

SWC 115: Moreton-in-Marsh Circular via Longborough

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1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check
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Start: Moreton-in-Marsh Train Station

Finish: Moreton-in-Marsh Train Station

Length: 12.5 miles (20.1 kilometers). For a longer variant in this area with the same start and finish, see SWC Walk 288.

It is possible to shorten the walk by 3 miles/4.8 km by catching a bus number 1 from Blockley.

Difficulty: 5 out of 10

Time: 7-9 hours, including transportation, lunch, afternoon refreshment stops and time spent admiring views and sites.

Transport: Take the train closest to 10:00am from **London Paddington**. Return trains run hourly. Buy a day return to Moreton-in-Marsh.

Lunch/Tea: The recommended lunch stop is the **Coach & Horses in Longborough** (01451 830 325), 3.5 miles (5.6 km) into the walk. It serves food from 11:00-2:30pm Monday to Thursday and all day on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

The recommended tea stop is the **Blockley Village Shop and Café**, a community run venture (01386 701411/blockleyshop.com). It is open until 4:00 pm (3:00 pm on Sunday). If the café is closed (or you prefer something stronger), the **Great Western Arms in Blockley** (01386 700 362/thegreatwesternarms.co.uk) also serves a variety of beverages (including tea). It is open from 5:30pm Monday-Friday and all day on Saturday and Sunday.

Moreton-in-Marsh has a number of options for post walk libations. Some recommendations include the **Bell Inn** (reputedly a haunt of J.R.R. Tolkien) and the **Black Bear Inn**. **Hassan Balti** serves good Indian food (also available on a take-out basis to eat on the train – don't forget to ask for plastic cutlery!)

Map: OL 45 OS Explorer

Walk Summary:

This walk is a lovely little introduction to the Cotswold Hills near Moreton-in-Marsh. It is effectively the shorter circular route of SWC 288 as a stand-alone set of instructions. Although missing out on the drama of the escarpment, the walk climbs several gentle hills affording some great views of the surrounding territory. It passes through the charming Cotswold villages of **Longborough** and **Blockley**.

Features of Interest:

Longborough: The village of Longborough is home to the **Longborough Festival Opera** each year in June and July. The theatre is a converted barn using seats from the Royal Opera House which were going to be discarded after the refurbishment of the Royal Opera House in the late 1990s. It specializes in operas by Wagner.

Moreton-in-Marsh: Moreton-in-Marsh is one of the principal market towns in the Northern Cotswolds, Gloucestershire located on the **Roman Fosse Way** (a Roman road that linked Exeter and Lincoln). It grew up as a market town during the 13th century and there is still an active market on Tuesdays. Buildings of note include the **Redesdale Market Hall** (erected in 1887) located on the High Street and the **Curfew Tower** (probably the oldest building in the village dating from the 16th century) located at the corner of the High Street and Oxford Street. The bell was rung nightly until 1860 to warn people of the risks of fire at night. Moreton means "Farmstead on the Moor" and "in Marsh" comes from *henne* and *mersh*, meaning a marsh used by birds such as moorhens. An alternative suggestion is that Marsh is a corruption of March, an early English word for boundary.

Monarch's Way: The Monarch's Way is a 615 mile (990 km) long-distance footpath that approximates the escape route taken by **King Charles II** in 1651 after being defeated at the **Battle of Worcester**. It runs from Worcester to Brighton (via Bristol and Yeovil).

Ridge and furrow: A medieval agricultural technique evidence of which is present towards the end of the walk. It is basically the result of plowing the same strip of land with non-reversible plows each year. It is visible on land plowed in the Middle Ages but not since.

