

ODELL to SHARNBROOK

2.6 miles - 60 mins

Start at The Bell in Odell (1). Go up the hill towards Odell church. Pause at the gate to Odell Castle on the right.

(2) *Odell Castle Estate*. In 1855 the estate was owned by Crewe Alston. His gamekeeper, George Stratton, set a vermin trap. The trap went missing and was found in the house of Henry Foskett at Harrold. Despite apparently being caught red handed and having a track record as a poacher, Henry, a railway labourer, was acquitted.

Continue up the hill past the church, cross the road and turn left up Church Lane. Follow Church Lane until it takes a sharp left. Leave the road and follow the bridleway straight ahead.

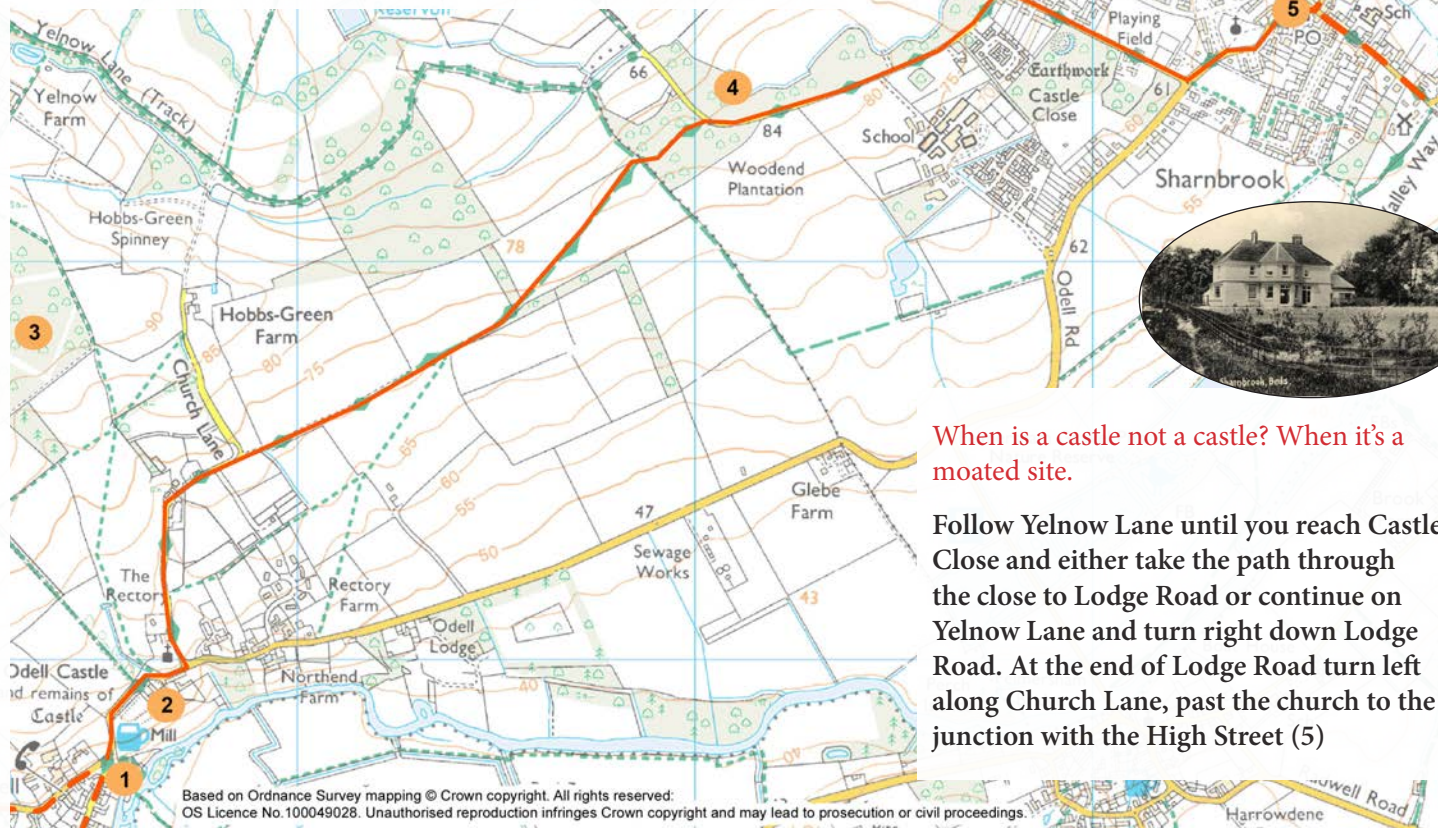
(3) *Odell Great Wood*. When William Barley finished work in the wood he left his axe under an ash stump. 3 days later he returned but the axe had gone. He suspected Joseph Mason of Felmersham and got a search warrant. Although the axe was found at Mason's house he was not arrested then as he was ill and in the Medical club. When he was brought to trial he was sentenced to 3 months hard labour.

Follow the bridleway to Woodend Plantation. Go through the wood and turn right onto Yelnow Lane.

Can you track any footprints across the field?



(4) *Colworth Estate* was acquired by Hollingworth Magniac in the 1840s. In 1847 he had a shooting party during which 41 hares were shot but 2 went missing on the way back from the shoot. The gamekeeper suspected one of the beaters, Thomas Burgess. He asked his assistant, a man with the unlikely name of Spencer Spencer, to watch Burgess. Burgess was soon caught. Handing over the hares he said he had been compelled by distress to take them hoping to make 2 or 3 shillings towards his rent.



When is a castle not a castle? When it's a moated site.

