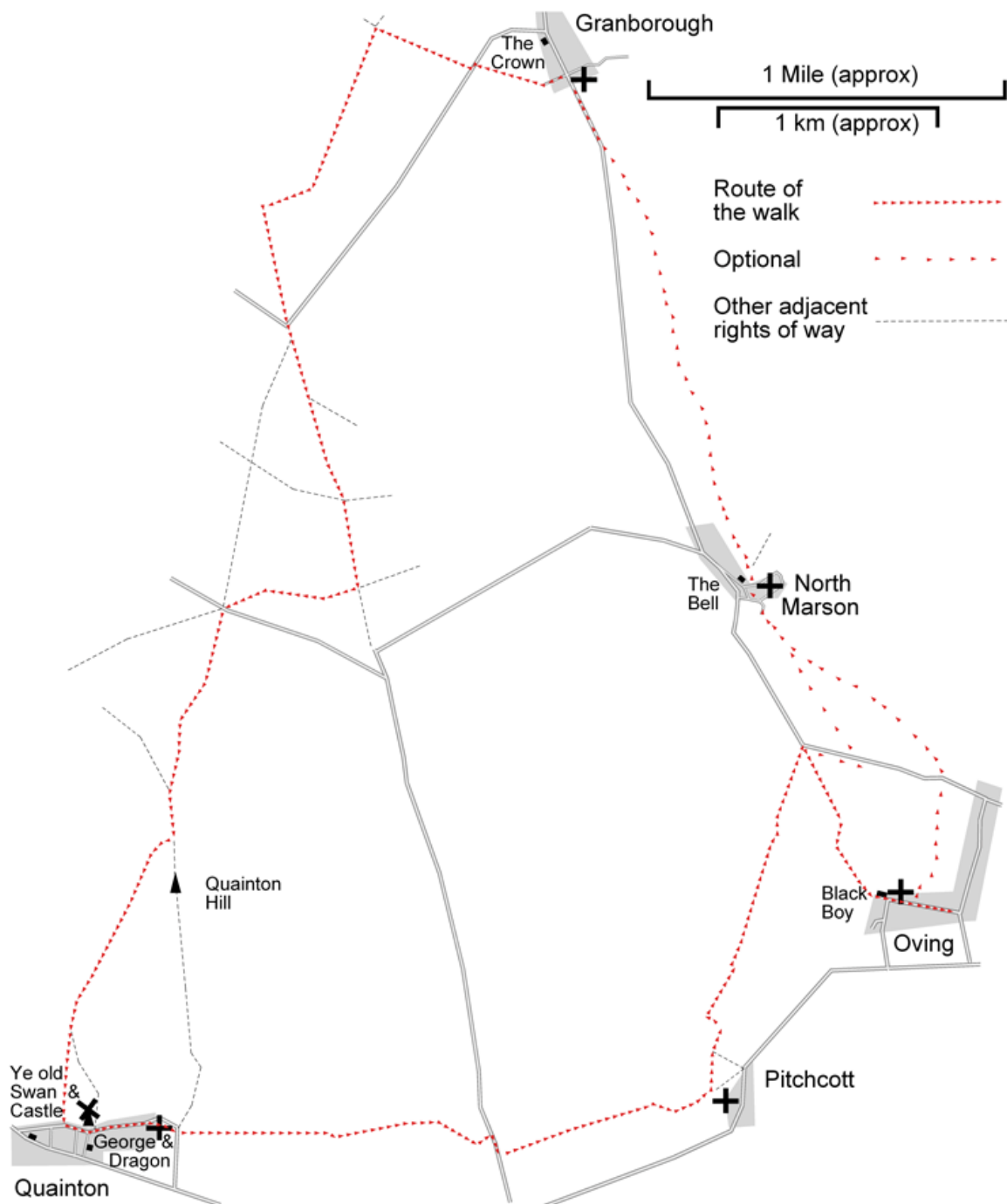


## Granborough – Quainton – Oving

Quainton Hill offers the most spectacular hill walking in north-west Buckinghamshire – choose a clear day for the fine views. The walk is almost entirely on pasture, and though there is one arable field to cross near the beginning and some parts can get muddy in wet weather, the conditions under foot are generally excellent. An early start is recommended if you wish to give yourselves time to enjoy the view from Quainton Hill, and still get to Quainton in time for lunch. If you have binoculars you might like to have them with you for this walk.

Minor amendments 2008



## Distances

Granborough to Quainton	4 miles (6.5 km)
Quainton to Oving	3.5 miles (5.5 km)
Total	7.5 miles (12 km)

(plus Oving to Granborough 2.5 miles (4 km) for a circular walk)

Climbs of about 70 metres (230 feet), 60 metres (200 feet) and 40 metres (130 feet)

## Travel

The 66 bus route links Aylesbury, Oving, Granborough and Buckingham, about hourly (two hourly on Sundays). There are occasional buses between Quainton and Aylesbury.

