

## Cambridge Club Site

### Shelfords and Hauxton walk

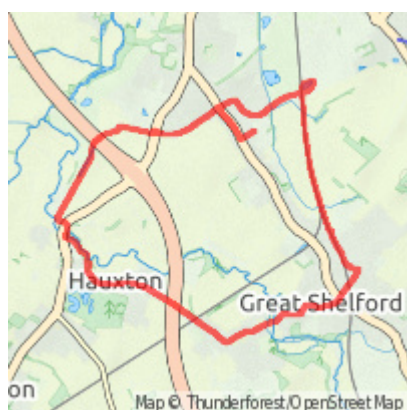
Camping and Caravanning



## Route Summary

A gentle circular walk of 12.3km/7.8 miles using cycle routes, pathways and country lanes around the villages of the Shelfords and Hauxton. This route provides reminders of days gone by in these historic villages which have undergone 20th Century urbanisation.

## Route Overview



Category: Walking

Rating: Unrated

Surface: Smooth

Date Published: 21st September 2018

Difficulty: Easy

Length: 12.460 km / 7.79 mi

Last Modified: 21st September 2018

## Description

This walk will take you past some historic features and buildings of interest which have now been surrounded by the ever-growing need for housing in the region. There are also pleasant open views from the cycle routes and pathways across old meadows which were farmed by Anglo-Saxon settlers. Despite all this urbanisation there are still some areas dedicated to wildlife that offer peace and relaxation.

Hobson's Brook or Hobsons Conduit runs along the eastern boundary of the Camping and Caravanning Club Site and then on into the centre of Cambridge along Addenbrookes Road. This small waterway was constructed in the early 1600s to provide fresh water from the chalk Springs at Nine Wells (now a nature reserve) into the city to improve sanitation. The area between the brook and railway to the north of Addenbrookes Road is Hobson's Park, 120 acres of landscaped woodland, ponds and other amenities that act as a greenbelt wildlife corridor.

The Nine Wells Nature Reserve is well worth a short detour to explore and enjoy. It can be found by taking a small footpath to the left where the cycleway runs parallel to the railway track. This reserve is a mixture of woodland, scrub and water that flows into Hobson's Conduit. The area used to be an SSSI, and work is under way to reintroduce invertebrates that were lost during the drought of 1976.

The village of Great Shelford began life in approximately 400AD as a small Anglo-Saxon settlement where an ancient route crossed the river at a shallow spot. The meadows close to the river would have been used for livestock, while the higher and drier slopes were utilised for arable crops. A second settlement developed on higher ground near to what is now known as Garnham's Farm. From Norman times through to the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII the area was under the ownership of Ely Abbey, with the Lord of the Manor living at The Grange or Burystead Manor House close to the river. Over the centuries the two settlements grew and developed. It is known that a water mill was built by the river as it's mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Book. It was changed several times over the years and is now a Grade II listed building, having been converted into a dwelling and offices. Some industry did come to the village, notably a factory that manufactured hemp and flax into rope, including a 'Rope Walk' that was 870 feet long.

The village became a respectable location for Cambridge dons, solicitors and doctors to live towards the end of the 19th Century. This allowed them to enjoy quiet rural surroundings while still having easy access to their places of work. Since those times there have been even greater changes with much residential development taking place, transforming this once rural village into a dormitory of Cambridge.

Little Shelford developed at the same time as its larger neighbour and was governed from the same Manorial seat. In 1640 the first Shelford Hall, or Old Hall as it became known, was built by the Wale family. They became the principle landowners and benefactors to the village for the next 300 years. Unfortunately, the Hall burnt down in 1929, leaving only the north wing of this 17th Century house. Renamed The Lodge, it stands at the corner of Bridge Road and Whittlesford Road.

It's claimed that this small village is the birthplace of Thomas Blossom, one of the Pilgrim founders of Plymouth, Massachusetts, and whose descendents apparently include former US President Barack Obama.

