

The Falcon Shotteswell and Horley Trail, Warminster, Warwickshire



Challenging Terrain

6 miles
Circular
3 to 3.5
hours

071215



Access Notes



1. The route includes many climbs and descents throughout and, combined with the soft and uneven ground underfoot, this will give you quite a workout.
2. The paths across the crop fields and pastures can be very muddy at times and can be also quite narrow or overgrown in parts, so good boots and long trousers are recommended (plus a change of shoes for the pub). You will need to negotiate several steps, footbridges and kissing gates plus 14 stiles.
3. About half of the stiles are enclosed with wire fencing so dogs will need a lift over these ones. You will cross several pastures holding cattle, a couple holding sheep and one horse paddock (which was also holding a pair of pigs when we walked).
4. The route requires you to cross a fairly busy B-road twice and also leads you across a small grass airstrip, so take particular care at these points.

The Falcon boasts fine food, an extensive list of spirits, wines and local beers and an outstanding view across the local countryside.

A 6 mile circular pub walk from The Falcon near Warminster in Warwickshire. The walking route explores this rural corner of Warwickshire and adjacent Oxfordshire, taking in the rolling landscape of pastures, crop fields and quaint villages. You will enjoy a remarkably peaceful journey, belying the walk's proximity to towns and motorways, across beautiful countryside and with glorious views throughout.

Getting there

Warminster is located in the Stratford-upon-Avon district of Warwickshire, close to the border with Oxfordshire and the M40. The Falcon is situated on the B4100 road which links Warminster to Banbury, about 4 miles north west of Banbury. The pub is opposite a car showroom and has its own large car park.

Approximate post code **OX17 1JJ**

Walk Sections



Start to Laurel Farm



Begin the walk in the parking area to the south of the pub (this is the parking area to the left of the pub if you are standing inside facing the road). Walk to the front left corner of this parking area where you will find a yellow-topped footpath waymarker post by a gap in the hedge. Go through the gap in the hedge to reach the corner of the adjacent crop field.

With your back to the gap, walk diagonally across the field (between 10 and 11 o'clock) heading for the barn visible in the tree line at the far side. NOTE: If for any reason, the field centre is impassable, simply follow the right-hand edge of the field round to the barn. You will notice that the soil in this part of the world is coloured rich red by the ironstone

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content. Iron ore has been quarried in the area for many years and was once transported to Banbury by an old rail line.

Pass to the left-hand side of the barn where you will find the next waymarker post. Ignore the gap in the hedge to your left, instead take the gap in front of you and then walk straight ahead. Follow the line of the hedge on your left for the first stretch and then, when the hedge turns away, keep straight ahead across the centre of the crop field (aiming for the oak tree at the end of the hedge line opposite).

As you reach the hedge corner just in front of this oak tree, bear slightly left (about 11 o'clock) across the remainder of the field. As you approach the fence line ahead, glorious views open up across the valley to the left. At the far side, cross the tall stile into a horse paddock (which was also holding a pair of pigs when we walked). Cross the paddock at about 11 o'clock to reach a wide metal gate within the fence line, beyond the beautiful old stone barn. Pass through this gate to reach the stone access drive for the farm, Laurel Farm.

1 → 2 Laurel Farm to County Boundary



Turn right along the stone track and, shortly, pass through the next wide gate. Follow the lane ahead to reach the junction with the main road in Shotteswell village. Turn right along the grass verge of the main road, signed to Banbury and Warwick. Follow this right-hand grass verge all the way out of the village to reach the junction with the B4100.

Turn right along the wide grass verge (signed to Warmington) and on your right in the hedge you will see a beautiful old stone marker post. This point is 73 miles from London and 35 miles from Birmingham and, before the M40 was built, this road was the main A-Road linking the two cities. After 60 yards on this grass verge, cross over (NOTE: please do take care as the traffic can be fast moving) to turn left onto the signed public footpath.

