

# Old Warden

**Walk:** approx. 7.5 miles/12km **Time:** 4 hours

Explore the countryside around the pretty villages of Old Warden, Northill and Ickwell Green. Stunning landscape views and walks through the woodlands and villages offer an insight into the history of the area.

## Old Warden

This delightful village is a good example of a 'closed' village, in which most of the houses originally belonged to the estate. Many of the cottages are of 17th or 18th century origin and were built in a variety of styles. However during the early part of the 19th century they were all modified by the 3rd Lord Ongley in a picturesque style. The family even insisted that residents wore a uniform of red coats and top hats to complete the picture.

The 12th century church of St Leonard is decorated inside with a substantial amount of carved woodwork collected by Lord Ongley and installed in 1841, some of which is believed to have originated in the chapel of Anne of Cleves in Bruges. The old oak tree at the western end of the car park is thought to be between 350 – 450 years old.

## Northill

Northill is an attractive village that gets its name from Northgivele, the northern territory of the Gifle tribe, in turn taking its name from the River Ivel. The village has an attractive pond adjacent to the 14th century St. Mary's church which boasts some lovely stained glass windows.

## Ickwell

Ickwell Green is a charming village arranged around a spacious village green flanked by wonderful thatched cottages. It is one of Bedfordshire's few surviving large

greens and has hosted traditional May Day celebrations since 1563. Ickwell takes its name from 'Gicca's Well' a natural spring in the village. Close to the green is a former smithy the birthplace of Thomas Tompion, who is said to be the father of English clock making.

## Flora and Fauna

Palmer's Wood is home to a variety of wild plants and animals including many Muntjac deer. The wood is also home to the Wild Service tree, a particularly uncommon specimen and taken as an indicator of ancient woodland.

Home Wood contains a rare network of medieval fishponds within a moat like feature. It is thought that the moat bank served as a rabbit warren to supply food and fur for the Lords of Northill Manor. In medieval times, Warden Warren was open heathland used as a rabbit warren by the monks at Warden Abbey. The Abbey was renowned for growing Warden pears, a variety of cooking pear mentioned by Shakespeare.

## Old Warden Park

The park was originally created in 1802 by Lord Ongley but when he suffered financial difficulties the estate was purchased in 1872 by Joseph Shuttleworth. He demolished the old red brick house and in 1876-7 replaced it with a Jacobean style mansion. His son Richard Ormonde Shuttleworth inherited the Old Warden estate on his 23rd birthday and took a keen interest in farming and estate management as well as motor racing and aviation.

He was killed at the age of 31 in an aviation accident and four years later his mother Dorothy founded a charitable trust as a permanent memorial to her son and his interests.

The Shuttleworth Collection is a world famous collection of aeroplanes, vintage cars and other early forms of transport.

## The Swiss Garden

The garden began life in 1830 as a romantic gesture by Lord Ongley but fell into disrepair until rescued by Bedfordshire County Council in 1939. The 10 acre site has undergone a continual process of restoration and contains many fine specimen trees and shrubs. There is a tiny Swiss thatched cottage, small canals spanned by wrought iron bridges, a mysterious grotto and a breathtaking fernery along with peacocks and ducks that freely roam, all adding to the air of tranquillity.

## The Bird of Prey Centre

The Bird of Prey and Conservation Centre in the Shuttleworth estate is one of the UK's largest bird of Prey collections. It includes daily flying displays, hands on experience, picnic area, restaurant, gift shop and adventure play area.



# Circular walks **Old Warden**

**Walk:** approx. 7.5 miles/12km **Time:** 4 hours

### Healthy walking

Why not get out and get healthy? There is no better way to start than by taking a walk. Just 30 minutes a day can improve health and well-being, reduce the risk of heart disease, help to prevent diabetes, improve muscle strength and even reduce anxiety and depression. So make today the day you start to enjoy Bedfordshire and good health. For information on healthy walking log onto [www.walkingforhealth.org.uk](http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk)

### Planning your walk

Old Warden village hall is the suggested starting point and the walk is described in a clockwise direction. However, you can begin at any other point and walk in either direction.

### Refreshments, parking and toilets

There is parking available at Old Warden Village Hall car park, please park considerately and towards the rear of the car park. There is alternative parking at St. Leonard's Church, Old Warden or in Northill or Ickwell.

The following pubs have kindly agreed to allow parking for walkers who take refreshments there. The Hare and Hounds in Old Warden and The Crown in Northill. Please inform the landlord if you intend to leave your car.

There is a restaurant/tearooms at the Shuttleworth Collection. For details of opening times Telephone 01767 627927 or log onto [www.shuttleworth.org](http://www.shuttleworth.org) for information.

### Public transport

A regular bus service operates from Biggleswade. For information contact Traveline 0871 200 22 33 The closest train station is 3 miles away at Biggleswade.

### Ordnance Survey maps

The route is covered on Ordnance Survey Landranger Series map 153. It is also shown on Explorer map 208. Both are available from local bookshops and some petrol stations.

