



The Hundred Parishes

Circular Walks – number 182

Linton - a short tour of the older parts of the village - 1.8 miles (3 kms)

This walk is mainly along streets with just a short stretch on tarmac path. We should take our time to enjoy Linton's heritage. The route passes the majority of Linton's 120 listed buildings; we will refer to just some of them.

Linton has several places for refreshment although they do not all open every day. There are no stiles.

Start and finish: The route starts and finishes at the car park off Coles Lane (Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL563469 - Postcode: CB21 4JS). The car park, which also serves the Health Centre, is on the right off Coles Lane, the one-way street that runs north from the High Street. Should the car park be full, on-street parking should be possible further up Coles Lane or, if necessary, by turning either left or right from the T junction at the top of Coles Lane. The route can be followed on Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 209. A diagram of the route is provided at the end of the description.

We leave the car park the way we came in and retrace to Coles Lane. Immediately opposite is the Village Hall. When safe, cross the lane and turn left, heading slightly downhill.

Ahead, we can see the tower of Linton's parish church. Soon, when the pavement starts on the left, cross the road with care and continue on the left.

On reaching the corner with the High Street, please pause. Across our road is Robert Cole's House, the large timber-framed building on the corner. Its wavy roof line suggests it is old; indeed, it dates from the 16th century and was bought in 1675 by Robert Cole. He and his family were grain merchants, operating from the building in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Opposite Robert Cole's House, on the other side of the High Street and behind a high wall, is Linton House. The two elements of the house, one faced in red brick and the other with gault brick were constructed in the late 17th century as separate buildings that were later joined.

When safe, cross Coles Lane and continue ahead, along the High Street, staying on the right and passing Robert Cole's House on the right and Linton House on the left.

On our side of the road, we soon go past a shop whose window displays photos of Linton.

The high brick wall on the opposite side of the road shields the Linton House gardens that extend down to the River Granta. The wall dates from about 1700 AD but much had to be rebuilt after collapsing in the October Storm of 1989.

Soon, we reach a long white-painted building on our side of the road: this was once the Swan Hotel and served in that capacity from the early 17th century until the 20th century.

The presence of a hotel is an indication that we are walking along what was once a busy through road until the village was bypassed in 1968.

Opposite the Swan Hotel, Linton's village sign features a man crossing the unusual "clapper stile" that could be found on a Linton footpath until recent years. The original stile, thought to be 200 years old, is now in Saffron Walden Museum.



When safe, we cross Symonds Lane and then pass over the River Granta on a rather ornate bridge. The river has flooded this area badly on a number of occasions.

Next on the right, we pass the thatched Dog and Duck Inn which dates from the 17th century. The building once comprised two cottages and a shop before they were merged to become the inn during the 19th century.

We keep to the right and continue along the High Street, soon crossing the entrance to Meadow Lane. When safe, cross the main road to continue ahead.

Immediately on our right, Chapel Terrace was built around 1800 AD and is now a mix of small shops and dwellings. This photo, from the early 1900s, shows Chapel Terrace, then The Dog and Duck and, on the far right, the start of the bridge over the Granta.



Just after Chapel Terrace, we pass number 51, a former chapel.

Further along, on the left, Bull House dates from around 1700 AD and was once the Bull Inn – yes, there were plenty of opportunities for the weary traveller to spend a while in Linton.

Linton flourished as a market town from the 13th to the 19th centuries and the High Street was a busy through route until the bypass, then A604 and now renumbered A1307, was opened in 1968. This wider stretch of High Street probably formed part of the market area.

Pause opposite the red phone box. The phone kiosk is listed and stands outside what was a general store from the 1850s until the mid-1900s. The large building has served many purposes since its 15th-century origins including weavers, drapers and collar-makers. The name HOLTTUM & SONS is still just visible and dates from when it was a general store.

In 1912, Holttum & Sons offered a halfpenny for every queen wasp brought to them during April and May. More than 800 were received, helping to alleviate a local problem. The far right of the building, number 35, was once The Griffin Inn but it closed after markets ceased in 1860. When safe, we should cross the High Street to the phone box area.

The photo below, from the early 1900s, shows Holttums on the right (with a lady peeking through the doorway) and what is now Linton Kitchen on the left just before the corner. The ladies are standing close to where the telephone kiosk was installed, probably in the 1930s.



Continuing uphill past the phone box, we turn right into Market Lane. Linton's markets probably once spread along the wide part of the High Street and into Market Lane. The market was held in Market Lane for many years until the early 18th century when it moved across the High Street to a market hall that then stood opposite Holttums.

We will venture along Market Lane for only about 100 yards before turning around. There are several interesting buildings here including Shepherd's Hall on the left. The building was opened in 1921 by the Ancient Order of Shepherds, a friendly society that offered benefits, including insurance, to its members.

Just beyond, the two thatched cottages date from the 17th century. We will turn here and retrace.

At the end of Market Lane, turn right, back into High Street, keeping to the pavement on the right. We will pass along with little comment and look in more detail when we return.

Pass Crown Inn on the right and soon reach the main Cambridge Road, A1307. Cross this busy road using the pedestrian-controlled lights and turn left. Immediately fork right into The Grip. Before construction in 1968 of the bypass heading East from where we have just crossed, traffic between Linton and Saffron Walden came along The Grip.

We pass attractive, ancient thatched houses, some dating back to the 16th century. The pavement is raised above the level of the road because the road used to flood. *Grip* is an old term for a ditch or watercourse that sometimes dried up.

When The Grip comes to a crossroads, we turn right onto B1052, which is also called The Grip for a while. Keep to the pavement on the right, soon passing tall, 16th-century Grip Farmhouse on the left, painted cream and with steps up to the door.

