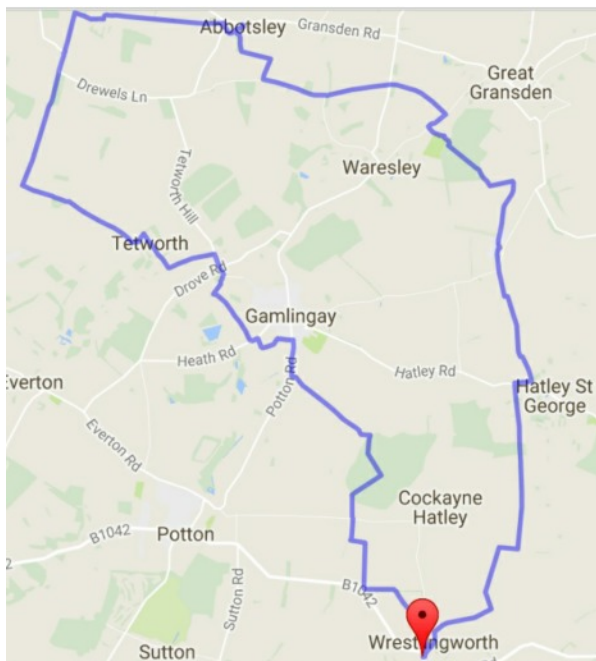


North-west Circuit

This route is a 19.7 mile circuit starting and finishing at the Chequers, taking in Gamlingay, Tetworth, Abbotsley, Waresley Wood and Hatley St George. Waymarking is pretty good throughout, but it would be wise to take OS Explorer 208 just in case you miss a sign.



The route has been saved on GMAP Pedometer at <http://gmap-pedometer.com/?r=7082074>.

Starting at the Chequers car park, turn left along the High Street, cross Potton Road, then bear left up Butchers Lane. At the end of the lane go through the kissing gate into Butcher's Knolls, a flower-rich pasture with extensive surviving ridge and furrow. Follow the path around to the gate at the north end of the field. After a few paces, take the path to the left which runs along the edge of a deep ditch. At the end of the field the path passes through a long, narrow wood (Wrestlingworth Plantation) and over a sleeper bridge. Turn left and follow the bridleway up to Potton Road, then turn right on the permissive path. At the end of this track turn left up to the ridge line, then right towards the water tower.

In spring and early summer the hedgerows will be full of blackthorn, hawthorn and rose blossom.



Cross the road and follow the path on the left side of the water tower. We are now on the Clopton Way, which we will follow to its end at Gamlingay Cinques. The path goes into Potton Wood where we have a choice of routes. Either take the path on the left through the wood or follow the main ride, turning left at the first crossing ride. Shortly before the end of the ride is a path on the right which you should follow until it leaves the wood. If you took the path through the wood you will come out onto the ride opposite the path out of the wood. Either way you will be treated to a lavish display of woodland flowers: bluebells, early purple orchids and common spotted orchids depending upon the season.



Leaving the wood, follow the path to the left which leads through the fields down to the Potton Road. Cross the road and follow the footpath into Gamlingay. Take the first road on the left, West Road. Follow West Road all the way to the end, where you turn left onto Heath Road. After 60m

cross the road and take the path down Park Lane. The path passes through fields to the west of Gamlingay. After half-a-mile the path divides – take the right fork which brings you out into the old hamlet of The Cinques, where the Clopton Way ends. Turn left onto Cinques Road, cross straight over Drove Road and walk down Tetworth Hill.

After 200 yards take the path on the left, which is the start of the Greensand Ridge Way. There are views out over St Neots on the right and also some huge thistle-like plants, possibly Scotch Thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*).



Giant thistle

Follow the track to Tetworth Hall, turning down the road to the right of the Hall. Tetworth Hall was built in 1710 and requisitioned during the Second World War, possibly in connection with nearby RAF Tempsford.

Approaching Valley Farm there is a large pond on the right hand side of the track. This is part of a moat system serving a long-lost village. Valley Farm itself was built around 1630 on the site of an ancient stone circle.

Follow the path past the farm and turn left around the edge of the first field you come to.

Follow the path in a north-westerly direction for a mile-and-a-quarter until you reach the route of



Tetworth Hall



Part of old moat at Valley Farm

the Roman Road linking Sandy with Huntingdon. Turn right and head north up the Roman Road.

After half-a-mile the path climbs steeply up Crane Hill, with great views out over the Ouse valley. After a short walk through a wood (Highfield Spinney) we come out on Drewels Lane, which runs between Gamlingay and St Neots.

After 200 yards the road turns sharp left while the path continues straight on, just to the right of the first chevron marking the bend. The path is heavily overgrown, has a broken footbridge and a large fallen tree across it, so walkers may



View from Crane Hill

prefer to continue along the road until they reach a gap in the hedge, then walk out along a tram-line to rejoin the path

In a quarter-of-a-mile we reach the driveway for Abbotsley Golf Club. There are some way-marks, but these seem to be incomplete. Turn right down the driveway and walk past the front of the clubhouse. After a couple of bends the footpath leaves the road on the right: it is easy to miss it. If you find you have reached the club's fire pit you have missed the path.



The Eight Bells in Abbotsley

After a mile you arrive in Abbotsley village. This is just over half-way through the walk (10.75 miles) so a visit to the Eight Bells will be a welcome break. Note that the pub isn't where most maps seem to put it – it is 200 yards further east opposite the eastern end of Blacksmiths Lane. (Google Maps hedges its bets and puts the pub in both locations!).

After lunch cross to Blacksmiths Lane again and after about 100 yards turn left into Blacksmiths Close. At the end of the close take the path leading to the right. The path zig-zags across a large field, coming out into a narrow sunken lane, where we turn left. After half-a-mile the road turns sharply right. Continue straight ahead on a by-way which skirts Waresley at a distance of half-a-mile or so and offers nice views of the village. After half-a-mile cross the B1040 and continue down the bridleway opposite. After another half-mile you reach the Gransden Road. Turn right and after 200 yards turn left into Waresley Wood. There are a number of rides through the wood – pick one that heads in a south-easterly direction. There is a nice shady seat near the

footbridge across to Gransden Wood which is a pleasant place to take a break.

Shortly after leaving the wood turn left for one field then right at the hedge.



Follow the path through Little Gransden Airfield paying close attention to the waymarks and any aircraft movements – you cross the end of one of the runways. (Probably best not to take this route on airshow days). The field south of the airfield is given over to horses and liberally stung with electric fences. You are heading for the far left corner, where there is a stile.

Cross over the road and follow the bridleway south, crossing the route of the old Varsity railway line after half a mile. Ignore the left turn option just past the line and continue due south. After another half-mile you reach Main Street, Hatley St George. Turn right and walk along the road for 200 yards, then cross into Hatley Park. The gate has a chain as well as a latch – be sure to re-clip it.

Hatley Park has its origins in the 12th century when it was owned by the St George family. Most of the current buildings date from the 18th and 19th centuries. The estate is currently owned by the Astor family.

The bridleway, Bar Lane, runs due south for one-and-a-half miles, when it is crossed by the Clopton Way. Turn right and after one field, left down the permissive path, a farm track. Follow this for a little over a mile to Wrestlingworth High Street. Turn left and follow the road back to the Chequers.

The walk should take about 7.5 hours, plus breaks, so allow 9.5 hours



**Parish
Walking &
Wildlife
Group**

*Route researched by
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