NOTE: The next few fields are likely to be holding cattle. Cross the stile and walk at about 1 o'clock heading for the barn at the bottom of the slope. Just before you reach the barn, bear left to pass alongside it and then follow the direction of the power lines that lead you all the way to the gate and stile in the furthest field corner. Cross the stile, walk ahead (with the hedge on your right) and a little way along, turn right through the gateway set within the hedge.

With your back to this gateway, cross the next section of pasture diagonally left (with great views ahead) to reach the next stile, close to the far left-hand corner. The stile leads you to the edge of a large crop field.

The stretch of path you are following is part of a 65 mile long distance footpath named after Colonel d'Arcy Dalton, a founding member of the Oxford Fieldpaths Society. The path was opened to mark the society's diamond jubilee, and celebrates the achievements in preserving the rights of way along the western boundary of Oxfordshire.

Cross the crop field at about 11 o'clock to reach a yellow waymarker and footbridge at the far side. Cross the footbridge and turn left, following the line of the hedgerow on your left. You will come to the next footbridge ahead. This marks the boundary between Warwickshire and Oxfordshire.

2 → 3 County Boundary to Kissing Gate



Cross the footbridge and stile to reach another pasture (likely to be holding cattle). Walk straight ahead across the pasture and pass through the hedgerow opposite, via the two stiles and a further footbridge. You will emerge to the edge of a large crop field.

Turn left along the field edge, following the left-hand tree line as it swings steadily right. Where the taller trees on the left end, look for a half-hidden stile set into the left-hand hedgerow. Turn left over this and walk ahead, following the left-hand edge of this rough meadow. There are several large elder bushes within the hedgerow on the left which produce a bounty of elderflowers in the spring and elderberries in the early autumn.

After just a short distance you will come to a gap in the hedgerow ahead. Pass through this (take care as it can be boggy here) and then continue following the left-hand edge of this next large field. Stay with the left-hand boundary as it twists and turns around several corners. At the far end of this long field you will find a waymarker arrow sitting on an old gate post.

Walk ahead into the next crop field and take the footpath which leads you ahead across the centre of the field and then bears left to reach the far left-hand corner. NOTE: Depending on the crop in the field, you could walk around the left-hand boundary if needs be. In the far left-hand corner you will find a metal kissing gate.

3 → 4 Kissing Gate to Banbury Lane



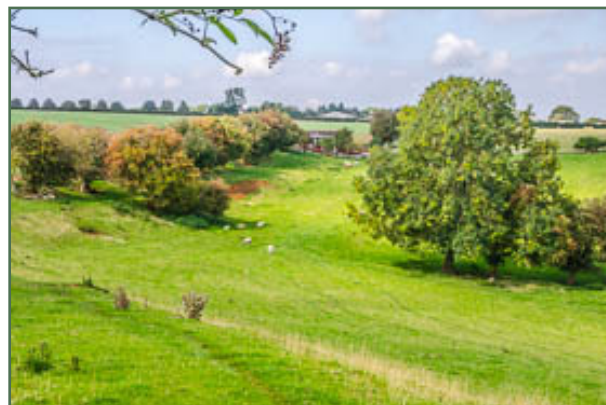
Pass through the kissing gate and then walk diagonally right (between 1 and 2 o'clock) heading uphill through the next two crop fields, passing through a small metal gate along the way. At the top of the slope, a kissing gate leads you to the end of a fenced grass bridleway. There is a handy bench here if you wish to pause and catch your breath. Follow the bridleway through the pretty belt of trees and all the way out to a junction with a quiet country lane.

Turn left along the lane, taking care of any occasional traffic, and follow it into the village of Horley. Continue along the main village road, passing Horley Lodge and then the manor house, Horley

House, (with its beautiful boundary wall) both on the left. This boundary wall is made of Horton Stone, a type of limestone quarried locally for generations. The stone is used extensively as a local building material, on churches as well as houses, and ranges in colour from a warm light brown, through brown-purple, grey and green to various shades of mauve and blue.

