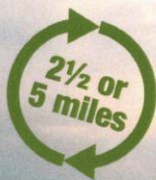


Glemsford Circular Walk



This attractive walk follows public rights of way, lanes and tracks in the parish of Glemsford, passing through open farmland with panoramic views. Features of interest include several Tudor houses built when Glemsford was a booming wool town. Most of the walk is easy going with only two sections of steeper gradients.

Countryside Code – advice for the public

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

GLEMSFORD
LOCAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

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Welcome to Glemsford

Glemsford sits on high ground overlooking the ancient east-west routes between Clare and Melford and the north-south route to and from Bury St Edmunds. The benefits of this vantage point have been shown throughout history with 4,000-year-old Bronze Age artifacts, Roman remains and an entry in the Domesday Book, as well as a scattering of mediaeval buildings.

While the existing main road, which boasts ten different names, must have been in place for at least a thousand years, the outline of a more direct Roman road from north to south can still be defined. It is likely that Glemsford arose from an assembly of smaller settlements such as those on the crest of the hill by St Mary's church, which dominated the valley. There are also those clustered around the aptly named Brook Street, as well as those around The Angel public house or at the top of the village at Tye Green.

Glemsford benefited greatly from the wool trade in 14th and 15th centuries from which time there exists many substantial timber framed houses, particularly that of John Golding, a major benefactor of the church and grandfather of the 17th Earl of Oxford, who, some believe, was the true William Shakespeare!

In later periods, many cottage industries helped bolster the meagre pay and seasonal unreliability of agricultural labour. Glemsford played a significant part in the silk industry, for which this area became noted, as well as the less glamorous industries of weaving, coconut matting, flax and horsehair all of which provided a living for many families over centuries.

The demise of these industries has not discouraged many new residents from settling, allowing the village to retain important facilities such as Post Office services, general stores, the doctors' surgery, and public houses.

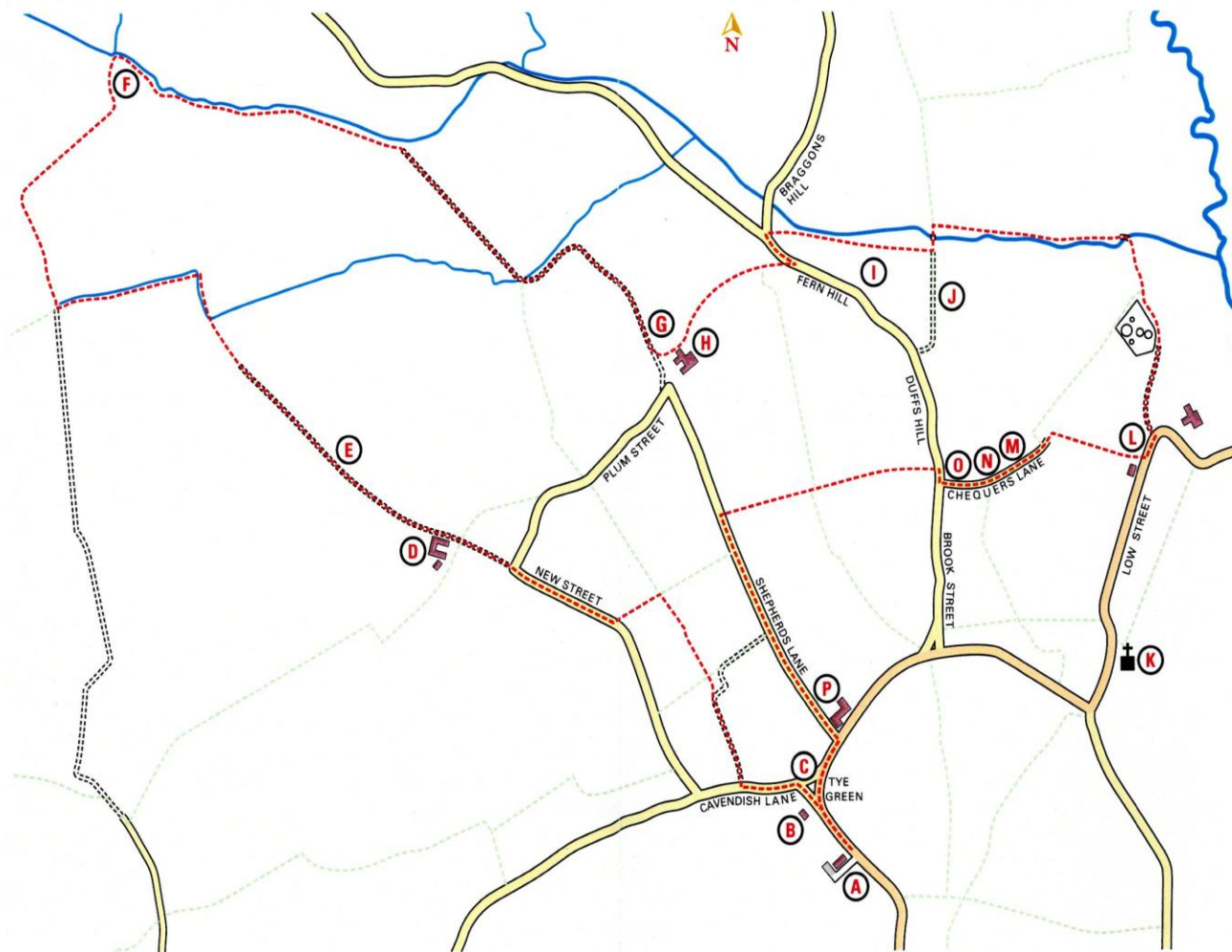
We hope you enjoy your visit to our historic village and its beautiful surrounding countryside.

