

CIRCULAR WALK

Start from the Bury Field car park in Queen's Avenue and allow 2-2½ hours. The walk can be made in either direction, although we recommend the clockwise route. This begins on the edge of the ancient borough of Newport and descends gently across the river Ouse onto the other bank in Gayhurst from which there are wide views back across the valley. It then returns through the quiet village of Lathbury along the side of the old north road.

OLD QUARRY

The quarry is an important little wildlife habitat which you are asked not to disturb. The dry end contains an amazing petrified tree, turned to stone by the lime oozing from the rocks.

THE COB

Until 30 years ago a row of thatched cottages stood by the river and it was a favourite picnic site. Today it is still an enjoyable spot where you may be surprised by the sight of a kingfisher.



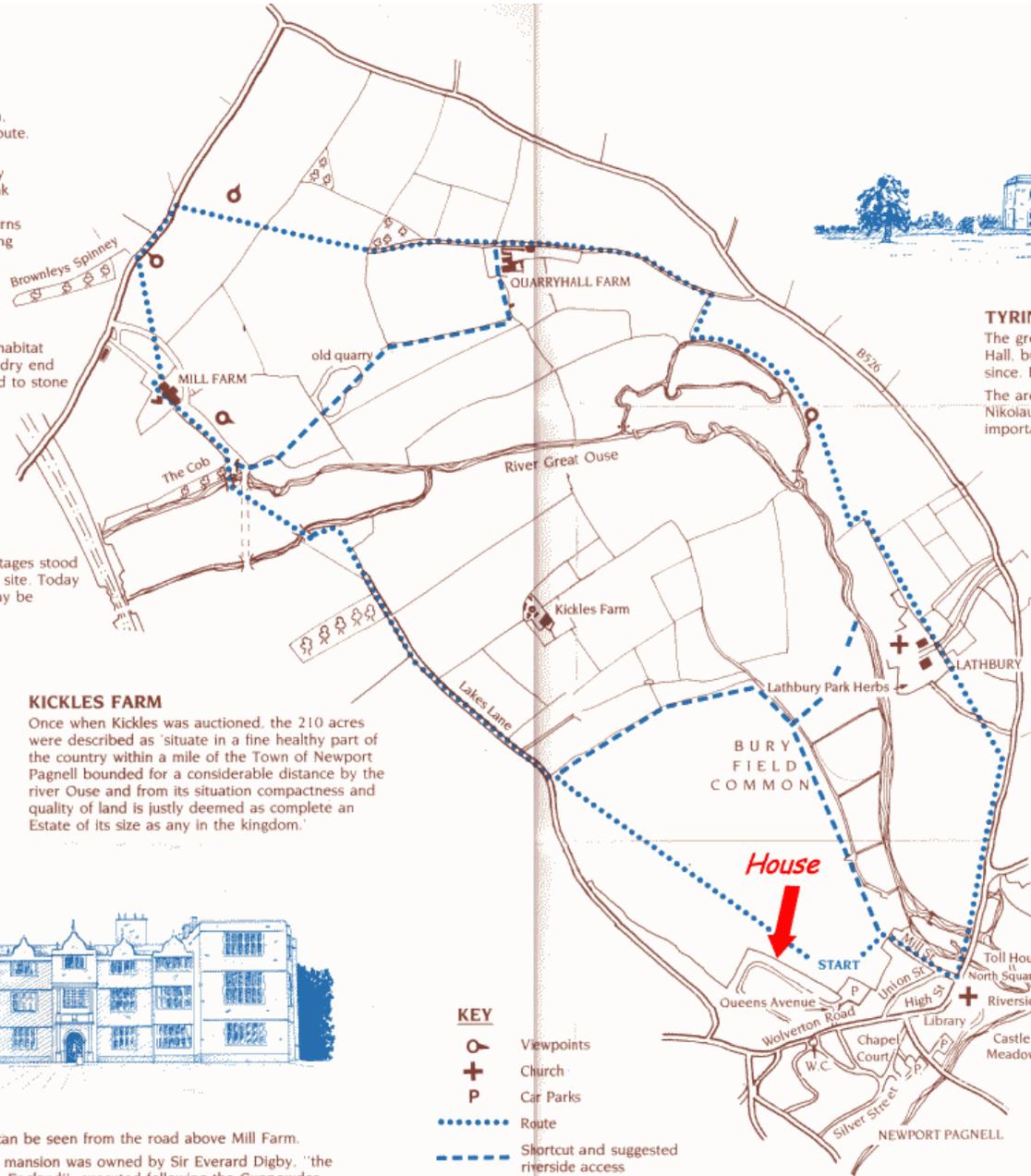
KICKLES FARM

Once when Kickles was auctioned, the 210 acres were described as 'situate in a fine healthy part of the country within a mile of the Town of Newport Pagnell bounded for a considerable distance by the river Ouse and from its situation compactness and quality of land is justly deemed as complete an Estate of its size as any in the kingdom.'



GAYHURST HOUSE

The house and grounds can be seen from the road above Mill Farm. The splendid Elizabethan mansion was owned by Sir Everard Digby, "the handsomest gentleman in England", executed following the Gunpowder Plot. The nearby Georgian church, architect unknown, is considered one of the finest of its period.



- KEY**
- Viewpoints
 - Church
 - Car Parks
 - Route
 - Shortcut and suggested riverside access



Scale approx. 0 0.5km 1/4 1/2 mile



TYRINGHAM HALL

The green-domed building away to the east is Tyringham Hall, built by Sir John Soane in 1793-7, but much altered since. It is now a naturopathic clinic. The arched gatehouse, also visible, was praised by Sir Nikolaus Pevsner as "a monument of European importance".

