



**Blenheim and the Churchill Legacy**

**A ramble which circumnavigates the Blenheim Palace Estate, with an optional visit to Sir Winston Churchill's final resting place at Bladon**

**Essential Facts**

- Route distance: 11.5 km (7.2 miles)
- Approximate time: 3 hours 30 mins
- Optional extension: 3.2 km (2.0 miles)
- Approx. total ascent: 120 metres
- Start point Grid Ref: SP 444 167
- GPS Ref: SP 44442 16744
- Recommended O.S. Map: Explorer 180
- Toughness Rating: Cotswolds 2

Please see the notes on Toughness Ratings at the end of this report

**Up For A  
CHALLENGE ?**

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A Team Effort**

**Full Info from the Great Walks web site**

## THE ROUTE

This walk is entirely on public footpaths, bridleways or roads. You will need to pay an admission charge to enter the immediate environs of Blenheim Palace or its gardens. Parking in the centre of Woodstock can be in short supply, and time limits may apply. You may find parking in streets further from the centre, or pay to park in the estate grounds.

You start this circumnavigation of the Blenheim Estate from the Market Square in the centre of Woodstock, **S**. Standing with the Bear Hotel behind you, turn right and then take the left-hand fork past the Town Hall. At the end of Market Street turn left into Oxford Street.

Follow the roadside path down the hill, crossing the brook over 'The Causeway'. Now carry on up the hill, passing the Black Prince pub, until reaching a cul-de-sac on the left, at **A**, opposite the converted church building. A Public Footpath sign (not very distinct) directs you to a gate in the estate wall, through which you pass.

Entering Blenheim Park you go down-hill towards the lake, with the palace in view over to your left. Pick up a tarmac track, where you turn right. Follow this track steadily up hill, eventually bearing left. The memorial column to the First Duke of Marlborough comes into view on your left. Soon, the path turns sharp right, away from the monument. Follow it in a straight line, between the lines of trees planted to replace the avenue of elms lost to Dutch Elm Disease.

Ignoring a first boundary, continue on this straight track for a kilometre to **B**, where you meet a fence and gate. It may not be signed, but the farm track to left and right is a bridleway. You take it to the left, with the boundary fence on your immediate right. In just 100 metres you come to a gate. Carry on ahead, continuing in the same direction when the grassy track becomes a hardcore farm roadway. Upon reaching a cross-roads of tracks, take the footpath straight over on a field margin.

Very soon the path goes slightly down hill, through a gate into a wood. Inside the wood you almost immediately come to a farm track, **C**, where you turn left. Follow the track between the trees for a short while, but soon take the footpath on the left. Cross a little bridge, and exit the wood. Now take the well defined footpath to the right, soon passing between two fields towards another long line of trees.

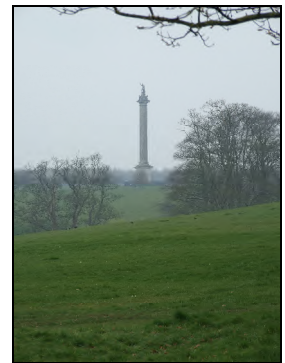
Turn right at the trees, keeping the wood to your left. When you reach the end of the wood continue ahead, on a footpath over a field. Again you head for a wood, which you enter. You go down a fairly steep path to the vale, do a quick left-then-right dog leg and then ascend the other side towards a stone boundary wall. You cross the wall by a ladder stile at **D**.

You now turn left, but soon turn right, on the footpath with a boundary hedge on its right. Follow this well defined path until it reaches the road, where you turn left. Upon reaching a little green bear left into the lane named East End. Continue on this lane until you reach a cottage on your left, beside which is Coombe Gate entrance to the Blenheim Estate, at **E**. This is a public footpath, so you pass through the side gate, and then take the right turn at the T-junction of tarmac pathways.

Now simply follow this tarmac path as it meanders through the woods. After a while you reach a gate into the Blenheim Palace Park itself. Continue ahead, and cross the stone bridge, beyond which our tarmac path bears a little to the right.



The Blenheim Bridge



The Marlborough Monument



The Grave Of Sir Winston And Lady Clementine Churchill

You'll soon see the south elevation of Blenheim Palace over to your left. But you continue ahead, reaching a T-junction by a little cottage, **F**.

