

Woodnewton Circular Walk via Apethorpe and Shortwood Lodge

*This walk is about 6¼ miles long and is rated as comparatively easy. There are a few lengthy ascents (none of them steep) and it should present few problems no matter what the prevailing weather. Note that, if a "watering hole" is needed after the walk, the **King's Head** pub at **Apethorpe** provides an alternative starting point should the **White Swan** not be open at **Woodnewton***

Commence the walk from the *White Swan* pub in Woodnewton (OS map reference SP034945) by heading to the right along *Main Street* as far as the Church. A small diversion into the churchyard to locate the grave of *Coco the Clown* may be considered worthwhile (there is also a woodcarving of *Coco* in the Woodnewton village park). *Coco* (i.e. Nikolai Polakovs) retired to Woodnewton in 1973 and, although he died shortly after, has inspired a regular fund-raising *Clownfest* festival held in his memory.



Conegar Farm & Mill

Where the main road bears right, cross over and follow the lane signposted to the picturesque *Conegar Farm* where, at the far end of the farmhouse, the old millrace is still visible. Follow the track past *Conegar Farm/Mill* and proceed up the long slope to a copse. Pass through the copse along the track and, eventually, descend towards a large wood. Just before arriving at the wood, cross a stile into a field on the right (as a matter of interest, the path which continues over the bridge and into the wood leads to Southwick).

Follow along the bottom edge of the field and on reaching the far side, turn right, keeping the hedge on your left. Proceed for about three-quarters of a mile until you reach a tarmac track. Please be aware that occasional vehicles may be encountered along this track. Turn right and follow the track for almost a mile to the *King's Head* pub at Apethorpe (note that a couple of hundred metres before arriving at the pub, it should be possible to see *Apethorpe Hall* and *Dovecot* to the right of the track).

Turn right at the *King's Head* and follow the road round to the left. Just opposite to the church, pause alongside the old village stocks and whipping-post which have been preserved in a specially built shelter. Continue along the road and, as you leave the village, you will cross a small bridge (having, by now, traversed about 3 miles in all) and soon afterwards you should turn left up a track through a wood for approximately half a mile.



Apethorpe Stocks

When you emerge from the wood you will see *Bluefield Farm* dwellings on your right and some renovated farm buildings a little way ahead on the left of the track. Immediately after these renovated buildings the track bears right but you should continue straight ahead, keeping the hedge on your left. This path leads you onto a bridleway within some woodland. Turn right along this bridleway.

At a gate, turn left onto a roadway (which can be busy with traffic!) and, after a hundred metres or so, just past the entrance to *Shortwood Lodge Equestrian Stables*, enter a gate on the right. Cross the grass diagonally to the

end of a high hedge where a waymarker should be visible. Continue with the hedge on your right, following the waymarkers straight past the large gap in the hedge.

Pass to the right at the end of the hedge and cross a stile. The footpath then dog-legs across the field to the corner of a copse visible on the right (probably following the line of an old field boundary) but, if the field is particularly "claggy", it might be considered preferable to follow the track which goes to the right around the edge of the field. Whichever route is taken to reach the corner of the copse, continue on the track which keeps the copse immediately to your right.

The path past the copse eventually leads through a gap in the hedge facing you and proceeds diagonally right across the field to a gap in another hedge (but, again, it may be considered preferable to dog-leg around the corner of the field). Pass through the gap and continue for about half a mile keeping the hedge on your left. As you approach the outskirts of Woodnewton, the path seems to lead straight towards an impenetrable hedge but a gap in the hedge to your left allows you to cross over a ditch and then turn right down to the road.

At the road, keep right and follow *Orchard Lane*. Just after *Wades Close*, turn left down a narrow alley which leads back to the *White Swan* pub.

Distance covered: approximately 6¼ miles

