

TEMPSFORD

HERITAGE TRAIL



Discover some of Tempsford's history on this 1.8 mile / 3km linear walk through the village.

The Tempsford Heritage Trail helps you enjoy some of the history in the parish of Tempsford. The walk is mainly focused on the village but there are two additional routes which take you into the surrounding countryside to further explore the local history.

The main walk around the village is suitable for all abilities and is a 1.8 miles / 3km linear route. There are wonderful views across to the River Great Ouse and some beautiful examples of buildings through the centuries. For a longer walk, the entire route with the two additional walks is 7.3 miles / 11.7km taking you along the picturesque river banks and out to the old WWII Tempsford Airfield.

PLACES OF INTEREST IN THE VILLAGE OF TEMPSFORD, BEDFORDSHIRE

- 1 Gannock Castle** is a medieval moated site constructed between 1250 and 1350 AD. The site is owned by Bedfordshire County Council and is a scheduled ancient monument. It is believed to have been built on the same spot as an earlier Danish fortress referred to in the Anglo Saxon Chronicle and dated 921 AD.
- 2** Return to Church Street and turn left. Opposite is **Church Farm**. The house was renovated around 1775 and the main farmhouse is 100 years older. To the right of the farmhouse is the **Old Matings**, probably the oldest building in the village. It was once used as the village school until the Lord of the Manor built a school in the village in 1869.
- 3** Walking towards the **Gannock House** on your left, a typical timber-framed 15th century dwelling, which was once an inn called The White Hart. Situated on the original Great North Road, it would have been a busy hostelry in the 17th-18th centuries.



Gannock House

4 St. Peter's Church

is built on the site of the Saxon church which was destroyed in 1010. Records show that by 1129 a Norman church had been constructed which the Lord of the Manor, Robert De Carum, presented to the Priory of St. Neots. In the late 13th century, building work began with the tower, the north west side chapel and the Lady Chapel. Most of the nave was built in the 14th century. During the 1874 restoration, much of the medieval work was destroyed as were some frescoes depicting the defeat of the Danes by King Edward the Elder.



St. Peter's Church

5 The Wheatsheaf pub

Directly opposite public house probably built in the late 17th century. It would have been a very busy public house in the days of the horse and carriage and is still popular with passing travellers.



The Wheatsheaf pub

6

Opposite the Wheatsheaf pub is **Mill Lane**. The road leads you to **Tempsford Mill**, passing the **Old Rectory** which dates back to the 15th century, with Victorian and 20th century additions. The next property is **Church Barn**. This 15th century building, which once stood in Church Farm's yard, was renovated in 1988. Further on there is a 17th century thatched cottage, one of a pair of cottages originally standing here. At the bottom of the lane is **Tempsford Mill** and the mill owner's house. It was originally a flour mill which was burnt down in the late 1800s. It was subsequently used as a timber mill by the Tempsford Estate, but is no longer in use.

7 Millennium Garden

Walk back along Mill Lane to Church Street and turn left. On the right is the **Millennium Garden Sanctuary**. This area was originally the entrance to **Tempsford Hall** but was cut off from the Hall in 1962 when the A1 trunk road was built. The area was neglected for over 30 years but in 1999 local residents transformed it into a wildlife sanctuary and woodland walk. The garden is open all year round and the history of the site is described on signs in the garden.



Stuart Memorial Hall

8

Continue along Church Street. On the left is **Ouse Farm**. This 15th century farmhouse was once part of a larger mansion house three times its current size. Sir Gillies Payne purchased the estate in 1769 and built a new mansion, **Tempsford Hall**. The old mansion was demolished around 1828 by William Stuart, leaving one wing of the former house.

9

Walk to the end of the road towards the **Stuart Memorial Hall**. The Hall was built in 1924 and presented to the village in memory of William Esme Montagu Stuart, only child of William and Millicent Stuart of Tempsford Hall, and in memory of the fourteen Tempsford men who lost their lives in the WWI.

10

Through the trees across the A1 you may see **Tempsford Hall** in the distance. This is now the headquarters of Kier Group Ltd. William Stuart purchased the estate in 1824 but the Hall was destroyed by a fire in 1898. The Hall you see today was built in 1903.

11

Continuing north, find the old **Tempsford village school** and **school master's house**, built in 1869 by the lord of the manor William Stuart. The school was leased to a board of governors and trustees until the 1970s when it was taken over by the education authority. In 1983 the school closed after 114 years providing education to children in the village.

Behind the business complex is the old station master's house and a row of six workers cottages, all built around 1893.

You may return to the start by re-tracing your steps along Station Road or continue for an additional walk (3 miles / 5km) as follows:

Cross the railway line and follow the fork right to **Woodbury Low Farm** where the road surface changes to concrete. Follow this road for 700m. At the farm buildings turn sharp right following the waymarked path (a roman road) to **Gibraltar Farm** visible in the distance. This was the site of the WWII covert operations carried out by the Special Operations Executive (S.O.E). All that remains today is one barn which serves as a memorial to the hundreds of special agents and aircrew who flew from here during WWII. Few people had any idea of the significance of RAF Tempsford during the war. Many books have been written about what went on here and today there are numerous websites from which to find out more. The area today is privately owned and entry to the barn is strictly by agreement with the owner.

Gibraltar Farm



Retrace your steps and turn left (west) along the footpath towards the railway line. At the railway turn right following the line to the level crossing to re-enter Station Road.

Public transport

A regular Monday to Saturday bus service operates in Tempsford and the surrounding areas (178 & S10). Please phone for further details.

For bus times: 01234 228337 (office hours)
0870 6082608

Accommodation and Refreshments

Refreshments are available from The Wheatsheaf in Church Street and The Anchor Hotel on the Great North Road (A1).