Here you can take the extension to visit Sir Winston Churchill's grave: Turn right, and soon exit the estate by its south gate. Cross the busy Witney road to the footpath, where you turn right. Follow the roadside footpath into Bladon, passing the White House Pub on your right. You pass the War Memorial on your immediate left, and then take the surfaced footpath uphill to the left, away from the road. You soon reach Bladon Church, at **G**. Pay your respects to 'The Greatest Englishman' at his grave.

Retrace your route to the south gate of Blenheim Estate. Enter, and return to **F**. Alternatively you could follow the roadside footpaths back to Woodstock.

From **F**, bear left past the cottage and continue ahead on the tarmac path. Follow this same path ahead for some while, ignoring turns off to the right. At a crossroads, turn left, passing the miniature railway station on your left. You'll reach a gateway with a cattle grid at **H**. Here you will clearly see the eastern elevation of the palace to your left. Unless you want to visit Blenheim Palace and/or its gardens, for which fees are payable, go ahead over the crossroads and make for the archway through which you exit the estate.

Now you're back in Woodstock. Continue down the street, soon reaching the Market Square from which you started, **S**.

### Refreshment

Kings Arms Hotel  
Hotel & Public House  
19 Market Street,  
Woodstock  
Tel: 01993 813636  
Meals and bar snacks  
available

The Bear Hotel  
Hotel & Restaurant  
Park Street, Woodstock  
Tel: 0870 400 8202  
Hotel with restaurant

Queens Own Inn  
Inn  
59 Oxford Street,  
Woodstock  
Tel: 01993 810040  
Inn with lunches and  
snacks

The White House  
Public House  
Witney Road, Bladon  
Country pub with food

Blenheim Tea Rooms  
Tea Rooms  
Park Street, Woodstock  
Tel: 01993 813888  
Traditional tea room –  
cream teas and all



**The Blenheim Tea Rooms**

## LOCAL INFO

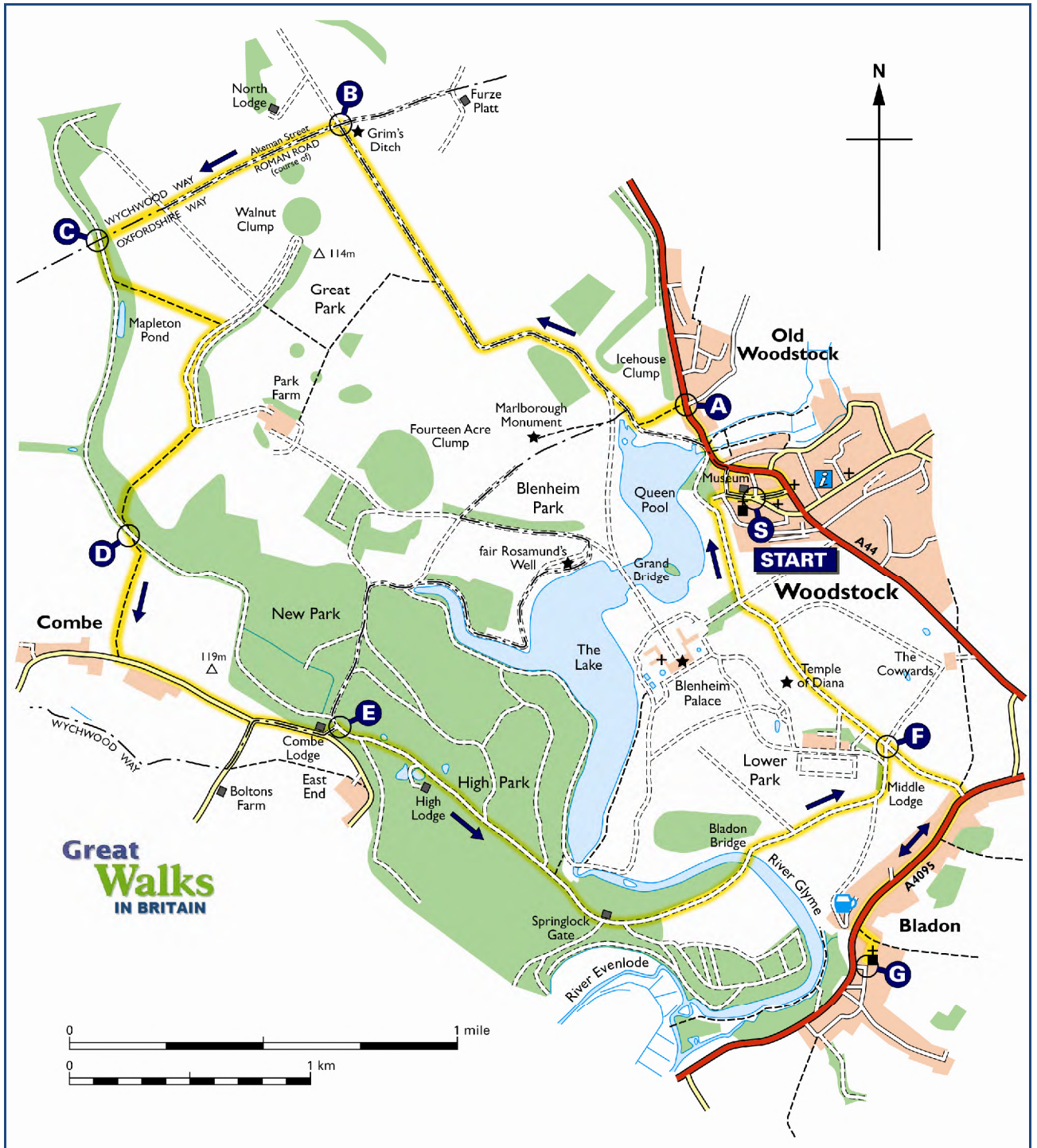
John Churchill, the English Commander in Chief, soundly thrashed the French at the Battle of Blenheim in 1704. His grateful King, William of Orange, rewarded him by funding the design and construction of the magnificent Blenheim Palace. Having been created Duke of Marlborough two years earlier, Churchill's success seemed complete. Unfortunately he fell from grace and ended his life in relative obscurity.

