden pole, where our previous path

continues steeply downhill further into the wood. In 110m *turn right* at a T-junction along another forest track, with the fringe of the wood now about 30m to the left (160°). The path meanders through the wood and in 160m follows the fringe of the wood, now with a large field behind the trees. In another 370m [!] *turn left* out of the wood through an unmarked gap in the trees into a large field, with a footpath (the **MVTT**) running left-to-right along the field boundary. Cross the footpath.

**\*\***) Continue along a gravel-and-earth track with a hedge on the left (100°) towards the buildings of **Brickhill Pastures** (on the OS map). In 160m enter the farm grounds through two sets of metal field gates. Follow the concrete track between farm buildings on the left and the farm house on the right and in 190m leave the farm grounds through a usually open double wooden field gate. In 220m a footpath crosses left to right. In 240m *turn left* along a road at a T-junction at a bend. In 270m *turn right* opposite **Meadowside House** with a footpath signpost through a metal kissing gate in a hedge gap into a narrow grassy field. Cross the field on a clear path and in 140m leave it through another metal kissing gate.

*Turn left* along a field boundary and in 15m *turn right* along a car wide grassy farm track between fields (due S). The ground slopes off on the right, opening up views into the **Flit Valley** to **Amphill** and **Flitwick**, with the **Chiltern Chain** behind in the distance. In 130m the next field on the left slopes off as well, now offering views over **Maulden Wood** on the left to **Barton Hills**, the easterly end of **The Chilterns** (SWC Walk Leagrave to Harlington), as well as dead ahead to the prominent water tower in **Pulloxhill** (SWC Walk Harlington to Flitwick). In 300m you reach the boundary of the field on the right at a corner and [!] walk through a metal kissing gate in the hedge into a large grassy field. Continue in the same direction along its left hand boundary.

In 390m enter **Maulden Church Meadow Local Nature Reserve** through a metal kissing gate in a hedge to *veer right* around an – often dry – pond. In 40m a footpath joins from the left out of trees through a kissing gate (SWC Walk Flitwick Circular). In 50m *fork left* (195°), keep to the right of another pond and to the left of a clump of trees. In 270m leave the meadow through a kissing gate by an information board. In 25m *turn right* through a metal gate into the church yard of **St. Mary the Virgin, Maulden** with the octagonal **Ailesbury Mausoleum & Crypt** to the right of the church.

Leave the church yard on the other side of the church in the south easterly corner through a metal gate and down towards **Maulden** village along a tarmac track between fences (230°). In 200m *turn right* at a T-junction with a road. In 20m *turn left* along **The Knoll**, a tarmac lane. In 60m continue to the right of a house along a narrow tarmac lane and in 100m reach **Amphill Road**. [**The White Hart at Maulden**, a recommended **early tea option**, and **the lunch option on the short walk**, is 300m down the right along the road]. Cross the road and continue 10m to the right along a gravel lane with a footpath signpost on the left.

In 50m walk through a metal gate to the left of a wooden field gate and continue along a grassy path. In 140m go through a metal gate into a grassy field and follow its left hand boundary, with allotment gardens on the left a little below. In 110m cross a tarmac lane and continue along a grassy path with a footpath signpost. In 90m cross a car wide track and continue along a narrower grassy path, with allotments on the right and a fence and trees on the left. In 65m you reach a tarmac lane where you *turn left*. In 180m pass the entrance to **Duck End Nature Reserve** (the remnants of **Maulden Moor**) on the right. In 75m walk through a metal kissing gate left of a metal field gate and continue along a grassy farm track between fences. Ahead you see the church tower in **Flitton** and **Pulloxhill Water Tower**.



In 350m *turn right* at a three-way footpath junction along a gravel farm track between fences in the general direction of a large white silo in **Flitwick**, with **Flitwick Wood** behind it. In 270m *turn left* with a footpath marker on a pole at a three-way farm track junction. Over the next 400m walk through three metal gates to the right of metal field gates, as you pass **Black Moor Farm (Business Park)**. Cross **New Road** and continue with a footpath signpost a little to the right along a narrow earthen path with a brook on the left and a brick wall on the right. In 70m walk through a usually open field gate and continue to the left of a metal bar fence with **Brookside Farm** on the right.

