

Marshfield Circular

Distance: 6¹/₂ miles

Walking Time: 3¹/₂ hours

GRADE: Moderate/Hard 4

9

Marshfield is a small medieval market town, linear in form, occupying an exposed position on the dip slope of the southern Cotswolds. The town possesses a rich and vibrant history and a wealth of historic buildings, many of which are listed. The walk explores the town and surrounding countryside, taking in the beautiful and spectacular landscapes associated with St Catherine's Valley before climbing to the neighbouring village of Cold Ashton. The walk is quite strenuous, involving some relatively long climbs.

Maps:

Explorer 155

Bristol & Bath
1:25 000 scale

Landranger 172

Bristol & Bath
1:50 000 scale

Grid Ref: (start of walk) ST 776 736



PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

Bus

The 635 Bristol - Chippenham service operates to/from Marshfield from The Centre (Colston Street) every two hours Mondays to Saturdays. The journey takes about 1 hour.

There are no Sunday and Bank Holiday services.

We recommend you check your journey times by logging on to www.traveline.org.uk or by calling the Traveline number below.

PUBLIC TOILETS

High Street, Marshfield

PUBLIC HOUSES/CAFES EN ROUTE

The Crown 01225 891189

The Lord Nelson 01225 891820

The Catherine Wheel 01225 892220

Sweetapples Tea-shop 01225 891657

PLACES AND FEATURES OF INTEREST

Marshfield

Marshfield was a historically important local town, partly due to its strategic location in the Cotswold wool country but also its proximity to Bath, and to Bristol with its port. From the evidence of Saxon charters, it seems that there was a settlement in the area from at least AD931. The town appears in the Domesday Book (AD1086) as 'Meresfelde'. It gained market status in 1234 and 30 years later was granted a charter for a three day fair.

By 1334 Marshfield was the fourth most prosperous town in the area, after Bristol, Gloucester and Cirencester. Development further west on the High Street occurred between the late 13th century to around 1600, although there are some 17th century buildings of note, in particular the fine Alms houses at the western end of the village. The next main development period for Marshfield was during the 18th century stimulated by trade in wool, candles and malt.

Malting Industry

Evidence of the malting industry is still found in the former malhouses and storage buildings, often of unusual length, situated to the rear of many properties fronting the High Street. There are records of barley being grown for malting dating back to the 15th century. Malting is the process whereby grain is converted into fermentable material for the brewing trade; it involves soaking, germination and heating. At one time Marshfield had 18 malhouses. The last malthouse ceased operation at the beginning of the 20th century.



View of Marshfield

Marshfield High Street



View from Marshfield High Street

Both frontages of the High Street are continuously developed along their entire length, interrupted only occasionally by narrow streets that afford glimpses of buildings and open countryside beyond. The majority of buildings lining the street are 18th century in origin although several buildings date from the 17th century and many conceal older cores. The facades of the buildings are unified by the consistent use of local stone and other materials, which add great character to the village.

Get off the bus along the High Street, Marshfield, either at Marshfield Baptist Church or the Crown pub. Walk back along the High Street and turn left into St. Martins Lane. Walk along the lane and take the footpath on the right past the houses, signposted to Cold Ashton.

