Walk around Steventon

In summary

Distance – 5 miles taking approx. 2 hrs. Mainly tracks and field paths to the southwest of Steventon. A visit to Steventon reveals a picturesque green and a variety of houses of different architectural styles, key components of the traditional English village. However, one feature sets Steventon apart from other villages in the area. The first leg of the walk is along an ancient paved causeway constructed by Benedictine monks 700 years ago to protect visitors from the local stream when it floods. Suggested map – OS Explorer 170 Abingdon, Wantage & Vale of White Horse.

The walk

1. From the shops in the centre of Steventon head north for a short distance and then turn left at The Causeway. Keep along the paved path as it runs parallel to the road. Pass a line of houses, and at the junction with Stocks Lane, by the North Star public house, continue on the path. Pass 79 The Causeway (Looker House, Godfrey’s at Pendon) on the left, soon turning left into Little Lane. Follow it to the end and Number 9 (referred to as Willis’ Cottage at Pendon) is the last house with the railway just the other side of the hedge. Return to The Causeway, turn left, crossing the railway line, and along this stretch of the road, look for The Old Vicarage and Priory Cottages on the left. Cross Mill Street, pass Manor Farm and the parish church of St Michael and All Angels, and head out of the village on a quiet country lane. Approach the buildings of Hill Farm and turn right along a track, which begins with a concrete surface.

2. Follow the bridleway and look for speeding trains across the fields to the right. Soon the track bends left and heads southwest, passing beside pastures and hedgerow. Follow the bridleway as it bends right and after about 50 yards turn left through a galvanized gate. The bridleway is now an indistinct field path running alongside fencing towards Wood’s Farm.
Make for a gate in the field corner and then take the clear and obvious path across the pasture towards a pair of cottages and outbuildings. Pass alongside them and then turn left towards the farm.

3. On reaching a ‘private, no right of way’ sign in front of the outbuildings, turn left at the footpath sign and skirt the field. Head for a plank bridge and stile in the corner and continue ahead in the next pasture. Keep close to the right edge of the field, with trees and bushes enclosing the East Hendred brook. Cross a stile, avoid a stile in the woodland boundary over to the right, and keep ahead to the next stile. Head back towards Hill Farm, cross another stile, look for a gap between the farm buildings ahead and make for a stile and gate. Pass through the gap and turn right to a bridge spanning the brook. Turn left here to join a waymarked footpath and now Steventon church can be seen ahead. Keep to the right side of farmland, beside the brook, and look for a footbridge and gate on the far side of the field. Follow the enclosed path beside the brook and turn right at the road.

4. Bear right after about 50 yards to join a bridleway. Look for a sign for Steventon Copse on one of the trees beside the bridleway and at an intersection of paths, head uphill on a path running over to the right edge of the woodland. As you approach a field at the top, turn left and walk along the top of the wood, with the pasture glimpsed on the right. At a field at the end of the copse, swing left and head down to a gate. Continue to the road (Stocks Lane) and walk ahead for a few paces towards the railway line, turning right on to a byway. Follow it as it twists and turns to the next road. Turn left and walk downhill into Steventon, passing two neighbouring pubs – the Cherry Tree and the Fox. Follow the main road back to the centre of Steventon.

**Links with Pendon**

*Godfrey’s* is number 79, The Causeway and was once a farmhouse.

*Willis’s Cottage* (Pendon’s name) is just off The Causeway at Number 9 Little Lane. Timber-framed walls, probably from mid 17th Century, encased in brick in 18th Century.

*The Old Vicarage* is at 103 and 107 The Causeway. (No. 105 no longer exists as the original three properties were converted to two some years ago.) The Old Vicarage was probably built for Robert du Plecy, vicar of Steventon, between 1330 and 1357.

*Priory Cottages*, on the corner of The Causeway and Mill Street, are former monastic buildings converted into two dwellings and now in the care of the National Trust. The furthest one, to the south, contains the Great Hall of the original priory and is open to the public. Admission is by written appointment with the tenant. It was the last model that Roye England made for Pendon.

**Logistics** Start/finish – Grid reference SU473917 Parking – spaces in the vicinity of the junction of the B4017 and The Causeway in the centre of Steventon Refreshments – Among several popular pubs in Steventon is The North Star, a wonderfully atmospheric Grade II-listed building with a tiny, low-ceilinged public and lounge bars, real ales and traditional pub games. For food, try the Cherry Tree or the Fox. Alternatively, make for the spacious Murphy’s Munchies café, near The Causeway, where you’ll find a good selection of snacks and meals.