ISE VALLEY VAGABONDS

Bedford River Walk BWF App No PT205

START & FINISH: Priory Country Park, Barkers Lane, Bedford MK41 9SH
OS map 153 Grid Ref TL072493 Distance 11km
Fee £1.00
Route last updated on 1 January 2016
This route description is valid from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016

This walk has been established by members of the Ise Valley Vagabonds Walking Club (BWF Club No 70) and is a qualifying event in the IVV award scheme. It can be walked at any time. There is a pub and restaurant at Priory Marina adjacent to Priory Country Park.

From the main entrance to the Country Park, turn left on the cycleway towards the town centre. After 800 meters, having ignored all side turnings, you come to a T junction. Turn left on the cycleway towards Fenlake, past the large pyramid on the right surrounded by water. This is the Oasis Beach Pool. Keep going ahead on the cycleway. At the road, cross over using the pedestrian crossing and go left, then after 5 meters turn right on the footpath between the houses. At the road (Nash Road) keep straight ahead to the T junction. Turn left along Moulton Avenue. After 100 meters, opposite Mareth Road, turn right through the main gates into the park. This is Jubilee Park. Follow the footpath straight ahead between the amenities.

QUESTION 1. JUST INSIDE THE MAIN GATE, ALONGSIDE THE PATH THERE IS AN INFORMATION BOARD. WHEN WAS THE SITE RE-OPENED AS A RECREATION GROUND?

At the far side of the park, do not exit but turn left along the broad tree-lined path. Go past a house on the right, then at the fork by the second house, bear right to pass the house. Stay on this path for 100 meters and then where the paths cross, just before the basketball court, turn right for 50 meters then turn left to join a cycleway. Follow the cycleway, with the basketball court on the left, to the road. Cross using the pedestrian crossing and go straight ahead on the cycleway, now called Harrowden Lane. At Hereford Road keep going straight ahead, still on the cycleway. After crossing 2 roads in quick succession, you are onto a gravel track which is now a public bridleway and cycleway. Follow this bridleway crossing a small road on the way, until you come to a public footpath, indicated by a yellow marker post half-hidden in the hedge, on the right (with a children's playground on the left). Turn right onto this footpath and follow it without deviation for 1.5km, passing a children's playground on the right, a school (Abbey Middle School) on the left and eventually running behind a row of houses, emerging onto a road. This is Elstow. *(John Bunyan, Bedfordshire's most famous son, was born in the parish of Elstow in 1628, the actual date is unknown. He was baptised in Elstow Abbey church in the fifteenth-century font on 30 November of that year and lived in Elstow High Street, although sadly his house has now gone. He wrote 'Pilgrim's Progress' while imprisoned for 12 years in Bedford Gaol from 1660 to 1672. In Norman times, the niece of William the Conqueror in 1078 established a Benedictine abbey and nunnery, which survived all through the Middle Ages. The Moot Hall was originally a market house dating from the late fifteenth century and was built of orange brick with a timber-frame*

construction. It stands proudly on Elstow's village green. Elstow Abbey, a Benedictine nunnery, was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1539. A few years later, it was given to the Radcliffe family and drastically reduced in size to form the Abbey Church of St Mary, which we see today (this was less than half the size of the original abbey). The fifteenth-century tower stands alone from the church; its bells were often rung by Bunyan, who attended the church regularly during his youth. Bunyan's mother, father, step-mother and sister are all buried in Elstow churchyard but records of 1885 state that their graves cannot be identified.) Cross the road and turn right. Turn left into Church End (signposted Moot Hall and Elstow Abbey). Ahead along tarmac lane between the Moot Hall on the right and the Abbey Church of Saint Mary & Saint Helena on the left.

QUESTION 2. IN WHAT YEAR WAS JOHN BUNYAN BAPTISED AT THE ABBEY CHURCH OF ST MARY & ST HELENA?

At the first wooden bench, turn right across the green to the tarmac path between the bungalow and the house. Ahead through the bollards onto the road (West End), cross the road and turn left. At the roundabout stay on the right hand side to go round it, cross Progress Way, then turn left on the cycleway to continue in the same direction as before. Stay on the cycleway and head towards the traffic lights.

At the traffic lights, turn right (this is Ampthill Road). In about 100 meters, at the next traffic lights, use the pedestrian crossings to cross this very busy road, with extreme care, to turn left into Elstow Road. Then go ahead and under the railway bridge. At the traffic lights, turn right into Spring Road.

