

THE VILLAGE OF HARROLD

Harrold is a riverside village with an ancient bridge over the River Great Ouse. It has a wide range of amenities and services, excellent schools, and is home to Harrold & Odell Country Park with interesting wildlife and picturesque walks. The bridge is the focal point of 3 parishes, with Carlton and Chellington a short walk across the ancient causeway spanning the floodplain and the attractive village of Odell a pleasant stroll through the Country Park. These villages together make an exciting community in which to live.



The triangular village green with its ancient Buttermarket lies at the centre of the village and is still a gathering point today for events such as the annual Harrold Pit (Fun) run. A leather industry existed in the village for almost 200 years but production ceased in the 1980's. Today many people commute to Bedford, Milton Keynes and London, while some work from home or are self-employed. Housing is mixed - attractive stone buildings, Victorian cottages and later infilling make up the central core, with recent developments providing modern family homes north of the high street. Local shops include a busy Co-op, incorporating a post office, a traditional butcher, a barber and two hairdressers, one of which offers sports therapy, massage and yoga. The village also has a beauty parlour, an Independent Financial advisor, an estate agent and a garage.

Harrold and the surrounding villages are well served by the Harrold Medical Centre which also runs a dispensary.

Harrold Centre, located in the historic Harrold Institute, acts as the community centre for the village and is used by many organisations - the village Toddlers group, the Snooker Club, Dance VyBz, and AdHoc, an award winning drama group. Harrold is twinned with St Pazanne, a small French town near Nantes, with exchanges taking place each year. A Harrold Heritage Trail links 31 locations of historic interest in the village. Much of the long history of Harrold and its people and details of its many clubs, societies, businesses and churches can be found on the Harrold village website www.harrold.info



The County Park, consisting of 144 acres of water meadow, riverside banks, lakes and woodland attracts many visitors throughout the year. With children's play areas, a skateboard park, an exercise area and ample space to picnic, walk or just sit and relax, there is something for everyone. Teazel's Café serves homemade cakes, good coffee, breakfast, light lunches, and teas with seating indoors or outdoors on the veranda overlooking the lake.

THE VILLAGE OF CARLTON with CHELLINGTON

Carlton is a friendly village with a strong sense of community. There is one pub, The Fox and an excellent village shop incorporating a Post Office. The village is a combination of two ancient communities, Carlton and Chellington, merged into one parish in 1934. New roads and homes were built in Carlton in 1960's and 1970's.

St Nicholas Chellington was declared redundant in the early 1970s but has been extensively refurbished to create the **Chellington Centre**, an independent and flourishing charity with local trustees where groups of young people can stay for short periods and experience life as a community.¹ The Centre is also available for social events, exhibitions etc. Several church members are regular volunteers.



Emmaus:

Emmaus is an organisation that helps homeless people to help themselves. Emmaus Village Community, Carlton opened in December 2001 on the outskirts of Carlton. The companions earn a living mainly by recycling donated goods and they run a furniture shop, a bric-a-brac store, a boutique and a Bistro offering home-made meals, cakes and snacks. The community maintains strong links with St Mary's church and its members.²



Carlton Lower School:

The Hall in the school building is also the Village Hall, available for a wide variety of church and village events, exhibitions etc.

Village Societies

A good range of Sports Clubs offer tennis, cricket, football, squash, badminton, bowls, snooker and golf. Carlton has an active Women's Institute which organises an annual

lunch for the more senior members of the community; the Historical Society meets monthly in the village hall with a wide range of speakers; the Garden and Allotment Society organises a well-supported annual village show; two Pilates classes meet in the village hall and there is an annual village quiz which is fiercely contested. The Village Hall Committee organises several social events to raise funds for the running of the hall. For more information see the village website www.carltonwithchellington.co.uk

¹ www.chellington.org

² www.emmaus.org.uk/village_carlton

THE VILLAGE OF ODELL with LITTLE ODELL

Odell lies on the north side of the River Great Ouse. The population includes people of working age, the retired and some families with children. Housing is mixed and the majority of those in employment commute elsewhere, or are self-employed working from home.

