



The Hundred Parishes

Circular Walks – number 129

Duxford – a stroll around the village – 1.8 miles (3 kms)

This walk explores the more historic parts of Duxford. The village, with a population of around 2,000, has a well-balanced mix of old and new properties. This route passes about half of the parish's 50 listed buildings. Duxford has a choice of pubs and tea rooms as well as several places to sit. The route is mainly along village streets with two short stretches of path.

IWM Duxford, part of the Imperial War Museum, lies to the west of the village (a mile or so along the busy A505). You might consider a full day's outing, combining this village walk with a visit to the extensive museum where you could easily walk another mile or two.

Another Hundred Parishes walk, Station Walk number 14 covering 5 miles from Great Chesterford Station to Whittlesford Station, includes part of this route, mostly travelling in the opposite direction.

Start and finish: There is a good parking area at Duxford's Community Centre. The walk description starts and finishes there. The Centre is on the Hunts Road through route, just south of the village sign. The Centre has a cafe which opens 7 days a week. Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL476459 and Postcode: CB22 4RE. Should the car park not be open, you might park just south of the village sign on Hunts Road or round the corner in St John's Street. The route can generally be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 209. A diagram of the route is provided at the end of the description.

Leave the Community Centre car park and turn right along the pavement of Hunts Road.

Pass Maarnford Farm on the left and soon reach a small green at the junction with St John's Street. Pause here just after the seat and Duxford village sign. Look ahead and to the left: the large buildings are on Duxford Airfield which played an important role in two world wars. The airfield lies within Duxford parish and has a quarter of the parish's listed buildings including WWI hangars. The airfield is now home to the Imperial War Museum ("IWM Duxford"). The extensive museum, by far the largest in the Hundred Parishes, certainly merits a visit.

Leave the small green and turn right unto St John's Street. Almost immediately cross the road with care and pass through the gate into Brewery Field, a public space opened only in 2020.

Turn left and then keep left, following the path clockwise around the field. From here you may well see a vintage plane or two flying from Duxford Airfield. It is not unusual to see a Tiger Moth bi-plane (with two wings, one above the other) or a noisy Spitfire looping the loop. The path leads to an exit from Brewery Field onto St John's Road with the school opposite. Turn left. Soon cross Elms Close and then Lacey's Way on the left.

Soon after Lacey's Way, you may like to cross to the non-pavement side to obtain a better view of Old Lacey's on the left. This is a former farmhouse thought to be a hundred years older than the 1683 included in a partridge emblem on the wall.

Cross back to the pavement and continue ahead. Pass St John's Church on the right and then turn right into Green Street. Pass Robynet House which dates from the 16th century. At the far end of the building, note the sundial on the brick chimney breast.

On the right, St John's Church merits a visit. It ceased to be an active church in 1874 but is cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust. Most unusually, Duxford has two churches that have a Grade I listing. Each dates from the 12th century. St John's has wall paintings that are thought to be almost as old as the church.

The existence of two ancient parish churches within one small present-day parish is explained by the ancient history of Duxford, which lies immediately west of the River Cam. An ancient route between Norfolk and Wiltshire, the Icknield Way, came through here. The Icknield Way was not always a single path and often had several alternative routes. That was the situation here: there were at least two points where travellers could ford the river. Settlements grew up beside these two routes and each built a church, albeit only 300 yards apart. We will pass the other church a little further on.

Immediately after St John's Church, College Farmhouse, number 11 on the right, is believed to have been built around 1500 AD as a guildhall. Around 1560 AD it was converted into a farmhouse and probably at that time connected to the 16th-century barn at the rear. The property was owned by Caius College, Cambridge for around 200 years to 1825.

Continue ahead and soon reach The Green. Fork left and left again onto the path which crosses the green. Look back at Old Vicarage Cottage. Over to the left, behind the brick wall, Barrington Cottage, number 4, started out as two cottages, built around 1700 AD.

Towards the far side of The Green, pass beneath three spreading lime trees and beside a 19th-century cast iron water pump.

As we leave The Green, on the right is thatched The Old House, a merger of two 17th-century cottages. To its left, the tiny, thatched Old House Cottage is of similar vintage. On our left is The Corner House, possibly also 17th century.

Turn left onto Green Street and soon pass Dean House on the right and then a garage which seems to have very old beams.

Next on the right number 1, Manor House, dates from the late 15th century. There is a limited view from the road unless the gates happen to be open, so here is a photo.

At the end of Green Street turn left beside a tiny green into Moorfield Road. Keep to the pavement on the left, immediately passing Cloudbury Cottage on the corner.

Soon reach thatched John Barleycorn pub which is believed to date from the 16th century; the 1660 inscription above a window is thought to relate to later alterations.



Then pass number 5 on the left, a 17th-century house displaying a rather modern AD 1621 on the wall.

