

Paths of Old

Walk 14 – Pitsford Water & Four Churches

Distance: 10.50 miles

Grade: Moderate

Start / Finish: The White Horse, Old (Grid Ref: SP786732)

Map: OS Explorer 223 Northampton & Market Harborough

Things to see: Grey Heron, Wildfowl, Common Buzzard, Brown Hare

Summary: A lovely circuit which crosses Pitsford Water via the Causeway and links Holcot with the four villages of the Walgrave Benefice – Old, Scaldwell, Hannington and Walgrave.



Point	Description
1	From outside the White Horse, follow Lamport Road out of the village, past Hamson's yard. At the right-hand bend, take the path over the stile on the left-hand side of the road (Grid Ref SP783732). On entering the field, head slightly right across it, aiming for a point where a line of trees marking an old field boundary meets the hedge on the far side of the field at a double stile (Grid Ref: SP782731).
2	Cross the stile and head diagonally right towards another double stile. Go over this and turn immediately left, keeping the hedge on your left. Ignore the gate to your left and go through the gate ahead of you. Bear slightly right over the brow of the hill to another gate (Grid Ref SP778729).
3	From here you can see Scaldwell village ahead of you. Head in this direction, gradually dropping down to your right to a footbridge over a small stream. Cross the bridge, turn immediately left and cross two stiles. Turn right and go up the hill aiming for the white gate in the top left corner. Cross the stile and keep ahead through the farmyard, passing in front of the barn to reach a stile beside a second white gate. Cross the stile and follow the track in front of you for approximately 40m to a stile on your left (Grid Ref SP773728).
4	Go over this into the field - ahead is a row of cream-coloured houses. Aim for a spot about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way down the right-hand hedge to find a stile. Cross this and turn left to go over a footbridge. In the next field, head diagonally right, uphill, aiming for the right-hand end of the row of cream-coloured houses to reach a stile. Follow the lane uphill to reach Scaldwell (Grid Ref SP769725).
5	Keep ahead along High Street. At a sharp right-hand bend keep ahead over a stile beside a gate to reach a track. Go forward approx. 15 metres then cut through a gap in the hedge on your left and on to a grassy track. Go diagonally across the field to the far corner, go through the gap then turn right and follow the edge of the field with the hedge on your right. At the end of the field, keep following the path round to the left to reach a stile.
6	Cross the stile and bear diagonally left to another stile in the corner of the field. Go over it and keep ahead with the hedge on your left. The hedge soon ends but keep ahead on the same line across this field and the following one.
7	In the next field, turn 90 degrees right and head downhill to a point in the hedge to the left of a telegraph pole where there is a stile. Cross this and walk diagonally uphill to a gate and stile in the top corner. It can often be wet and muddy here.
8	Navigation gets a little easier now. Keep ahead with a wire fence on your right and Pitsford Water away to your left until you go over a stile and reach a metalled track. Turn right and go uphill until you meet the road. Carefully cross it to the far verge, then turn left downhill to reach the Causeway over Pitsford Water. By the entrance to the car park, join the tarmac path over the causeway then climb the hill towards the village of Holcot.

Did You Know?

Pitsford Water was built in 1956 to supply water to the growing town of Northampton. Along with Brixworth Country Park, it is a great place for fishing, birdwatching, nature walks, watersports and cycling. See their website for more details. <https://anglianwaterparks.co.uk/pitsford-water>



9	On reaching the edge of the village, take the alley opposite Glebe Close and bear right at the end on to Rectory Lane. Follow this to a junction and keep ahead into Walgrave Road. Where the road turns sharp left, look out for a stile on the right at the side of a gateway. The gateway posts are topped with Eagle sculptures, so it is quite easy to identify.
10	Cross the stile and go forward for approx. 15 metres, then turn left and initially follow a clear track uphill. Where this track bends to the right, pick up a less distinct grassy track that keeps more-or-less to a level, paralleling the fence away to the left. Go through a gateway and keep ahead across a long field. The rear of the Holcot Car Boot site is visible to your right. Go through a second gateway, keeping more-or-less ahead and cross a smaller field to a plank bridge.
11	Go slightly diagonally right across the next small field and cut through the hedge at the far side. In the next field, keep the hedge on your left to reach a plank bridge in the corner. Cross it, go ahead for approx. 30 metres, then bear left along a track with a ditch and stream on your left.
12	Keep along the track until you reach a crossroads with a bridleway beside a large house on your left. Keep ahead over the bridleway then in approx. 50 metres bear left across the field. Cross a stile and keep ahead across two fields. About three-quarters of the way across the third field meet a bridleway at a T-junction and turn left, soon meeting a hedge on your right.

13	Keep beside the hedge until the grassy track turns into a metalled surface as you reach Hannington village. Keep ahead to the T-junction, then turn left and follow the road to the church. Ignore the first right turn into Walgrave Road and carry on to the next right turn into School Lane. Take this, follow it round to the end, passing the Village Hall and heading through a metal gate into a garden (Grid Ref: SP810710).
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<i>Did You Know?</i>	<i>Hannington has been inhabited for longer than many people realise. Bronze Age flints have been found locally, and there are traces of Roman and Mediaeval settlements nearby. Noted resident, John Downes, studied botany alongside Charles Darwin before changing vocation to become Rector and personally pay for the restoration of the church.</i>
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14	Go straight ahead. Pass beneath a large Weeping Willow tree and up the bank beyond to reach a second metal gate in a tall hedge. Cross the track, go over the stile, and follow the hedge on your right. This hedge soon disappears but keep straight ahead to a stile in the far hedge and continue in the same direction on a clear path that brings you to a Bridleway (Grid Ref: SP807714).
15	Directly opposite, another clear path leads in the same general direction across a large field, aiming just to the left of Walgrave Church spire. At the far side, cross the stile and bear left to a gate and stile. Cross this, bear right downhill to the wooden footbridge and follow the field edge uphill to Rectory Lane (Grid Ref: SP802718). Turn right for approx. 30 metres then left into an alley called Church Lane. Follow this, past the church, to reach High Street.
16	Turn left, follow the road to the crossroads and go straight ahead into Holcot Road. When the road turns sharp left, continue ahead through the gate and into a field to pick up a clear track which heads downhill. At the bottom, turn right keeping a stream and hedge to your right.
17	Go into the next field, then turn immediately left to climb the hill with the hedge to your left. Keep following the edge of the field until you reach a gap in the hedge which takes you into another field. Keep ahead with the hedge on your right then, as you approach the end of the field, go through a wide gateway on the right and turn left for a few metres to reach a dirt track. Cherry Hill is now clearly visible across the field.
18	Turn right along the dirt track. After approx. 250 metres, tall hedges appear on both sides. Look out for one of two gaps in the hedge on your left and go into the field. Follow the path across this field (or keep to the left-hand edge) to reach a small gate at the far side. Cross the next field and exit on to Bridle Road. Turn right, then left at the end to return to the White Horse.

Remember: for the benefit of all please keep to the path, close all gates behind you and keep dogs on a lead, especially around livestock.