

The Clopton Way

Go back in time 800 years and enter the medieval village of Clopton – this is the world you would have seen from the gate on the western side of the present earthworks.

The path here is a track of Anglo-Saxon or perhaps earlier origin, and the settlement before you is a prosperous one, drawing farmers and villagers from miles around to its weekly markets.

At the time of the Domesday Book, Clopton was already well established with two manors and at least nineteen households spread out along the hillside.

After 1200AD Clopton began to outgrow its neighbouring villages; this continues into the fourteenth century when tax returns showed a fairly wealthy population of between five and six hundred people.

In the south-east corner of the earthworks (behind the houses illustrated below) are several large ponds which were probably used both as fishponds and as a source of power for the watermill.

Another mill was situated on the River Rhee in the bottom of the valley.

Imagine how the flat terraced area would have looked in the fourteenth century. This was the cobbled market place (depicted below) – the real hub of the village. You might have come, as many would have, to sell your livestock – both sheep and cattle, or perhaps you have other items like cloth, clothing, pottery, kitchenware or iron pots and pans to trade?

If your horse is in need of shoeing, the village has its own blacksmith or if you're feeling hungry follow your nose to the bakery. Perhaps you are a musician or a jester? Come and join in the entertainment and add to the festivities of the market place!

The Clopton Way

Gamlingay • Wimpole



The church, situated just below the cobbled area, was built of flint walls with limestone cornerstones. It would have looked very similar to the church standing at East Hatley.

Along with a rectory and two moated manor houses, the church would have been the dominant building in the village.

The two manors in the village were the Clopton-Bury Manor held by a family who probably adopted the village name as their surname, and Wakefields Manor (shown below). Their status was such that at least one of the two manors would have been sufficiently well endowed to receive a Bishop as a guest. During the fifteenth century both of the manors passed into the Fisher family.

In the late medieval period the Black Death swept across the land, killing many of the peasant farmers. The richer folk who survived then took over much of the better land and began to raise sheep as a less labour-intensive form of farming.

By 1561 the Fishers owned nearly all the land around Clopton, and the village was deserted. The parish became extinct and was joined to Croydon.

Croydon survived this period because the landlord did not enclose his land so comprehensively. The surviving village is built upon a medieval site, but the experienced eye can still see up to ten house plots as earthworks on the north side of the road, between the pub and the church.

By the late seventeenth century Croydon became part of the estate of the Downing family, and thus many records and maps survive in Downing College, Cambridge.



Follow the country code – *why?*

Because the countryside is a place to be enjoyed by all; do protect wildlife, plants and trees, don't leave rubbish behind and don't disturb others with unnecessary noise.

Because the countryside is a place of work; do keep to paths and use stiles and gates to cross boundaries; don't let your dogs disturb stock and don't interfere with crops or machines.



The Cambridgeshire countryside is there to be enjoyed by *everyone*. This route follows farm tracks and grassy field edge paths. The surface is uneven.

The Public Rights of Way and Access Team is endeavouring to replace stiles with gates where a barrier is necessary. More information about other Access for All walks is available on the Cambridgeshire County Council website at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/countrysideandrights

Come and enjoy it!



This project is supported by the Fens Adventurers Local Action Group (LAG) who deliver the Rural Development Programme England in Cambridgeshire and West Norfolk through the Leader approach. The LAG is managed by Cambridgeshire County Council & Cambridgeshire ACRE and supported by EEDA, Defra, Local Authorities and the EU's European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in Rural Areas.



Web Link: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/urdev/index_en.htm

This leaflet is one of a series produced by Cambridgeshire County Council to encourage the use and enjoyment of some of the many public rights of way in Cambridgeshire. We hope you have enjoyed the walks and would appreciate any comments you may have.

Public Rights of Way and Access, Box CC1305, Environment Services, Cambridgeshire County Council, Castle Court, Castle Hill, Cambridge, CB3 0AP Tel 0345 045 5212

