



The Ramblers Association

Ouse Valley Group

Ouse Valley Ramblers' Guided Walks

Walk N° 4

Carlton, Bedfordshire

Area	Carlton, Bedfordshire.
Walk Leader	Mike Dawson
Start Point	Carlton (Rose & Crown PH) at 2:00 pm
End Point	Carlton (Rose & Crown PH) at approximately 4:30 pm
Places Visited	Carlton -> Chellington -> Pavenham -> Odell -> Carlton
Approximate Distance	6.4 miles
Time To Complete	2 to 3 hours depending upon walking speed (2:1/2 hrs ave)
Difficulty	Easy - Mostly flat countryside or undulating hills.
Car Parking	Carlton Village, Moor Lane
Public Transport	No chance !



Walk Itinerary

- [1] Depart Carlton north east towards S' Nicolas Church, Chellington.
- [2] At Chellington head South East towards Pavenham. Skirting Pavenham to the north head back towards Odell
- [3] At Odell Mill join up to the country park and walk towards Harrold.
- [4] Carefully walk south across Harrold Bridge back to Carlton.

Notes On The Walk

This walk is primarily on established paths and farm tracks so the going should not be muddy. Some stretches can be muddy after prolonged rain but there are no ploughed fields to negotiate.

Because we shall be moving through fields of livestock (Inc. sheep, cattle and horses) dogs **MUST** be kept on a lead during these times. Please follow the guidance of the walks leader.

Notes On the Walk Area

There are many opportunities for wide views of the Odell valley as well as distant Bedford and beyond on this walk at the appropriate vantage points.

The history of this area is extensive with most of the villages being recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. Notes on the history of the area are printed overleaf.



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Carlton

Carlton is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. William the Conqueror gave his half-brother, the Bishop of Bayeux, a deer park within the parish. Centuries later John Bunyan preached in secret at Fishers Farm and his daughter married the farmer.

A medieval stone bridge of 14 arches crosses the river to Harrold. The ancient raised causeway enables pedestrians to cross the flood plain. In early times, the river would have been the only method of communication. A rare Romano-British enamelled brooch and finds of Roman and medieval pottery point to the continued habitation of the village.

Large quantities of 'bloomery slag', a by-product of iron smelting, are found in some fields. Iron ore, possibly from Irchester, would be brought to make use of the local wood and limestone.

Chellington - The Mystery Village

Unlike Carlton, Chellington is not recorded in the Domesday book. Therefore it was a much later settlement and can be documented from around 1242. All that is left of the village is the Church, S^t. Nicolas which dates from 1250 with some interior 17th Century woodwork.

Many fields still have the ridge and furrow, exactly the same as the Strip Map of 1798. Earth mounds show signs of a deserted village and a sunken grass track is all that remains of the Bedford to Kettering coach road.

Little is recorded about the village except that the Rev Samuel Rogers was rector from 1758 to 1768 and kept a Grammar school here.

Sir Robert Darling was born here and became Sheriff of London and Middlesex in 1776. He is reputed to have kept cows on Chellington hill and followed a wagon to London where he made his fortune. He was also a member of Parliament (Wendover) in 1768 but died in 1770 aged 55. He is buried in Chellington Church yard (see inset picture)



Legend says that the villagers in the 15th Century, fearful of the plague burnt down their houses to prevent the spread of infection and took refuge in the church. When the danger passed they rebuilt their village on a nearby site and called it Carlton. The problem with this nice notion is that due to the Domesday Book we know that Carlton predates Chellington. There is little evidence now of a village but medieval remains of several settlements remain as do wagon tracks between the different locations around Chellington.

Pavenham

The centre of the village is dominated by the long and winding main street. Many of the stone built cottages lining the street are snuggled under their cosy thatch, including the barn where John Bunyan preached.

The medieval church, dedicated to St. Peter, stands on a hill above the village. Inside, it was panelled during the mid 1800's with Jacobean woodwork taken from the old Bury mansion during its rebuilding. An annual Flower Festival is held, which often coincides with the observance of the ancient custom of strewing the floor of the church with the first hay cut from Sanfoin field on one of the working farms still centred on the village.

Church Lane itself was reputed to be haunted by the ghost of a Cavalier who had been waylaid by a group from the village - this was Roundhead territory. This unfortunate man was said to have tried to escape by jumping his horse over a gate at the top of the lane. His horse clipped the gate, throwing its rider who was then killed and his body dumped in a nearby well. 'To this day' the story goes, no gate can be expected to remain long before collapsing in that particular gateway.

Odell

In Saxon days the village was called Woadhull (or Woad Hill) because of the amount of woad grown in the area. A Saxon stronghold stood on the banks of the river and when this fell to the Normans the land was granted to Walter the Fleming who promptly started to erect a motte and bailey castle. By Tudor times the 2902 acre estate was in ruins. Heiress Agness de Wahull married into the Chetwood family and the estate was leased to William Alston who, after much restoration work, bought the entire estate in 1633. The Alston family was still in residence in February 1931 when fire gutted the building and the property was bought by the Lawson-Johnston family. The 2nd Lord Luke is still in residence today. In nearly 1000 years only three families have held title to this estate - quite a record.

The pocket handkerchief village green was the site of a thriving market large enough to rival that at Olney. A horse fair was also held regularly and on these market days, by merely displaying a green bough by the door, the villagers claimed their right to sell beer without licence. This happy practice of 'Tapping' however, was stopped in 1858.



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