

## Start . . . .

Whilst this local walk can start at a number of locations along the way (The Plough or Greyhound Public Houses, The Church or the Village Hall) we commence our stroll at **St Mary the Virgin Church (1)**.

St Mary's is the Parish Church. It is a Grade II Listed cruciform church. Built in the 13th Century it gained the western tower in the 15th Century - the church was restored and the tower rebuilt in 1879-80. To the right of the doorway, in the churchyard, there are the remains of a 15th Century cross.



From the Church, head in a northerly direction up the hill (Station Road.)

Opposite the **Post Office and Village Shop** (on your right,) turn left down The College lane **(2)**.

**The College**, largely owned by the Ewelme Trust, is characterised by a number of small thatched workers' cottages from around the 1700's.

Continuing past the cottages, the footpath veers slightly right to a metal kissing gate (signed as part of the *Bernwood Jubilee Way*). Pass through the gate **(3)**, turning left into the field beyond.

This field is a strong example of the medieval **'Ridge & Furrow'** farming method - whilst the examples remaining in the parish are now fragmented, some blocks are good examples (in 1995 it was assessed that some 784 acres remained.) Historical records show that Marsh Gibbon, with a landscape dominated by open field systems, would have formed the agricultural heart of **Bernwood Forest**.

Head diagonally across the field to the small roof-covered well. This is **Stump Well (D)**, a medieval well built in local limestone. It covers a mineral spring, which has long supplied water to properties in the village. It continues to do so today, providing one of the key ingredients to the local Oxfordshire Ales brewery.

## What's in a name?

- Derived from the Anglo-Saxon word **mersc**, meaning 'Marsh', the village was known as Mersa or Merse in Domesday - 1086
- In the 12th Century the family of **Gibbewin** or **Gibewin** acquired The Manor
- The settlement and the parish acquired the 13th Century name of **Mershe Gybbewine**, and **Mersh Gibwyne** (1292), before evolving into **'Marsh Gibbon'** by the 16th Century.

It was during the 19th Century that Sir Henry Acland (master of Ewelme) together with the Ewelme trustees, greatly improved the village through the development of The College, the introduction of a reading room and the rebuilding of a large number of houses that characterise the village today.

**Parking** : Available at the Greyhound Inn and The Plough Public Houses, and at the Village Hall.

**Buses** : Please check Oxfordshire and Aylesbury bus websites for current timetables.

**Footwear** : Many of the paths on the walk can be wet and muddy at any time of the year. Therefore, waterproof footwear is recommended.

**Maps** : This information leaflet can be used in conjunction with Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer Sheet 192.

### When in the countryside please follow the Countryside Code.

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Fasten all gates
- Keep your dogs under close control
- Keep to public paths across farmland
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
- Take your litter home
- Help to keep all water clean
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees
- Take special care on country roads
- Make no unnecessary noise

**LEAVE ONLY YOUR FOOTPRINTS  
TAKE ONLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

If you have any suggestions for new walks or amendments to this leaflet, please email: [clerk@marshgibbon-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@marshgibbon-pc.gov.uk)

Marsh Gibbon Parish Council is grateful to the volunteers who wrote and produced this leaflet, in particular Applied Landscape Design Limited for designing and printing. November 2012.



**Walk 1**

**Short Walk**

**Duration: 1 hour**

Continue in a westerly direction towards the corner of the field (4) - where there is a large metal gate. Pass through the gate and turn left (5.) [The Bernwood Jubilee Way turns right over a timber stile.]



Walk back towards the village with the hedge on your left. The hedges around Marsh Gibbon typically contain an array of hawthorns, privets, willows and climbing plants such as white bryony - this diversity supports many insects and bird life.

Follow the path to the gate in the corner of the field (under the electricity cables) - this access point can be very wet.

Having passed through the gate, follow the path diagonally across the field - heading for a wide metal bar gate between the 4th/5th houses (6.) As this is a regularly used field gate it can be muddy around the gate post - remember to close it after you have passed through!

