

The Parks Trust Self-Guided Walks: Great Linford

Walk by Peter Burrett, Monday 2nd June 2014

Start point

Car park at tennis courts and pavilion, Great Linford Park.

Access from Wolverton Road; take Marsh Drive, Great Linford. Pass High Street on your right. Access to car park is then a short distance on your left.

Access from Monks Way (H3); turn north at Great Linford roundabout into St Leger Drive, then right into Marsh Drive. Just after Woad Lane on your left, car park is on your right.

Walk overview

This is a figure of eight walk, including a linear section either side of the Grand Union Canal. It starts and finishes at the same car park.

The walking is easy, along good quality footpaths and red ways. Unfortunately, it is not suitable for wheelchair users as there is one set of steps.

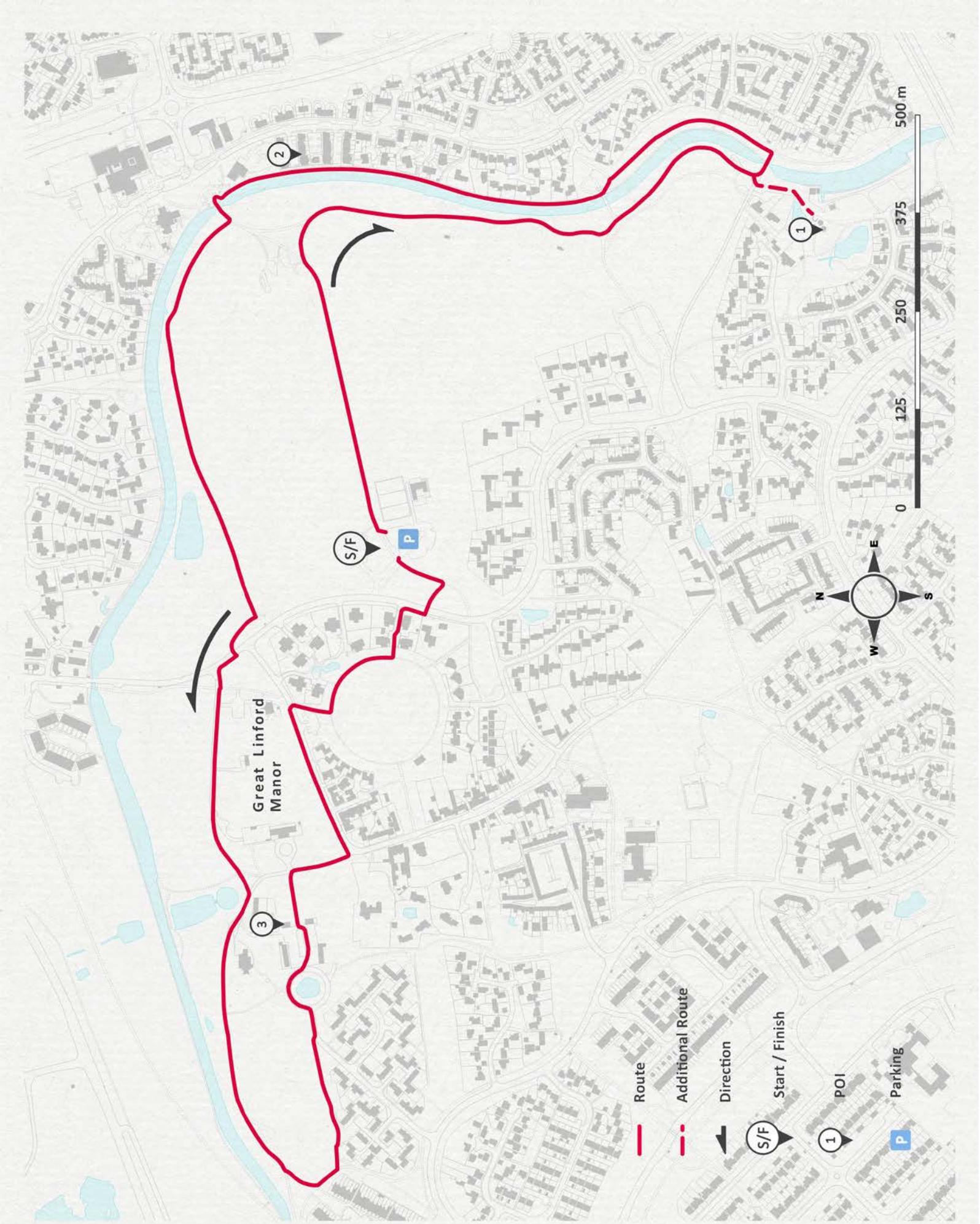
Distances & times

Figure of eight walk; Car park – Great Linford Park – Linford Brick Kilns - Grand Union Canal – Manor Park – Great Linford Cricket Green - car park = 2.7 miles, 90 minutes.

As well as copious numbers of seats and picnic benches along the route, there are also two pubs and a café. The modern family-orientated *Giffard Park* pub on the Grand Union Canal is now part of the *Sizzling Pub* chain, offering great value pub food. It is open Sunday to Thursday 12.00 to 23.00, and 12.00 to midnight on Friday and Saturday. The café at the Milton Keynes Arts Centre is open 10.00 to 16.00 Monday to Saturday, closed Bank Holidays. It offers hot and cold drinks as well as locally-sourced organic snacks.

The 15th century thatched *Nags Head* pub in Great Linford village offers a very different experience to the *Giffard Park*, with its original beams, low ceilings and two real fireplaces. Food can be eaten in the lounge, bar area or beer garden. The pub is open Sunday to Thursday 11.00 to 23.00, Friday and Saturday 11.00 to 23.30. Food is served Monday to Saturday 12.00 to 21.00, Sunday 12.00 to 20.00.

