



The main walk is unsuitable for the elderly or disabled but the area can still be enjoyed from key points within a 1 mile drive from the start, try these :-

Visit the church adjacent to the start and take a short walk along Church End past the tithe barn, cottages and Manor house.

Felmersham bridge with riverside walk and seats on the Jubilee lawn overlooking the Ouse.

The nature reserve has parking and easy pedestrian access (not wheelchairs).

Daisy bank picnic site, a small car park and resting place in open countryside.

All the pubs mentioned have outside seating and adjacent parking. Access within the old world buildings is more difficult.

The nearest toilets for the disabled are at Harrold Odell country park, 3.5 miles from the start (directions on map). There is also reserved parking with views over the lake.

COUNTRY CODE.



Enjoy the countryside and respect its life & work.

Guard against all risk of fire.

Fasten all gates.

Keep your dogs under close control.

Keep to public paths across farmland.

Use gates & stiles to cross fences, hedges & walls.

Leave livestock, crops & machinery alone.

Take your litter home.

Help to keep all water clean.

Protect wildlife, plants & trees.

Take special care on country roads.

Make no unnecessary noise.

WAYMARKING.

The path is marked with arrow signs, yellow for footpaths and blue for bridleways.



Walkers should not be confused by Circular Route markers that refer to a walk starting from Harrold Odell Country Park that has some common sections. These should be seen as another opportunity for future enjoyment.

Parts of this walk may be muddy and cross a variety of terrain. It is recommended that walkers wear strong footwear, let someone know where they are going and take extra care where conditions are rough.

ORDNANCE SURVEY.

This walk forms the hub of many other routes that branch out into the surrounding countryside. Information may be added to include some of these in the future but in the meantime Pathfinder maps 1001 and 1002 will provide ideas.



This walk has been developed by Felmersham and Radwell Parish Paths Partnership, with support from Bedfordshire County Council.

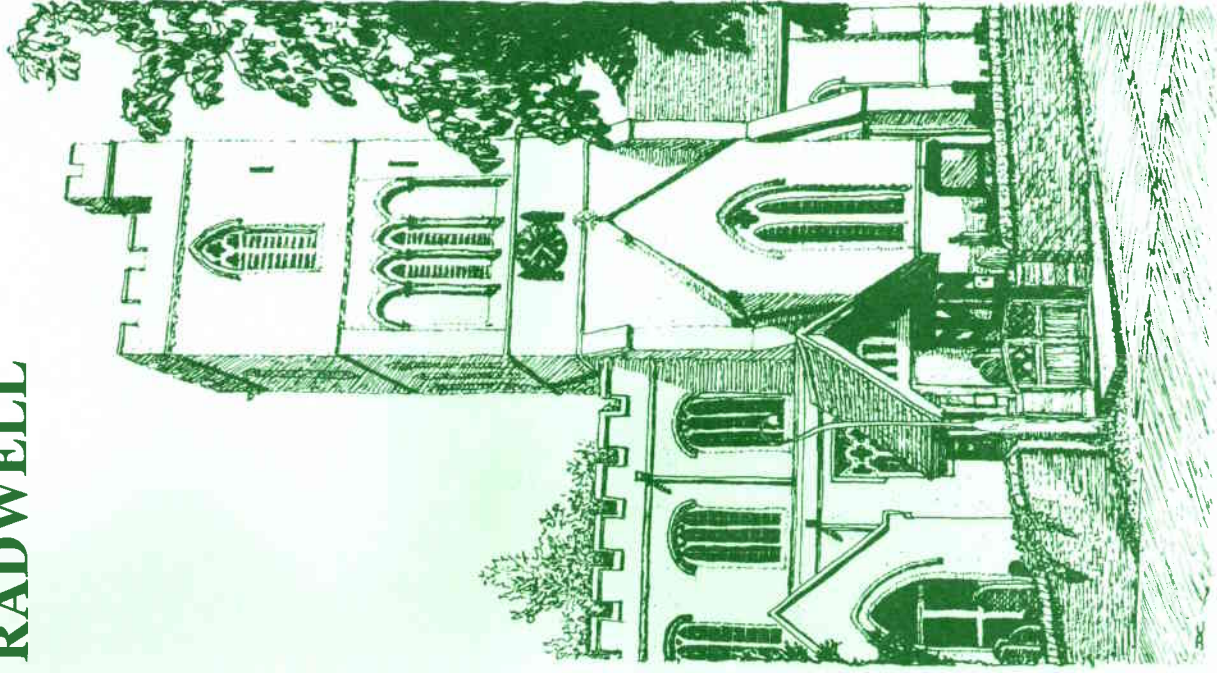
The Parish Paths Partnership (P3) is a national scheme, developed to ensure that a network of parish footpaths is legally defined, properly maintained and well publicised for the new Millennium.

