

ISE VALLEY VAGABONDS

Marston Vale Timberland Trail BWF App No PT196

START & FINISH: The Forest Centre, Station Road, Marston Moretaine, Bedford
MK43 0PR

OS map 153 Grid Ref TL005417 Distance 21km

Fee £1.00 Patch £2.00

Route last updated on 19 May 2013

This route description is valid from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017

This walk has been established by members of the Ise Valley Vagabonds Walking Club (BWF Club No 70) and is a qualifying event in the IVV award scheme. It can be walked at any time.

Notes

- 1 As this is a circular trail, there are many ways and places to start it. The description here is for a days walking from the Forest Centre at Marston Moretaine.
- 2 Call in at the Forest Centre for a descriptive leaflet on the Timberland Trail before departure.
- 3 A range of refreshment and information services is available in the Forest Centre.
- 4 The trail is clearly marked with way-marker discs depicting an arrow with a tree superimposed and the words Marston Vale Timberland Trail.
- 5 All sections of the described trail are open to the public at all times.
- 6 Keep to the paths at all times, be aware and careful of traffic when using or traversing roads.
- 7 Keep dogs under close control.
- 8 Remember that the Forest Centre Car Park is locked up at 18.00 hours on Mondays to Fridays and at 17.00 hours on Saturdays and Sundays.
- 9 Crossing the flat vale farmland can be heavy going in winter, as the clay will stick to your boots.

With the Forest Centre behind you, go straight ahead on the paved path and go through a metal kissing gate. Turn left on the path. After 700 meters turn left through the kissing gate, cross the access road and go through the next kissing gate, still in the country park. Follow the path as it heads towards a row of houses. The way-marked trail will lead you out of the country park at the Jubilee Cottages footpath entrance. Turn right to the kissing gate by the houses; these are Jubilee Cottages. Go through the kissing gate and leave the country park, cross the road (Station Road) to the footpath opposite, to head towards Marston Church. (Alternative in wet weather, at Jubilee Cottages turn left and ahead to take the road to Lidlington as far as Lombard Street). Before the bridge, turn left beside the brook, to begin to cross the vale. Marston Church will now be to your right and the Greensand Ridge in front of you. After 100 meters, at marker post, bear left diagonally across the field on the way-marked path towards the yellow marker post. Go through the bushes and trees and go straight across the next field, again towards a yellow marker post. In the third field, to stay on the path, bear slightly left towards the next yellow marker post. Keep ahead through the fourth field and in the fifth field, bear left again heading towards the ladder stile beside the railway line. Taking great care, using ladder stiles at either side of the track, cross the Bedford to Bletchley railway. Enter Lidlington by going

right towards the yellow marker post by the lamppost and house (The Grove). (*The train station is a short walk off the trail to the right, as are the shops and pubs. The Green Man is open for lunches daily from 12.00 noon to 2.30pm daily except Mondays*). At the road, turn left; this is Lombard Street. Go ahead to the T junction, cross straight over the road towards the wooden hut (Scout Hut) to begin the climb up Jackdaw Hill following the Timberland Trail waymarkers all the way up. *Rising and falling for about 2km, this part of the walk takes you round the car industry proving grounds, to your left – you will get occasional glimpses (scenes from the James Bond film, Casino Royale were shot here) and onto Bedfordshire's premier route, the Greensand Ridge Walk.* At the top of the hill, at the T junction with the golf course directly in front of you, turn left. The path soon bears right around the edge of the golf course. *The highest point of the trail is on this section, with stunning views across the vale. As the view opens up, you will find some seats set off to the left of the trail on which to take a break.* Continue ahead, generally downhill, until you come to the Greensand Ridge Walk car park and ahead to the road.

QUESTION 1. LOOK TO YOUR LEFT TO THE ENTRANCE TO THE PROVING GROUNDS. WHAT IS THE NAME OF THEM?

