

## A walk around Cockayne Hatley Village

1.4 miles, starting and finishing at the top of the village

### 1. The Village Road.

Until c.1820 this was the main road from Potton to Cambridge, and would have been a busy highway.

### 2. The top of the village

The two rows of houses were built by Mr. Whitehead in the 1930s to house his farm and orchards workers. By 1939, Mr. Whitehead had developed the largest orchards in Europe, which required much local labour – up to 300 people at its peak.

### 3. Village Farm

Built in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to replace the old Village Farm (see below)

### 4. No. 19 often known as 'Mrs Parnell's house'

This is the original Village Farm, one of the five farms which the Lord of the Manor built to manage his estate. Adjacent are the remains of barns used for for cattle and a piggery. There is a large extension but the original building from the 17<sup>th</sup> century can be distinguished.

### 5. The Old Rectory

Built in 1867 by the Hon. & Rev. Cockayne Cust (Lord of the Manor) to replace an earlier rectory and included a large brewhouse. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war, the rectory housed Italian prisoners of war who worked on the farm and in the orchards with little supervision.



### 6. The Well House.

Originally this was Street Farm but was converted into three cottages in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (and consequently has three staircases!). The well was the only source of water for the village until mains water was installed in the 1930s. The pump required 25 turns of the handle to fill a bucket at a cost of 6d per month.

### 7. Orchard View

This was the laundry for the Manor House. It had its own water supply via a pipe from the Manor House.

*Take footpath on right towards Church*

### 8. The Road to the Church & Manor House

This road is relatively new. It was built after Church Farm, which was located at the village cross roads, burnt down in 1857. The cross roads were known as "Burnt Farm Corner" by older villagers.

### 9. The Churchyard

There are several notable graves and memorials in the churchyard.

The tomb of Francis Cockayne Cust – the last of the Cockayne family buried in the churchyard – is adjacent to the church. The tall monument is to the poet W.E. Henley, the author of the poem *Invictus* and the inspiration for R. L. Stevenson's *Long John Silver*. It includes the grave of his daughter Margaret who used to call Henley's colleague, J.M. Barrie, her 'fwendy wendy'. Barrie named his heroine 'Wendy' in his book *Peter Pan* after her. Also of note is the memorial to the crew of the Liberator aircraft which crashed in Potton Wood, killing four of the seven crew. The pilot's



dog, 'Bitsa' survived the crash. The monument was donated by the family of the pilot, Flight Lieutenant Spiller, who died in the crash. It is formed in the shape of a Spitfire wing.

### 10. The Church.

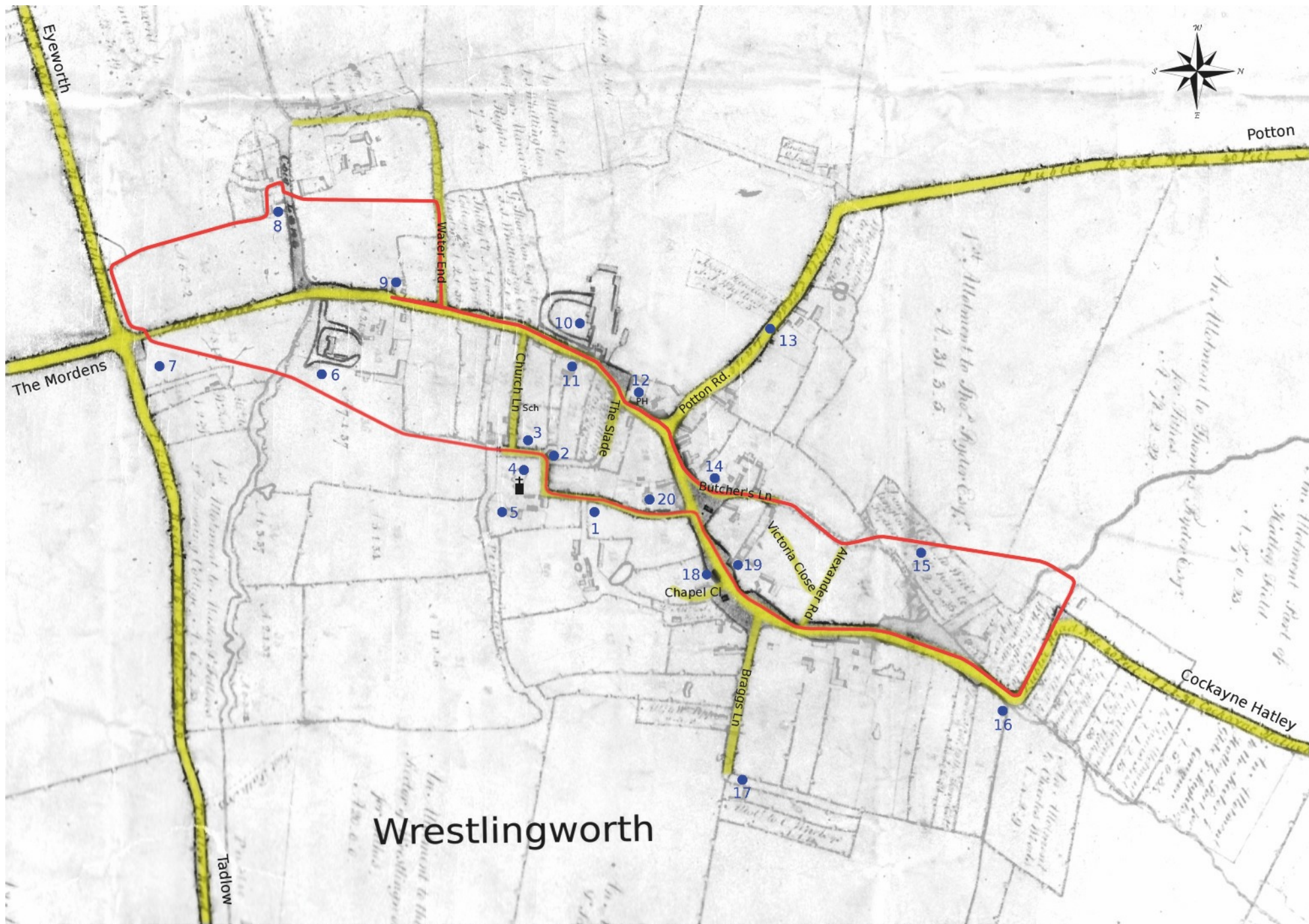
The existence of the church is recorded in 1166. Aisles, tower, an enlarged chancel, and porch were added and, by 1450, the church was largely as seen today.

