

The Flit Valley Walk

(7 ½) Miles



Flitwick Town Council

A waymarked walk
following the River Flit
through its quiet valley,
rich in history & wildlife

The Flit Valley Walk

This 7.5 mile walk follows the River Flit through its quiet valley rich in history and wildlife, a rare gem in the Greensand Country landscape.

The route runs from Westoning to Silsoe and will introduce you to some of the distinct, beautiful and loved wonders to be found along the River Flit, from peat bogs and old woodland to the stories told by historic buildings such as Flitwick Mill and Flitwick Manor, and archaeological finds.

A series of six beautifully illustrated information boards placed at key points along the route share information on the wide variety of flora and fauna you may discover on your walk together with fascinating facts on the history of each area. At the Jack Crawley Memorial Barn in Flitton you will find the Flit Valley Discovery Centre.

Please take care when crossing roads and observe the Countryside Code as you explore the stunning open spaces. Treat the land on which you walk with respect, leave gates as you found them and please take your litter home.

For more information about the Flit Valley Walk please visit:
www.flitwick.gov.uk



Points of interest around the Flit Valley Walk



In 1632 Edward Blofield purchased the Manor of Flitwick from the Crown and rebuilt the Manor House, now known as Flitwick Manor which is a hotel. It was in the early 19th century that it came into

the hands of John Thomas Brooks who landscaped the grounds, creating a stunning arboretum.

Many of the original features of the park have been reinstated by Flitwick Town Council and the Flit Valley Walk volunteers. The Sweet Chestnut Avenue created by John Brooks in 1831 and Flit Water, created by Henry Dell in the mid-18th century, have already been restored.



To the north of Manor Park is the The Mount. Originally part of the Flitwick Manor Estate, The Mount was the site of a small short-lived motte-and-bailey castle built by the lord of Flitwick Manor c. AD1100 to control Flitwick and the Flit Valley. The Mount is designated a Scheduled Monument. Flitwick Town Council owns and manages this quiet open green space along with Manor Park.

Flitwick Mill worked until 1987. Records show a mill has stood on this site since AD1086. It is now a private house. You can find out about this fascinating restoration project by visiting: www.flitwickmill.co.uk





Flitwick Moor Nature Reserve is the largest area of Wetland in Bedfordshire. Managed by the Wildlife Trust, most of the Moor is a Site of Special Scientific Interest protecting areas of valley mire habitat with insects and plants rare in Southeast Britain. Flitwick Moor is also known for its chalybeate springs of water rich in iron from the Greensand. The iron-rich water was bottled and sold as a tonic from the late 19th century until the 1930s. This is characterised by the rusty colour streams you see today.



Flitton Moor Nature Reserve is owned by Central Bedfordshire Council and managed by the 'Friends of Flitton Moor'. It was created in the late 1980s to recreate some of the habitats that would have been present along the Flit Valley before it was drained in the 19th century. The large pond on the moor provides a tranquil place to stop and observe the natural habitat.



The De Grey Mausoleum attached to the 15th Century Church of St John the Baptist in Flitton contains one of the finest sets of funerary memorials in Britain. It was erected for the de Grey family of nearby Wrest Park in Silsoe and spans three centuries. Visit www.english-heritage.org.uk for more information.



Directions

The route is described from Westoning to Silsoe. Visit www.flitwick.gov.uk to view directions in reverse. **Please take care when walking along, or crossing, all roads.**

From the Village Hall and green in Westoning **i** walk up the road, passing St Mary Magdalene Church **1** on left to T junction at the top. Turn right along the enclosed footpath and then left at end. **1** At bottom of slope turn right and follow path to Moor Farm. (The view on your left is a first glimpse of the Flit Valley). **2** Continue through farm and walk ahead to the pavement and turn left (A5120).

Cross the river on footbridge and turn left through gate into Manor Park **i**. Feel free to explore the park using whichever route you like or keep going ahead on the winding path, and bear left through the arboretum **3** and out into meadow. Turn right at waymark post up path through trees. At the top turn right back into the arboretum and bear left, then later bear right to exit into open. Follow fence on left, (with view of Flitwick Manor on left) **4**, then bear right downhill to pass leaping fox sculpture on your left.

Follow the waymarks to leave Manor Park on the tarmac path.



Flit Water in Manor Park

At road turn left and cross Church Road to cross at crossing and turn right to Vicarage Hill. Pass shops and turn right along Hornes End Road (Take care at road crossings in this section). In 250m turn left along bridleway at signpost. Cross a bridge over the mill leat **5** and turn left. Follow the bridleway under railway and continue ahead, still with mill leat on left. At junction turn right on path, with ditch on left.