Main Walk Instructions:

1. Leaving the station platform, enter the car park and *turn left*. In 40 meters follow the road as it curves around to the right leaving the car park. In 60 meters at a three-way road junction (with Station Road heading off to the left) *turn right*.
2. In 90 meters at the High Street, *turn left*. In 75 meters cross the High Street at the traffic lights, pass through a parking area and then cross a smaller slip road and *turn left* to carry on in the same direction along the High Street. In 50 meters, you pass by the old market building, **Redesdale Market Hall**, built in 1887 on the left. *Also of note, the **Curfew Tower** (the oldest building in town dating from the 16th Century) is located on the opposite side of the High Street (almost opposite the Coop) at its junction with Oxford Street. The bell was rung nightly until 1860 to warn people of the risk of fire.* In 70 further meters, cross Bourton road to carry on in the same direction.
3. In 120 meters at Parkers Lane with the **Inn on the Marsh** visible ahead on the right in 30 meters, *turn right* onto Parkers Lane with a pond on the left-hand side.

4. In 170 meters at the end of Parkers Lane, *turn left* along a small lane following a public footpath sign (with a small Monarch's Way marker). In 100 meters carry on ahead along a wide grassy strip with houses on the left and a ditch and hedges on the right. In 140 meters, the grassy strip narrows into a path between hedges (having become slightly narrower over the prior 50 meters or so).
5. In 100 meters go through a sometimes open metal field gate with a yellow footpath arrow and Monarch's Way marker on the left-hand side and *turn half right* in the direction indicated by the footpath arrow. In 60 meters go through some wooden barriers to carry on in the same direction on the right-hand side of the next field with field boundary hedges on the right-hand side.
6. In 250 meters at a junction with another large arable field, *turn right* to follow a footpath sign on the left along the right-hand side of the field with a boundary hedge on the right. In 250 meters continue ahead into the next field still with hedge boundaries on the right-hand side (passing on your left a large tree and another hedge boundary running perpendicular down the field). In 250 further meters continue straight ahead into the next field again passing a field boundary running perpendicular on the left and following a yellow public footpath sign with a Monarch's Way marker 20 meters ahead on the right.
7. 40 meters after passing the post, *veer half left* (your direction 210°) across the field on a clear path through the crop (if planted). In 30 meters continue along this path as it curves to the right (your direction now 240°) and in 110 meters emerge from the field onto its boundary edge with a large tree in front of you to the left with a footpath arrow and Monarch's Way marker and carry on straight ahead as indicated by the footpath arrow on the tree. *Alternatively, if the field is not planted or the path not clear, continue along the field edge and in 230 meters at the right-hand corner of the field turn left to carry along the right-hand side of the field and in 45 meters at a large oak tree with a footpath sign and Monarch's Way marker, turn right.*
8. In 10 meters pass through a metal field gate that is usually open to follow a public footpath sign with a Monarch's Way marker now on the left-hand side of a field with a boundary hedge to the left. In 250 meters go through a wooden field gate to carry on across the next field in the same direction following a public footpath sign with a Monarch's Way marker.
9. [!] In 140 meters at a large wooden stump in the middle of the field (with a small fenced-in wood about 30 meters ahead to the right), *turn right* along a hard to see path through the grass following a footpath arrow located on the left-hand side of the stump (now leaving the Monarch's Way). Carry along this path which generally follows the line of the wood on the left (about 30 meters away). In 90 meters pass to the left of a short post with a footpath arrow to *veer slightly left* following the arrow along the left-hand side of the grassy field.
10. In 90 meters follow the path as it *curves around left* at the end of the wood towards a wooden field gate. In 30 meters go through the wooden field gate and *veer half right* in the direction of the footpath arrow across a large grassy field towards the left-hand side of some farm out buildings in the far left-hand corner of the field. *Note: If there are animals in the field that there is a permissive route that runs the perimeter of the field over the stile to the left. Also, if the grass is long, you may want to walk along the perimeter of the field within the fence.* In 250 meters, the route joins a stony track and passes through a wooden field gate by the farm buildings on the right. In 30 meters go through another wooden field gate to carry on in the same direction. In 90 meters, the track passes by an area of concrete where you carry on in the same direction eventually along a tarmac track on the right-hand side of the field. In 230 meters continue along the tarmac track as it *curves left* at the field corner.