By 1800 the church was in very poor condition, and the current Lord of the Manor – the Hon. & Rev. Cockayne Cust – carried out major repairs and filled the church with wonderful old Flemish woodwork which was being sold after Napoleon had ravaged the religious buildings in Flanders. Cockayne Cust also commissioned a well-known stained glass artist (Willemont) to provide new windows. The east window is particularly fine, showing scenes from the life of Christ. He also installed a window, dating from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century which he purchased from a church in Yorkshire. It depicts four English saints.

### 11. The Hall / Manor House.

There has been a house on this site since c.1100. There are traces of a Tudor building, but there is much Victorian restoration, and further work following a major fire in 1931. The Cockaynes, and the Cockayne Custs lived here from 1408 to 1898 when they sold the estate. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it had all the attributes of a stately home with orangery, walled gardens, an ice house and large servants' quarters.

*Continue on road past Hall taking track on right and then footpath back to village centre. Turn left to return to start.*



# Wrestlingworth

## WRESTLINGWORTH

According to the Oxford Dictionary of Place Names, 'Wrestlingewrd' was established in about 1150AD. The name was probably from the Old English meaning 'the enclosure of the family or followers of man called Wraestel'. The derivation of the name is: *Wraestel* (family name) + *inga* (dwellers at) + *worth* (enclosure). A 1667 map of Bedfordshire shows Wrestlingworth as 'Wormleighton'. This was a typographical error perpetuated by subsequent cartographers over the next 100 years until the error was realized and corrected.

### Wrestlingworth History Walk Highlights

*This 1.9 mile circular walk uses roads and footpaths around the village.*

*Numbers refer to map numbers*

#### 1. Memorial Hall

In 1938 a committee was formed to progress the Memorial Hall scheme to 'commemorate the efforts of the men and women of Wrestlingworth who served in the Great War'. At that time Wrestlingworth was a fairly remote rural community to which electricity had only come the previous year. It was planned that a foundation stone ceremony would be held on Saturday September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1939, but this did not happen due to the outbreak of World War II on 1<sup>st</sup>! The Memorial Hall was eventually declared open by Lady Delia Peel on Easter Monday, March 25<sup>th</sup> 1940.

#### 2. Ivy Cottage

Ivy Cottage was built in 1829. In a report in an edition of *Bedfordshire Magazine*, Ivy Cottage was described as the only building in Wrestlingworth that was worthy of mention.

#### 3. The Old School House

A National School with attached house was built in 1851. By 1885 there were 135 children on the roll with an average attendance of 100. Although education had become compulsory, not all villagers could afford or were willing to send their children to school. The original school building was replaced in the 1970s but the house remains.

#### 4. St Peter's Church

The Parish Church, dedicated to St Peter dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the earliest parts being the nave and chancel. Many pieces of worked stone from the original building can still be

seen in the outside walls of the aisles. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the church was enlarged by the addition of the south aisle and later by the north aisle. The chancel was lengthened during the following century and the present chancel inserted in about 1550. During the 15<sup>th</sup> century the tower was added to the west end of the nave and in 1500 the clerestory (with three windows on each side) was incorporated in order to raise the height of the nave. The south porch is of modern construction dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 5. The Old Rectory

Various Rectors resided here throughout the centuries including the Rev. William Twiss who arrived as curate in 1826 and was there to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee as Rector of the parish where he died in 1888.

*Take footpath across field.*

#### 6. Home Farm

Home Farm is the oldest surviving property in Wrestlingworth, thought to be erected in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The original structure was one large hall with a moat. A second floor was added at a later date. There is an old brick-built dovecote in the grounds.