Turn left into St John's Street, a continuation of where we started this walk. A house on the right displays a date in Roman numerals as MDCCCXLIX. What do you make that? [answer on the final page].

In another 50 yards reach 16th-century Lacey's Farm on the right. It is best viewed from the left side of the road. We will turn here, so cross the road and retrace on the pavement side.

At the corner, cross the road with care and turn right, retracing along Moorfield Road. Soon turn left into Mill Lane. Immediately on the left is an unusual building with bay windows, the premises of Riro Mooney Antiques, restorers of antique furniture. We will turn here. Mill Lane leads to Duxford Mill, whose site was recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 AD. The 18th-century mill was converted into a private residence and is not visible from the lane, so we will retrace the few paces back to Moorfield Road.

Back at the junction with Moorfield Road, we have a better view of number 5 opposite. It has a rather splendid chimney stack.

When safe, cross the road to the pavement and turn left, passing the John Barleycorn on the right. Pass Temple Close on the left – this leads to Temple Farmhouse, built in the 16th century or earlier close to the river on a site owned by the Knights Templar in the 13th century. The house is not visible from Temple Close so we will pass on.

Pass Green Street on the right. Our road changes its name from Moorfield Road to Chapel Street and soon on the left is the United Reformed Chapel, built in 1794. Next door is Pynes House, number 8, probably built for Rev Benjamin Pyne who died in 1833.

Cross the entrance to Manger's Lane and soon, on the left, pass 17th-century Milkwood, number 6, which sports the date AD 1776 and has a plaque to denote its status as an English Listed Building.

Before reaching a bend and road junction, cross with care to the left and turn left up the path to the Parish Church of St Peter's.

Note the benchmark low down near the corner of the first outside wall of the church – a horizontal line with arrow beneath. This was carved by an Ordnance Survey surveyor as an altitude reference point. Benchmarks were used for plotting altitudes from around 1840 until the 1990s but have now been superseded by GPS, the global positioning system.

This is Duxford's other 12th-century Grade I-listed church. Like all churches, it is worth visiting if open.

From the church porch, turn right and take the left fork to leave the churchyard by the gate on the left. After the gate, keep straight ahead along the path, now in Hinxton Road.

Soon, there is an interpretation panel on the left, giving a welcome to *The Biggen*. It explains that the piece of land we are about to visit is a Scheduled Monument, number 1006854. Pass through an attractive metal gateway, installed in 2020, and go down the path, passing a bungalow on the right and St Peter's on the left. In about 70 yards the path reaches a small woodland area which is the subject of the Scheduled Monument protection.

Go ahead on the path and soon reach the River Cam. It flows from right to left, from South to North, on its way to Cambridge. Today, this site is a popular destination for school groups that have outdoor lessons here.

Retrace along the footpath to Hinxton Road. With care, cross the road to the pavement and turn right. Soon, turn left beside a small but well-appointed green. There is a 19th-century cast iron water pump, a seat and a fingerpost sign. Here also is Duxford's war memorial, in the shape of a Celtic cross, recording the names of 24 men who died in the two World Wars.

Our route is signposted towards Ickleton.

Keep to the pavement on the left, passing Graystones tea room on the right and number 15 on the left - a beauty parlour with extensive floral decoration. On the right, number 10, King's Head House dates from the 16th century and served as a pub for at least 150 years before becoming a private house.

On the left, Runham Cottage has a Sun Insurance fire mark, denoting that the building was insured by that company.

Pass a small village store on the left and then cross the entrance to Kintbury.

Thatched Bustler's Cottage on the right dates from the 17th century.

Number 30, a large house on the right is listed as Saddlers Farmhouse and dates from the 17th century.

On the left, Markby Close has a bench on the small green. If you venture through the green you will find another bench in a small garden.

The thatched Plough Inn dates from the early 1700s.

Soon, cross with care to the right side.

At the junction with the main road, Hunts Road, go straight across with care into Grange Road. Just a few yards along you will see two thatched properties to the left. These were once three cottages and date from the 17th century.

Turn and retrace to Hunts Road. Diagonally to the right is The Lodge, a small hotel and restaurant. Turn left and when safe cross to the right and continue along Hunts Road.

In about 200 yards, reach the entrance to Duxford Community Centre, an impressive building opened in 2020. Inside is a tea room that opens 7 days a week.

If you parked on Hunts Road or outside the school, you will need to continue ahead a little further.

Earlier, we asked about the Roman numerals on a house at the far end of St John's Street. MDCCCXLIX translates to 1849.

You can read more about Duxford on www.hundredparishes.org.uk.

This route description, last updated 26 September 2020, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk Please email any suggestions for improving the route or the route description to hundredparishes@btinternet.com.

A diagram covering this route, based on the Ordnance Survey map, is shown below. It is published under © Crown copyright 2020 OS 100062498.