There are guest houses and B&B's in the Tempsford area. For further details on accommodation, please contact:

Bedford Tourist Information Centre
01234 215226

Sandy Tourist Information Centre
01767 682728

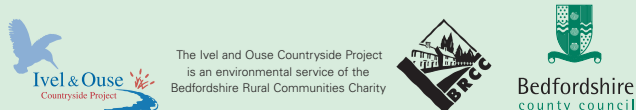
Useful maps

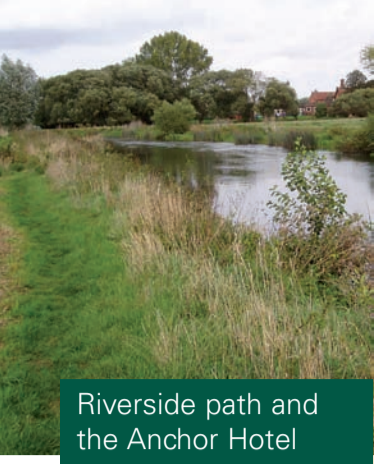
The walk is covered by Ordnance Survey Landranger sheet no. 153; and Explorer sheet no. 208. For copies of the Ouse Valley Way and Kingfisher Way, please contact the tourist information centre.

Further Information

If you would like more information on the Stuart Memorial Hall please visit www.tempsford-stuart-memorial-village-hall.co.uk
<http://www.lhi.org.uk>

Supported by:





Riverside path and the Anchor Hotel

12 Further north, **The Anchor Hotel** was built by the Stuart family in 1831. The descendants of the Stuart family sold the Anchor in the 1970s to Hamilton Taverns, who later sold it to Scottish and Newcastle breweries. Behind the Anchor Hotel is **Ferry Cottage**, formerly the **Ferry Inn** public house.

For a riverside walk (1.5 miles / 2.4 km) take the path from the pub car park down to the river passing Ferry Cottage on your right and leading to a footbridge. Cross the river via the footbridge and turn left following the path until you meet a concrete road. Cross the road and ditch keeping left and follow the path which leads to Roxton Lock. Cross the river over the weir and follow the waymarked route along the River Ivel until you get to a bridge. Walk over the bridge and follow the footpath into the farmyard of **Ouse Farm** and continue until you meet Church Street. Take a left to return to the footbridge over the A1.

13 Cross the footbridge (from which Tempsford Hall to the east and the flood meadows of the River Great Ouse can be seen) over the A1 and proceed along Station Road.

14 The village shop, now **number 49**, was open from 1905 to 1989. The building dates from the 1860s and was built on the site of previous cottages.



Roxton Lock

15 **Number 51** was originally a public house called The Black Horse dating back beyond 1837. The pub stood where the front garden is now and the current building was built in 1933, The Black Horse public house closed in 1967.

16 **Number 53** was built in the late 19th century on the site of four cottages. Peter Addington was the village blacksmith here in the late 19th century and sold the business in 1906 to the Wilson family, who continued the business into the 1960s.

17 The **Tempsford Wesleyan Chapel** is the oldest Methodist chapel in the St. Neots area and is still in use today. The building was completed in 1804 with a Sunday school building added to the rear in 1878. Services are still held here every Sunday.

18 **Number 59** (Penny Farthing Cottage) was once the village butcher's shop. The cottage was probably built in the mid 18th century with the shop section to the left being added in the late 19th century. The yard at the rear was used for slaughtering the animals and storing the carcasses. The butchers shop ceased trading in the mid 1980s.

19 **Number 61** was formerly the White Hart public house, dating back to 1830. The last pint was pulled in the spring of 1992 and the property was sold in November 1993.

20 **The Old Bakery** is a lovely old part timber framed house which was probably built in the late 17th century. Around 1910, a draper's shop occupied part of the building, as well as a bakery.

21 **Number 65** is Clematis Cottage. It is mainly of 17th century construction with 19th and 20th century additions. The cottage was for many years the home of the Lewin family, who were the village thatchers.

22 In 1848 William Cope built **number 69 and 71**, originally a single five-bedroom house and draper's shop until 1905, when Elizabeth Cope died. The property was then sold to John Wady, who converted the property into two cottages. Look above the right-hand cottage's front door and window to see the different coloured bricks where the shop window would have been.

23 **Number 88** is Pyghtle Farmhouse, formerly an estate house. In 1979 this 16th century farmhouse was restored by the owners. It was once used as farm workers' cottages and has had many alterations over the years. Some of the timbers used in the construction of the property were probably taken from a much larger dwelling, possibly the Old Brays Manor (which once stood near the entrance of Station Road), dismantled in the mid 15th to early 16th century.



Wesleyan Chapel

24 **Old Biggin Farmhouse and dovecote** is a wonderful old farmhouse built in three stages between the 17th - 19th century. The property (until the late 1980s) has always been a farm and the dovecote, which is still in remarkably good condition, is probably of 17th century design. The property was sold by the Tempsford Estate in 1986 and is now a private house.

A new farmhouse was built to replace the original and this stands to the left of the dovecote.

25 The origins of **Mossbury Manor** can be traced back to the Domesday Survey of 1086. Tempsford was then made up of four manors, eventually becoming one. The original manor house has long since disappeared and we can only assume that the property now bearing the name was built on the site of the former manor. The farmhouse we see today probably dates back to the 17th century. It has had many alterations in recent years since the Tempsford Estate sold the property in 1984.

26 Continuing along Station Road you come to the level crossing. The railway was built in 1850 but **Tempsford Station** was not built until the latter half of the 19th century. The station closed in 1959 and all that remains is one of the old goods sheds in the former goods yard, now a small business complex.

