

Wansdyke Path directions – Marlborough to Lockeridge/Alton Barnes road

Maps: OS Explorer 157, OS Landranger 173

Distance: 5.8 miles (9.3 km)

East to west

Walk to the end of Granham Close, at the west end of George Lane in Marlborough. Go through a gap by a gate onto a track, and after a few metres go through a metal kissing gate on your left and diagonally up the grass slope beyond it. At the top, ignore another metal kissing gate leading to the Pewsey road, and continue on the grass roughly parallel to the road. Cross a hollow (which used to be the old road) between two earthworks, and continue along the top of Granham Hill. You join the White Horse Trail (WHT) as you cross over a sunken track just before going through a small wood. Cross the stile at the end of the field beyond the wood and go through a strip of trees to another one. Go half left over the field beyond to reach a log stile in its corner. Step over this and continue in the same direction with hedge on your left. Where this juts out in front of you, turn right onto an unploughed strip. This brings you to Manton Drove, a tarmac road.

Turn left along the road for approx. 100m, then go right along a hedged lane (signposted Public Footpath), which comes out into a field at its end. Turn sharp left here around the end of the copse, then go half right across a partially ploughed/planted field, keeping a small copse of trees and bushes to your right, to a stile through the far hedge into a pasture field which slopes down to the Clatford to Pewsey road below. Turn left and follow the hedge along the top of the valley, going over a stile, and then go left through a small gate, then immediately right into a belt of trees. Continue in the same direction through Short Oak Copse until you meet the Wansdyke, by a redundant stile. Turn right and follow the ditch of the Wansdyke down to the Clatford to Pewsey road.

Take the path on the opposite side indicated by a W.C.C footpath signpost diagonally right up into West Woods. This soon joins a track coming up from the road by a low, waymarked post; turn left along it, and after a few metres, at a second low, waymarked post, leave the WHT and turn right onto a wide woodland track. This bends left by a third waymarked post, and approximately 100m after this, take the broad, well surfaced track to the left signposted “Easy-access trail”.

At this point we rejoin the Wansdyke, which is on your left. It can be extremely muddy along this section. Rather than trying to walk on or close to the Wansdyke, it is easier to use the broad, earthen track a few metres into the trees. Eventually cross over the Wansdyke on a cross track and continue in the same direction with the Wansdyke now on your right. Almost a mile (1.6 km) after rejoining the Wansdyke you reach a broad track on the perimeter of the West Woods, and rejoin the WHT. Turn right along this, soon going downhill. At the bottom of the hill, go left along the WHT for 10m, then turn right through the remains of a wooden gate to ascend the trench beside the Wansdyke, which is now back on your left. You may

need to walk on the bank to the right of the trench in various places to avoid fallen trees. At the end of the woods, go over the stile, and forward onto a slightly raised spinney. Once through the spinney, turn right, with hedge on your right, and walk down to the bottom of the hollow and up the other side. Cross the stile at the top and turn sharp left along the edge of Shaw Copse.

In the corner of the field, cross the stile and follow the path half right away from Shaw Copse and through a break in the hedge/line of trees. Take the stile into the field corner after approx 100m and turn right along the field edge. [As the stile is at present broken, as an alternative turn right just before the stile and proceed approx. 50m along the edge of the field to a gap in the hedge/undergrowth. **Please note that this is not an official right of way.**] Cross into the field through the gap and continue in the same direction with the hedge/undergrowth now on your right]. Ignore several obvious gaps into fields on the right; in the furthest and largest of these is the site of the medieval village of Shaw, but there are now no visible remains of this. At the far corner, there is a T junction of paths; go right along a path with fence to left and strip of woodland to right. Go through a metal gate at the end of this, with four Sarsen stones just beyond, and follow the fence line on your right down to the Lockeridge to Alton Barnes road.

West to east

Enter the field to the east of the road through the gate provided and follow the fence on your left to the top of the field past four Sarsen stones in the top corner. Go through the gate beyond these onto a path with fence to right and strip of woodland to left. Where a line of trees comes in from the right, turn left into a field and walk along its left hand edge. (The field on the left contains the site of the medieval village of Shaw, but there are now no visible remains of this). Cross the stile in the far corner. [As the stile is at present broken, as an alternative cross into the field on the left approx. 50m before the stile, ignoring the three obvious gaps in the hedge/undergrowth before this, the first of which is by two Sarsen stones, and proceed in the same direction to the stile. **Please note that this is not an official right of way.**] Go half left through a break in the hedge/line of trees to arrive at another stile by Shaw Copse. Cross this and walk along the edge of the field with the Copse on your right, then turn right over the stile at the end into a long field. Go down to the bottom of the hollow and up the other side, with the hedge to your left. At the top, just before a splendidly solitary wooden farm gate, turn left through a spinney and enter West Woods by a stile.

Follow the path to the left of the Wansdyke, which gradually becomes a trench (you may have to walk on the bank to the left of the trench in various places to avoid fallen trees), to exit onto the White Horse Trail (WHT) through the remains of a wooden gate. Turn left for 10 yards, then right onto a broad track on the perimeter of the West Woods, going steadily uphill at first. After almost $\frac{1}{2}$ mile (0.8 km), where the track bends to the right, branch left off it, leaving the WHT, with the Wansdyke on your left. It can be extremely muddy along this section. Eventually cross the Wansdyke on a cross track and continue in the same direction, with the Wansdyke now on your right. Almost a mile (1.6 km) after rejoining the

Wansdyke you arrive at a T junction of tracks and a sign confirming that you have just been walking on the “Easy-access trail”. Turn right here. The path soon bends right by a low, waymarked post. Take the first obvious track to the left about 100m after this, where there is a second low, waymarked post, then after a few metres turn half right off this, as indicated by a third waymarked post, to arrive at the Clatford to Pewsey road by a W.C.C. footpath signpost.

Cross this and follow the Wansdyke, on your right, uphill to the end of Short Oak Copse. Turn left within Short Oak Copse, maintain direction in a belt of trees beyond, then go left through a small gate into a pasture field which slopes down to the Pewsey to Clatford road. Turn right along the crest of the valley with a hedge on your right, going over one stile, then go right over a stile uphill through the hedge into a partially-ploughed/planted field. Go half left across the field, keeping a small copse of trees and bushes to your left, and around the left corner of the copse ahead, turning immediately right to enter a hedged lane to the left just beyond the copse.

This comes out on a tarmac road, Manton Drove. Go left down this for approx. 100m, then turn right onto an unploughed strip between two fields. On reaching the far edge, go left and step over the logged stile in the fence into the next field. Go diagonally left across this aiming for a stile half way down the other side. Cross this, pass through a strip of woodland, and go over a second stile. This takes you into a long field at the top of Granham Hill. After passing through a small wood, the WHT veers left downhill alongside a sunken track, but we continue along the top of the hill. Cross a hollow (which used to be the old road) between earthworks to the left of a wooden stile onto the Pewsey road, and follow the path diagonally left downhill to a metal kissing gate onto a track, ignoring another metal kissing gate on the right onto the Pewsey road. Go right along this track and through the gap by a gate into Granham Close. Walk along this to arrive in Marlborough at the western end of George Lane.