11. In 80 meters *turn right* with the tarmac track and go through a wooden field gate. In 60 meters go over a cattle grid and in 380 meters pass through a sometimes open wooden field gate (or over a stile to its left) to continue along the tarmac track gently uphill. In a further 110 meters pass to the left of the Keeper's Cottage on the right-hand side.
12. In 75 meters at the top of the field (just before another cattle grid) *turn left* to carry along the top right-hand edge of a grassy field with a boundary hedge on the right. In 75 meters carry on straight ahead through a sometimes open wooden field gate (or, if the gate is closed, *turn right* to cross a stile on the right and immediately *turn left* to carry on in the same direction). In 60 meters go through a metal gate to the right of a wooden field gate to carry on in the same direction (*noting the artistry of the gate handle as you pass through*) with a small wood now on your right. In 40 meters emerge into a large arable field to carry along its left-hand side with great views to the left of the Evenlode valley with Adlestrop and Chastleton Hill and Barrow (hill fort) in the distance. In 550 meters where there is a field boundary running perpendicular off to the right and a wooden post to the left with public footpath signs and Heart of England Way marker pointing straight ahead, carry on straight ahead. In 160 meters go through a wooden gate and pass by the back of the church and its churchyard to the left. In 50 meters carry on ahead along a tarmac lane to emerge in a further 40 meters at a junction with another tarmac lane where you *turn left* to find **The Coach and Horses** pub, in 30 meters on the right.
13. Leaving the pub after lunch, *turn left* and in 575 meters at a T-Junction at a small triangular green with a three-armed sign post, continue ahead through a wooden gate into a wood, following a yellow footpath arrow on the right-hand side. *Before entering into the woods, turn around and enjoy the view behind you with Moreton-in-Marsh in the valley below.* Continue through the wood on the clear main path which is part gravel, tarmac and dirt (ignoring vague routes off to the right and left) and in 120 meters ignore a clear fork to the left to continue on the right fork and in a further 80 meters go through a wooden gate and emerge onto a somewhat busy road.
14. Cross the road carefully and *turn right* and *immediately left* to head down a tarmac lane sign posted Luckley and Condicote.
15. In 100 meters, *turn right* into some woods along a footpath (sign posted Hinchwick) which may be overgrown during the summer.
16. In 50 meters emerge from the woods and *turn right* onto a car wide dirt track. In 350 meters, the track starts to descend slightly and in a further 250 meters it makes a more pronounced dip with a small group of trees to the left. In a further 220 meters on the far side of the dip you pass a house on the right and at some point past the house the track turns into a horse gallop – so be aware of any horses and walk along the elevated grassy track on the left.
17. [!] In 680 meters where the gallop starts dipping and curving to the left, *cross the gallop* and continue straight ahead on a footpath downhill on the right-hand side of a grassy field following a footpath sign on a post off to the right. In 70 meters follow the footpath between a gap in a stone wall deeply down into a dip. In 80 meters at the bottom of the dip go through a wooden gate to carry on up the hill on the other side.
18. On top of the far side of the dip, pause to catch your breath and look back at the lovely views, then, cross over a stile into a field and go *half left* (your direction 270°) across the field aiming for the left of a small clump of trees in front of you. (*Alternatively, if the field has been planted, follow the clear path straight ahead towards the trees and in 45 meters turn left to follow the edge of the wood on your right*

for 20 meters where you turn right with the wood edge). In 45 meters, at the clump of trees, carry along the right-hand edge of the field with the trees on your right. Regardless of route, in 50 meters, you pass by (on the right-hand side) a rather dramatic tombstone for Haze and Michael Asquith whose ashes were scattered nearby.