In 75m the fence ends and you continue in the same direction along a field boundary. In 60m you *veer right* across the field with a footpath marker on a pole along a usually well-cleared path (due S). In 130m on the opposite field boundary go through a metal kissing gate and continue on a clear path through an overgrown grassy area towards a road. In 30m *turn right* along the grassy road verge and in 30m *turn left* to cross the road. Cross a stile in a hedge gap and *veer right* across a grassy field (190°). In 90m *turn left* through a metal gate and over a two-railed bridge over a brook into **Flitton Moor (Local Nature Reserve)** ignoring a footpath continuing in the same direction.

*Turn left* along the grassy **Two Moors Heritage Trail** with a fence on the right. In 20m *turn right* with the path and in 180m *turn right* at a T-junction with a gravel path, with the **River Flit** on the left and **Flitton Moor** now on the right. In 620m *turn left* with a bridleway marker over a two-railed concrete bridge spanning the river and leave the **Two Moors Heritage Trail**. In 120m *turn right* with the concrete-and-grass path where a footpath joins from the left. In 80m *turn right* through a kissing gate to the right of a field gate along an earthen path. In 90m cross a two-railed concrete bridge over the **Flit** and go through a kissing gate into the grassy **Maggots Moor**, part of **Flitwick Moor Nature Reserve**.

Ignore the path turning left along the fence and take the equally obvious path *straight across the meadow* (initially 260°). On your left the **old course of The Flit** is marked by meandering depressions, edged by trees growing on the old river-banks. In 90m fork left where the path splits. In 170m in the far corner walk through a set of metal gates either side of a two-railed wooden plank bridge and *turn right* with a footpath marker in a grassy meadow along its right hand side. In 65m walk through a wooden kissing gate in the meadow corner and continue with a footpath marker along a forest track.

In 110m you reach a two-railed wooden plank bridge over a stream and **[!]** *turn left immediately before it* along a narrow and bumpy path through the moor, over tree roots and with bogs and streams to the sides.

**[Don't take this path in fading light or darkness**, in that case: cross the bridge, continue in the same direction, in 200m fork left – about 40m before a car park on the fringe of the wood – and in 100m *turn left* at a T-junction with a path along the fringe of the wood. In 200m reach a four-way track junction. The main route joins from the left.]

In 20m cross a railed wooden plank bridge and in 310m *turn right* at a track T-junction. In 170m *turn left* at a four-way track junction with a **Two Moors Heritage Trail**-marker on a yellow-topped pole with a fence on the left (and still through trees), where a track joins from the right (the fading light alternative route). In 110m emerge from the wooded area and continue along a field boundary which soon curves right. In 180m *turn left* with the boundary towards the houses of **Flitwick**, where a footpath joins from the right across the field.

In 140m *turn right* at a T-junction with **Moor Lane** and in 55m reach **Maulden Road** and *turn left along it*. In 80m cross **Kings Road** (the **direct route to the station** turns right along this busy road) and continue along **Station Road**. In 175m reach the

recommended (pub) tea stop **The Crown**. Follow the road for 550m to a roundabout with the station on the left.

**Here either:**

- *turn right* on a dog leg into **King's Road** (to the left of war memorial) to reach the **China Inn** in 75m;
- *turn right* along **The Avenue** to find **The Pearl of Bengal** on the right;
- cross the roundabout and walk along **High Street** to reach the **Bollywood Lounge** in 100m;
- *turn left* and in 50m *turn right* through a wall gap into **Flitwick Station** (*turn right* to Platform 1);
- *turn left*, cross the railway bridge and find **The Swan** pub on the left;
- or *turn left*, cross the railway bridge and walk down **Coniston Road** to reach **The Bumble Bee** pub in 150m, and in another 50m the recommended **Lounge Coffee Shop** on the corner of a superstore building.