Please park near the Village Hall (A). With your back to the hall, look left to see Tye Green (on which the village sign is a feature). Follow the road across Tye Green, passing the large, timber-framed Tudor house named 'Peverells' (B). Built in 1495 for a wool merchant at the height of the 'Old Draperies', the house was later divided into three separate dwellings. It was only restored to one large house in the 20th century. On Tye Green itself, notice the village sign (C), funded from money raised by the Glemsford W.I. and inaugurated on October 17th 2009. At Cavendish Lane turn left and, at the end of the paling fence surrounding Coldhams, the old Glemsford Rectory, turn right along a field edge. Where the hedge line turns, continue straight ahead across the open field, aiming for the corner of the hedge line opposite. Continue along the headland, with the hedge on your left, as far as a sleeper bridge on your left. Cross the bridge, and keeping the hedge on your left go straight ahead into New Street. At the road turn right and towards a large, beautifully appointed house called Five Gables. Here the route continues straight along a gravelled track towards New Street Farm (D).

Stay on the track, passing a large pond on the left. A little further along, to your right, is the site of the lost farmstead of 'Jankens' (E), the masonry of which can still sometimes be seen in the field. The track continues with a cross hedge on the left; follow the headland with a hedge on your right to a deep ditch. In spring-time look for primroses and cowslips which grow in profusion on the banks of the ditch. Here the track bears left, continue along the headland until you meet a farm track. Turn right passing a large oak tree on the left and follow the track down into the valley noting three cattle grids. (F).

At the stream turn right and follow the field headland with the stream on your left. Cross the plank bridge and, soon after, bear right to follow a steep uphill track. From the top the track descends; at the bottom turn left with a deep ditch and hedge on your left. Bear right and ascend the next hill. This area is known as 'The Hillies' (G). At the top of the track, look right to notice the splendid elm tree standing in Plum Street opposite the red brick cottages. This is possibly the best elm tree in the village.

Those doing the shorter walk can make their way back to the starting point. Walk down Shepherds Lane to the end, then



turn right to return to Tye Green. Bear left to find the Village Hall.

For those taking the longer walk: Arrive at Mill Hill Farm (H), formerly the home of the Goodchilds, who were involved in the agricultural labourers' dispute in 1875. On reaching the farmyard, turn left across the yard to a stile into a meadow. Follow the hedge line down to cross a stile, then into the lane at Fern Hill. Turn left here, then right at the road junction towards Braggons Hill. Almost immediately take the footpath sign on your right opposite the thatched Shepherds Cottage. (An alternative here is to turn right a few yards

further on, near the road bridge, and then follow the track along the valley bottom keeping the deep ditch on your left.) This whole low-lying area is known locally as 'the queech' (I), an old Suffolk word meaning an irregular shaped field, usually awkward to cultivate. On joining a farm track, bear left over a bridge and immediately right along another track. The North/South farm track you have just crossed is the line of the Roman road (J). Follow the track with a large ditch (right), and a high bank (left) as far as a wooden footbridge on your right. Take this and follow the path into Reed Lane, passing the sewage beds to join the road at Low Street.

Turn right and proceed a short way along Low Street towards Glemsford Church **(K)**, before turning right again just before Monks Hall **(L)**. **Two options here:** Before continuing the walk, carry on up Church Hill, pausing to admire Monks Hall, a fine old timber-framed building, home of Ambrose and Christine Kerrington in 1614. The Kerringtons were a very wealthy family who made their money in brewing and merchant shipping, owning premises at Wapping in London.

St. Mary's Church, standing in a commanding position on the summit of the hill, was built in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the style known as 'Perpendicular', and financed by local wealth derived from the booming cloth-making industry. There are many 'wool' churches in this area which reflect the prosperity of that era. The church is normally open to visitors. Before leaving it, stop for a moment in the churchyard to see the magnificent views across the Glem Valley.

Retrace your steps down to Monks Hall and then take the footpath on the left just after the hall. **Follow the footpath past the former site of Glemsford Silk Mill - now modern housing (M).** The Silk Mill was built in 1824, continuing Glemsford's traditional involvement in the textile industry. A number of the royal wedding dresses started their lives here. **Proceed along Chequers Lane to join Brook Street.** Chequers **(N)**, the large 17th century timber-framed house on the right, dates back to an original building of 1560. At one time in its history, it was divided into three cottages but re-established as a single dwelling in the 1960s.

Opposite 'Chequers' is 'Old Chequers' which was a medieval hall house. A few yards further on the right, pause at the small red brick wall to admire the brook **(O)**. This is fed by a natural spring and in former days ran down into the large Silk Mill pond, now filled in. Apparently, the brook has never been known to dry up!

Cross Brook Street diagonally right to footpath sign. Follow the headland path into Shepherds Lane. Follow the lane left. The Victorian Primary School opened in 1874 is now a listed building **(P)**.

At the end of Shepherds Lane turn right to return to Tye Green. Bear left to find the Village Hall.

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