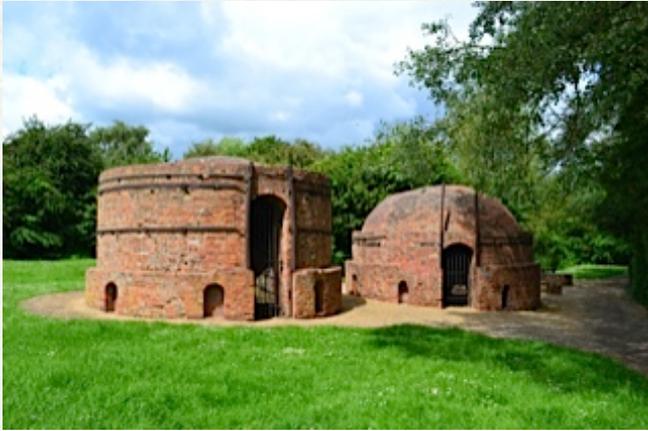




The figure of eight walk

Facing the tennis courts, take the red way at the furthest left hand corner of the car park. This takes you through an avenue of trees dissecting Great Linford Park, with well-maintained cricket and rugby pitches on your right.

Ahead of you at the end of the avenue is a footbridge over the Grand Union Canal. Before you reach this, turn right onto another red way opposite a children's play area, which is on your left. The canal is now on your left as you head south, and you soon pass paddocks to your right.



At a path junction, continue straight on past another footbridge over the canal. Just after a picnic bench on your left you come to another junction of paths. Head straight across for a short diversion to the Linford Brick Kilns (signed "*Linford Brick Kilns*" and "*Pennyland*").

The brick kilns were built in the late 1800s by George Osborn Price of Newport Pagnell, a coal and lime merchant and agricultural chandler selling everything from seeds to manure. The canal was used to take the bricks by horse-drawn barge to surrounding areas for use in building work. A pond near the kilns is actually a water-filled clay pit, now supporting many aquatic plants and animals.

Now retrace your steps to the last footpath junction and turn right onto a red way over a brick-built canal footbridge, signposted "*Canal Broadwalk*". On the other side of the canal, turn left onto a footpath taking you north, signposted "*Canal Broadwalk*" and "*Linford District Park*". You pass through another avenue of trees and will see the houses of Giffard Park to your right.

Cross a short section of wooden boardwalk over an area of low-lying boggy ground and under the first footbridge you passed on the other side of the canal, here diverting off the footpath onto the canal towpath. There are usually brightly-coloured canal boats moored on the stretch of canal.