The Community Spirit is alive and well in Odell, encouraged by a variety of events throughout the year. The Village Hall offers a varied programme of social events, eg the annual Burns Night Supper, popular quiz nights, local theatre and musical presentations. The Hall is available to hire, and is regularly used for local events as well as by the Parish Council, Odell WI, 6.45 Youth Group (run by Sharnbrook Evangelical Church), children's and adults' dance groups and for the Senior Citizens' lunches three times a year. Church members are actively involved in many of these events.

Other Features and Attractions

At the centre of the village lies The Bell, a stone & thatched pub, with log fires and a garden running down to the river. Noted for good food and beer, The Bell attracts many visitors as well as the local community.

The Odell Great wood is an area of ancient woodland mentioned in the Domesday book and Odell Castle stands on the site of an ancient fortification.



There are many footpaths starting from Odell and offering good walking between the local villages or circular routes around the area. The bluebells in the Odell Great Wood are a must-see. At the end of Horsefair Lane you will find the award winning and much visited Harrold & Odell Country Park bounded by the River Great Ouse and the parishes of Harrold and Carlton. Remains of a Saxon village were found on the site of the Country Park, which today is a haven for a wide variety of wildlife, the lakes attracting winter wild-fowl and migrating summer birds. The park is carefully managed by professional rangers and volunteers, and organised events throughout the year, including twice-monthly 'Health Walks'. The visitor centre provides maps and information, and the popular TeaZels Café offers a range of delicious cakes and locally sourced produce. Westwood Nurseries in Little Odell supply a wide choice of plants and fruit bushes at reasonable prices. The unique 'Wodehill Blue' and other cheeses are produced by a local family and are available locally and in Covent Garden.

Further Information

Further information about the church and village, including history and copies of past magazines, can be found on the Odell web site; www.odellbeds.net

THE VILLAGE OF TURVEY

The riverside village of Turvey is set in a beautiful part of North Bedfordshire, with many of its older houses built in limestone. Surrounded by parkland, it is the centre for many country walks, and owes its origins to an early settlement by the River Great Ouse.

Housing ranges from small terraced cottages through to large detached houses, 70% of which are owned and 30% are social or privately rented. There is an Almshouse development of 26 bungalows at the eastern end of the village, and outline planning consent has been granted for the construction of a Retirement Village nearby.

A number of local people work within the community or from home, but the majority work in the nearby towns or commute to London.



Turvey has two general stores, one containing a sub Post Office, a butcher, a car repair garage, a small number of light industrial units and two pubs, the Three Cranes and the Five Fyshes. Both offer varied menus, and accommodation is available at the Three Cranes.



Turvey has its own Parish Council and there is a Mother and Toddler group, a Pre-school Playgroup, a Nursery School and Beavers, Cubs, Brownies and Scouts. There are also many other flourishing societies including amateur dramatics, football, tennis, carpet bowls, gardening and a community choir. The Turvey Lunch Club (TLC) for older parishioners is run by the Church, held monthly in the Village Hall and much appreciated. The Village Hall is in almost constant use and there is a large recreation ground with all-weather tennis courts and a children's play area.

Turvey Lower School – see 'Schools & Education' on page 9.

Turvey Abbey:

The nuns at the Priory of Our Lady of Peace are a Roman Catholic community living according to the Rule of Saint Benedict and affiliated to the Olivetan family of Benedictines. They live next door to the monks of the Monastery of Christ our Saviour, with whom daily worship is shared. The Abbey offers various events and courses throughout the year, as well as being open for retreats, private guests, groups and individuals. For details see www.turveyabbey.org.uk

For more about Turvey village, its activities, events, societies etc. see www.turveybeds.com

THE VILLAGE OF STEVINGTON

Location:

The historic village of Stevington is located in the Great Ouse river valley, about 6 miles north-west of Bedford. The cross which stands at the central crossroads is thought to be the inspiration for the cross in John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress'. The stone dwellings of the 17th and 18th centuries, some of which are listed, give the village its character. Further development took place between the two world wars, with more modern development 1960-1970 and in 1999.

The Village Community:

This ancient village continues to be a close-knit community with a good social mix. The village has a much older age profile than Bedford Borough generally, with 27% of residents aged over 65. 13% of residents are 0-15. There is a high proportion of one-person households (28%), and almost one-third of all households are pensioners. Most of the farms are still worked. Self-employment (14%) and working from home (15%) are both high. Employment as managers, directors and in professional occupations (47%) is among the highest of all parishes. The proportion of residents aged 16+ with degree level qualifications (43%) is well above the average for rural parishes, and only 15% have no qualifications.

