

Northhill

Northhill Parish Church, St. Mary Virgin, is in the centre of the village and close by are The Crown Inn, The Green and Village Pond, Reed and Well Cottages, The Grange (1690) and the clapper-board house. The church was built between 1330 and 1370 of dark red ironstone in the Decorated and Perpendicular Style. The east window exhibits a beautiful specimen of stained glass by Oliver. The church was made a collegiate in the reign of Henry IV for a master, warden and fellows. The clock on the tower could have been made by Tompion of Ickwell (See Ickwell). The bellry houses six bells, one dated 1510.



The Crown Inn was built before the 1600s and has an underground passage but where it leads is unknown.

Northhill contains an ancient woodland called Flitton Scar and two ancient fishponds that provided fish for Northhill College (which was housed in the church) and The Manor.

Despite some infilling with small modern developments the village has seen few changes for most of the past century.

Upper Caldecote

Lying in the flat lands of the Ivel Valley it was once a major market garden centre but this has now given way to large arable fields many of whose boundaries are of Roman origin. Much of the village is a modern development but it still retains many buildings of historic interest.

The most notable buildings are All Saints Church (1867), The Harvey Cottages (1876) The Old Rectory, The Old School and Old Schoolhouse, The Wesleyan Chapel (1909), Water Lane Farm (19th century), Caldecote House and Farm and the Old Chapel. Atterton's Farm has the date of 1776 depicted in the tiles in the roof but it is much earlier than that. All are on the walk or close by and are well worth a short detour.



The village green has hardly changed in the last 100 years and is bordered on its southern side by small hedge lined fields that show what the countryside was like before the hedges were removed.

Ickwell

One of the most picturesque villages in Bedfordshire. The village green is dominated by a 200 year old oak tree and nestling within the shadow of the oak is the village cricket pitch and pavilion.



Maypole dancing has been celebrated on the village green for over 400 years as is witnessed by the large Maypole. Near the Maypole is the entrance to Ickwell Bury which is set in 500 acres of wooded parkland and includes the site of an ancient Manor House and other interesting outbuildings. The house which was partly rebuilt in the 1930s contains many handsome carvings and curious historic relics.

Ickwell House (The Old House) was originally moated and had many ponds in its grounds which are thought to have been used to provide fish for the Manor and Northhill College. It was originally owned by the Fyshe family but when they died out it was bought in 1842 by John Harvey of Ickwell Bury.

The smithy, village hall and the thatched Tompion's Cottage, Thomas Tompion (1639-1713) being considered the father of English watch-making, all create a scene which is quintessentially English.

The Walk

The walk goes through three of the five greens in Northhill Parish. It passes through a great variety of countryside - an ancient woodland, meadows and arable fields - and crosses Northhill Brook twice showing two different aspects of the same stream. It has numerous and varied views across the Ivel Valley.

Many of the area's historic buildings and historic sites are passed.

Northhill Church is the suggested starting point and the walk is described in a clockwise direction. However you can begin at any other point and walk in either direction.

Public Transport

The walk can be accessed by train at Biggleswade, Sandy or Bedford.

A Monday to Saturday bus service operates in Northhill (route M4 Biggleswade-Bedford). There is a Sunday and Bank Holiday service through Moggerhanger 2.5 miles (4 km) from Northhill (route M3, Bedford-Sandy).

For bus times:
Bedfordshire Bus Information Line 01234 228337 (office hours),
Traveline 0871 200 22 33 or
visit www.stagecoachbus.com/bedford.

For train times:
National Rail Enquiries 08457 484950.
The nearest train station is on the East Coast Mainline, 7km/4miles away at Biggleswade.

Parking

In Northhill parking is available in the road near Northhill Village Hall (opposite the Crown Inn) and alongside the Churchyard wall opposite the pond. On road parking is available in Upper Caldecote and Ickwell, please park considerately.

THE THREE GREENS WALK



'A circular walk of 4 miles/6.2 km of historic interest, varied landscape and views, and a wide range of flora and fauna.'

Ordnance Survey Map

The route is covered on Ordnance Survey Landranger Series map 153 and Explorer map 208

Countryside Code

Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
Leave gates and property as you found them
Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
Keep dogs under control Consider other people

Acknowledgements

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To find out more about other walks in the area and Bedfordshire visit: www.jetsgo.org.uk
For more information about Northhill parish please visit: www.northhillparish.co.uk