

Paths of Old

Walk 10 – Old to Market Harborough

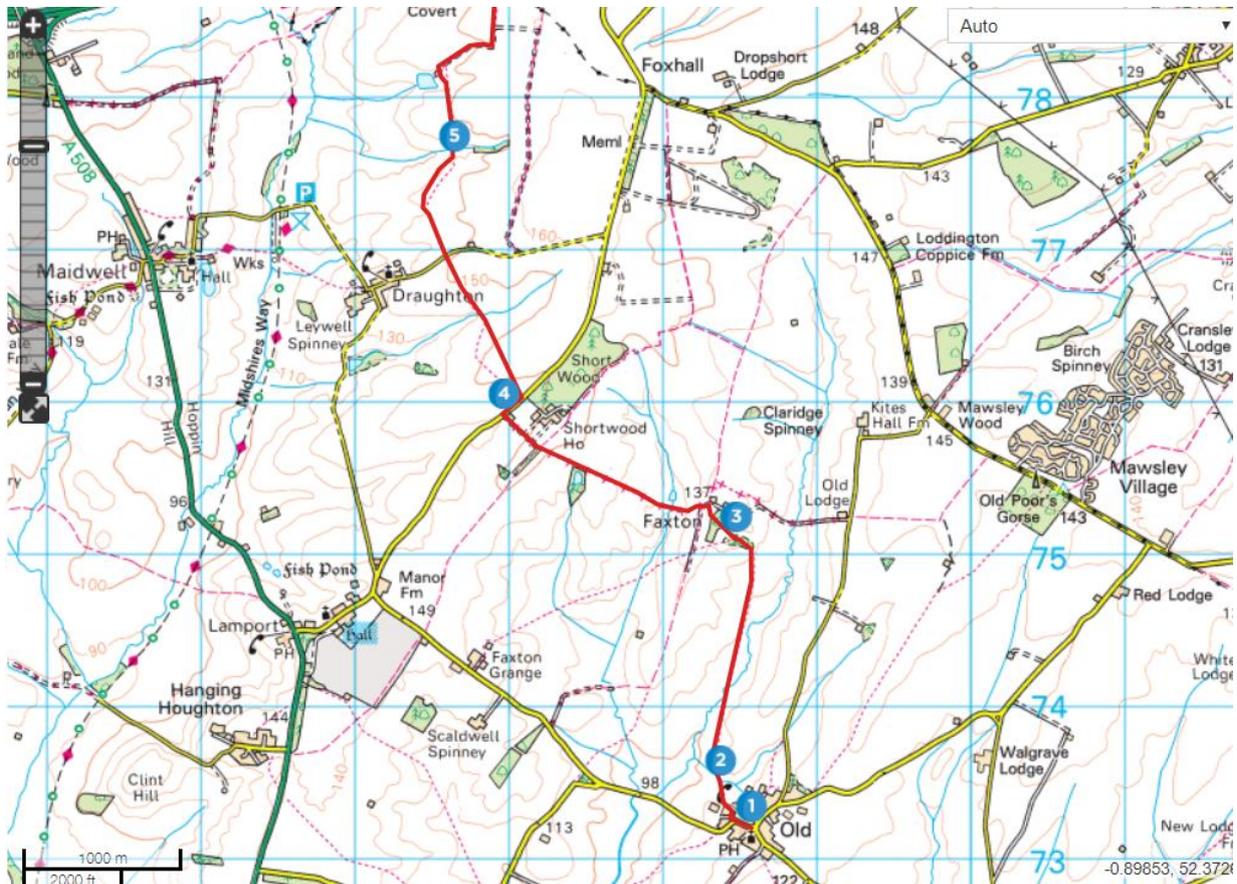
Distance:	13.00 miles
Grade:	Moderate - Strenuous
Start / Finish:	The White Horse, Old / Market Harborough
Map:	OS Explorer 223 Northampton & Market Harborough
Things to see:	Quiet paths, superb views, Great Oxendon tunnel.
Summary:	<p>This is a longer route through mostly quiet countryside and picturesque local villages, starting in Old and ending in Market Harborough. It makes a great two-day "circuit" with Walk 9, a second route between Old and Harborough which makes use of completely different paths.</p> <p>At around 13 miles it's a good three-quarter day's walk, but there's nothing too difficult underfoot and the grading is more to reflect the distance than the difficulty of the terrain. Despite there being some busy sections, most notably on the Brampton Valley Way, there are plenty of quiet paths too, and that means plenty of birds, animals, plants and butterflies to be seen.</p>