If you are interested in joining the local group or if you wish to report a footpath obstruction, damaged stile or missing waymarker, please contact the P3 representative for Felmersham and Radwell.

The leaflet was written and illustrated by David Cardy and family and produced in conjunction with Chris Ure.

FOOTPATHS AROUND

FELMERSHAM & RADWELL



ST. MARY'S CHURCH FELMERSHAM

INTRODUCTION.

Felmersham and Radwell are situated 6 miles north west of Bedford just off the A6 at crossing points of the river Great Ouse. The area is rich in plants, birds and other wildlife attracted by the river and many small woodlands.

The walk follows a route round the parish of Felmersham and Radwell, with views over surrounding villages and parts of the Ouse valley.

The total length is approximately 7.5 miles and at least 3 hours should be allowed, although the walk can be modified to form two separate walks of about 4 miles each. There are three pubs on or near the route for refreshments.

The starting point is the Felmersham bus shelter (services from Bedford and Rushden, tel. 01604 620077 for information), next to the tithe barn built in the 15th. century and near the fine 13th. century St. Mary's parish church.

WALK.

With your back to the shelter (1), cross the road and turn right, walking down to the river bridge. The small Jubilee lawn and adjoining slipway provides your first view of the river Ouse and waterside meadows. Do not cross the bridge but turn left up the hill towards Carlton.



FELMERSHAM BRIDGE

On the right is East Grange, formerly connected to the adjoining West Grange as one building but a section was removed in the 20th. century to form the two Houses. Just before the top of the hill turn left into Grange Road, the building on the corner was originally the stables to the Grange.

Continue for 100M along Grange Road to the thatched stone cottage close to the road, until a few years ago this was the Six Ringers public house.

After a further 50M. follow the footpath sign to the right. Initially enclosed between garden fences the footpath soon crosses two stiles onto open pasture. Follow the right hand fence across the field to a gate, then a second field and another gate. Please make sure the gates are closed as cattle, sheep or horses frequently graze the fields. Walk in the same direction along the headland, keeping the hedge on your right, to a stile. Cross the stile and walk 20M. to the corner of the hedge. The footpath now leaves the hedge line and drops down to a tree next to double parallel gates. After the gates walk diagonally right up hill to rejoin the hedge at the corner of the field. Cross a stile onto a narrow tarmac lane and turn right to follow the lane.

From this vantage point you can again see over the Ouse valley with Odell slightly left and Sharnbrook to the right.

When the lane reaches a road junction (2) Daisy Bank picnic site is 100M to the left, but to continue, turn right, watching out for fast cars on the narrow country roads. Keep to the road for 350m. as it drops down a dip, at the bottom take the signed footpath to the left over a stile, across the side of the field to a second stile and then between fences before turning left through a hedge and over a small bridge and stiles to the river bank (3).

The bottom of the field here is the temporary home in spring for a large number of swans.

Follow the river and at the end of the field the waymarked path turns left and then right over a stile. Continue in the same direction across a narrow strip of pasture to the corner of a fence and hedge, follow the route with the hedge on your left as the river meanders away on the right. Taking care to avoid the many rabbit holes pass through three fields and over three stiles to the junction with a bridleway (4).

Our route turns left, but a short detour to the right will take you to a river bridge, a weir, the old water mill (private) and refreshments at The Bell pub.

Return to the bridleway and follow it up the slope to the road again. Turn left for 125M. and then right at the footpath sign (5). The path climbs gently to a copse.

The bank of the ditch on the left is covered with cowslips in the spring, a protected plant to be left for others to enjoy as well. Look back over the valley to see towers and spires of parish churches. It should be possible to see at least seven churches during the walk, more on a clear day, count as you go.

Pass the end of the copse where the path drops down to a ditch and then rises again to the corner of Green's Spinney. Follow the path round two sides of the spinney.