Two centuries later, his direct descendant, Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill was born at Blenheim Palace – in 1874. In fact his mother, Lady Jenny Churchill, went into labour whilst out horse riding. She was carried into the palace, and gave birth to 'The Greatest Englishman' on a hastily positioned bed on the ground floor. If you visit Blenheim Palace after your walk you can see the very bed in the actual room where the great man entered the world.

When the wartime Prime Minister died, in 1965, he was afforded the honour of a full State Funeral. Finally his body was carried by train to Oxford, thence to his final resting place in the churchyard at Bladon.

### **BLENHEIM & THE CHURCHILL LEGACY G.P.S. WAYPOINTS**

WAYPOINT NAME	MAP REF		CO-ORDINATES		ELEVATION: Metres
BLE S	S	SP	44442	16744	105
BLE A	A	SP	44128	17133	85
BLE B	B	SP	42686	18306	110
BLE C	C	SP	41693	17820	110
BLE D	D	SP	41834	16586	100
BLE E	E	SP	42644	15769	120
BLE F	F	SP	44935	15504	85
BLE G	G	SP	44893	14806	70
BLE H	H	SP	44390	16304	95



**Great Walks**  
IN BRITAIN

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MAP LEGEND					
	Great Walks route		Church with tower		Spot height - metres
	M6 Motorway		Church with spire		Information centre
	A23 Main road		Other place of worship		Parking
	B2116 Secondary road		Cathedral / Abbey		Public convenience
	Minor road		Building		Public house
	Other road		Built up area		Picnic site
	Track		Woodland		Camp site
	Footpath		Sand, shingle or mud		Major tourist feature
	Bridleway		Water feature		Other tourist feature
	National trail				
	Railway				

## Safety First

**Safety should always** be your first priority in planning and undertaking a walk, whether on your own or leading a group. Please read these Safety First and Walking Our Routes notes.

**Lead a group** of other walkers only if you have leadership and navigational experience adequate for the 'worst case' conditions which may be encountered on the particular walk, bearing in mind the terrain, possible weather and navigational demands.