To keep the description to reasonable lengths, the following notes are not quite as detailed as for some other walks. They should be good enough to follow this walk, though, and I intend to refine it in places in future, but for now I recommend taking the paper Ordnance Survey map (OS Explorer 223 Northampton & Market Harborough) with you as well.

Point	Description
1	The walk starts outside The White Horse, Old. Take Lamport Road for approx. 80 metres then, as the road bends left keep ahead into Chapel Lane and almost immediately turn right along a short drive with a kissing gate at the end. Go through this gate and turn immediately left down some steps and past the tennis court. Follow the edge of the cricket field round to the left to reach a gap in the wooden fence just after the swings. Go down the bank with the hedge on your left, over a plank bridge and follow the path round the edge of the field to a stile.
2	Cross the stile and head diagonally across the field to another stile. You are now in a very large field: follow the path over the brow of the hill, gradually tending leftwards and down to a plank bridge. Cross this and keep ahead alongside the hedge. When the hedge ends, keep in the same direction across the next field on the clear path. Cross a track and keep ahead, following the edge of a small wood round to the left to reach a marker post at the corner of the wood.

Did You Know?

The two houses here stand near the remains of the mediaeval Village of Faxton. Now abandoned due to a lack of road access, the village is mentioned in the Domesday Book when it was estimated that some 60-80 people were living there.



3	<p>Turn right and go diagonally across the field to a small gate and stile. Cross the next small field in the same general direction to another stile and exit on to a track. Turn left and keep ahead to a crossroads of paths. Go through the gateway ahead (signed "Byway") and follow the track as it curves first left then right and downhill into a dip. Keeping the hedge on your left all the while, climb the hill into a large field, go through a gate into another field and keep ahead to a gate and cattle grid at the far side (Shortwood House is clearly visible to your right). Keep ahead again along the tarmac track to reach the road.</p>
4	<p>Turn right along the road, then in approx. 100 metres go left into a field as indicated by a fingerpost. Follow the path over the brow of the hill and down towards the right-hand end of a tall hedge at the bottom of the hill. Pick up the clear track ahead and continue, climbing gradually with the hedge on your left. Keep following this track for about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, ignoring any tracks and turnings off to either side and crossing the road into Draughton on the way.</p>