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/countrysideandrights

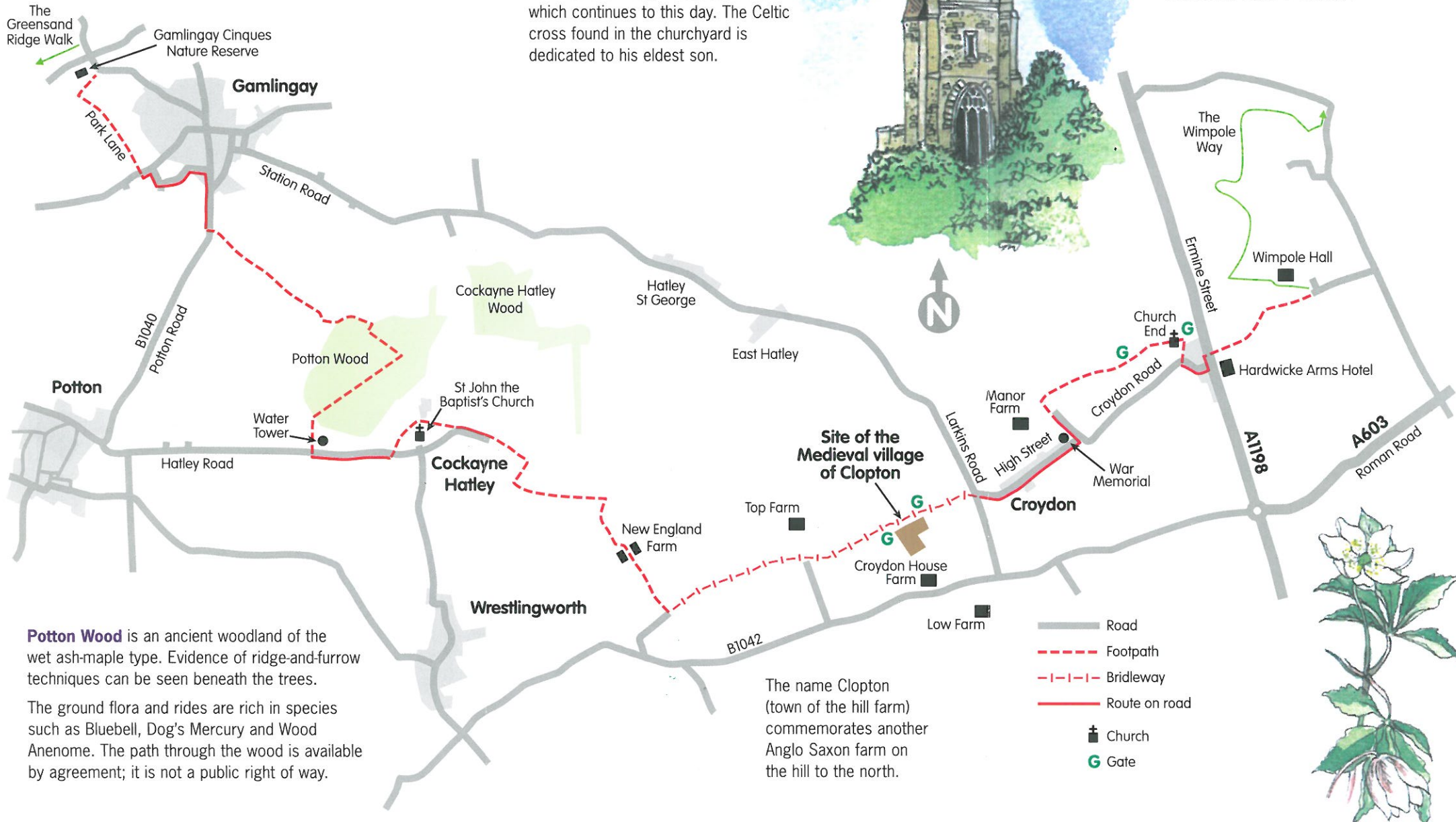
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The early village of **Gamlingay** grew around a 20 acre green. Throughout the Middle Ages it was a large and prosperous village with a market every Tuesday, but a disastrous fire in 1600 destroyed 76 houses; the village declined and the market moved to Potton.

Legend has it that Dick Turpin often rode Black Bess along **Park Lane** which formed part of the old road to York.

The **Church of St John the Baptist** was built in various stages between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. Subsequent neglect, however, led Henry Cockayne Cust (both the Squire and the Rector) to find it in a 'most lamentable state of neglect' in 1806. He undertook major restoration work which continues to this day. The Celtic cross found in the churchyard is dedicated to his eldest son.

Also buried there is W.E. Henley and his daughter Margaret. Henley was the nineteenth century poet and man of many letters remembered most for his work *Invictus*. His daughter is said to have inspired the character of Wendy in J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, by describing him as her father's 'fwendy'.



Site of the Medieval village of Clopton

The name Clopton (town of the hill farm) commemorates another Anglo Saxon farm on the hill to the north.



Potton Wood is an ancient woodland of the wet ash-maple type. Evidence of ridge-and-furrow techniques can be seen beneath the trees.

The ground flora and rides are rich in species such as Bluebell, Dog's Mercury and Wood Anemone. The path through the wood is available by agreement; it is not a public right of way.