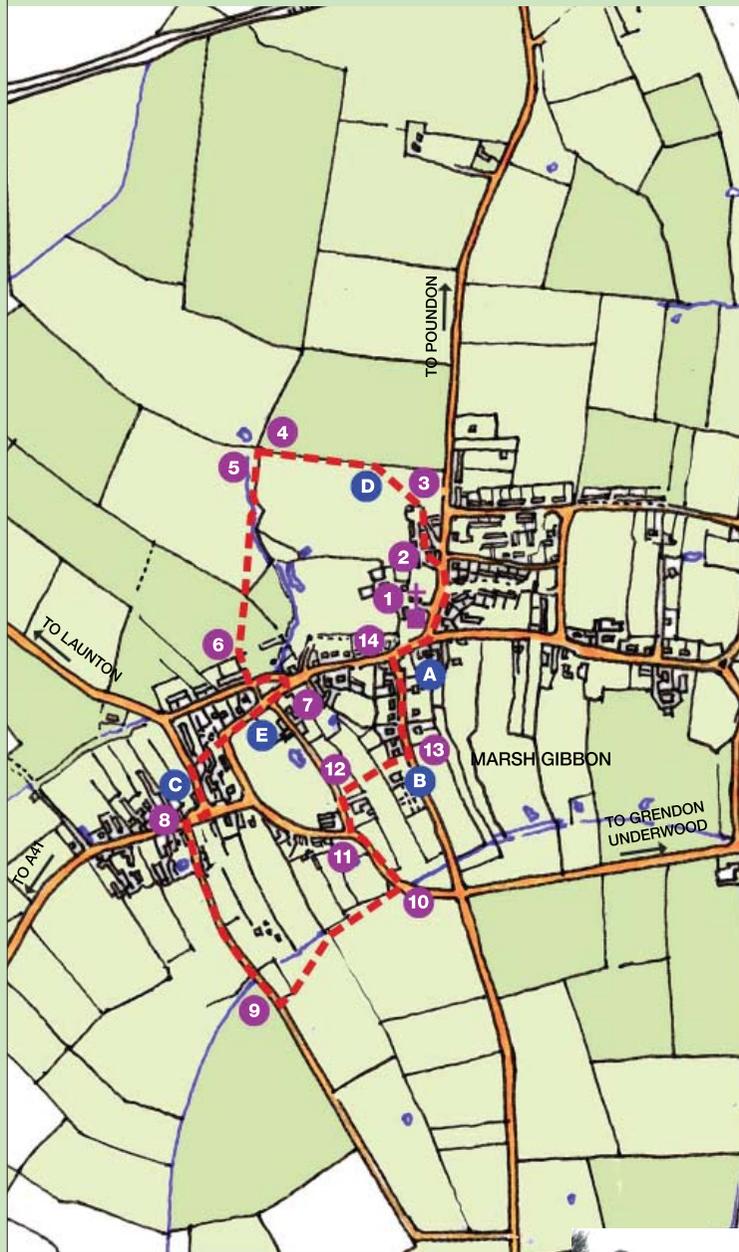
Pass along the short green lane between the houses, and emerge onto Ware Leys Close. Continue along the Close, southwards to Bicester Road where you turn left (eastwards). At this point you could follow the road back to the starting point. (approx time 30 mins.)

At the triangular junction, bear right keeping Ware Pond (E) on your right hand side (7). Take a moment to sit on the bench and see what water plants and animals you can spot around the water's edge.

From the pond travel west along West Edge. (please be cautious - there is no footpath between the road and garden fences.) When you reach the sharp left hand bend in the road, carry straight on down the footpath between the houses. (There is a 'no cycling' sign.)



Emerge onto and walk along Styles Close, then bear left onto Tompkins Lane. Walk past the 17th Century Greyhound Inn (C) (or pop in for refreshments) on your right. Cross over the road into Scotts Lane (8.)



Illustrative route map  
Not to scale

Proceed down Scotts Lane [this can be very very wet at various times of the year]. Pass the sewerage works and old allotments on your left, continuing along the lane to the marked footpath on the left of the lane (rejoining Bernwood Jubilee Way.)

Pass through the kissing gate (9) which is tucked into the hedge. Follow the path along the hedge, and then track diagonally across the field. Pass through the hedge at the corner of the field using the field gate. Continue through the next field - with the field hedge on your left. At the far corner of the field you will reach a gate - head out onto Spiers Lane (10.)

Turn left into the lane (heading north). Bear right at the first junction into Moat Lane (11) - there is an interesting small thatched cottage on your left. Proceed up Moat Lane for a short distance.

Turn right (12) through a gate in the hedge (to the side of a garden) - following the footpath sign. After passing along the side of the house the path opens up onto a pony paddock with the Village Hall, play area, tennis courts beyond.

The Village Hall (B), constructed in 1976, provides for a multitude of community and private functions - from Parish Council Meetings, through to Badminton and Bowls (find out about events, regular sessions and booking details at <http://www.bucksvoice.net/mgvh/>.) Pass through the car park to Clements Lane footpath (13) - turning left (north.)

At the top of Clements Lane (14) turn right onto Church Street (the Marsh Gibbon main street is nearly a mile long.)

The Plough Pub (A) on your right (pop in for refreshments and expend some energy on the timber play area) is a traditional 16th Century Grade II listed coaching inn.



From here head northwards - as you walk back to the Church, the Manor House (1) comes into view on your left.

With the house dating from the middle of the 16th Century, the garden wall was added in the 18th Century - this now wraps around a garden which is opened annually for the church summer fayre. . . . Finish