#### 7. The Three Elms

The trio of magnificent pollarded trees are Elms. Once a common tree, it is now a rarity to see such large specimens, apparently immune to the fungus borne by the dutch elm beetle.

#### 8. Water End / Cow Lane

Cow Lane runs from High Street (originally Town Street) to a thatched cottage at Water End. In the past there were other thatched cottages as well as the William IV pub in this vicinity.

#### 9. Sarah Daizley's Cottage

Sarah Daizley was a notorious murderer who poisoned two husbands and her child: she was the last woman to be publicly hanged in Britain on Sunday August 5<sup>th</sup> 1843 outside Bedford Prison. She moved to this cottage when she married her second husband in October 1840.

#### 10. Woodcrafts Meadow and old moat – The Manor House

A Manor House called 'Kendals' stood to the south of The Chequers Inn. There are no remains above ground, but it is known the structure followed the shape of the letter 'U'. The modern bungalows on the western side of the High Street stand on the site of the old moat.

#### 11. 42 High Street

This used to be the Three Horseshoes pub. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the same family ran both this pub and the Chequers Inn.

#### 12. The Chequers Inn and Blacksmith's shop

The blacksmith's shop was run by the Newel family and was located in the present car park of The Chequers. The earliest record of The Chequers goes back to the early 1700s but it is believed it was built long before that date.

#### 13. White Cross Lane

Now named Potton Road, White Cross Lane ran from the T-junction in the middle of the village towards Potton. There was once a cross at the T-junction which is believed to have given the road its name.

#### 14. Butcher's House and Village Shop

Butcher's House was originally a butchers's shop with the meat hanging outside the front. Next door is the village shop which has been a bakers, grocers and delicatessen, clothes and footwear shop, a café selling provisions and is presently a seamstress.

*Walk down Butchers Lane and take footpath into field*

#### 15. Ridge and Furrow

This is a medieval field system where fields were broken down into strips typically 11 yards apart and 220 yards (1 furlong) long. Ploughs originally turned soil only to one side, thus by ploughing in a clockwise spiral, starting in the middle of the strip and working outwards, the soil was gradually heaped towards a middle ridge with furrows at the edges. The reversible plough developed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century is widely believed to have brought the end of ridge and furrow.

#### 16 First and Last Public House

This public house was at the end of a row of cottages, hence its name. The cottages were built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 17. Charles Square, Braggs Lane

There used to be a row of cottages and another separate pair at the end of Braggs Lane, the area being known as Charles Square. The three remaining cottages have been made into one house.

#### 18. Old Chapel

On Good Friday 1887 the new Methodist Chapel was opened to replace the old barn chapel, which had collapsed. The total cost of the re-building, £525, was a tremendous fund-raising achievement (led by Mr GA Heath of Biggleswade) particularly as it was "quite a new movement in Wrestlingworth" and there was "no congregation at the time of the erection of this structure." It became derelict by the late 1990s and was completely renovated as a private house with a second floor added, at the turn of the millennium.

#### 19. Millennium Garden

In the 1990s the centre of Wrestlingworth was marred by the neglected beer garden of the old Queen Victoria Public House, which was abandoned and overgrown after the pub was sold as a private house. The village's Millennium Project was to raise enough funds to buy the land from Greene King, the brewery owners, and create the garden seen here today.

#### 20. Hill Farm

Hill and Home Farms were owned by the Randall family. Norman Clarke ran Home Farm for many years, working for Mrs Pamela Randall, and lived in Hill Farm House with his wife Catherine, who still resides in the village.

The Parish Walking and Wildlife Group (PWWG) was formed as a result of the Wrestlingworth and Cockayne Hatley Parish Plan published in 2010. Drawing members from both parishes the group has a varied programme of monthly walks taking in the flora, fauna and history of this beautiful part of Bedfordshire.

Initiatives have included the successful Nest Box Project, to which members and villagers contribute, and we have put up 28 nest boxes suitable for 9 different species in strategically chosen areas of the villages according to known breeding habits.

The latest PWWG project is the clearing, restoration and maintenance of the ancient gravel pits in farmland to the south of the village which the Group is turning into a Nature Reserve.

The PWWG meets every third Sunday of each month usually at 10am in the car park of The Chequers pub.

The Walks Programme for 2012/13 will include:

- Wildflower walk
- Butterfly hunt
- Clopton Way walk
- Three Hatleys walk
- Fungi foray
- Potton Wood walk

For more information on the PWWG contact

Robin Barratt on 07768 340 599 or e-mail [rlbarratt@btinternet.com](mailto:rlbarratt@btinternet.com).



Other useful contacts:

RSPB Sandy: The Lodge, Potton Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL

Telephone: 01767 680551

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/t/thelodge/>

The Wildlife Trusts (Beds, Cambs & Northants):

<http://www.wildlifebcn.org/about-the-trust>

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Tel: 0300 300 6135

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/environment/countryside/default.aspx>

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## The Wrestlingworth & Cockayne Hatley Diamond Jubilee Walks

Two short walks to celebrate the history, flora and fauna of the two villages of Wrestlingworth and Cockayne Hatley