River view by Jim Trollinger

Cross the bridge over the Flit into a wood and bear left. (You are now on part of Flitwick Moor) **6**. Follow winding path through wood to junction with waymark post. Turn left and follow permissive path through edge of wood. Bear left at low post, then bear right to cross river on new bridge. Follow path with river on right. Go through kissing gate and ahead you can see Flitwick Mill **7** as you reach the information board **i** on the right.

Cross the road and turn left on pavement. Opposite the mill turn right through kissing gate and follow path through field. (You are now also following part of the Two Moors Heritage Trail). Follow the path with river on right through another part of Flitwick Moor SSSI. **8** At junction with seat, continue beside the river to pass a large bridge on the right. (You can cross bridge to The Compasses pub). Keep ahead to go through kissing gate.

Emerge into a meadow (Maggotts Moor - another part of Flitwick Moor) and keep ahead along right hand side of field. **9** Ahead through kissing gate, cross footbridge, and follow enclosed path through another kissing gate **10**. Turn left along bridleway to pass info board on left **i**. Bear left at junction to cross the river on bridge and turn right. (A left and right turn here on the Heritage Trail would take you to Ruxox Moat) **11**.

Follow the river to reach Flitton Moor **12** on your left at low waymark post. Continue to reach the Flit Valley Discovery Centre on your left **13**. (You may want to stop here for a rest and look at some of the information in the Jack Crawley Memorial Barn).

Turn right over the bridge, through kissing gate, and up Brook Lane towards church. **14** (White Hart pub ahead). Turn left on Church Lane and ahead through farmyard.



The opening of the Jack Crawley Memorial Barn by Baroness Young



Kite and buzzard bench by Ian Freemantle

Keep ahead up hill to waymark post (view across to river and Greensand Ridge beyond) where turn sharp right. Ahead with hedge on right to go downhill to road junction. Cross with care to pavement and turn left. At top of hill cross to pavement on left and ahead to junction at Jolly Coopers pub. Turn left on pavement and at bend in road ahead onto bridleway. Pass by gate and at waymark post turn left uphill between hedge and trees.

At top of hill by bench stop to look down the valley where the river cuts through the Greensand Ridge at the 'Clophill Gap' on its way to Shefford. **15** Continue on path to hedge and turn right downhill. At road cross onto footpath opposite. (On your right is the Beaumont Tree monument). **16** Pass beside barrier and continue ahead uphill and follow track down between hedges. Beyond hedges, with river in treeline to left, continue to junction 250m before large house.

Here turn right up hill along line of power poles. At waymark post keep ahead with hedge on right. Go through kissing gate, ahead down grassy path, and at corner turn left through kissing gate. Turn right on track and at road turn right on pavement. Cross end of Newbury Lane and ahead on pavement. Walk past bus shelter, turn right through 'Millennium Green' gates and ahead to centre of Green. **i** **17**

Greensand Country

An area of distinct, beautiful and loved countryside stretching from Gamlingay to Leighton Buzzard. 40 miles of scenic landscape follows the Greensand Ridge, which forms the northern side of the Flit Valley from Flitwick to Shefford.

Greensand Country contains all of Bedfordshire's remaining heathland, more than half of its woodland and, as a proportion of the area, is made up of more historic parkland than any other place in England.

Walking is an ideal way to get to know Greensand Country and experience what it has to offer. When on foot you are closer to nature and able to take in the views, soak up the landscape and enjoy the physical health and mental wellbeing benefits associated with exploring the great outdoors.

Many routes have been created by the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership to help you explore the history, heritage and rich culture of Greensand Country including a number of historic parkland walks and Geo Trails. Other routes to explore include Katherine's Walk, the Ouzel Valley Meander and Weneslawe Walk.

Find further information and search these routes and more via our interactive map at:

www.greensandcountry.com



A Haven for Wildlife!



The Flit Valley Walk guides you through a wide variety of wildlife habitats. What will you see on your walk?

Near the river you can watch for Kingfishers and a Grey Heron hunting for fish and frogs. In early spring male Skylarks sing high in the sky above their nest sites in arable fields. Red Kites and Buzzards are also a familiar sight in the skies.



Flitwick Moor Nature Reserve protects a range of wetland habitats now rare in Bedfordshire. Grazing maintains damp meadows where Orange Tip butterflies feed on spring-flowering Cuckoo Smock.

Rarely seen, otters returned to the Flit Valley some years ago as water quality improved but you may find tracks or signs of their feeding.



Beautifully carved benches celebrating the wildlife to be found on the Flit Valley Walk provide a welcome spot to rest and enjoy the stunning views.

Flitwick Town Council has created the Flit Valley Walk with support from the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership. The Council is very grateful to the team of volunteers, and local organisations, who have been working with us to deliver this exciting project.

Visit www.flitwick.gov.uk for more information on the Flit Valley Walk.



Get involved: greensandcountry.com

