

Grandborough Walk 6

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Sarah Jackson
OS Explorer 222

A circular walk of approx 10.6 km (6.5 miles) R = Right, L = Left.
Allow approx 2.5 hours

With the Shoulder of Mutton on your L and facing the Parish Council notice board, walk ahead on Sawbridge Road past Hockley Close and Grange Farm R to go past the Benn Memorial Village Hall L. The Village Hall was erected in 1897 and extended in 1997. At the front is a First World War Naval Shell. 15ins (38cm) in size, weighing approx. 1916lbs (871kg). It was offered to the village as a memento in recognition of local heroes.



Continue past Gilbert House, re-named from The Cottage after re-furbishment and due to it's links to the creation of the first "dry" Gilbert Rugby Ball by Harry Timms. Stay on the main road until you have passed the Leys L and the road bears R. Enter the field R through a metal kissing gate. (Alternatively, if the field looks very muddy, you could follow the road round branching round to the right., to the Nethercote Road junction from the metal kissing gate).

Go across the field with the garden boundary L and tree cluster R heading toward the houses and Poplar trees in the distance (on the main road). At the hedgerow, follow R to a gap and cross into the next field.

Go past a small pond L and continue across the field to exit through the new footpath gate onto the main road. Turn R.

At the road corner, cross over the road to join the unclassified county road R through a metal field gate. This is Nethercote Road (ref No. E2989). Follow the road past the house L and continue through the next field gate, edged with white fencing and posts. At the footpath bridge L, you can see Bush Hill R at 2 o'clock direction and Shuckburgh Hills wooded hilltop at 3 o'clock direction. Keep footbridge L but do not cross, continue on road towards railway bridge arch.



As you progress along the road, All Saints Church Spire at Braunston comes into view L and the dismantled railway line bridge that you are heading for comes into view in front. Pass under the railway bridge and continue along road as it rises slightly towards Nethercote and Wolfhamcote.

As the road climbs to cross the canal bear L before the bridge and access a canal towpath through a gate. Turn L and walk along the towpath for approx. 1 mile with the canal on your R.



This is signed as part of the Oxford Canal Walk. Enjoy the views of open fields on either side and visiting, as well as, more permanently moored canal boats. Just before Bridge No 98, take the steps up L and leave the towpath joining another unclassified road, turn L. do not cross other the canal. Keeping the canal behind you head down the incline.

Grandborough Church spire is visible ahead flanked by it's two large Wellingtonia Trees. As you head down the road towards a field gate, there is evidence of former canal sidings on L, now an oblong pond.



Follow the road between a large hedge R and open sheep fields L through a few field gates. As you near Sawbridge the road passes between wooden fences and fields often containing horses and ponies. At the top of the small incline after barn conversion L and before small farmhouse R take the footpath R around the farmyard and skirting the fields, bear L following the path and signs crossing a field and exiting over a stile to join the road to Willoughby, turn R. Alternatively, again particularly when the ground is muddy, you can, not take the footpath before the farmhouse, but instead continue along the road with a few houses on either side coming out, with a small wall mounted post box R at the road to Grandborough, turn R and R again at junction signed to Willoughby.



Walk along the Willoughby road, taking care as the few vehicles that come by here are often quite fast, there is a swampy area R of the road just before the bridge over the river Leam, usually quite small here, but subject to floods on occasion. Crossing the road you can take the stile and footpath (unmarked) across the corner of the field L, however this is often very muddy and/or heavily cropped, or continue along road for a further 100m to the junction with an unclassified road L known to some locals as Fox Cover Lane or The Ridgeway. The main road continues R towards Willoughby House.

Turn L onto Fox Cover Lane and avoiding the potholes & large puddles continue along the flat with fields either side. As the lane passes a wooded area R (the 'fox cover') often used by roosting starlings in winter, it crosses a stream with a concrete bridge and bears R before starting to climb towards Woolscott. The large open arable field on R often has sky larks in summer, to the L there is a grass wide verge for most of the climb when the hedge has been cut there is a good view L towards Grandborough Church spire.

Just before reaching the tarmac road there is a footpath gate into the field R. Take this gate and enter the field with its historic ridge and furrow field system now grazed by sheep. There is a small pond L. Keep the road directly behind you walk up and down the ridges towards

the telegraph poles at the highest point in the field. Woolscott House and Manor are to the R. Head down the hill aiming for the gate just L of the sheep enclosure at the hedged boundary with the next field. Go through the gate and continue straight ahead parallel with the road heading towards the Water Mill bridge and St Peter's Church, Grandborough. At the bottom of the hill just before the bridge join the road and turn L going over 2 bridges (the 2nd becomes a causeway at times of flood for cars as well). Follow the road R along side of Church and then continue into Grandborough village (past old telephone box R) to T junction. Turn L and The Shoulder of Mutton Pub is 200m on L.