The woodland is strictly private but a carpet of bluebells are clearly visible when they are in flower.

Part way along the second side follow the waymark signs to the right on the field edge and turn left when the path meets a bridleway (6). The route now follows a ridge of high ground with views in all directions, Pavenham low to the right and Oakley on higher ground. The bridleway leads along the edge of one field and then diagonally across another to a small copse to the left of farm buildings, before eventually reaching the road (7).

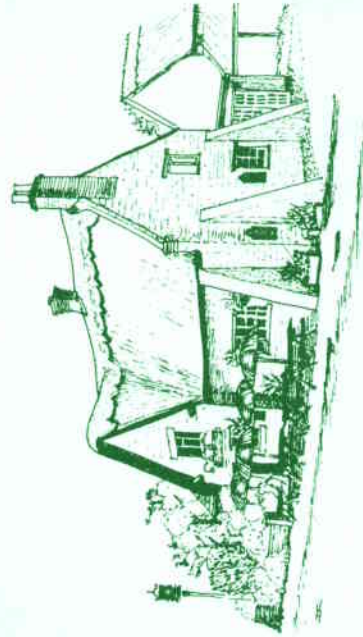
Turn right, but if you wish the walk can be cut in half to leave the remainder for another day by turning left and following the road back to Felmersham. A right turn in the village at The Sun pub and then left will bring you back to the starting point.

If you are one of the energetic people continue right for a short walk on the road of about 100M. to a footpath leading left over a stile.

Muntjac deer roam in the small woods and copses throughout this area.

A short length of track opens out onto the golf course. The path turns sharp left and then right with a hedge on the left as it continues to drop down through the golf course to a tree line in the distance, with Milton Ernest and Thurleigh airfield visible beyond. On reaching the far side and the trees turn left along the edge of the trees. You can look down through the wood to see glimpses of the river as it takes a long winding route towards Bedford. Next there is a stile to cross and waypoint posts in the middle of a field showing the direction to another stile on the far side.

Cross the road and turn right, perhaps stopping for a well earned rest and refreshment at The Swan Inn (8), before bearing left alongside Radwell Green into Moor End Road.



THE SWAN INN RADWELL

The single road through Radwell has a mixture of buildings from a converted chapel, cottages and farms to more modern dwellings.



COTTAGES ON RADWELL GREEN

Near the far end of the village where the road narrows take the small lane that forks left. Keep straight on after 200M. as the lane crosses a farm road, onto a track. After a further 100M. find a stile in the hedge on the left (9), cross it and follow the hedge on your right to the corner, turn right and walk close to the hedge down hill to another stile just to your left. Crossing this stile takes you into a field, all of which has kindly been made available for people to enjoy.

Continue in the original direction over a further stile, a second field and another stile in the corner near the farm buildings (10).

Note. In wet weather the next section can be very muddy and when the river is high it may be impassable, You can return to the starting point by turning left and following the lane, but do not take this short cut unless forced to as some of the best parts of the Ouse are to come.

Skirt the farmyard by turning right and then left, following the signs that lead through a succession of stiles, gates and a small timber bridge. At the end of the hedge adjoining the caravan site turn left, over a stile and another small timber bridge, to four larger

bridges, that inter connect the Pinchmill Islands, over the fast flowing water of the river Ouse as it divides between the islands.

After the fourth bridge follow the path across a stile and an area of rough pasture to a bridge over a small weir. Some of the land here is also open to allow people to wander beside the water, but please keep strictly to the areas shown on the signs.

To continue, climb the stile to the left of the weir, over the bridge and head left to the trees with a gate at the bottom corner (11).

This part of the walk is in the parish of Sharnbrook and you will have wonderful views back across the river to Felmersham church and the bridge.

Go through the gate with the trees on your right and a small watercourse on the left to the first of two bridges. As you pass the trees you can look through them to the lakes that were formed from an old gravel working and are now part of a nature reserve. There is a cattle proof access to the reserve from this path but the main entry point is from the road north of Felmersham bridge. Make a note for a future visit.

Cross the first bridge and follow the almost still watercourse back to the main river. The walk along the river with it's reeds, water lilies and dragonflies will lead you to the road over Felmersham bridge and up to the starting point.

By walking further up the slope and turning right into Grange Road you can reach The Sun pub where those that cut the ramble in half are already refreshed!