LATHBURY

At Lathbury Park, a small herb growing business is open for sales on weekdays. The little church has Norman carvings and C.15 wall paintings of the Last Judgement.

NORTH BRIDGE AND TOLL HOUSE

The stone bridge and toll house were built in 1810 after an incident when the Defiance Manchester Stagecoach overturned into the river. The driver wasn't able to see the breaks in the old bridge beneath the floodwater.



MILL STREET

When the Pagnells took over the Manor at Newport there was already a corn mill by the river Ouse at the edge of Bury Fields. This location has survived until now, so that Mill Street retains its Anglo-Saxon origin.

NEWPORT PAGNELL - a circular walk of 4.5 miles through fields and farms of the Ouse Valley.

NEWPORT PAGNELL

The Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Danes and Normans all had their effects on the countryside of Newport Pagnell but, through the ages, the basic pattern of settlement has remained the same. In fact, many old place names are still in everyday use and help us to trace the history of the landscape.

Newport Pagnell is thought to be an Anglo-Saxon town which became a fortified borough. It was well situated for its purpose at a high point above the meeting points of the rivers Ouse and Lovat with pre-Roman trackways.

The town itself was defended against the marauding Danes and within the defences a market or 'port' was established, turning Newport into an important trading centre and giving it its name. The shape of the 'burgh' can still be traced along Union Street, River Side, Silver Street and Chapel Court. Outside the town farming continued on the strip-cultivation system.

The Second part of the name derives from the Pagnel family who held the manor of Newport after the Norman conquest. Fulk Pagnel was responsible for founding Tickford Priory, to which he gave the church, and possibly for building the castle which was probably a wooden structure.

Much later, Newport Pagnell acquired fame as the home of Aston Martin Lagonda cars (still built here), and as Britain's first motorway service-area! The fine church of SS Peter & Paul is well worth a visit.

BURY FIELD COMMON

Bury Field is an important historical remnant of an ancient system of farming that was common in Britain until land was reorganised by the Inclosure Awards to make whole farms.

Before the Inclosure people owned and cultivated strips within huge open fields of which Tickfordfield and Portfield were once the other two. Rights to pasture on Bury Field were originally held by the merchant owners of town properties or 'burgages'.

Today, there are still commonright holders, but the freehold is owned by Milton Keynes Borough Council, and grazing is let to a local farmer.

For a shorter walk, the Common gives access to a delightful stretch of the river Ouse, with Lathbury Church and Park through trees on the opposite bank.

Across the Common, humps and hollows mark the line of the never-completed Newport-Olney railway.

KICKLES FARM

The hamlet of Kickles was also once an ancient settlement. In 1276 it was known as 'Gyckley'. The original name was probably the name of the owner. It is impressive but not unusual for a farm to keep its name for so long in this way.

In the last century a Saxon burial site was unearthed here and Roman coins have also been found.

LAKES LANE AND MILL FARM

Lakes Lane may once have been the farmers' central access to both Bury Field and Portfield, and leads to the river Ouse where a mill was once situated. A Gayhurst Mill was mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086.

The short-cut footpath to Quarryhall from The Cob follows close by the route of a Roman road from a settlement at Little Linford to Filgrave village.

GAYHURST HOUSE

Gayhurst has had a long and varied history of connections with royalty and government, alternately in support or in rebellion. Queen Elizabeth I once granted it to Sir Francis Drake who sold it again 24 hours later.

Its most tragic figure, Sir Everard Digby, may have entertained Guy Fawkes here before being hanged, drawn and quartered for supporting the Gunpowder Plot.

Sir John Digby died fighting for King Charles, and Walter Carlile was the first MP to drive himself away from the House of Commons in a motor car.

During the second world war, the WRNS working on decoding devices lived in the house, which has now been converted to a number of private residences.

QUARRYHALL

A limestone quarry here was said to have supplied the materials for Newport Pagnell church.

LATHBURY

Lathbury village grew on the far side of the Ouse marshes where possibly, Hazel or Willow sticks were cut to provide the laths for house walls made from wattle and daub. Lathbury Park House is on the site of the previous manor, which had one particularly famous resident - Jane Symes.

Her story goes like this:

In 1745 the Duke of Cumberland was leading an army north to prevent Bonnie Prince Charlie from reaching London. The army camped at Newport but could not cross the flooded river by the usual bridge in the morning.

The Symes had a gated bridge of their own but, being a catholic sympathiser, Jane led the Duke's messenger to believe that she and the gate key were in London. At this, the Duke waited for a few hours hoping that Newport residents would declare Lathbury a papist stronghold so that he could open fire on the village. No one came forward so the army broke down the gates and stormed through Lathbury setting fire to the manor fields and hedges on their way.

All Saints' Church dates from Norman times, and has 15th century wall-paintings.

NORTH BRIDGE

Bridges, their construction, destruction and maintenance, loom large in the histories of Newport Pagnell. The marshes between Lathbury and Newport were often a problem to cross and, as the town was on the high road from London to Northampton, this caused difficulties for many travellers and traders. The organisations responsible for looking after the bridges were often in trouble for non-maintenance, and tolls were levied for boat or vehicle. In 1381 traders entering Newport were stung for a halfpenny for each cask of wine or cheese, a farthing for 10 bundles of garlic or one penny for a cartload of sea fish, wood or charcoal.