5	The hedge on your left finally ends at the bottom of a short steep hill. Go up the hill and descend slightly to a T junction. Turn right and follow the track round to the left where it becomes a metalled road. Keep ahead and join a narrow path through the woods. When it reaches a track, turn left and pass the Harrington Aviation Museum to reach a T junction where you turn right along the narrow road beside the busy A14.
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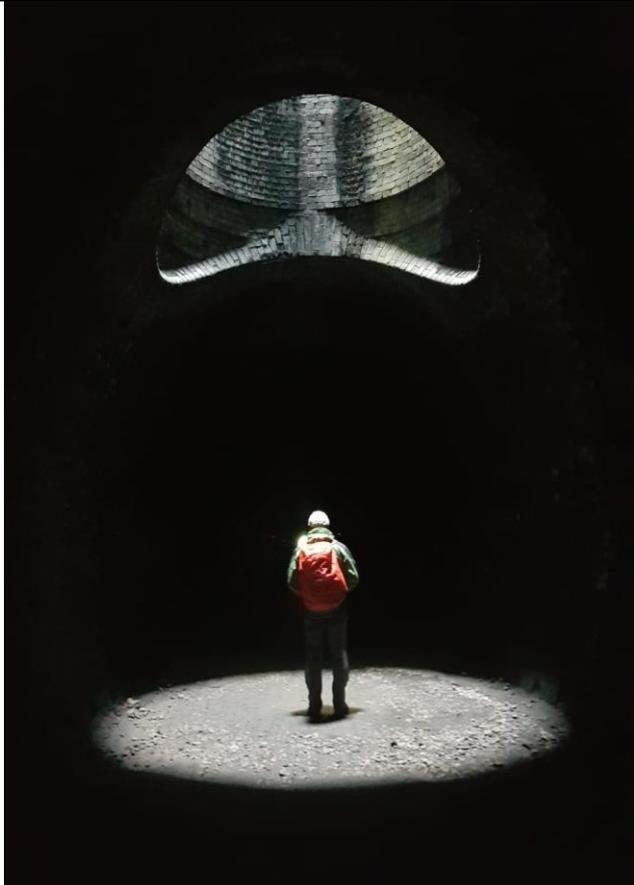
<i>Did You Know?</i>	<i>The Harrington Carpetbagger Aviation Museum contains displays and exhibits relating to the USAAF 801st / 492nd Bomb Group (the Carpetbaggers) and their secret missions to deliver agents and supplies to occupied Europe during WWII as well as subsequent Cold War activities.</i>
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6	At the T junction, turn left across the bridge over the A14 and continue into Harrington village. At first there are houses on both sides, but after a right-hand bend the houses on the left end. Take the bridle path opposite the Warner's Distillery and Village Hall.
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<i>Did You Know?</i>	<i>Warner's Distillery crafts speciality gins using its own spring water, home grown organic botanicals and honey from its own hives. "Saving the world from mediocre gin!" as they say themselves about their award-winning products.</i>
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7	With the hedge on your left, go down the field and through two gates, emerging into a large field with the hedge now on your right. Follow the edge of the field until the path cuts through the hedge to emerge in another large field with a farm on the hill ahead of you. Keep to the path as it passes to the right of the farm and descends gently through another large field with the hedge on your left. Go through the gate and over a brick footbridge before angling left to reach a metal gate and join the road. Turn left into Arthingworth.
8	Pass the church on your right (where there is a bench beside the porch if you need a rest) and turn right into Oxendon Road. Keep going to the edge of the village then keep ahead on the metalled road as it crosses a series of fields to reach the Brampton Valley Way (BVW) in about 1 mile.



<p>9</p>	<p>Turn right along the BVW. In approx. 700 metres you come to the entrance to the Oxendon Tunnel. If you want to walk through it it's best to take a torch with you as although there is an air shaft half way through and you can see the far end quite clearly it is over 400 metres long!</p> <p>Go through the tunnel and continue on the BVW for about a mile, past Waterloo Farm (where refreshments are available). Fishing ponds and log cabins are visible through the hedges on either side.</p> <p>As the hedges reduce in thickness and height and the trail feels more open, look out for a set of wooden steps cut into the bank on the left. Go up these and take the path diagonally right.</p>	 <p>In Great Oxendon Tunnel</p>
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<p>10</p>	<p>Cross the large field and go over a plank bridge. At the stile, cross a second plank bridge and follow the narrow path into another field. Continue forward with the hedge on your right into the corner of the field where a narrow path cuts to the right through the hedge and over a plank bridge before reaching an open field. Continue ahead until you reach the road by a mini roundabout. Go straight ahead and pick up the tarmac path (signed as Monks Close) that runs between houses. Follow this right to the end and exit on to the main road. If you are catching the bus back to Lamport, Brixworth, etc, there are bus stops here – the X7 service runs quite frequently every day of the week.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Otherwise, turn right and follow the road past the petrol station and onward with houses on both sides. If you are going back to the centre of Market Harborough, keep on this road for approx. half a mile, crossing a road junction and going over a bridge to reach the marketplace.</p> <p>If you parked opposite the Royalist pub on Western Avenue, look out for The Cinnamon Lounge on your right where you turn left into Bath Street. After approx. half a mile this runs into Western Avenue where the pub is on your left.</p>

Remember: for the benefit of all please keep to the path, close all gates behind you and keep dogs on a lead, especially around livestock.