

A brief history of Potton

Potton is an ancient market town, with a population of approximately 5,000 people. Its written history can be traced back to the tenth century when it was mentioned in a document granting land to Ramsey Abbey. At that time there were 18 households



and around 100 people living here.

When the Domesday Book was completed in 1086 by William

the Conqueror, his niece Countess Judith held the manor of Potton.

Did you know?

The well-known 'Potton Houses' – timber frame, self-build houses – were originally designed and fabricated here in the 1980s. You can see some of these on Everton Road and Byards Green.

In medieval times Potton was one of the three most important towns in the county and was larger in size than Biggleswade. From the twelfth century it had a flourishing weekly market and four fairs per year.

In 1783 a great fire swept through Potton destroying 50 houses (mostly on King Street) and half of the Market Square. However there are still many listed buildings here, some dating from before the fire.



By the nineteenth century, one of Potton's fairs had turned into an important Horse Fair that took place each January until the 1930s. The presence of the market accounts for the large

Did you know?

Potton was on a railway line that joined Bedford and Cambridge. The line was closed on 30 December 1967 but Potton Station, built in 1862, still stands on Sandy Road and is now a private house.

number of inns and public houses that were in the town. In 1903 about 40 of these remained!

Potton is still a thriving town that is growing in size. Busy local shops share the Market Square with small businesses providing local employment.

There is an active town council who guide decisions made about Potton and also manage facilities such as

the playing fields and community centres. In 2009 they published a Town Plan, which shows how those who live and work in Potton would like their town to develop.



The Market Square is still central to Potton life and the Four Seasons Market takes place in March, June, September and December each year. There are also many community groups, events and activities based in and around Potton, such as the biennial Party On Potton celebrations.



Where the wild things are...

Birds

Potton has a good population of swifts, which can be seen and heard screaming around the Market Square in late spring and summer at dusk. You may also see the occasional hobby hunting swallows and insects overhead. Scrubby areas of Pegnut Wood are an excellent place to hear song birds such as whitethroats and garden warblers, while the horse paddocks and fields around town host skylarks and yellowhammers.

Mammals

It's not uncommon to hear the night-time barking of muntjac deer or foxes in and around the town. Through the warmer months, bats (mainly pipistrelles) can be seen at dusk flying from their roosts in town towards feeding areas around The Hollow and Deepdale.

Insects

The marbled white butterfly is best looked for during July and August in long grass around Galley Hill, along the rides in Pegnut Wood and especially along the bridleway running parallel to Carthage Road. Other species you might see include ringlet, gatekeeper and a variety of skippers.



Want to know more?

If you would like to find out more about Potton and its history, community groups and events, visit www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk

You can also contact the council at:

Potton Town Council
The Community Centre
Brook End
Potton, Bedfordshire
SG19 2QS

e: pottoncouncil@btconnect.com



Other walks to enjoy

RSPB The Lodge has a choice of trails through woodland, heathland and formal gardens. Open all year. Some trails are wheelchair/pushchair-friendly. Facilities: parking, shop and toilets.

Potton Road, Sandy SG19 2DL
W www.rspb.org.uk/thelodge
T 01767 680541
E thelodgereserve@rspb.org.uk

Sandy Tourist Information Centre organise guided walks during the summer and also have information on walks in this area.

Rear of 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy SG19 1JE
W www.sandy-bedfordshire.co.uk/sandy_tic.html
T 01767 682728
E tourism@sandytowncouncil.gov.uk

Walks in & around Potton



Map
inside

Stay safe...

- take a bottle of water
- stay on the footpaths/bridleways
- wear correct footwear
- follow a map.

Both www.walkinginbeds.co.uk and www.letsgo.org.uk provide walk descriptions and maps for this area.

Explore Potton's history and wildlife with four guided walks suitable for everyone.

Walk 1

Potton to Sutton

Walk 1a: 3.6 miles

Walk 1b: 3 miles

Accessibility:

- Two small and narrow bridges and a stile.

