

The
British
Horse
Society

Brick Ride

9 miles from Marston Moretaine



Explore Greensand Country on horseback

Greensand Country

An area of distinct, beautiful and loved countryside

Brick Ride

With sweeping views from the viewpoint known as “The top of the world”, this route takes you from Marston Vale up on to the Greensand Ridge and back again. This lovely ride is on a mixture of hard tracks, sand tracks and grass paths, with much of the ride in a woodland environment. There are some steep hills (for Bedfordshire!) both upward and downward and a level crossing (twice).



Parking is at The Forest of Marston Vale, Forest Centre, MK43 0PR which is well signed from the A421. We recommend using the car park straight ahead at the roundabout in the Park (w3w: ///polishing.shells.familiar). There is a parking charge (currently £2 for up to 3 hours) – you can pay by cash, card or phone. Please observe signs for the Forest Centre’s prompt closing times, which change seasonally and in line with events taking place on site. It will cost £25 for a ranger to release you if you get locked in!

The Forest Centre is the visitor centre for the Millennium Country Park, the centrepiece of the Forest of Marston Vale. There is a café, bike hire and lots to see and do, both fun and educational – well worth a visit without your horse. www.marstonvale.org



Abbi Grief Photography

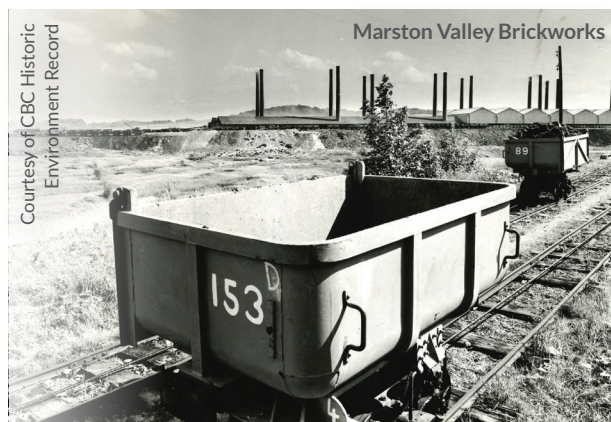
Points of interest around the Brick ride

As you leave the Millennium Country Park you pass an ancient stone (thought to be the base of a medieval cross) known locally as the “Devil’s Toenail”!



The route runs close to the Bedford to Bletchley railway line, constructed in 1846, which is now a community rail line offering trains approximately hourly Monday to Saturday – an excellent way to explore the Vale.

www.marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk



The Vale is famous for its brickworks - at the height of the industry’s production there were 162 brick chimneys in the Marston Vale. In the 1970s Bedfordshire produced 20% of England’s bricks. Prior to closure, production totalled 135 million bricks a year. The Marston Valley Brickworks towards Lidlington operated from 1929 to 1977.



You will ride through Folly Wood, a 33 acre new wood planted by the Marston Vale charity in 2011/12 on the edge of Lidlington village. Enjoy the view from

“The top of the world” – access to this viewpoint is by footpath but horses are permitted to go there provided ground conditions are such that they will not damage the surface for walkers. Please do not abuse this permission or it may be withdrawn.

Millbrook Proving Ground occupies 700 acres to the east of the route and provides a 13.5 mile test track for vehicle manufacturers, including a two mile high speed section. There is also a hill climb within the facility – you may hear engine noise!

As you return to the village of Lidlington, you will pass on your right the remains of All Saints’ Church which was demolished after it was replaced in 1887.



The ride takes you around Jackdaw Hill, part of Lidlington Woods. The jackdaw is a small, black crow with a distinctive silvery sheen to the back of its head. The pale eyes are also noticeable. The jackdaw call is a familiar hard

‘tchack’ from which it gets its name (though another theory is that ‘jack’ means ‘small’). It will commonly nest in chimneys, buildings, rock crevices and tree holes and enjoys an omnivorous diet of insects, fruits, seeds, carrion and even eggs. They are quite common with an estimated 1.4 million breeding pairs in the UK.