In Little Shelford Church you will find the grave of William Alabaster, who was born in Hadleigh, Suffolk, studied at Cambridge and died in 1640. During his life he was Chaplain to an expedition by the Earl of Essex to Cadiz and later became Chaplain to King James I in 1618. A poet, mystic and scholar in Latin and Hebrew, his sonnets have been heralded as the earliest religious lyrics in the Metaphysical style.

The village of Hauxton also owes its position to an ancient shallow river crossing. An Iron Age excavation of a cemetery containing more than 100 human remains suggests that Hauxton pre-dates the Shelfords. There had been a mill present next to the river from Roman times through to 1974 when the last company ceased trading. It was the last watermill in Cambridgeshire. The village church, dedicated to St Edmund, was originally thought to have been built in the 10th Century, and replaced in 1109 by the present building. A restoration in 1860 uncovered a fresco of Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury murdered by Henry II. It is believed it had been deliberately hidden in plaster to save it from Oliver Cromwell.

## Waypoints

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### Start at Camping and Caravanning Club site Reception

(52.16494; 0.12401)



Leave the Camping and Caravanning Club site via the reception to make your way along the private road to the hustle and bustle of the main road. You will not be on this long! The architecture changes rapidly as the route progresses; turning into Addenbrookes Road you move from a long-established road with buildings dating back over a century, to utopian style homes built within this decade. The transformation is startling and is evidence of rapid population growth in and around the city of Cambridge.

The view from the top of the railway bridge gives excellent contrasting styles, north over Hobson's Park and into the city, east to Addenbrookes Hospital then south over fields to The Shelfords and beyond.

## 2 Railway track towards Shelford

(52.16894; 0.13212)



After passing under the railway bridge look for the footpath that goes to Nine Wells Nature Reserve on your left – a short and worthwhile detour.

As the route nears Great Shelford to your left you will be able to see a group of farm buildings. This is Granham's Farm, formerly the site of a medieval manor house in this part of the village. The oldest remaining evidence of this is the 13th Century moat that surrounds the existing farm buildings. The eastern half of the house, of white brick with a slate roof, dates from 1830-40 when it was rebuilt by St John's College. The cottage next to the farm was originally a pigeon house probably from the late 17th or early 18th Century.

As the route passes through Great Shelford, you'll be able to see the extraordinary range of different styles and ages

of its buildings.

### 3 Woollards Lane junction with Tunwells Lane

(52.14719; 0.13837)



After crossing Tunwells Lane into Woollards Lane a little imagination is called for. The area on your right known as Ashen Green was once exactly that – a green open space in the middle of the village utilised by the inhabitants for grazing and recreational purposes. Approaching the church, bear in mind that this is the site of the original river crossing settlement.

### 4 River crossing between The Shelfords

(52.14491; 0.12713)



Crossing the river between the Shelfords involves going over an island that is referred to as The Hermitage. There is probably no religious connection, but not long after the first bridge was built at the end of the 14th Century there is mention of the hermit – a character who would probably have collected money from travellers to facilitate repairs to the bridge.

Just after the bridge, behind the old brick wall, is The Grange or Burystead Manor House, the seat of the Lord of The



Manor over both Shelfords. The original building was medieval but extensively altered during the 1890s.

As you stroll through Little Shelford you may notice a more rural feel to the village, with a greater proportion of older housing along the route until turning towards Hauxton.

## St Edmunds Church at Hauxton

(52.14899; 0.09706)



Hauxton village, as with Little Shelford, has a rural and open feel as you stroll along Church Road. Take a few moments to explore St Edmunds Church prior to turning along the footpath towards the mill. This probably marks the village's original centre. From the riverside and mill area, cross the A10 Cambridge to London Road and take the cycle track opposite, then walk through the fields of Trumpington Meadows Nature Reserve and cross the M11. On joining the Addenbrookes Cycleway observe the contrast between modern buildings on your left and open farmland to the right.