When you reach the road fork, with the church ahead, take the left-hand branch still following the main road and passing the church on your right. Just beyond the church, join the raised pavement along the left-hand side of the road and then cross over the side road, Lane Close, on the left. Take a moment here to look alongside the garden gate for property number 10. Sitting on the gatepost you will meet the local celebrity, Julie Duck. Julie sports a number of outfits depending on the season. Why not add a photo to the iFootpath walk photo gallery to show the outfit she was wearing when you walked by?

Continue ahead and soon the pavement leads you to a staggered T-junction with Banbury Lane. Turn left, signed to Banbury.



into the second sheep field.

Walk ahead for a few paces and then dog-leg left (across the stile) and then right, to follow the right-hand edge of the adjacent crop field. Pass to the right-hand side of the large metal outbuilding, a hanger for the airstrip. Beyond this hanger you will be crossing the end of the airstrip so again look out for any active planes before you proceed.

Pass to the right of the next hanger and, behind this, a stile leads you into another pasture. Walk ahead, following the right-hand fence line of this final pasture. As you reach the far right-hand corner, pass through the series of three metal gates which lead you alongside the animal holding pens on your left. You are likely to get a noisy welcome from the cattle if they are at home! You will emerge to a road in Shotteswell village. Cross the road and take the gate ahead into the recreation ground.

4 → 5 Banbury Lane to Airstrip



Follow Banbury Lane, taking care of traffic, passing the cricket club on the left and leaving the village of Horley behind. Continue following the lane downhill and over a stream bridge. Immediately afterwards you will see a footpath fingerpost on the left. Do NOT cross the fence into the stable paddock (as the sign seems to suggest!), instead, continue for a few paces and then turn left onto the grass track.

Follow this track with the fenced paddock on the left and an open crop field on the right. Continue through the gap in the hedge ahead and cross the next field diagonally right (at 1 o'clock). At the far side cross the stile, head down the wooden steps, over the footbridge and up the steps at the far side to reach the next crop field with wonderful views ahead.

Turn right, following the field edge uphill. Keep your eyes peeled in the tree line on your right and you will find a waymarker post set within this. At this point, fork left (as directed by the waymarker) to walk diagonally across the crop field. The path leads you to a wide metal gate within the top field boundary.

Pass through the gate to reach the grass verge alongside the B4100. Cross over, again taking particular care on this fast-moving road. Turn left along the opposite grass verge for just a few yards to reach the next waymarker. Turn right across the stile to enter the next crop field which is also home to an active airstrip. You need to walk directly ahead across the centre of this field, but please check carefully that no aircraft are using the grass runway before you do so.

5 → 6 Airstrip to Recreation Ground

At the far side you will find a stile within the fence (close to the left-hand end of the tree line). Cross the stile to enter the sheep pasture and turn left along the path, following the fence line on the left. At the end of the first pasture, pass to the right of the corrugated iron enclosure and go through the wide gate ahead

6 → 7 Recreation Ground to End



Walk at about 11 o'clock, passing close to the basketball hoop, and leave the recreation ground at the far side. Continue down the flight of wooden steps and you will emerge to the village road junction which you should recognise from your outward leg. Walk between 10 and 11 o'clock across the junction to reach the waymarker post alongside the Back Hill road sign.

From this point you will be retracing your steps back to the pub. To do this, take the tarmac access drive ahead, go through the gate in front of you and then turn left through the gate to enter the horse paddock. Cross the paddock diagonally right and cross the stile into the crop field. Take a moment to look across to the right here and, on a clear day, you will be able to see the obelisk within Farnborough Hall estate, which is 16.5 metres high. This is reputed to be the spot where two lovers, one from Mollington and one from Farnborough, used to secretly meet.

Walk at about 11 o'clock, heading for the single oak tree at the end of the hedge line. Where you reach the hedge corner, bear half right to continue across the centre of the field, heading for the gap in the hedge between the barn roof and the single ash tree. Pass alongside the barn on your left and then cross the final large crop field diagonally left. At the far corner you will reach The Falcon for some well-earned hospitality.

Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