Just before Grand Union Canal pedestrian bridge number 78, climb a short flight of steps and proceed across the bridge. You will see the *Giffard Park* pub to your right as you cross. Take the first path on the right, signed "*Linford Manor Park*".

With the canal now to your right, the path takes you through an area of woodland before emerging alongside pasture land between path and canal. You are now on the northern edge of Great Linford Park, but it is still not possible to see through trees and scrub into the northern part of the park itself.



At a T-junction of paths, turn right for a short distance alongside Marsh Drive before crossing over into an access road signed "*The Memorial Hall*". Cross a red way, pass a small car park to your left then between two brick pillars into Manor Park.

This is the most appealing and interesting section of the walk, the park being beautifully landscaped with trees and lawned areas, and replete with benches. An ideal area to stop for a picnic.

On your left is the boundary wall of Linford Manor (good views of this later). This 17th century manor house is now believed to be owned by businessman Pete Winkelman, chairman of MK Dons football club.



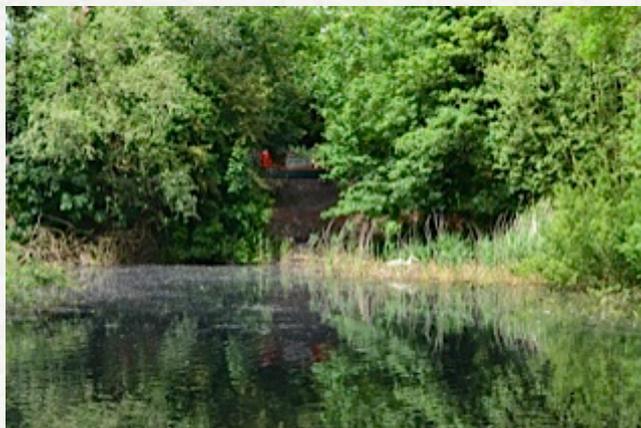
Ignore the option to turn left here towards the *Nags Head* pub (signed "*Linford Village*") which you can see in the near distance and instead continue straight across (signed "*Railway Walk*" and "*St Andrews Church*") past some 17th century almshouses on your left, and ponds on the right complete with ducks, swans and moorhens at time of visit.

Just after a useful information board about the history of Great Linford, take the footpath to the right of St Andrews Church and its churchyard. This parish church was constructed in the 13th and 14th centuries and contains stained glass windows of note. Its ecumenical status means the church is an interesting partnership between Methodists, Baptists, the Church of England and the United Reformed Church.

This footpath is signed as cycle way number 6 on the National Cycle Network. The Grand Union Canal is now on your right. There are plenty of picnic benches on the grassy area between path and canal.

You pass a collection of large stones on your left. There is no explanatory signage, but these appear to be a modern art installation rather than a site of historic interest.

Take another path to the left before a footbridge over the canal, which you will see ahead of you. This takes you through further woodland and past another Great Linford information board. Turn left onto a red way for a short stretch, then left again onto a footpath through woods and into a grassy area.



The path comes to Parklands, a tarmacked road. Walk around the left side of a circular road with a pond at its centre. You pass the rear of St Andrews Church. Enter the courtyard of historic buildings that make up Milton Keynes Arts Centre. These were formerly stables and associated gate houses for Linford Manor. The almshouses previously passed form part of the complex and are now used as artists' studios.

A fine thatched building houses the café and hosts various exhibitions and events, as well as further artists' workshops.

Walk through the Arts Centre and down a slope towards the frontage of Linford Manor, turning right before you reach it. The path emerges onto High Street where the *Nags Head* is located.

Turn left onto residential High Street, which is a high street in name only nowadays, having no shops or businesses other than the village pub.

Just past a wooden five bar gate on your right, take a path leading to Great Linford cricket green, a separate ground to that seen earlier on the walk, idyllically situated with its own substantial pavilion.

Walk left around the green before taking the first right of way footpath to the left. At a red way turn left again, cross Marsh Drive and proceed 100 metres back to the car park.