Follow Yelnow Lane until you reach Castle Close and either take the path through the close to Lodge Road or continue on Yelnow Lane and turn right down Lodge Road. At the end of Lodge Road turn left along Church Lane, past the church to the junction with the High Street (5)



Produced by Bedfordshire & Luton Archives Service Paths to Crime project. Funded by the National Cataloguing Grant Programme for Archives and local sponsors, this project catalogued the 19th century Quarter Sessions Court Papers. More information www.bedford.gov.uk/archivecrimepaths

Bedfordshire & Luton
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SHARNBROOK

1.1 miles - 45 mins

Start at Sharnbrook sign on the green at Church Lane/High Street junction (5).

One of the shops here may have been where, in 1845, 19 year-old William Holland tried to buy tobacco with a counterfeit coin before heading off to Odell Fair to sell gingerbread.

Cross the road and stop at house on the corner of Church Lane and High Street.

(6) **Old Alehouse formerly the Swan Inn** Two cases at The Swan have an element of farce. In 1846 William Blundell, a tailor from Podington, was sleeping off the effects of Sharnbrook Feast when his hat was stolen from his head. He was woken by PC Miller who brought his hat to him. Miller said "Blundell you've lost your hat and I've been after it". 22 year-old Joseph Edwards claimed he had taken the hat as a joke.

Ten years later Robert Toll was held in police custody by being chained to a bed at The Swan for the night. At 3 am Toll escaped, stealing the clothes of a servant from the next room. The police quickly traced Toll to his daughter's house in Pavenham where she was still holding the hatchet she had used to break his handcuffs. Toll was convicted of the theft of the clothes but not of the offence he was in custody for and was never charged with escaping from custody.

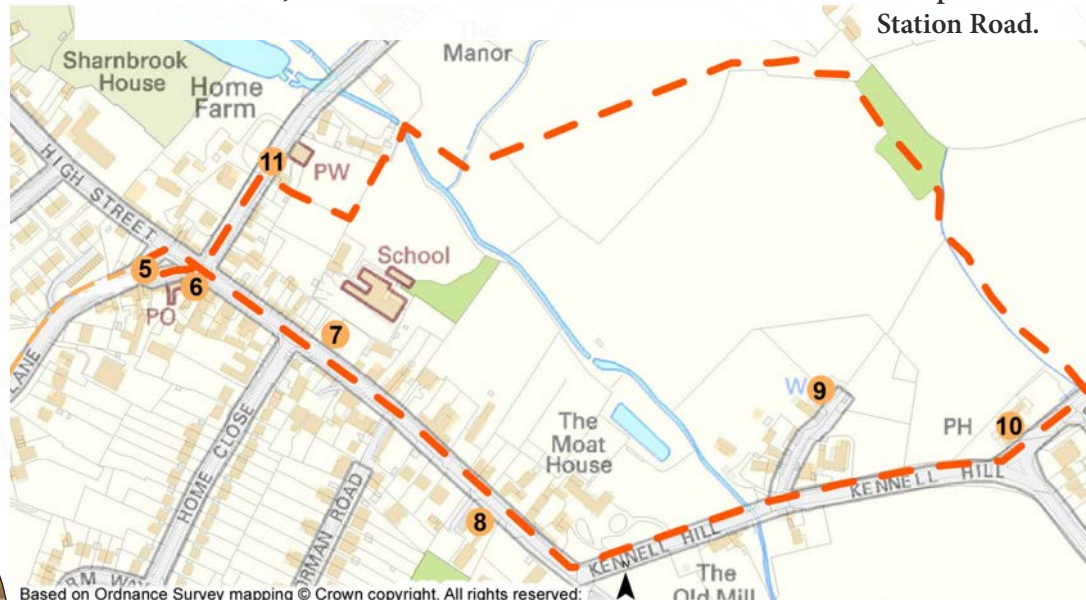


Why steal a pair of braces? To keep your stolen trousers up!

Turn right into the High Street and walk past the Swan with Two Nicks. Cross the High Street at zebra crossing.

(7) **School and School House**

Ann Single came to school in 1854 with an umbrella, which she left in the porch. When she came to leave the umbrella had gone. Mary Spencer lived in the school house and suspected an Irish beggar woman who had sold her some matches. Umbrella and beggar woman were found together and the woman was sentenced to 7 days hard labour.



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Turn right and continue on High Street for 200 metres. Stop and look across the road at the former police station.

(8) **The Police Station**, built in 1872 to serve the Petty Sessions district for North Bedfordshire, doesn't feature in many Quarter Sessions cases but policemen do. In 1842, 2 years after Bedfordshire police force was established, PC Joseph Neal arrested William Bailey for stealing fowls 7 years previously. William's brother, Joseph, threatened to stick Neal with a sickle; both brothers were imprisoned.



Who was Sharnbrook's iron lady?

Keep walking up High Street and turn into Kennell Hill. Note Godfrey Lane on the left.

(9) **The Forge**. Ann Single, of the stolen umbrella, married the local blacksmith, Thomas Payne in 1866. Thomas died and Ann kept the forge at the top of Godfrey Lane in her own right for 20 years.

At top of Kennell Hill carry straight on into Station Road.



(10) **Fordham**

Arms formerly The Railway Hotel. In 1890 Ann Sanders came to the hotel to get her supper beer. She met Joseph Pugh and agreed to give him lodgings at her home in Coffle End. Pugh claimed he needed money for a doctor's certificate before his railway pension arrived. Ann lent him the money but Pugh left and never returned.

Pass bus stop, take footpath on left. At the fork in path turn right. At the marker follow 'Village ½ mile'. Follow path through 3 fields and a private garden, turn left into Park Lane.

(11) **Park Lane**. In 1848 John Edis's mare strayed up the lane. Jesse Fisher found and rode off on her but was seen by the police superintendent. Fisher was sentenced to 7 years transportation and was sent to Western Australia in 1851.

Go down Park Lane to the High Street, turn right and cross the road to return to start (5).