The village is lucky to have a vibrant Village Hall which is used by a Carpet Bowling Club, Table Tennis, meetings of the Historical Trust, Burns Night, dances, concerts etc. One of the highlights of the year is the Church Christmas Concert at which the musical and performing talents of the villagers come to the fore. The village also presents a bi-annual pantomime which reflects the talents of the community. Adjacent to the Village Hall is a playing field, equipped with a children's playground. An active football team plays in the local league. Other clubs include a lively Sailing Club, two popular Book Clubs and a Rambling Club as well as Pilates and Line Dancing Classes. The Stevington Run is renowned and draws a wide range of runners along its 12k course. A pancake race is just one of the activities organised for children this year.

The windmill also attracts visitors.

The Stevington History, published at the beginning of this century, is an example of the dedication and authorship of some of our residents. A unique 'Stevington Natural History', researched by a large group of local enthusiasts has just been published. For more information see www.stevington.org.uk



There are no shops or post office in the village, but a well-stocked Community Shop run on a voluntary basis in the Church Room has served the village with a wide variety of food and household goods for nearly 20 years. The Royal George is the only public house at present, the Red Lion having closed recently. The Stevington Walk is popular with both the local community and visitors, as are the Bunyan Trail and Ouse Valley Walk, both of which run close to the Church.

THE VILLAGE OF PODINGTON with FARNDISH & HINWICK

Originally an agricultural village, Podington is now enlivened with younger professional people who commute to London or other towns, and their families. The original 17th and 18th century cottages have been joined by small housing developments, including a few Pilgrim Housing Association houses.



The peaceful and rural atmosphere of Podington, Farndish and Hinwick are typical of the beautiful villages of North Bedfordshire with many Grade 2 listed and thatched houses.

The Christopher Reeve Voluntary Aided Church School:

The school is very much part of the community and plays an extremely important place in village life. With 3 classrooms, a library and a hall, the school is situated in beautiful grounds which include a playground, a large playing field, a Spiritual Garden and herb, vegetable and flower beds, a long grass meadow, woodland area and minibeast corner. See also 'Schools and Education' on page 9.

The Wyevale Garden Centre:

Described as a 'plant-person's paradise' this Garden Centre at the centre of the village, attracts many visitors and offers a wide range of products and events throughout the year. Experts are on hand to give advice and tips, and the Cherry Tree Restaurant serves freshly prepared family-friendly food at reasonable prices.

Santa Pod Raceway:

Santa Pod Raceway, in Bedfordshire, England, opened at Easter in 1966, is Europe's first permanent drag racing venue. It was built on a disused Second World War air base, once used by the 92nd Bomber Group. The raceway hosts the televised FIA European Drag Racing Championships and many other events throughout the year. For more details see www.santapod.co.uk

THE VILLAGE OF WYMINGTON

Lying adjacent to the County boundary, the village consists of some older type stone houses around the church, two Pilgrim Housing Association developments, two pocket developments of newer houses with planning permission for another and a ribbon development which joins up with the neighbouring urban area of Rushden.

An industrial estate lies on the eastern outskirts of the village amidst the agricultural land which surrounds three sides of the village and there are pockets of glebe land around. The factories of Rushden, once at the heart of the leather industry, used to provide the main employment for the people of Wymington and so the community became more urban than agricultural. Despite the closure of most of the factories, there is still a strong sense of community, especially among the more established in the village. Many of the houses today are occupied by retired people and younger commuter families.

Wymington Chapel was built in 1870 and a School Hall was added in 1930. In 2006 the members embarked on a renewal of their premises, which are now available not only to the local congregation but to the wider community. The congregation which meets at the Chapel belongs to the Wesleyan Reform Union, a small denomination which traces its origins to the Methodist movement in Britain.



The New Inn is a traditional village pub with a large garden including a play area. Games are also played in a barn across the car park. A range of home-cooked food is available daily, with a roast on Sunday.

Wymington has a Carer & Tots playgroup; Rainbows and Brownies have expressed interest in having a church parade on Remembrance Sunday.

The nearby town of Rushden, a mile away, has a reasonable range of shops, banks, and businesses.



St. Lawrence Voluntary Aided Church School