19. In a further 50 meters (with impressive views of Hinchwick Manor below in the valley) cross over a stile into a field and *veer half right* (your direction 310°) diagonally downhill aiming for a small white broken disc on a fence post just in front of a stone wall and a small wood roughly 60 meters ahead (if the grass is long, the broken disc may not initially be visible – but will become so as you approach).
20. At the stone wall, *turn left* to continue downhill with the stone wall and wood on your right-hand side.
21. In 260 meters at the bottom of the hill in the lower right-hand corner of the field *turn right* to exit the field by a metal field gate and *turn left* onto a lane.
22. In 40 meters at a public bridleway signpost and a potentially muddy car-wide track, *turn right* on the bridleway and in 50 meters continue uphill into a light wood along a stony dirt track. In 190 meters towards the top of the hill at a footpath post where the path begins to level out *take the left-hand fork* to follow the footpath arrow along a wide track in the woods along the top of the hill. Ignore all ways off as the path gently contours around to the right.
23. In 760 meters go through a wooden gate to emerge into an open grassy field and follow the public bridleway arrow on the gate to contour along the left-hand side of the field with a valley becoming visible below to the left. As you continue to contour around stay above the valley with an arable field off to your right (about 30-40 meters away).
24. In 500 meters, you come to the crest of a dip with a line of small trees and bushes leading down to the valley on the left and a metal field gate with a stile to its right visible to the right in the bottom of the dip, *veer half-right* aiming for the metal field gate.
25. In a further 50 meters *turn right* to go through the metal field gate (or cross the stile) to continue up the left-hand side of the arable field following a white footpath arrow on the gate.
26. In 160 meters at the top left-hand corner of the field with a stonewall on the left go through the wooden gate onto a farm track and *turn right*. In 25 meters follow the farm track as it curves around to the left. In 200 meters (about 10 meters before a large conifer windbreak) *veer left* with the farm track, staying to the left of the large trees.
27. In 100 meters at the end of the line of conifers and a T-junction with another farm track, *turn left*.
28. In 50 meters *turn right* to pass through a wooden gate in a stone wall to carry along the top left-hand edge of a field which slopes down to the right. In 300 meters continue ahead through a wooden gate and *veer half-right* diagonally down across the next grassy field aiming for the lower left-hand corner if looking downhill in the field having turned half-right (NOT the upper left-hand corner which would require veering left and also ignoring the stile more directly right). In 200 meters (about 20 meters before the lower left-hand corner of the field) *veer right* to go over a stile to the right of a metal field gate following a public bridleway arrow now downhill between trees. In 40 meters continue along the car-wide slightly rutted track as it curves to the right downhill towards a metal field gate.
29. In 30 meters go through the metal field gate and *turn left* to follow a clear path along the left-hand side of an undulating field with a stone wall and wooden and wire fence to the left and some small trees/bushes to the right.
30. In 180 meters after going slightly uphill still with a wire and wood fence to the left, go through a metal field gate to emerge in 5 meters onto a tarmac lane which you cross and *turn left and immediately*