Travel information for Buckinghamshire is available on [www.buckscc.gov.uk/travelinfo](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/travelinfo) and for the whole of SE England by telephoning Traveline on 0871 200 22 33.

While our walks are intended to be linear routes using public transport, we recognise that public transport to this part of Buckinghamshire is limited, so we give the option of making this a car-based circular walk. However, there are no recognised public car parks on the route, so please be sure to park considerately. You may find this easiest in Oving. We give at the end directions for an optional start from Oving. There is no general right to park on road verges, and it can cause offence near houses.

## Ordnance Survey Map

This walk is all on the Ordnance Survey Explorer map 192, Buckingham & Milton Keynes.

## Refreshments

The Crown at Granborough.

The George and Dragon (closed Monday lunchtime) and Ye Old Swan and Castle at Quainton (where there is also a village shop, and the butcher's sells ices, fruit, etc.).

The Black Boy at Oving (closed all day Monday, except bank holidays, and Sunday evening).

(The Bell at North Marston, for those making a circular walk.)

Please always be considerate about muddy boots in pubs etc; either take them off, or cover them up.

Never eat or drink your own provisions on pub premises (including the garden, if there is one).

## Route

Get off the bus at the Green End stop, by Granborough church, at the southern (Aylesbury) end of the village.

**At Granborough church there is a replica of a chrismatory (vessel for sacred wine, water and oil). The original is in Oxford for safe keeping. The only other example is said to be in St Martin's Canterbury**

Opposite the church, go along Church Lane, past the village hall, to a kissing gate after the last house on the right.

Go diagonally down to a kissing gate on to a road.

Go left for 50 yards to a kissing gate on the right.

Go through the gate and along the right-hand edge of two fields.

At the end of the second field, ignore a stile on the right, turn left and go along the field edge.

In the next field, the path should normally be visible on the ground, going slightly left, a few yards left of the hedge bend ahead, then about 100 yards left of the pylon, to a footbridge a little to the right of the field corner.

Cross the footbridge and a strip of woodland and go over the stile and continue ahead along the left-hand edge of the next field nearly 200 yards, ignoring a gate, to a kissing gate.

Go through the kissing gate and continue in the same direction on the other side of the hedge, to the field corner.

Turn left and follow the fence and ditch through two fields to the road.

**This is known as Deadman's Corner (presumably the site of a gibbet).**

Cross the road to the track ahead.

**From here you follow for a few yards the North Bucks Way. This was one of the first promoted routes in Buckinghamshire, set up by the Ramblers' Association in the 1970s, and runs from Wolverton on the outskirts of Milton Keynes to Chequers Knap on the Ridgeway.**

**You are also on the course of a Roman road. This was a local road, linking the religious site at Thornborough with the settlement at Fleet Marston, and is thus not quite as straight as military roads usually are. 400 yards ahead it bends round a pond; it is tempting to wonder whether the pond has been there ever since Roman times. Until the mid-eighteenth century, this was also the course of the main London – Aylesbury – Buckingham – Birmingham road, before its route was moved to the present A 413 on higher ground to the east. The line of the old road is also followed by the parish boundary between Hogshaw and Quainton to the west and Granborough, North Marston and Oving to the east.**

Go along the track (a public bridleway) for 500 yards, to a gate, then in the same direction along a right-hand field edge, then along another length of track, to a gate by cattle pens.

Continue ahead 200 yards up a slight rise, to a stile on the right.

Cross the stile, and cross the field to a footbridge and stile and stile opposite.

Cross, and continue to a stile in line with the buildings ahead.

Continue towards the right-hand end of the buildings, to an inconspicuous stile on to the road (rejoining the North Bucks Way).

Cross the road and a field, and go through a bridle gate (or the field gate next to it) well to the left of the converted farm buildings, and up the hill to the large tree on the skyline, to the left of a row of smaller trees (an old hedgerow).

Here you reach a summit at 184 metres (600 ft). The true summit with the tower ahead is three metres (10 ft) higher, but you may find you get more of an all-round view from here, especially behind you.