We pass The Grip Barns on the left and Ditches Close on the right. Ditches Close, number 42, is a former hall house that dates from around 1500 AD.

Soon afterwards, there are high banks on either side of the road. They are all that remain of the embankments that once supported a high brick arch which carried the railway line over the road. The Stour Valley Railway operated between Sudbury and Shelford, south of Cambridge, for a hundred years before closing in 1967. We will turn here to retrace, but if we were to continue ahead, we would pass a commercial estate on the right and then come to the entrance for Linton Zoological Gardens. The zoo and gardens have been here 50 years and cover 18 acres – they merit a visit, perhaps on another day – see <http://www.lintonzoo.com> for details.

Having turned, we retrace along the B1052. On our left, Ditches Close, number 42, is followed by more cottages from long ago including number 36, 15th-century Priors End, and number 34 from the 17th century.

Soon we turn left, continuing along The Grip.

When The Grip meets the 'new' A1307, we will cross with care, using the pedestrian traffic lights. [If, before crossing, we were to continue along the A1307 for about 200 yards and turn left into Station Road, we would reach the former station, now re-purposed but looking much as it did until 1967].

Having used the pedestrian crossing over the A1307, we turn right and then left, back into Linton's High Street. Before the 'new' road was opened in 1968, traffic heading east from Cambridge on the A604 would make this left turn before continuing, as we will, along Linton High Street. No wonder it was bypassed!

When safe, cross High Street and continue on the right. Many of the varied buildings along the High Street are ancient and/or listed. Many extend back a long way from the main road. Much of the centre of Linton is designated as an Outstanding Conservation Area.

In about 50 yards, we pass Crown Inn on the left. The building has been here since at least 1600 AD and used to function as a coaching inn where travellers could rest while tired horses were exchanged for fresh ones. Opposite, on the right behind the wall, is Queens House which dates from around 1730 AD. It extends back a long way from the main road.

Immediately after Crown Inn, Merchants House on the left dates from the 16th century.

On the right, thatched number 18, called "1716 House", is considered to be 17th century with 1716 probably referring to the year that alterations were made to merge two or three cottages into one dwelling.

On the right, numbers 26 and 28 once constituted The Red Lion Inn, a posting inn where coaches could change horses. Immediately after number 28, we will turn right into Horn Lane. [Just after the junction is The Linton Kitchen tea room. If you should stop here, retrace a few steps and turn left into Horn Lane.]

In Horn Lane, number 8, on the right, dates from the 17th century and has a rather unusual 'porch', described in the building's listing as a "panelled canopy supported on two carved bed posts".

We pass Linton Free Church on the right. The church was built in 1818 as a Congregational Chapel. The array of rather grand tombs reflects the relative wealth of the tradespeople who made up a good proportion of the congregation in the 19th century.

Follow Horn Lane round to the left. We soon cross the Granta again on a bridge; ducks often gather here at what was once a ford.

We pass The Guildhall on our left. It was built in 1523 as a guildhall but has been a private house for 300 years. At one time it was the home of Sir John Kendrew who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1962.

The Guildhall faces Church Lane which we cross to gain access to the churchyard and the 14th/15th-century parish church, dedicated to St Mary the Virgin. It is constructed of flint and stone. You are encouraged to visit if it is open – but first, please remove or cover boots if they are dirty. Inside, there are several ancient monuments, the grandest of which has been almost hidden since the Victorian organ was installed. A series of intricate carvings adorn the ends of some benches – they are known as "poppy heads", a corruption of a Latin word *puppis*, meaning the poop or figurehead of a ship.

From the church porch, turn right along the path through the churchyard. Keep straight ahead on this tarmac path across the playing field.

At the far side of the playing field, keep straight ahead to soon reach Mill Lane and continue ahead towards Linton Mill. This water mill was built beside the Granta in the 18th century on a site of many earlier mills going back as far as the 13th century. It ceased to operate in 1972 and was converted to residential accommodation.

Follow the lane to the right, beneath the mill, and within 200 yards we reach a footbridge over the millstream which flows from the millpond on the left. We will turn here and retrace.

After passing beneath the mill, turn right and immediately left before The Stables to take the footpath which soon reaches Green Lane. Continue up Green Lane.

On the left we pass the 18th-century, red-brick Old Manor House and on the right a row of cottages that started life as a farmhouse in the 16th century before conversion into 5 dwellings around 1840.

Set back on the left, the thatched cottage is called The Old Green. It was built in the 17th century on the green that had been the original site for markets that were first held in Linton in 1246 AD.

Further along on the right, Mansard Cottage dates from the 16th century, although its tiled mansard roof was probably added in the 19th. A mansard roof has two relatively-steep slopes on each side. Mansard Cottage is followed by Mansard House which also has a mansard roof.

At the end of Green Lane, we turn right into the High Street, immediately passing the Co-op store and soon going past The Waggon and Horses pub which dates from the 17th century or earlier.

When safe, and before reaching the junction on the left with Balsham Road, B1052, we should cross the High Street and turn to retrace on the opposite side. Many of the buildings along here date back to the 16th century; many were once shops; today a good number have colourfully-painted rendering.

We pass Green Lane and then Mill Lane on the left.

On the right, number 95 has a large, tell-tale hanging bell that gives away its former life as the Bell Inn. It dates from the 16th century and has been called The Bell since around 1670 AD.

The next two dwellings, numbers 93 and 91, date from the 15th century when they were built as a single hall house. 93 has a particularly interesting mix of ancient and more-modern pargetting.

Shortly afterwards, we pass Church Lane on the left and almost immediately turn right into an alley that soon reaches the car park where we started this walk.

This route description, last updated 06 April 2023, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk There, you can read more about the parish of Linton and also find many additional walk routes including Walks 109 and 174 which are longer routes that each include some of what we have seen today.

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

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