### Did you enjoy the walk?

This is one of a series of circular walk leaflets produced by Central Bedfordshire Council. If you wish to request a leaflet, give us some feedback or report any problems encountered, please contact us on **0300 3008305** or e-mail us on [recreational.routes@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:recreational.routes@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

### Tips for enjoying your walk

Parts of the walk can become muddy especially after heavy rain, so strong waterproof footwear is recommended. Take care where conditions are rough and do let someone know where you are going. Please be aware that much of the walk is unsuitable for wheelchairs and difficult for pushchairs.

### Other walks

To discover more walks in Central Bedfordshire visit [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/countryside) or [www.lets-go.org.uk](http://www.lets-go.org.uk)

Or why not explore the Greensand Ridge by following



- Walk**
- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Sandy and Everton    | 7 Rushmere and Stockgrove  |
| 2 Old Warden           | 8 Cranfield                |
| 3 Silsoe - Shillington | 9 Totternhoe               |
| 4 Ampthill - Maulden   | 10 Dunstable Downs         |
| 5 Ampthill - Millbrook | 11 Whipsnade               |
| 6 Woburn - Eversholt   | ■ ■ ■ Greensand Ridge walk |

the fabulous Greensand Ridge Walk, a walk that passes through many of the area's most valuable landscapes and historic towns [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/greensand](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/greensand)

 **@BedsCountryside**  
 **CBCountryside**

Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Central Bedfordshire Council. Licence No 100049029 (2013)

# Walk 2

## Circular walks Old Warden

Walk: approx. 7.5 miles/12km Time: 4 hours



**Key**

.....	The walk	🌳	Woodland
—	Footpath	⛪	Church
—	Bridleway	P	Parking
		🍴	Picnic area
		🏪	Local shop
		🍺	Public house

**Please follow these tips to keep you and your dog safe:**

- 🐾 Always keep your dog in sight and train it to come back when called.
- 🐾 Never let your dog chase wildlife or grazing animals – it could get injured too.
- 🐾 Unless you're already friends, keep your dog away from other people and other dogs – not everyone loves your dog as much as you do!
- 🐾 Always clean up after your dog.
- 🐾 Look out for horses, cyclists and runners – for everybody's safety it's best to put your dog on a lead as they come by.
- 🐾 Follow all local signs about grazing animals.

This is one of a series of circular walk leaflets produced by Central Bedfordshire Council. For further information and availability please contact us on 0300 300 8085

# Old Warden

**Walk:** approx. 7.5 miles/12km **Time:** 4 hours

## Countryside code

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people.

- 1 Turn right out of the Village Hall car park and after approx 75m turn right again along a public footpath. Follow the footpath up a flight of steps and through two kissing gates to St Leonard's Church.
- 2 Turn left and leave the church car park via the kissing gate and follow the footpath which leads into Palmers Wood.
- 3 Continue straight ahead through the centre of the wood and on reaching the edge of the wood, turn right then left following the field boundary. Continue straight ahead and after crossing a timber bridge, turn left to follow the field edge to join the Greensand Ridge Walk. (The Greensand Ridge Walk is a 40 mile walk across Bedfordshire which stretches from Leighton Buzzard in the south of the county to Gamlingay, many other circular walks and visitor attractions can be accessed from this long distance linear walk).
- 4 Continue along the route of the Greensand Ridge Walk to Northill. Turn right along the bridleway and follow the way marking which leads past Sweetbrier Farm. Turn right and after approx 50m cross a timber bridge, then turn left onto Green Lane. The view north west from the ridge includes the Cardington Hangers, and Ravensden water tower.
- 5 After passing Sweetbrier Cottage on the left, turn right along a field edge path, through a tree belt and a paddock to Highlands Farm. Highlands Farm is a distinctive Georgian farmhouse and during World War 2 was used to house prisoners of war who worked on nearby farms.
- 6 Follow the waymarking through two kissing gates, then across an avenue of large trees and through a small wood. The avenue is of alternating horse chestnut and lime trees, and runs from Deadman's Oak to the Ickwell Bury Estate.
- 7 Turn right and follow the waymarking along a field edge path and through Home Wood. Leave the wood via a kissing gate, pass the end of the medieval fish ponds and follow the path between the paddocks to Northill.
- 8 Turn right onto Bedford Road and right again into Ickwell Road and continue to Ickwell Green.
- 9 Follow the left hand edge of the green, cross Caldecote Road and leave the village via 'The Sheepwalk' bridleway.
- 10 Cross Hill Lane and follow the ditch side bridleway, crossing a culvert, and continue around the edge of the Shuttleworth Airfield. Continue along the bridleway and turn right onto the main estate road. After approx 150m turn left and follow the waymarking alongside a ditch, past Lowsiebush Covert and along a farm track with a recently planted avenue of oak trees.
- 11 Turn right and follow the road for approx 560m, there are glimpses of Southill Park and lake to the left. Southill Park dates from the 17th century with additions by Capability Brown in 1777.
- 12 Follow the footpath through the centre of Warden Warren Wood and on entering Old Warden turn left to return to the Village Hall car park opposite the Hare and Hounds public house.