

Ashton – Oundle 4 Mile Circular Pub Walk

DIRECTIONS TO START: At the roundabout on the A605 just north of Oundle, turn south-east (signposted to Polebrook). In about ½ mile turn left where signposted to Ashton. The Chequered Skipper is beside the green. Parking around the green and beside the pub.



- 1** From the Chequered Skipper, cross the green and follow the Nene Way signs along the path beside the chapel wall. Cross the field with its fine views of the lovely crocketed spire of St Peter's, and descend to the road. Turn right for about 50 yards to reach the National Dragonfly Museum at Ashton Mill – if it's open you should return later. Now continue between the mill buildings and take the track leading to a metal bridge over the Nene.
- 2** Cross the bridge, turn left and follow the river bank. On your left water gushes over the sluice and Ashton Lock is hidden in the trees. The path crosses a field alongside the lock, but soon returns to the river bank. The way is now straightforward – a lovely grassy track beside the lazy curving river. Wild geese graze the fields while herons stand silently at the water's edge. In summer waterlilies drift in the shallows. After about a mile you pass under the road bridge (once a railway bridge) and continue beside the river under the trees. Crossing an open field with pollarded willows, you reach a metal footbridge.
- 3** Turn right here (leaving the Nene Way) and cross the field. Through the gate, walk up the road and turn right at it's end. Soon you reach Oundle town square with the old town hall at its centre. Opposite is the church, and all around are the houses of Oundle School. Continue on ahead on North Street, passing some fine old buildings, including Latham's Hospital dating from 1611. Leaving town, you cross the river and reach the roundabout at the A605.

- 4** Cross to the bank opposite where a footpath sign directs you to climb uphill with the hedge on your left. Pass through a little patch of woodland and continue uphill. A stile leads you into an open field and you head for a stone wall at the top. Here another stile takes you onto the chapel grounds and, crossing through, you are once again on Ashton green.

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