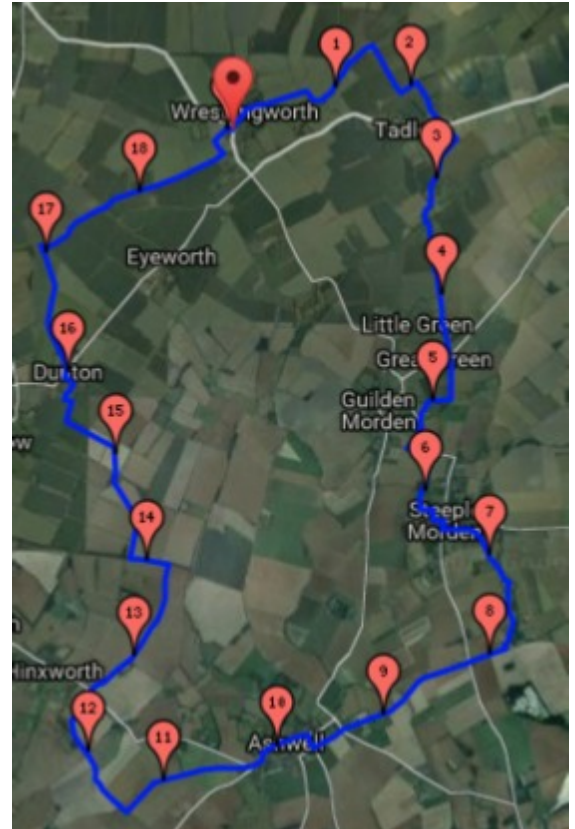


Circuit to the South West

This is a 19 mile walk round Tadlow, Guilden Morden, Steeple Morden, Ashwell, Hinxworth and Dunton. It should take around seven hours, plus breaks. Most of the route is on OS Explorer 208 with a few miles around Ashwell on OS Explorer 193. The route is mostly well waymarked. A map of the route can be found on GMAP-pedometer at <https://gmap-pedometer.com/?r=7257017>.

Starting from the Chequers, turn left down the High Street and right into Braggs Lane. Continue down the bridleway at the end of Braggs Lane which eventually bends to the south to join the path from Grange Farm. Continue heading east, crossing the first bridge (of three) at the eastern end of the field. Walk straight on to New England Farm and turn right through the farmyard. Continue south on the paved track until it turns sharp right: take the path on the left signed *Clopton Way*.



GMAP-pedometer map of route



Cobbs Lane

After 280 yards turn right through the hedge. Ahead of you and to the right you will see most of the territory you will be covering up to lunchtime. The path goes straight downhill to the end of the hedge then bears diagonally right to the corner of a hedge. Walk alongside the hedge to the B1042. Through the trees on the right you can see an old farm moat – the house is, however, fairly modern.

Cross the road with care and walk down the west side of the hedge opposite. At the point where the hedge bends away to the left, the path strikes out across the field to the right. About three-quarters of the way across the field a path crosses from a stile at the right hand edge of the field – take the left fork and follow to the road. The path crosses the road diagonally and continues across the field the other side to a rather overgrown bridge through the hedge, just beyond the electricity pole.

The path continues diagonally across the next field, heading for a gate in the corner. Go through the gate and follow the track for about 150 yards. The path heads into the trees on the left and crosses the River Cam (or Rhee) by means of a substantial bridge. After fifty



Southern Hawker dragonfly - Cobbs Lane

finest moated sites in Cambridgeshire, but is quite hard to see.

On the other side of the estate exit on to Trap Road. Cross the road and turn left, walking along the broad verge for 80 yards, then take the footpath on the right. At the end of the field go through the hedge and turn left onto a broad green lane running back to Trap Road. On reaching the road, turn right and take the path in ten yards on your right leading to Steeple Morden.

The paths on the west side of Steeple Morden no longer correspond with the OS map – presumably some closures. Follow the path until you come to a footbridge: cross over and turn right, continuing

yards there is a path on the right – ignore it and continue for another 10 yards to reach Cobbs Lane. Turn right and follow Cobbs Lane for about one-and-a-half miles.

Cobbs Lane is on top of a bank which is believed to be a Saxon boundary marker. Depending upon the time of year, you will find the hedges rich with dragonflies and butterflies while the lane itself often has copious field mushrooms (there may be other species too – don't pick them if you don't know what you are doing).

You will eventually (1½ miles) reach Fleck's Lane in Guilden Morden. Cross the road taking the bridleway opposite, offset slightly to the left. There are horse jumps alongside the path. The path crosses a field and then turns right. After about 400 yards, turn left along the west side of the hedge.

When you reach the next hedge turn right and after 20 yards, left through a kissing gate onto Morden Hall land. The original Hall was built by Thomas Haselden, Controller of the Household of John O'Gaunt but was burnt down during the Peasants' Revolt. It is claimed to be one of the



Flower meadow - Steeple Morden



Morden Green

to the south. When you reach a waymark pointing uphill, take the path which will ultimately lead you to the playing fields car park. Walk out to the road, turn right and follow the path around to the church. Cross over and take the path to the right of the *Waggon & Horses*. (Refreshments from noon). The path leads into a meadow. Follow the crossing path to the right and then down to the bottom of the field. Walk around the wooden fence and follow the waymark on the tennis courts heading south-east to come out in Morden Green, a very pretty backwater.

