



 **Almshouses**



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WALK 5

CAVALIERS AND ROUNDHEADS THE MARSHFIELD AND COLD ASHTON TRAIL

Start Point	Marshfield Village
Distance	10km (6 1/2 miles)
Difficulty	Hard includes steep, wet and uneven ground in parts (Can be very muddy in Winter)
Time	4-5 hours
Refreshments	Numerous inns - The Lord Nelson, The Crown and The Catherine Wheel, Sweet Apples Tea Room and a selection of shops in Marshfield village. White Hart Inn at Cold Ashton

INTRODUCTION

This walk follows some of the Cotswold's most secluded and hidden valleys. Roman and medieval histories, and stories from the Civil War, are all embedded deep in the strategic boundary settlements of Marshfield and Cold Ashton. The walk starts in Marshfield village where a range of refreshments and car parking can be found.

THE ROUTE

- 1** Starting from outside the Old School House in Marshfield village centre, head southwards down Weir Lane. Pass Weir Farm Pond, which was used for cleaning carts and coaches and soaking their wooden wheels. Bear left into Sheepfair Lane, and then left again into Ashwicke Road.
- 2** Shortly after leaving the village, turn right down Beek's Lane (opposite Marshfield Cricket Club) towards Beek's Farm (a distance of 2 1/4 km).
- 3** Just past Beek's Mill turn right onto the waymarked public footpath crossing St Catherine's Brook. Here we join the route of the Limestone Link. Cross a wooden stile and follow the path up a short steep climb to Leigh Lane.
- 4** At Leigh Lane, turn right up hill for a short distance (10m). Turn right again and follow the path down a short track to a field gate and stile. Cross the stile and follow the Limestone Link path along the valley side.
- 5** Upon reaching Burmead Wood, the path takes a sharp right, almost doubling back upon itself. The Limestone Link waymarkers help at this point. After a short while turn left when you reach a wooden hunting gate. Go through the gate and continue straight on towards Cold Ashton (on the skyline in front), following a stream to your right.
- 6** Head up hill towards Cold Ashton. After around 1/2 km, look out for the footpath way-marker adjacent to the large sycamore tree on your right. Turn right here, crossing the stream, and follow the path up through the steep field towards Cold Ashton, noting the footpath stile on the horizon to guide you. Cross the stile and continue up the steep ascent to the field gate allowing access into Hyde's Lane. This point marks the start of the Limestone Link, a walk of 58km linking the Cotswolds to the Mendip Hills.
- 7** At Hyde's Lane turn right to join the Cotswold Way National Trail. We only follow the Cotswold Way National Trail for a short distance of around 30m before it turns left- you can continue to follow the Cotswold Way National Trail to visit Holy Trinity Church and The White Hart public house. However we continue along Hyde's Lane for 1/2 km, taking the second marked path down to the right.



The Manor House, Cold Ashton

- 8 Proceed down across fields towards Great Moody's Wood and the derelict building. Follow the path to the left of the derelict building, keeping both Great Moody's Wood and Little Moody's Wood to your left side. Follow the path across the middle of the next two fields and up the valley, crossing several wooden stiles as you progress, with the upper reaches of St Catherine's Brook to your right.
- 9 Approaching the top of the valley cross St Catherine's Brook and climb up to your left towards the stile that leads out onto Green Lane. Turn left and follow Green Lane past Bellum to Marshfield High Street, noting the Old Toll House to your left. Turn right to return to Marshfield village, passing its almshouses, delightful cottages, historic buildings, converted churches and friendly pubs.

SOME PLACE NAME ORIGINS:

Cold Ashton	Farmstead by the ash tree, much exposed to the violence of the winds
Marshfield	Meresfelde in Domesday Book - a tract of open land on the border




