



The Hundred Parishes

Walks from railway stations – number 17

Newport – circular walk of 2.5 miles (4 kilometres)

This short and varied anti-clockwise walk includes open countryside and some of Newport village, where there are shops and places to eat and drink. The route also passes a church. If you hope to visit the church or somewhere for refreshment, please be prepared to either remove muddy boots or wear boot covers or plastic bags. In autumn, there are opportunities to pick blackberries and sloes. The start of the route is similar to longer walks 15 and 16.

There are no stiles to climb, but there are a few steps and a couple of fairly steep gradients. There are a few short stretches that may be muddy.

Start and finish: Newport Station (Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL522336 – postcode: CB11 3RN). Limited parking at the Station where charges apply.
The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 195.
A diagram of the route is provided at the end of the description.

Leave Newport Station on the East side of the track, that is from the southbound platform, number 1 (over the footbridge from the northbound platform from London, from the main entrance and booking office and from the car park).

Turn left along a quiet lane, heading uphill. In less than 100 yards, just before reaching a small unofficial parking area, turn right onto a public footpath. Climb a few steps up from the road and continue straight ahead on the path. The route climbs steadily up out of the valley of the River Cam. On reaching a wooden fence, pause and turn to look back at the village of Newport with its prominent church with a tower.



Continue up to the corner of the field, turn left and in 20 yards turn right to continue gently upwards. In the autumn, the hedgerow on the left can be rich with blackberries and sloes. Keep the hedgerow on the left, bearing left and right along the field-edge path.

Continue along the field edge, climbing gently for more than a quarter of a mile. Then, soon after passing a large house on the left, we turn left to follow the path beside a hedge, downhill for 100 yards towards a road.

Just before Debden Road, the footpath turns right before descending to meet the road. Cross the road with care and turn left along a section of footpath running beside the road. After about 30 yards, turn right between hedges.

This narrow path descends steeply and can be muddy at times. It becomes slightly wider as it passes through a short stretch of woodland but still may be slippery after rain.

After the descent, emerge from the wood and continue straight ahead



across a field with this long view to the right.

At the far side, enter a small wood and take care as the first few yards can be slippery. Cross Debden Water on the wooden footbridge with metal handrails and immediately turn left onto the woodland path.

On leaving the woodland, continue ahead on the field-edge path with woodland on the right.

When the wood on the right ends, the main track turns to the right but we keep straight ahead, signposted as Harcamlow Way and, for a while, heading towards the distant Newport parish church.

Later, Newport Church appears again, now over to the left, before disappearing.

We pass sewage works on the right, ignore a footpath off to the right, and then cross a concrete bridge over the River Cam. Note the World War II pillbox on the left, one of many built in 1940 along the Cam valley.

Soon, we pass under a railway arch, now briefly in Water Lane before it becomes Bridge End. To our right is a long white, plastered building: the section to the right (The Old Priory and Priory Cottage), with upper storey jettied out over the ground floor, dates from the 15th century.



Soon, we reach the main road, Belmont Hill, the B1383, and turn left, heading south. We immediately cross over Wicken Water which rushes east to soon flow into the River Cam.

On the opposite side of the road, the Toll House B&B displays a preserved notice of the charges that were once levied here on passing traffic.

Soon, we should cross the road, with care, at the pedestrian crossing and continue heading south – but before moving on, look back across the road.

The chains and manacles high above the door of The Links, are a reminder that this was once a house of correction. It was built in 1774 and ceased to be used as a prison in 1841. It has been converted into private dwellings.



We will continue along Newport's principal street for about half a mile. A large proportion of the buildings are listed for their architectural or historic significance; we will mention just a few.

Continue up Belmont Hill, crossing the entrance to Gaces Acre. Until the main road was upgraded as a turnpike (a toll road) in the 1740s, the main route had followed what is now the raised pavement.



Distinctive number 7, on the other side of the road and pictured here, dates from the 15th century.

As we reach 17th-century White Horse Inn on the opposite side of the road, we fork right off the main road for a short distance, following the route of the old road.

The large red-brick Belmont Farmhouse on our right dates from the 17th century when it was constructed with timber framing and then plastered. The red brick front was added in the 18th century.