**(The view is described in detail, though not everyone will want to linger if the weather is cold or visibility poor.)**

**The row of trees behind you points at Botolph Claydon, 2 miles (3 km) away, merging with East Claydon (place names ending in '-don' generally indicate hilltop villages, of which there are many in this area, where limestone emerges from the clay of the plain). Stowe (8.5 miles, 13.5 km) is beyond. The Corinthian Arch is conspicuous if the sun is shining on it.**

**A little to the right is Buckingham (7.5 miles, 12 km), then Addington (4.5 miles, 7km). The electricity grid substation is 2.5 miles (4 km) away; to the right of that is Winslow (4 miles, 6 km), then Granborough (2.3 miles, 3.6 km).**

**On the distant skyline (12 miles, 20 km) is the Xscape Leisure Centre at Milton Keynes with its ski slope (dome-shaped from this direction, but in fact cylindrical), then the water tower at Mursley (6 miles, 10 km), and the hills of the greensand ridge rising quite sharply above Woburn Sands.**

**Below you, closer, is North Marston (1.7 miles, 2.7 km) then Oving (2 miles, 3 km) tucked into the hillside.**

**Further to the right are the Dunstable Downs, with the White Lion (15 miles, 25 km) just below the skyline at Whipsnade.**

**The BCC office tower at Aylesbury (7 miles, 11 km) is normally conspicuous. Wendover is in front of the gap in the Chiltern Hills beyond it. From there, the Chilterns then stretch away to the right, behind the near summit ahead of you and further off to the south west.**

**Going anti clockwise from Botolph Claydon:**

**The steeple of Steeple Claydon church (4.5 miles, 7 km). Claydon House is just a little to the right of it, in the trees a mile (1.6 km) closer, but difficult to see in most circumstances.**

**To the left (14 miles, 23 km away) are two brownish spherical structures, at the airfield at Croughton.**

**You may be able to see part of Grebe Lake at Charndon (a flooded former brick pit), behind the near low wooded summit.**

**The most conspicuous buildings to the left of that are on the Bicester commercial and industrial estate (9.5 miles, 15 km). In line with them, and at half the distance, are the Grendon and Springhill prisons at Edgcott (note the glass house).**

**To the left of that are military supply buildings at Arcott (9 miles, 14 km), in front of a low wooded hill.**

**The most prominent hill in the middle distance is Muswell Hill, with a clump of trees towards the right-hand side (7.5 miles, 12.5 km). Much further away, and a little to the right of it, is the wooded Wytham hill, just beyond Oxford.**

**Brill (7.5 miles, 12 km) is on the next hill to the left, though few houses are visible from this direction, then Dorton Hill (7 miles, 11 km), Ashendon (5 miles, 8 km), and Waddesdon Manor visible on its wooded hilltop (3 miles, 5 km).**

Go through a gate towards the tower, and on nearly to the next gate. Here our route turns right, alongside the hedge, but you might like to go through the gate up to the summit of Quainton Hill, and return here afterwards.

Having turned right before the gate, continue alongside the hedge to a stile, then on to the next stile (which may have a gap beside it).

Cross, and bear slightly away from the hedge, more or less level along the top of steep slopes, to a stile.

**The steep slopes are the remains of old quarries, from which stone was taken for the church.**

Cross, and go ahead 500 yards to a minor summit (Simber Hill).

**The windmill becomes visible below you to the left.**

**From here you can see, on the horizon to the left of Waddesdon Manor, the communications tower at Stokenchurch (12 miles 19.5 km), further to the left, Beacon Hill near Chequers (10.5 miles, 17 km), recognisable by its small clump of trees, and possibly the monument on Coombe Hill (10.5 miles, 17 km).**

Go down ahead to a stile, then just to the left of another minor summit to a kissing gate, 100 yards to the right of the field corner, into an enclosed path.

Go down the path to the road (Ye old Swan and Castle is to the right, then left at a T-junction; the George and Dragon is to your left, on the green).

Turn left to go along the top of Quainton village green.

**Note the plaque on front of the house on your right at the near corner of the green, the 1723 Dormer family coat of arms on Cross Farmhouse on the left, the remains of the old market cross at the top of the green, and the information panel on the wall on your left.**

**The windmill, the tallest in Buckinghamshire (75ft 8in, 23.06 metres) was built in 1832 and appears to have fallen into disuse at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Restoration of the mill started in the 1970s, and work is still continuing, usually taking place while the mill is open on Sundays, 10.00 am till 1.00 pm. There is no public access to the area when the mill is closed.**

Go ahead along Church Street, past the almshouses, and go into the churchyard.

**Inside the church are an unusual number of fine monuments, several of them to members of the Dorney family.**

Continue through the churchyard to rejoin the road and cross the stile opposite.

**From here, we follow Matthew's Way almost to Oving. An information panel later gives details.**

Go ahead gently uphill to pass close to the nearest electricity post.

Continue to the far left corner of the field.

**The brick wall on your left, unusual as a field boundary, used to enclose the deer park of Denham Lodge, visible beyond it.**

Cross the cattle grid on the tarmac track, then another cattle grid on your left.

Cross the field, passing between the first and second (single) electricity poles, to go through a gate.