Off-road cyclists

This route is also suitable for off-road cyclists but please remember that cyclists should give way to walkers and horses. Please pass other users slowly and with consideration. Be nice, say hi!



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- 1 Take the horse trail by turning left at the bridleway gate by the roundabout, riding parallel to the entrance drive. Follow this trail, crossing the drive a little before the entrance and around the edge of the park, until you reach the right turn to Millbrook railway station.
- 2 Turn off the horse trail and leave the park over the horse stile. Go straight across the road (level crossing is on your left) and onto a permissive bridleway signed as a cycle route.
- 3 At the end of the bridleway, turn left onto the road and across the level crossing. Then turn right across the road onto another permissive bridleway. Watch out for rabbit holes in the sand track next to the harder surface.
- 4 The track emerges onto Lombard Street in Lidlington. Go straight ahead. At the junction with Station Road turn right towards the station.
- 5 Before the level crossing, turn left into Bye Road and continue straight ahead for about half a kilometre. Bye Road becomes a lane and bridleway about half way along.
- 6 Ignore the footpath on the left and continue until you can turn left over a horse stile and then immediately left again into Folly Wood. The route turns right in about 100m and then bends in gentle 'hairpins' up the hill – just follow the waymarks. As you reach the top of the hill you will see the 'top of the world' viewpoint, with picnic benches and an information board. Please only go into this area with your horse if the ground conditions are such that you will not do any damage to the surface.
- 7 Continue following the marked route, flatter now, to some gates onto Boughton End Lane. These gates will usually be closed, so bear right and then turn left at the bottom of the hill over the horse stile and left again out onto the lane.
- 8 At the top of the lane, turn left. This short section of road is downhill and can be quite busy so please take care. After about 100m, turn right across the road and into the bridleway.
- 9 The bridleway joins the Greensand Ridge Walk, bear left here, through the gates of Jackdaw Hill House; you pass along the drive in front of the house (please keep off the grass). There is a gate into the woods, just after the house, which is usually open. Follow this track through the woods for about half a kilometre. At a fork in the track, bear left.
- 10 Then turn left again at the next junction and then fork left, downhill, at the next junction.
- 11 Follow straight on for a kilometre (you now have the Millbrook Proving Ground on your right) – ignore any turns to the left. There is one very steep section which should be descended with care – you may prefer to dismount. The track turns right and then leads down to the road in the village, passing a children's playground.
- 12 Cross the road with great care, and head straight ahead (slightly right) into Lombard Street. Towards the end of Lombard Street, as it bears around to the left you should turn right and return to the permissive bridleway alongside the railway.
- 13 Now you return the same way as you came, crossing the level crossing and taking the permissive route on your right. When you enter the Millennium Country Park again you can either turn left and retrace your route out or turn right to return to the car park. If you turn right you will pass closer to the wind turbine and the Forest Centre.

Horse Riding Routes in Greensand Country

The dry, sandy soil of Greensand Country is ideal for horses and hacking and the landscape is covered with grassy paddocks and riding stables. There's a good network of bridleways many of which, especially on the top of the ridge, are dry and mud-free even in the middle of winter.

More Information

We have also prepared an overview leaflet about the Horse riding routes in Greensand Country which includes

- Information about the other routes
- Tips to help you keep yourself and your horse safe and to make the most of your ride
- Places for you and your horse to stay in Greensand Country

This information, together with the other route leaflets and .gpx files of the routes, can be downloaded from the website www.greensandcountry.com/explore/horse-riding



Look out for these signs as you ride the route – the route is marked only in the direction described and not in the reverse direction.

What3words: Download this app to your smartphone to help you find locations and to tell others (vets, emergency services, friends) where you are. Each 3m square in the world has been assigned a unique 3 word address that will never change.

Emergency Vet contacts:

Please note that out of hours you may be directed to call another number

Buckingham Equine Vets, Maulden **01525 861995** (8 miles from start)

Chiltern Equine, Bury Farm, Slapton **01525 222099** (18 miles)

Meadowbrook Equine Clinic, Luton Hoo **0845 296 6675** (22 miles)



All distances are approximate
Cover photo: PJB Photography

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Get involved: greensandcountry.com