Turn right and continue on the grassy track heading south. A little way over to the east are

three Nissen huts, remnants of the wartime Steeple Morden airfield. After 200 yards the path bears left down to the hedge then turns right along the hedge for 30 yards before turning left into the woods. You are now in the private garden of Gatley End so be careful not to stray from the clearly marked path. After 100 yards the path leaves the garden (there is a route which remains in the garden for longer but I missed it) and continues south along a field margin. The house may be seen through the trees and is very beautiful. Little Gatley, in the grounds, is available for hire on Airbnb. When you reach the access road for Gatley End, turn left for a few yards and pick up the path on the right. If you took the other option earlier the paths meet up here. Continue for 200 yards, admiring the tumbledown house at Upper Gatley End and you will reach Ashwell Street, where you turn right (south-west). Ashwell Street is paved for the 500 yards from here to Station Road, Steeple Morden. The view of Ashwell Church from this point is beautiful. On crossing the road it becomes a green lane and runs for 1½ miles through beautiful farmland to Ashwell. Cross Station Road, Ashwell (two Station Roads - confusing) and continue on Ashwell Street.



Nissen huts on old Steeple Morden airfield

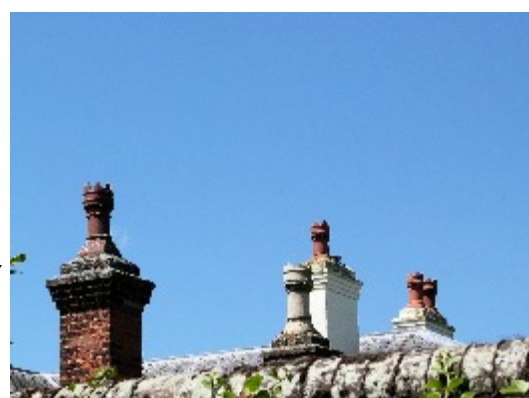


Derelict House - Upper Gatley End

You can turn right down Kingsland Way to meet the High Street near the *Three Tuns*, or stay on Ashwell Street and take Bear Lane to join the High Street near the *Rose & Crown*. The *Bushel & Strike* is 80m north of the High Street, accessed via Alms Lane and Mill Street. Check with the pub websites for opening and food service times. Ashwell has an interesting museum, a large church with the tallest tower in Hertfordshire, a rare thatched wall, and the source of the Rhee.



Ashwell Church from Station Road, Steeple Morden Road, down Ashwell Street



Chimney pots - Ashwell



Haymaking - Ashwell Street



Ashwell Museum



Ashwell Village & Church

Walk westward down Ashwell High Street, staying on the left side as there is no path on the right. When you reach Hinxworth Road on the right, cross over and take the by-way on the left, which ascends Newnham Hill. As you climb you will enjoy fine views back to Ashwell and across the Vale of the Cam/Rhee, including the rest of our route. After about 1¼ miles the path reaches a T-junction – take the right-hand track down to Hinxworth Place and Pulter's Farm, where we follow the path around the copse to the right. After a couple of hundred yards there is a path on



Thatched wall in Ashwell



Looking back at Ashwell from Newnham Hill

the left which leads into Hinxworth and the *Three Horseshoes*, should you require further refreshment. Otherwise carry straight on and cross the Ashwell to Hinxworth road, following the bridleway up a broad track leading to Arbtree Farm. On your right you will pass a workshop restoring all sorts of old Volkswagens.

In a little over a mile you will reach a wooded path: turn left. Watch for the path leading out into the fields on the right in about 400 yards. The path crosses a field to a bridge across a ditch and through a hedge. It is overgrown and in very poor condition and must be crossed with care. After crossing another two fields we reach the derelict



The way ahead - five miles to Dunton from Newnham Hill

Plantation Farm where the route becomes unclear. Walk to the left side of the tress to reach a cinder track, turn right for a few yards to the crossing track, turn left then immediately right, taking the footpath due north out across a field. After a couple of hundred yards the path veers northwest. After half-a-mile take the path along the west side of a hedge on your right which



Broken and overgrown bridge at TL 24662 42410 - take care!



Lapwing - Plantation Farm

leads to the corner of the field where a path runs uphill alongside a horse paddock. Follow this up to Dunton.

At the end of the path turn left down the road towards the Church. Turn right along the High Street to the *March Hare*, then cross down Boot Lane. Turn left into Fen Reach and walk past the last house and out into the field.

If the farmer has cleared the path through the crop, follow it in a north-easterly direction. If he hasn't, turn right and walk round the edge of the field. When you reach the track, turn right then immediately left down the western side of the



Bracket fungus beside path up to Dunton

next field. At the bottom of the field you will see a path joining from the left.

Turn right along the brook and keep an eye out for where the path cuts through the hedge to stay with the brook. This is not waymarked on this side of the hedge, although it is on the other side. If you find yourself walking uphill, you have missed it.

The path comes out on the Sutton Road. Cross over to the bridleway opposite. In around 600 yards you will pass the Lousy Bush Nature



Approaching Dunton

reserve. Access to the hide is through the gate on the south-west boundary.

Carry straight on for another $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, following the path round the left side of the hedge at Water End. Turn left onto the track and in 100 yards turn right across a pasture. On your right is a fine solitary elm. Pass through the gate and keep to the right, passing through another gate into the *Chequers* car park. You deserve a beer.



Solitary Elm - Wrestlingworth



Route researched by
Jim Hawkins of the
Wrestlingworth Parish
Walking & Wildlife
Group

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