- right* to head in largely the same direction as before down a tarmac drive with a Far Upton Wold Private Drive sign post with a public footpath arrow. In 100 meters continue straight ahead passing some farm buildings, the one on the left being habitable and the ones on the right somewhat less so.
31. In 60 meters pass the last structure on the right and go over a cattle grid (or through a wooden field gate adjacent to it) to carry on slightly to the right along the grass to the right of the tarmac drive and left of a boggy stream aiming towards the right-hand side of a group of trees sticking into the field from the left. About 10 meters before the trees, cross over the boggy area in the field and carry on slightly to *the right and then left* basically around the group of trees eventually aiming for a wooden gate and stile ahead (your direction due North – once over the boggy bit and standing flush with the end of trees in the bottom of the valley). *Do not head up the right side of the valley – but continue ahead in the bottom with the trees on your left initially.* In 80 meters go through the wooden gate, now with stonewall and little wood on your right-hand side and an open field on the left. In 140 meters go through a metal field gate to carry on in the same direction along a farm track that runs along the right-hand edge of a field with a wire fence on the right.
 32. In 35 meters pass through a metal field gate to continue ahead uphill on the left-hand side of a field with a wire fence to the left. *Note: If for some reason the gate is locked, you can also walk up the left side of the fence and pass back across through a wooden field gate at the end of the field – the right of way, however, is on the right-hand side.*
 33. In 390 meters go over a stile to the left of a metal field gate to emerge onto a busy A road where you *turn right* to walk along the grassy verge.
 34. In 20 meters cross the road with care to follow a public footpath sign down a clear path through a wooden gate into a small wood. In 25 meters where a track joins from the left *veer slightly right and then left* to emerge in 10 meters into a large arable field with some lovely views straight ahead. Carry on straight ahead along the farm track between fields. In 260 meters at the far end of the field where another farm track joins from the left, continue straight ahead through some field hedge boundaries in the same direction along a wide farm track gently downhill. In 200 meters carry on straight ahead on the farm track as you pass through a gap in some boundary walls and hedges, now with some boundary hedges on the left and a field on the right. In 180 meters pass by Warren Farm Cottage on your left-hand side and carry along the track as it curves to the left and right and left again to continue in largely the same direction downhill ultimately with a boundary hedge on the left and a field on the right. *Ignore the farm track that goes off to the right slightly uphill!* In 80 meters, the boundary hedge on the left falls away and you are now walking between arable fields. In 100 meters carry on straight ahead downhill on the track which begins to narrow as you enter a light wood with the track ultimately curving to the right with a drop to the left.
 35. In 200 meters pass to the left of a green barrier to carry on ahead to join a tarmac lane in 10 meters where you *turn right* with the buildings of Blockley ahead.
 36. In 100 meters at a T-junction with another tarmac lane, *turn left*. In 75 meters at a public footpath sign post on the right-hand side, carry on ahead and in a further 350 meters at a T-junction with a lane coming up on the right, continue ahead (ignoring the Heart of England Way footpath sign) to pass the Crown Inn on the left-hand side in 40 meters. In a further 80 meters where the lane forks right to the church, carry on straight along Bell Lane between stone buildings. In 50 meters, you arrive at the **Blockley Shop & Café**. To catch the bus, *turn left* to walk up the left-hand side of the village green towards the stone bus shelter on the right at the top of the green in 100 meters.

37. To continue on to Moreton-in-Marsh from the **Blockley Shop & Café**, *turn right (or left if leaving the café)* to take the concrete pathway towards the church. In 45 meters in front of the church, *turn left* at the T-junction to walk downhill with the church on your right-hand side. In 45 meters pass through a metal barrier to *veer right* down a steep tarmac drive with a railing on the side to emerge in 40 meters onto a main road. On the main road, **you have a choice**:
- a. to visit the **Great Western Arms** pub, *turn left* and the pub will be about 50 meters down the road on the right (leaving the pub retrace your steps back); or
 - b. to continue with the walk, cross the road and *turn right* and in 210 meters (65 meters past a road with a Pasture Farm arrow), *fork left* at a public footpath post marked with Heart of England and Monarch's Way emblems along an initially wide stony track gently uphill (ignoring the small path continuing ahead parallel to the road).
38. In 70 meters go through a metal field gate (or over a stile to its left) into a field to carry on in the same direction on the left-hand side of the field with field boundary hedges on your left.
39. In 100 meters pass through another field gate (or go over a stile to its right) at a field boundary and *veer half right* in the direction of a footpath arrow on the gate with Heart of England and Monarch's Way markers to carry on diagonally up across the field. In 175 meters cross a stile to continue uphill in the same general direction as indicated by the footpath markers (Heart of England and Monarch's Way) towards a marker post visible 60 meters ahead and continue to follow the line of marker posts up the hill.
40. In 420 meters, at the top of the hill in the upper left-hand corner of the field, cross a stile to the left of a metal field gate and *turn left* to follow Heart of England and Monarch's Way sign posts along the crest of the ridge with Blockley down in the valley on the left-hand side. *Don't forget to look back and admire the view and breathe a sigh of relief at having just completed the last climb of the day....*
41. In 100 meters, pass through a wooden gate and *turn right* following a footpath sign post with a Monarch's Way sign to go along the right-hand edge of a field with a line of trees on your right. In 260 meters pass by a field boundary on the left to carry on in the same direction along a farm track with a wall on the right. In a further 170 meters pass through a usually open metal field gate to continue in the same direction still following the Heart of England and Monarch's Way along a car wide dirt track for another 45 meters up to a T-junction with a road. Cross over the road and follow the public footpath signs (Heart of England Way and Monarch's Way) over a stile to the right of a wooden gate and stone wall to carry on in the same direction eventually downhill with a wall on your left.
42. In 420 meters at a footpath post on the right continue straight ahead over a path with a wooden gate to the left still following the Heart of England and Monarch's Way. In a further 35 meters the path joins a wider car wide track where you *turn left* to carry on downhill with the valley ahead of you on the right.
43. In 340 meters, at a fork in the track with a public footpath sign (Heart of England and Monarch's Way markers), *take the right-hand fork* (the narrower of the options). In 30 meters, cross a stile into a field to follow the Heart of England/Monarch's Way in the same direction gently downhill through a meadow (with evidence of **ridge and furrow** agriculture to the right).
44. In 150 meters pass through a wooden gate to the left of a wooden field gate and *turn right* along the grassy verge of a tarmac lane and in 5 meters *turn left* to cross the lane and pass through a wooden gate in 10 meters to cross another meadow still following the Monarch's Way footpath (with more evidence of **ridge and furrow** agriculture in the field to the right). In 120 meters veer slightly left with