**Holy Trinity
Church**

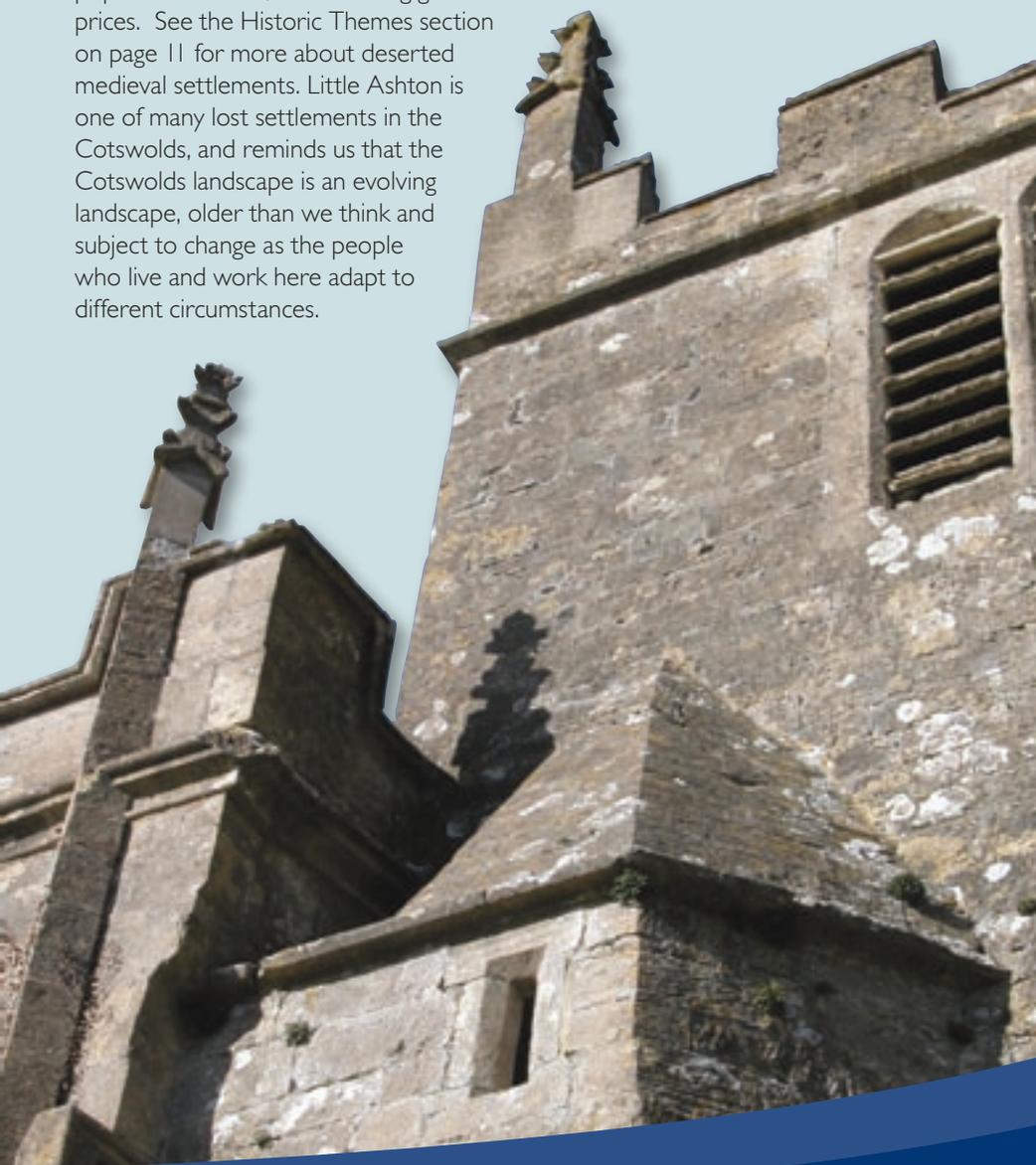
COLD ASHTON

Cold Ashton's place name, see above - says a lot! The village stands high up on the south Cotswold hills, with dry stone walls curving out over the rolling landscape of arable fields and pastures. From the village street there are excellent views to the east to the Wiltshire Downs and westwards over St Catherine's valley. Cold Ashton is surrounded by the traces of medieval field systems in the form of strip lynchets. These are narrow terraces formed by ploughing and cultivation and used to maximise the area that could be cultivated on steep slopes. You can also see pillow mounds (man-made rabbit warrens) of similar vintage close to Beek's Farm. A document from 1575 refers to this area being called 'Rabbottes Hill'. The Cold Ashton estate was originally the property of Bath Abbey until the dissolution and in 1564 it came into the hands of William Pepwall, Mayor of Bristol. There are a number of impressive Cotswold buildings within the village, one of which is the splendid Elizabethan Manor House. The Old Rectory and the Court House also lie along the stone walled main street. The Holy Trinity Church, set away from the road, is almost entirely hidden by trees.



LOST LITTLE ASHTON

There used to be a village near Cold Ashton called Little Ashton. Tax lists of 1327 for this now-vanished village of Little Aston show a healthy population, yet pottery and other evidence suggest a complete desertion by the middle years of the fourteenth century. Desertion stemmed from a conjunction of poor climate, the impact of the plague and regional population decline, and declining grain prices. See the Historic Themes section on page 11 for more about deserted medieval settlements. Little Ashton is one of many lost settlements in the Cotswolds, and reminds us that the Cotswolds landscape is an evolving landscape, older than we think and subject to change as the people who live and work here adapt to different circumstances.





CAVALIERS AND ROUNDHEADS

Imagine yourself entering the village on a hot sweltering day, badly wounded, back on the 5th July 1643. A bloody battle of the English Civil War had been fought between the Royalist and Parliamentarian armies, leaving several hundred dead on Lansdowne Hill near Bath. The battle was something of a stalemate; although the armies of the Parliament left the field, they maintained strategic control of nearby Bath. However, the commander of the Royalist Infantry, Sir Bevil Granville, had been mortally wounded and he was brought back to the Old Rectory in Cold Ashton, where he died of his wounds.

MARSHFIELD

Marshfield lay on the old boundaries of the Anglo Saxon kingdoms of Wessex and Mercia. Its origins, however, are much older. Clusters of Roman pottery, including shards of fine Samian tablewares, have been discovered here, and the plough frequently turns up objects from Roman times. A Roman farmstead has been excavated nearby and yielded bronze coins, jewellery, fragments of glass and other items.

Charters date a Saxon settlement here from 963. The growth of the modern town began in the early medieval period around 1265, with market status and the granting of a charter for a three day fair.



Weir Farm pond

Marshfield conforms to the typical planned medieval market town layout, with long narrow “burgage” plots running back from a broad High Street to a pair of back lanes now called Back Lane and Weir Lane. The prosperity brought by the wool and malting trades financed striking architecture over the following centuries as the town expanded. It also prospered because of its strategic location. It was an important staging post on the Bristol to London route, strategically linking the Cotswold wool trade to markets and ports such as Bristol. “103 miles from Hyde Park Corner” proclaims the plate on a wall near The Crown, showing the town’s importance as a staging post. As it was later bypassed by the industrial revolution, so it is now bypassed by the A420 to the north.

MARSHFIELD TODAY

Nowadays Marshfield is a lively village with a primary school, shops, businesses and local events. It’s well known in folk circles for the Marshfield Mummers, a group of local performers. With costumes made from strips of newspaper, they perform the revived version of their Mummer play on Boxing Day each year. This is an example of a tradition known in many Gloucestershire villages, and may go back to ancient times.



*High Street,
Marshfield*