Go ahead along the right-hand field edge and through another gate at the far corner.

From here you go to the stile by the gate at the far end of the post-and-wire fence on your left. (The official right of way goes slightly to the right of this and then doubles back left along the far hedge.)

Cross the stile on to the road, and turn right for 100 yards, to a drive on the left.

Go 25 yards along the drive, to cross a stile on the right.

Go across the field and through a gateway a little to the right of the house.

Go up to the far right-hand corner of the field, to cross stiles and a plank bridge.

Go up the left-hand field edge and through a kissing gate at the top.

Go along the left-hand edge of two fields (leaving the former Pitchcott church – now converted into a house – to your right) to cross a stile just to the right of the farmhouse.

Turn right along the drive for a few yards to cross a stile on the left, then a second stile, and continue along the left-hand edge of the field to cross another stile.

Follow the left-hand field edge until it turns left and then continue ahead, passing through an old hedge, to cross a stile at the end of the fence on your left.

Continue along the right-hand field edge to cross a double stile.

Go on in the same direction, slightly to the right of a small summit, to cross two stiles beside a bridle gate (usually locked).

Continue in the same direction, to cross a stile to the right of a small building.

**An information panel on the left gives details of Matthew's Way and the reason for creating it.**

For Oving, you leave this field by crossing the stream 60 yards left of the field corner 300 yards to your right, but the official right of way continues down the left-hand side of the field to the road, where you meet another public footpath turning back sharp right, aiming towards the farm buildings to the right of the church.

(To continue to North Marston, go down towards the road, turn right along the permissive path (still Matthew's Way) parallel with the road along the field edge to a stile by a gate.

Cross the road and the stile a little to the left. Aiming a little to the left of the church, cross two fields to a stile in the field corner.)

Having crossed the stream, bear half right, between a water trough on your left and a wooden structure (sheep shelter?) on your right, to cross stiles and a footbridge.

Go up the left-hand edge of the field to a stile, into the pub carpark.

Go ahead passing the Black Boy pub on your left, to a road.

Continue ahead with the church on your left, and up the road nearly 400 yards to a T-junction.

The bus stop opposite, with a shelter, is for buses towards Aylesbury.

### **To start from Oving.**

From the church, go uphill with the red brick wall of Church Farm on your left.

After the farm (and some new building), take the track to the left, to enter a field.

Bear slightly right across the field to gates on the other side.

Go through the kissing gate on the left, to continue with a hedge on your right, to a road.

Cross the road with care (blind corner) and the stile opposite, and turn left, aiming a little to the right of North Marston church, and go downhill to a stile.

Cross the stile and go on towards the church, to a gate.

Go along the right-hand side of the field to another gate.

Continue ahead slightly uphill to a stile in the field corner.

Go along the track ahead to the Holy or Schorne Well.

**A panel gives details of the restoration of the well, in rhyming verse.**

**John Schorne was reputed to have imprisoned the devil in a boot. His shrine, which attracted thousands of pilgrims in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, was transferred to Windsor in 1478 to divert the pilgrims and thereby attract funds for the completion of St George's Chapel.**

Continue ahead, then bear right, to the small village green.

**North Marston church, a short way off your route to the right, was restored at the expense of Queen Victoria, in gratitude for a bequest to her by a local landowner, JC Nield, which she used to buy the Balmoral estate.**

Turn left, then follow the footway to the right of a pond (with the Bell pub a few yards beyond it.)

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There are several places on the route across the fields from here to Granborough that can get very muddy. If conditions are not reasonably dry, you may like to take the road ahead. There is a footway for some distance, and then a generous verge for most of the way. Traffic is fast, but the road is straight and visibility is good. Or there may be a convenient bus to Granborough.

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To take the field path to Granborough, turn right before the pub up School Hill 50 yards to a footpath sign on the left.

Follow the footpath over a stile, then slightly right to another stile.

Go ahead, over two more stiles, along an enclosed path, over two more stiles and through a kissing gate with a plank bridge.

Go ahead, uphill (ignoring a gate on your left) then down to a kissing gate, then continue through another kissing gate with a plank bridge and stile in the next field corner.

Continue up the right-hand side of the field, ignoring a gate on the right, to a stile with a plank bridge.

Go ahead down this field, aiming at a barn three fields away, to cross a stile at the bottom of the field.

In the next field, cross slightly right, go through an old hedge (decrepit gate in muddy patch when we last checked), then alongside a hedge on your left, to go through a gate two thirds of the way along it.

Cross the corner of the field, towards the barns, go through a pedestrian gate with a broken stile, and then 50 yards to the right of the barn through another pedestrian gate with a plank bridge.

Go ahead through a gateway to the right of the house, to a stile by the gate in the field corner, on to the road into Granborough.