the path and in a further 120 meters continue over a little wooden bridge before a wooden kissing gate to continue in the same direction on a clear path across the next field still on the Heart of England/Monarch's Way aiming for the left corner of the field. In 180 meters pass through a wooden kissing gate to carry on in the same direction with a barbed wire fence and field boundary on the left-hand side. In 250 meters cross over a narrow stone bridge with metal railings to carry on in the same direction. In a further 40 meters pass over a two-plank bridge and pass through a wooden kissing gate to carry on in the same direction through another meadow with the path curving slightly left. In 140 meters go through wood railings to carry on in the same direction still following a Monarch's Way footpath marker. In 150 meters, pass through a wooden gate to continue in the same direction now on a broad path across a field with a steeple in Moreton-in-Marsh directly ahead of you. In another 260 meters pass through another wooden kissing gate to carry on in the same direction. In 100 meters pass a redundant/broken wooden kissing gate on the left to carry on in the same direction still following the Monarch's Way. In 110 meters go through a wooden kissing gate and cross over a 3-plank bridge to carry on towards a footpath post.

45. In 50 meters at the footpath post, *turn left* through a wooden kissing gate in a gap in the boundary hedges on the left-hand side and then *turn right* to continue along the right-hand side of the next field with boundary hedges on the right heading towards the buildings of Moreton-in-Marsh.
46. In 100 meters follow the path as it *veers half left* through the field. In 150 meters pass through a metal kissing gate to continue down a gravel path with allotments on the left and hedges on the right. In 100 meters, cross a tarmac lane and continue down a tarmac lane to reach the High Street of Moreton-in-Marsh in a further 90 meters with a variety of post walk refreshments available, including a **Coop** immediately on your right and **Hassan Balti**, an Indian restaurant, 200 meters to the left on the left. To go directly to the **Station**, cross the slip road and *turn left* through a parking/market area to cross the High Street at the street lights. After crossing the High Street *turn left* along the pavement and then in 60 meters shortly past the ASK restaurant, *turn right* to retrace your steps from this morning back to the Station. Alternatively, enjoy some refreshments along the High Street and then make your way to the Station.
47. For those going to **Hassan Balti**, coming out of the restaurant, *turn left*. In 50 meters when the slip road curves right towards the High Street, cross the High Street and *turn left* along the pavement with a wall on the right and in 20 meters follow the pavement around to the right onto a tarmac path with a grocery store for any last minute train supplies 20 meters on the left. In a further 40 meters you emerge into the car park for the Station. Trains to London are on the far platform.