Soon, we should keep to the right of the tiny Elephant Green. It was probably named after the Elephant & Castle inn that served this locality in Victorian times before being converted into a private house. A rather more imaginative but unconfirmed explanation tells of an elephant with a travelling circus that collapsed and died on the green. We keep to the right.

Soon, we reach a mini crossroads with a lamp standard on a miniature island on the left and an entrance to Newport's parish church on the right. You are encouraged to visit the church, but first please remove dirty boots or cover them. The church is largely 13th to 15th century with an unusually fine Victorian tower, a medieval carved screen and "portable" altar, shown here.



From the church, retrace to the road and the miniature island. Take the no through road, Church Street, downhill past the row of three cottages on the left. They date from the 17th or 18th century, their roofs are a mix of thatch and tile and four gabled dormer windows emerge below the thatch.

We soon re-join the main road, which is now called High Street. Turn right and continue along this side of road. Take care when crossing Wicken Road. Immediately afterwards, Village House on the corner was, until about 1980, The Star and Garter inn.

Continue along the High Street for another 400 yards, being sure to enjoy the many listed buildings along the way. We will mention a few, generally older, properties.

Newport High Street is on the old highway from London to Newmarket and Cambridge. The road retains several fine buildings from the days of horse-drawn carriages, when stabling and overnight accommodation were required to break the journey. In the 17th century, King James I and his grandson King Charles II were fond of horse racing and travelled with their royal entourage regularly between business in London and pleasure at Newmarket.

Some buildings pre-date the days of passing royalty. On the opposite side of the High Street, note the ancient Monk's Barn, with exposed timber beams and brick nogging, pictured here. The left section is believed to date from the 15th century when it was built for a priest. Its upper storey is jettied out over the ground floor and the protruding (or 'oriel') window is supported by a wooden bracket with carved figures thought to be a crowned Virgin and Child, flanked by angels. The building was extended in the 16th and 17th centuries.



Further along, also on the left, The Old Vicarage, shown heret, dates from the 16th century. It was damaged by fire at the end of 2017 but has been restored to its former appearance.



Just afterwards, on the right, red-brick The Old Manse dates from the 18th century and was once a branch of National Westminster Bank.

Red-brick The Georgians, on the left, also dates from the 18th century.

Dorrington's bakery and tea room is not so old, but it may tempt you! The local Dorringtons chain was founded in Sawbridgeworth in 1919.

Soon afterwards, we cross High Street with care, using the pedestrian crossing, and continue to head south.

Several place names bear witness to the fact that there was once a great fish pond here, albeit that it dried up in the 16th century. This was once the site of medieval fairs and markets and a market cross stood here until the 18th century.

The pink L-shaped house on the left that displays the date “1694” does indeed date from the 17th century.

We turn left into Station Road, almost immediately passing on the left a Victorian postbox with its giveaway “VR” cipher.

On the right, Newport Village Hall was largely built by volunteers and opened in 1960. The 2009 appraisal of Newport’s extensive conservation area rather unkindly described this well-used venue as “seriously ugly”. Behind the hall and its car park, there is a large common.

On the right, shortly after the car park entrance and another post box, note the example of “Hertfordshire puddingstone”, a natural rock composed of flint pebbles believed to have been formed around 50 million years ago.



At the end of the car park, Station Road crosses over the hardly-visible River Cam.

Just before we reach the station, the conical roofs can be seen of Newport’s former maltings buildings on the left. They were constructed in 1855 beside the railway and had their own rail siding. Malting ceased in 1982 and the premises now serve a variety of commercial purposes.

The entrance to the station leads to the north-bound platform, for trains heading towards Cambridge. Cross the footbridge for trains bound for London.

Not all trains stop at all stations so, before boarding one, please check that it is scheduled to stop at your intended destination.

This route description, last updated 27 March 2022, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk where there is more information about Newport within the parish introductions.

Please email any suggestions for improving the route or the route description to hundredparishes@btinternet.com.

A map of the route, drawn by Glyn Kuhn for the Hundred Parishes Society, is shown below.