Turn right at the road up Station Lane. As you enter Millbrook village, **DO NOT** turn right into Sandhill Close, but keep straight ahead; this is also Sandhill Close, then, after 200 meters, turn right into Russell Grove. Keep straight ahead to the wooden gate. Take the narrow path between the fence and hedge, passing the red-brick farmhouse on the left. Go through the metal gate and ahead on the track going past more farm buildings. After passing the farm buildings, keep straight ahead uphill on the grass track. At the end of this track, go through the metal gate and turn left. At the track crossroads, keep straight ahead, at first on the wide track then on the narrower path between fences, conifer trees to the right. *To the left you can see the twin hangers that housed the R101 airship.* At the T junction, turn left, then in a few meters turn right and go up the steps then through the small wood. Go through the metal kissing gate, then straight ahead across the small field towards the yellow marker post. Go through the wooden kissing gate into Ampthill Park; there is a distinct lack of waymarkers through the park. Go straight ahead uphill, following yellow waymarker posts. Keeping in the same direction, pass to the left of Katherine's Cross.

QUESTION 2. THERE IS A PLAQUE AT KATHERINE'S CROSS. WHICH YEAR IS ON IT?

Just past Katherine's Cross, the path becomes much more obvious. Keep on it in the same direction as before. Where the path begins to bear right towards the dog waste bin, keep straight ahead, now on the grass, passing to the left of a hillock and then past 3 wooden seats. Do not turn left through the kissing gate to leave the park, but stay in the park walking through the trees with a fence on the left. After 200 meters, ignore a track to the left but stay ahead towards the houses. Just before getting to the houses, turn left onto a path through a kissing gate between the hedges. This path turns right, and in a few meters you enter Chapel Lane. Go ahead downhill. At small triangle/junction, ignore small lane to the right and keep ahead over the junction to continue downhill on Chapel Lane to the main road. Turn left to pass the Queens Head. This is Woburn Street. *Make time to browse the antique shops and exotic restaurants.* At the roundabouts, turn left at the first one and go straight ahead at the second one into Church Street.

QUESTION 3. HOW FAR IS IT TO LONDON?

Stay ahead for 225 meters then turn left up Rectory Close which is opposite Church Avenue, coming to Ampthill Church on your right. Pass the Church to continue along this road with a graveyard on your right. In 50 meters turn off right along the public footpath towards the cemetery, then in a few metres turn left past a metal gate into an enclosed lane, keeping the holly hedge on the right. At the end cross the stile and go diagonally right through 2 fields to the field corner, go through the kissing gate and turn left onto a track; this is Gas House Lane. Go through another kissing gate by the cattle grid. After 50 meters, at the way marker post on the right, turn right to head diagonally across the field, uphill, to the farm. Go through a kissing gate and go ahead on the grass path, with the farm on the left, towards, then beside the reservoirs big, grassy banks.

QUESTION 4. AT THE GATES TO THE RESERVOIRS, WHICH WATER AUTHORITY OWN THEM?

At the concrete road go left, and almost immediately right and right again onto the track towards Kings Wood ahead. *Do not miss the fabulous views, you wouldn't know the low hills in the distance were the western end of the Chilterns across the vale to the left. King Henry VIII used to hunt in this ancient woodland when it was a forest.* At the end of the track, go through a kissing gate into a small grass field, then through the left hand gate to enter the wood. The only Timberland Trail waymark shows the trail now on the outside of the wood.

After 30 meters, fork right and follow the way-marked permissive path through the ancient woodland, downhill to Glebe Meadow. (In wet weather, follow the alternative way-marked trail along the right hand wood edge, also marked Timberland Trail). Leave the wood by going through the gate into the meadow (Glebe Meadow) and turning left along the bottom edge of the wood. *A diversion to the pretty village of Houghton Conquest is an option from the Glebe Meadow, via Rectory Lane. The village has pubs and accommodation with a restaurant.* At the end of the meadow, turn left through the kissing gate to cut across the corner of Kings Wood. Almost immediately, turn right to leave the wood again and after a few meters turn left alongside the wood. The wood is now on the left. The way-marked trail now takes you along field edges, which tend to be overgrown with grass and dog daisies in high summer. At the top of the slight hill, the path turns right away from the wood. There is now a hedge on the left. Keep ahead until you get a small wooden bridge on the left. Turn left to cross the bridge, the turn right and walk ahead now with the hedge on the right. After about 100 meters, at a marker post, turn right over a little bridge and go ahead now with the hedge and a ditch on the right towards some houses. At the houses, cross the stile into a small paddock, cross the paddock, and leave by the gate at the far side. Then walk straight ahead on the driveway, with conifer trees on the left.