**Weigh up the capabilities** of your party, in terms of fitness and walking speed. Adjust your time expectations accordingly.

**Ensure** all your party are adequately clothed for the weather and conditions. Footwear is particularly important. Clothing must protect against cold, wet or strong sun according to the time of year.

**Emergencies** are quite rare, but it is essential to think ahead about what to do if someone in your party sustains an injury. Will you have a First Aid kit? Is there a qualified First Aider in the party? How could help be summoned in a serious eventuality?

**Refreshment**, particularly water, can be vital. Dehydration in hot summer conditions can be rapid, and frequent intake of fluids is essential.

**On tougher walks** it is a good idea to tell someone where you are planning to go – and when you expect to be back. Remember - mobile phones often lose reception in mountainous or isolated areas.

**All our walks use legitimate routes:** Public Rights of Way, Public Footpaths, Bridleways, Permissive Paths, Access Land, Byways and Roads.

**Road** walking calls for particular care. When there is no defined footpath or verge wide enough for safe walking it is usually best to walk on the right – facing oncoming traffic. An exception may be a tight bend, where walkers would be more visible on the left.

**Occasionally** you may find a public footpath blocked or unuseable. It is perfectly in order to take the shortest available diversion without damaging crops, perhaps around a field margin.

**It is courteous** to close gates after passing through, sometimes even if the gate was open when you arrived – particularly if it is obvious livestock may escape.

**Mutual respect** for farm animals is to be encouraged! Don't frighten or annoy them, but equally don't put your party members in danger or discomfort. You certainly wouldn't be the first walkers to go round the outside of a field of frisky bullocks.

**Dogs** should always be kept on a lead anywhere near farm animals, and under close supervision elsewhere in the countryside.

## Walking Our Routes

**Our walks** are designed to be negotiated using the route directions in conjunction with the map section provided. We suggest walkers also take the Ordnance Survey Explorer or Outdoor Leisure map recommended for each walk.

**On mountain, moorland and open heathland** walks it is **ESSENTIAL** to have navigational expertise and tools, including the recommended Ordnance Survey map(s).

**Take care** to observe any cautions in the route description; exposed paths, areas liable to flooding etc.

**Consider conditions before setting off.** Will heavy rain have made a water meadow impassable? Will frost or snow make a path slippery?

**When navigating the route** look for clues to confirm you are in the right place. Are map features where you would expect on the ground? Are features mentioned in the text where expected? If you suspect you may have taken a wrong turn, take action sooner rather than later. It is better to re-trace to a known point rather than carry on regardless with the possibility of becoming increasingly confused.

**All our routes are carefully checked** before publication, but features can change on the ground – sometimes surprisingly quickly. Footpaths may be re-routed, buildings can appear or change significantly and these days pub names seem to change frequently.

**The approximate time** given for each walk is based on an average walking speed of 2.5 miles per hour (4 km/hour), plus an allowance for ascent, descent and any difficult terrain.

**Total ascent** is the approximate total ascent over the whole walk.

**GPS users** can enter in the waypoints provided in each of our walk reports. It is important to read our guide **Introducing GPS for Walkers**, available as a PDF file from the Great Walks in Britain web site.

**Remember that GPS** is a great navigational tool, but only one of those available to the navigator. Never dispense with conventional map and compass – and the training and skills to use them, especially on mountain, moorland or open heathland walks.

### TOUGHNESS RATINGS

All our **Cotswolds** routes can be undertaken by reasonably fit walkers able to utilise our map segments, together with the route guidance notes. Always consider recent and forecast weather.

Each walk has been allocated a **Toughness Rating**:

1. Easier walks with modest ascent and generally on well defined paths. There may be stiles or narrow gateways to negotiate.
2. Routes which are more demanding. They may include more ascent and possibly paths which are looser or more difficult underfoot.
3. More strenuous walks with some steep sections, higher paths or places which may be wet and boggy.
4. The most demanding walks in this edition. There may be prolonged steep ascents. Conditions may be challenging underfoot.

Toughness Ratings are allocated in the context of the terrain in the edition area. For example a walk rated as demanding in Cambridgeshire may be equivalent to an easier or moderate route on Dartmoor,