QUESTION 3. WHAT IS THE NAME OF HOUSE NUMBERS 172 & 174?
SPRINGFIELD COTTAGES

After house number 68, turn right between barriers onto the cycleway, soon to take a right fork. At the road (Walcourt Road) turn left, signposted towards Bedford. Stay on this road until it reaches the main road. Turn right. *Kempston Barracks were built between 1874 and 1876 to accommodate what was then the XVIth Regiment of Foot. In 1881 they became the depot for the Bedfordshire Regiment and 1918 the depot of the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment. The barracks played an enormous part of the lives of Kempston people and thousands of men passed through 'The Depot' gates during this time; some 40,000 signed up there during the First World War. Apart from the parades, ceremonies and everyday business which took place, the barracks also held concerts, garden parties and cricket matches, and the local community was often invited to join in events. In 1958 the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment amalgamated with the 1st Battalion Essex Regiment for form 3rd East Anglian Regiment, and in September 1977 the depot finally closed. Part of the barracks was demolished in 1981/82, with a portion of the east wing remaining, along with the keep (or main tower) and all of the west wing. Since 1981, the Bedford Freemasons have owned the building, but recently a room has been let back to the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment for reunion meetings.*
Cross the road when it is safe to do so. Soon after the sign for St Johns School, by the Bedford town sign, turn left on the cycleway towards Queens Park.

QUESTION 4. IN WHICH YEAR WAS THE TOWN CHARTER GRANTED?

Follow the cycleway over the river bridge and then turn right, still on a cycleway, to walk with the river on the right. *(The river is followed now for 2.75km, all the way to Newnham Bridge.)* After a new pedestrian bridge over the river, on your right, fork left on path between barriers to cross railway line via circular green bridge. Continue and pass under road bridge. (County Bridge) Immediately turn left up to road and turn left again over the river.

QUESTION 5. AT THE FAR END OF THE BRIDGE, ON THE RIGHT HAND SIDE, THERE IS A LARGE PLAQUE. WHO WAS THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF BEDFORDSHIRE?

At pedestrian crossing, turn left through wall then immediately left again down steps / slope to river. Turn right, keeping river on your left, to head towards next bridge. Just before bridge, fork right up to road, then turn left over bridge to reach pedestrian crossing. Turn right over crossing / road, then turn right and then turn left onto The Embankment. Keep going ahead with the river on the right passing the suspension bridge. At the Butterfly Bridge, turn right to cross it. Once over the bridge, turn left to walk with the river now on your left. Re-cross the river at the next bridge, Newnham Bridge, and turn right to use the subway towards the Leisure Centre. Go ahead on the cycleway, passing the cinema complex on the left. At the end of the car park, the cycleway bears right over a bridge. After the bridge, turn left and re-trace your steps for 500 meters back to Priory Country Park.

We hope you have enjoyed the walk!

The Ise Valley Vagabonds have established other Permanent Trails at Bedford (2), Daventry, Kempston, Kettering, Kings Lynn, London (2), Marston Moretaine (2), Oxford, Rugby, Rushden, Stamford, Stratford upon Avon, Warwick and Wellingborough.
They are all qualifying events towards the IVV award scheme. Further information about these walks, the IVV, the club and all its activities can be found by visiting our Web Site www.vagabonds.org.uk

THE ORGANISERS ARE NOT LIABLE FOR ACCIDENTS, THEFT, AND/OR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY. EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE BY THE ORGANISERS TO MAKE THIS A SAFE, ENJOYABLE AND MEMORABLE EVENT.

ISE VALLEY VAGABONDS
PERMANENT TRAIL REGISTRATION FORM

TRAIL	PT 205 Bedford River Walk (2016/2)	
ROUTE UPDATED	01 January 2016	
DATE WALKED		
NAME		
ADDRESS		
TELEPHONE		
EMAIL		
ADDITIONAL WALKERS		
ENTRY FEE	___ Walkers @ £1.00 (€2,00) each	Total £
TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED		**£**
Please put my IVV stamps on a new set of Insert cards Yes/No		
ANSWERS		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
Comments		
If you have a problem with this trail, please try and resolve it with the organiser. If you are unable to resolve the problem, then please contact the BWF Trail Officer.		
Please enclose a STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE (at least C6 (114 x 162mm) or DL (110 x 220mm)) with this form and send it to Carol Jones 138 Rushden Road Wymington Rushden Northants NN10 9LE		