The Clopton Way

Linear route **11 miles**
Allow approximately **4 hours**

This walk offers commanding views over much of south west Cambridgeshire, as it follows the top of an escarpment. The walk passes through the deserted medieval village of Clopton, from which it takes its name.

The walk connects The Wimpole Way (Cambridge to Wimpole Estate) with the Greensand Ridge Walk (Leighton Buzzard to Gamlingay Cinques) giving a long distance walk of 64 miles. Parking is available at Wimpole Estate and Gamlingay Cinques Common.



Wimpole Hall

Starting from Wimpole

Turn right out of Wimpole Estate car park and follow the driveway which leads in front of the Hall towards Ermine Street (A1198).

Starting from Gamlingay Cinques Common

Cross the Common adjacent to the car park and follow the track on the right of the houses.

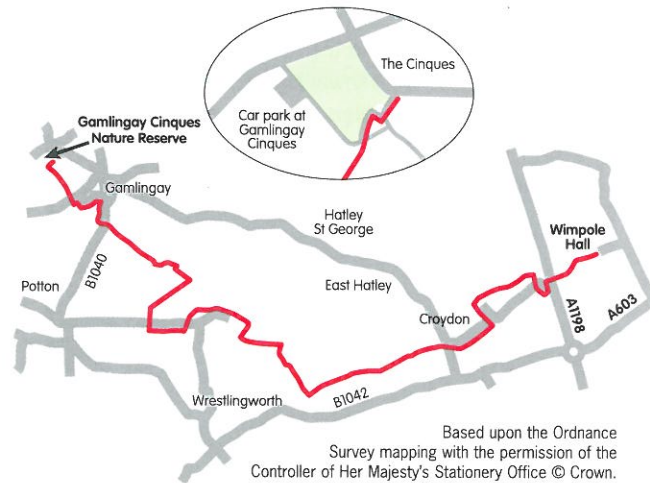
How to get there

By bus Two bus companies serve this route:
Whippet Coaches 01954 230011
Stagecoach in the Fens 01223 423578

By train Nearest station is Royston
National Rail Inquiries 08457 484950

By road A603 west from Cambridge or A1198 south from Huntingdon

Inquiries Cambridgeshire County Council Passenger Transport Inquiries Tel 0345 045 0675



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Wimpole Estate

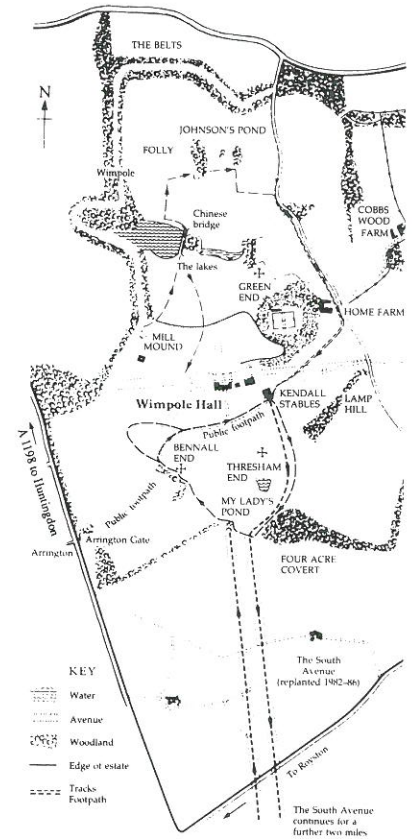
Opening times

March to October
Home Farm, Gardens, Restaurant and Shop daily 10.30am – 5pm,
Hall Saturday to Wednesday plus Thursday in Cambs school holidays 11am – 5pm.

November to February Home Farm, Gardens, Restaurant and Shop Saturday to Wednesday 11am – 4pm,
Home Farm Weekends only 11am – 4pm.

Admission charge to Hall, Farm and Gardens.

Car parking £2 redeemable in the shop or restaurant.
Call 01223 206000 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wimpole



Further information

Footwear: The route can be wet and muddy in places, particularly after heavy rain. Strong waterproof footwear is essential.

Maps: The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey 1:50000 Landranger Sheets 153 and 154 or on 1:25000 Explorer Sheet 209.

Waymarking: The route has green metal Clopton Way signposts where it meets roads and yellow (footpath) or blue (bridleway) waymark arrows along the rights of way.

Refreshments: These can be obtained from public houses and shops in Gamlingay, pubs in Croydon and Arrington and at the Wimpole Estate restaurant and shop (www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wimpole).