

Agriculture and Nature

Heathcote Farms Ltd manages some 2,000 acres around Toddington including the arable and woodland land adjacent to the River Flitt. The farm operates a policy of bio-diversity within the commercial operation, minimising the use of fertilisers, particularly near the river.

Woodland: Hipsey Spinney is classified as 'Ancient Woodland' and dates back to at least the 16th century. Woodcock Wood, is not as old, but is similarly managed to maintain its long-term future. Intrusive (weed) trees such as Elder & Sycamore are removed to create glades to encourage butterflies, other insects and birds. Hazel is coppiced (cut off at ground level) to be used in other conservation projects.

Wildlife: Foxes, deer, badgers and other small mammals like wood mice inhabit the woodland. The songbird population is monitored with the intention of reversing the population decline.

Fields: This whole area was cleared of woods in the 17th century to allow cultivation of crops. Hedges were planted in the 19th century to create grazing meadows. In the 20th century the area was converted back to arable crops.

Hedgerows: New hedgerows have been planted to replace some of those removed in earlier years. Some tall hedges are left to grow with the minimum of management, these are probably the oldest dating back to 1797, the time of enclosure.

Fancott Wood and Meadows: The woodland, known as Chalton Spinney, is managed by the Beds Wildlife Trust (www.wildlifebcnp.org), a bridge over the River Flit gives access to a circular walk sown on adjacent information board. In spring, the woodland floor is carpeted with bluebells, along with dog's mercury and the occasional primrose. Multi-stemmed shrubs of hazel tell of past coppicing, while on the meandering path through the wood you may discern the smell of garlic emanating from clumps of ramsons.



- Respect other people
- Protect the natural environment
- Enjoy the outdoors
- Keep dogs under close control

Enjoy the Toddington countryside. Enjoy your walk, and let others enjoy it too.

The **Icknield Way** is unique among long distance tracks because it can claim to be "the oldest road in Britain". Extending for 110 miles from Ivinghoe Beacon in Buckinghamshire to Knettishall Heath on Norfolk/Suffolk boarder, it consists of prehistoric pathways, ancient when the Romans came. Dotted with archaeological remains, it survives as splendid tracks and green lanes along the chalk "spine" of England. More info: www.IcknieldWayPath.co.uk.

Other Toddington walks are available from the library or www.LetsGo.org.uk.

Suggestions or problems with the leaflet or route: RoW@chevalier.me.uk

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Toddington Parish Walk No 2

Cowbridge – Fancott Circular Walk

A pleasant circular walk starting on Toddington village green. The full distance is approximately three and a half miles (6km); or you can take a short cut (on map: A to B), making the walk about two miles (3km). The route passes a footpath access to the Fancott Wood and Meadow which can add a further one mile loop.

Most fields are arable while those from point B back towards Toddington are normally used for livestock grazing. Dogs must be kept under close control near livestock. The route is now stile free, but has fourteen gates and in places it may be muddy.

Refreshments are available in Toddington and at the pub in Fancott. Restricted and unrestricted parking is available in the village.



View towards Woodcock Wood