Walk 1a Time: 2 hours

Starting in the Market Square, this walk will take you into Pegnut Wood, across Potton Brook, along the perimeter of the John O'Gaunt golf course and across the fields towards Sutton. You can often hear the distinctive call of a green woodpecker or a jay in the woods. Once in Sutton, turn left, walk through the village, then turn left again and head back across the fields to Pegnut Wood.

Walk 1b Time: 1 hour 40 min

If you would prefer not to walk back the same way, once in Sutton turn right, cross the thirteenth-century stone bridge at Sutton Ford, walk up to the crossroads with Biggleswade Road, and walk back into Potton on the bridleway alongside the golf course. The bluebells are a wonderful sight and smell in the spring.

Walk 2

Potton Windmill

Length: 2.5 miles

Time: 1 hour 20 min

Accessibility:

- No stiles, bridges or gates.

Starting at Mill Lane recreation ground, walk away from Potton towards the disused windmill. Take the second left after Cherry Trees Farm and walk alongside the fields. Look out for blackberries in late summer, and lapwings on the fields. Turn left again and walk back towards Potton; you will eventually end up on Old Bedford Road. Cross Newtown and continue down Festival Road – at the T-junction turn right and about 400 yards in front of you is a snicket (cut-through) that will bring you out onto Sandy Road.



Walk 3

Sandy Heath

Length: 3.2 miles

Time: 1 hour 50 min

Accessibility:

- No stiles, bridges or gates.
- Some walking on Carthage Road.

Starting in the Market Square, walk out of Potton and take the second footpath on the right (opposite the footpath leading into Pegnut Wood). Walk up the rise, and carry on along this track, which runs alongside the old quarry. As you drop down towards Carthage Road, turn right onto a permissive footpath that keeps you off the road. Look out for butterflies and wildflowers along this path in spring and summer. You will come out at the entrance to the quarry – turn right and walk along Carthage Road (take care on the bend) until you reach Sandy Road. Cross over and walk up Deepdale, past the Aquatic Centre (handy for ice creams!), turning right when you reach the campsite. Walk along this track until it brings you out onto Old Bedford Road.

Walk 4

St Mary's Church

Length: 0.6 miles

Time: 35 min

Accessibility:

- Footpaths all the way.

Start in the car park next to Henry Smith Playing Fields. Follow the path along the brook – look out for water birds with their chicks in spring, and dragonflies in summer. Turn right when you reach the end of the park and follow the footpath up towards St Mary's Church, with its fifteenth-century tower. Turn left and walk past the Church Hall, down to the junction and turn left again. Follow the road as it bends left into King Street, which will lead you into Potton Market Square. Alternatively, when you reach St Mary's Church, turn right and walk up the hill. Turn right again at the Scout Hut and walk alongside the fields until you reach the top of Bury Hill. Cross the road, and walk down Bury Hill back towards the fire station and Henry Smith Playing Fields.

WALK 2

The spectacular wasp spider has only recently arrived in this area and can be found in rough grassy areas in late summer to the west of Potton where its prey – grasshoppers and crickets – are common.

WALK 4

The banks of the Henry Smith Playing Fields hide the burrows of a large population of water voles, but you will be very lucky to see one of these elusive creatures! Dragonflies are best spotted around the duck pond.

WALK 3

The footpaths along the edge of the golf course and the woods around Deepdale are good areas to look for mushrooms. Species such as shaggy parasol, clouded agaric and wood blewits are all common during autumn.

WALK 1

The brook running through Potton is home to a variety of wildlife and kingfishers can occasionally be seen flashing along the stream. You might catch a lucky glimpse if you watch the section of the brook by Sheepwalk Close in early spring.

KEY

Walk 1.	Green dashed line	Pub	Icon of a glass
Walk 2.	Blue dashed line	School	Icon of a school building
Walk 3.	Pink dashed line	Bridge	Icon of a bridge
Walk 4.	Red dashed line	Fire station	Icon of a fire station
Woods	Green tree icon	Carrot sluice	Icon of a sluice
Car park	P icon	Post box	Icon of a post box
		Village / Community Hall	Icon of a house

