

## **MEPPERSHALL AND GRAVENHURST**

### **Through the county's farming landscape**

#### **Distance**

4½ miles

#### **Directions, Parking and Public Transport**

Meppershall is around 9 miles south of Bedford and just south of the A507. Take the Campton Road out of Meppershall and almost immediately turn left into Church Road. Park at the end of the lane near the vicarage and church, at grid reference TL135359, (Explorer 193, Landranger 153).

Meppershall is served by two bus services operated by Centrebus: Luton to Shefford and Hitchin to Henlow Camp or Shefford, Details can be obtained from

[http://www.bedford.gov.uk/transport\\_and\\_streets/public\\_transport/timetables\\_and\\_maps.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/transport_and_streets/public_transport/timetables_and_maps.aspx)

#### **Refreshments and Facilities**

There are no facilities at the start point, but The Green Dragon pub at Upper Gravenhurst offers a useful refreshment point, as might stores at Bury End. In Meppershall, The Sugar Loaf pub on the Shefford Road offers an alternative, but is ½ mile away from the walk route.

#### **Points of Interest**

The rolling countryside and expansive landscapes offer fine views, especially for the first and last mile of the walk.

St. Mary's Church (A) in Lower Gravenhurst, just off the main route, is built of dark limestone. The setting is unspoiled and the church dates from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, including the benches and the king-post roof. The altar rails and pulpit are 17<sup>th</sup> century. Although the church is now redundant it is often open during the day.

#### **The Walk**

Go through the kissing gate near the vicarage and bear left to the adjacent field edge where the path joins another going diagonally back across the field into Meppershall. Ignore this backward going path, but continue forward into the next field, keeping the field edge on your left. In the field corner (1) take the path to the right, but do not go through the gap into the next field. In 50 yds ignore the first left turn, but follow the path as it turns right, then left in another 20 yds. Follow this path down the hillside beside a ditch. You will reach a

plank crossing over the ditch, where another path crosses our route. Walk over the plank and continue alongside the ditch on the opposite side, until you reach a narrow stretch of trees. Follow the path on the left of the trees until you see a plank bridge on your right. Cross the bridge and go through a kissing gate.

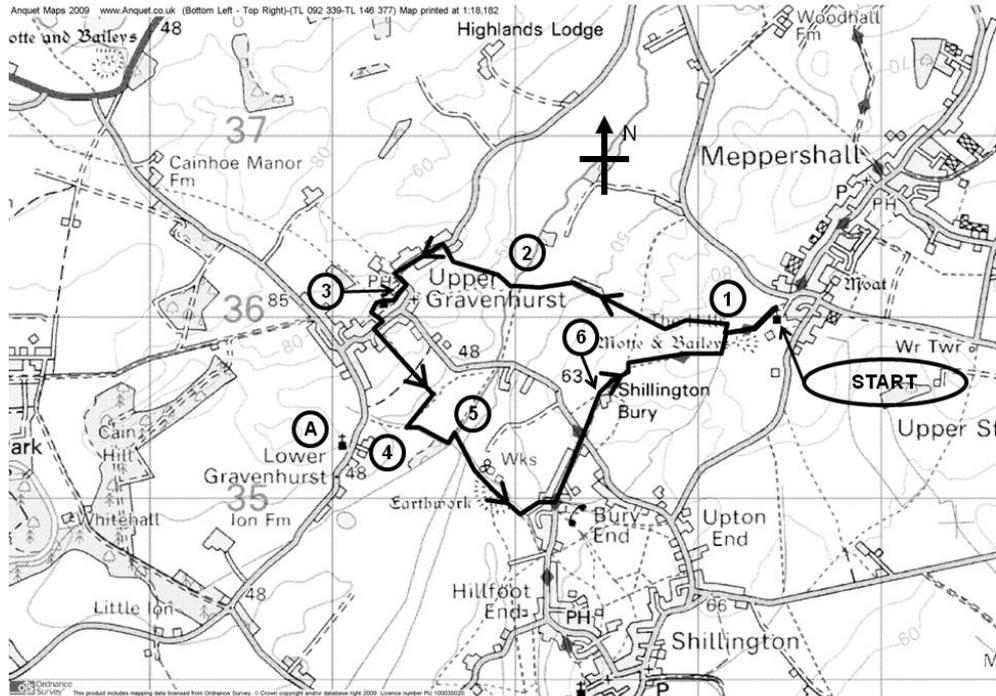
Bear slightly to the left and go diagonally to the next field corner. From here, continue with the field edge close to your right until you cross a small humpback bridge (2). Go diagonally left and cross a plank bridge in 30 yds, then bear right and cross another bridge in 10 yds. The path then turns left and goes up a fairly steep area of narrowing pasture. Follow this path to the Campton Road at Hillside Farm.

Turn left onto the road. After the left hand bend in 300 yds, ignore the first path on the right, but take the next path right (3). This goes up a few steps and runs to the left of houses, just after 'The Glebe' road sign and before reaching the right hand road bend. Follow this path behind houses until it emerges into St. Giles churchyard. Turn right at the road and in 50 yds take a narrow path left between houses. In 200 yds the track emerges into arable land. Cross a track in 100 yds and go to the end of the field. Turn right over the plank bridge, then go left for a few yards and then turn right again and continue until you come to a hedge (4) at the field boundary on your left.

To visit St. Mary's Church (A), bear right here and follow the path for 300 yds until you reach the road. Turn left and you will reach the church in 250 yds. Return by retracing your steps to (4). The total distance is just over ½ mile.

To remain on or return to the circular route turn left here at (4) and walk to the bottom of the field. Follow the path as it goes left, then in 50 yds take the turn (5) on the right and cross a bridge. Go straight on, ignoring a wide plank bridge on the right. Pass through a kissing gate and go over another bridge to pass a sewage works on the left and then a rough grassy area to the right.

Where the path splits, take the left fork over a concrete bridge and emerge onto Bury Road. Turn left and in 350 yds reach a road junction. Cross over the junction to follow the track towards Shillington Bury. The path eventually takes a left turn off the track to follow the inside edge of a small paddock before emerging onto a field track (6) after crossing a plank bridge. Turn right here and follow the wide track up a slight incline until it becomes a field edge path running to the right of a hedge. Continue to follow this path and in 100 yds go left through a gap in the hedge. After a few yards you will enter another field. To follow the official right of way, turn left inside the field and continue until you go through another hedge gap. Turn right here (1) and then follow the outward path back to the starting point.



### Acknowledgement

This walk was first published by Ivel Valley Walkers in 2010 in their book 'Favourite Walks in and around Bedfordshire'. The book was published to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this Ramblers Group. IVG has over 300 members and offer a varied programme of more than 200 guided walks each year. These are open to all, although membership of the Ramblers is encouraged for regular walkers. Further details of the Group can be obtained from the web page <http://www.ivelvalleywalkers.co.uk/>