Pass to the right of a small conifer hedge, and then go immediately left to the footpath sign and kissing gate behind the hedge. Go through the kissing gate and go along the narrow path (heavily nettled in the summer) to another kissing gate. Through this one and then continue along the field edge to the road. Enter onto the road **with great care**. Turn right, keeping to the verge for about 100 meters, as far as the footpath sign on the other side of the road. Cross carefully and head across the field on the way-marked trail, to the hedge on the far side and turn right, keeping the hedge on your left. At the corner of the field, by the yellow marker post, cross the

sleeper bridge and go ahead to the next yellow marker post by the wooden bridge. Cross the bridge and go straight ahead across the next field towards the chimneys. Cross the next sleeper bridge and keep ahead again towards the chimneys and railway line. Go under the railway line, then turn immediately right to walk alongside it. The path becomes very narrow alongside the allotments and end at the road. Stop and cross carefully. Turn left. Follow the pathway through Stewartby village, *purpose-built in the 1930's by Sir Malcolm Stewart's London Brick Company, for its workers*. Continue ahead at the first roundabout. Turn left at the next roundabout, past the Village Hall with its impressive clock and bell tower.

QUESTION 5. WHAT IS DEPICTED ON THE WEATHER VANE?

Follow the road out of the village for 500 meters to Stewartby level crossing. Ahead for a further 75 meters then carefully cross the road to enter the Marston Vale Millennium Country Park. The trail is way-marked to the right, down the east side of Stewartby Lake, which affords, at the end of the day, sunset views across the water. Following the lakeside trail anti-clockwise for 2.1kms, you will return to your departure point at the Forest Centre.

The Marston Vale Country Park Organisation, Timberland, the Countryside Agency and Ise Valley Vagabonds hope that you have enjoyed this walk, and will try some other delightful walks available in the area.

The Ise Valley Vagabonds have established other Permanent Trails at Bedford (2), Daventry, Kempston, Kettering, Kings Lynn, Leicester, London (2), Marston Moretaine (3), Oxford, Rugby, Rushden, Stamford, Stratford upon Avon, Warwick, Wellingborough and Woodstock.

They are all qualifying events towards the IVV award scheme. Further information about these walks, the IVV, the club and all its activities can be found by visiting our Web Site www.vagabonds.org.uk

THE ORGANISERS ARE NOT LIABLE FOR ACCIDENTS, THEFT, AND/OR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY. EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE BY THE ORGANISERS TO MAKE THIS A SAFE, ENJOYABLE AND MEMORABLE EVENT.

**ISE VALLEY VAGABONDS
PERMANENT TRAIL REGISTRATION FORM**

TRAIL	Marston Vale Timberland Trail	2017/1
ROUTE UPDATED	19 May 2013	
DATE WALKED		
NAME		
ADDRESS		
TEL		
EMAIL		
ADDITIONAL WALKERS		
ENTRY FEE	___ Walkers @ £1.00 (€2,00) each	Total £
AWARDS REQUIRED	___ Patches @ £2.00 (€4,00) each	Total £
TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED		£
Please put my IVV stamps on a new set of Insert cards Yes/No		
ANSWERS		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
Comments		
<p>If you have a problem with this trail, please try and resolve it with the organiser. If you are unable to resolve the problem, then please contact the BWF Trail Officer.</p>		
<p>Please enclose a STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE (at least C6 (114 x 162mm) or DL (110 x 220mm)) with this form and send it to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Carol Jones 138 Rushden Road Wymington Rushden Northants NN10 9LE</p>		