

For centuries the settlement of Eaton Socon became wealthy from the development of coaching inns along the Great North Road, from selling the produce from farming the land and from the sale of flour ground at the River Mill.



See also – The Great War Trail, The Poppy Trail, The Lost Priory Trail, Eynesbury Village Trail, St Neots Town Trail, and the Eaton Ford Trail.

This booklet has been extensively revised by Sue Jarrett from trails written by the Eatons Community Association (ESCA) and thanks are due to many local residents who helped in the compilation of these trails and willingly walked them.

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Eatons Community Association

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Tel: 01480 474787 E-mail: sales@xlpress.co.uk

## TRAILS AROUND THE TOWN

# Eaton Socon Village



Discover the buildings, characters and history of Eaton Socon

## Eaton Socon Village

For centuries the settlement of Eaton Socon was based around the village green on the Great North Road and the nearby river crossing. The village consisted of just three small lanes leading from the Great North Road towards the river. The settlement, for centuries known as 'Eaton or 'Eaton Town' distinguished the main village from the rest of the parish of Eaton Socon which covered 20 square miles and included the large village of Wyboston and many small villages and hamlets including Staploe, Duloe, Bushmead, Bassmead, Eaton Ford, Crosshall, Crosshall Ford, Maltmans Gardens, Tithe and Goodwick.

The main settlement of Eaton had the parish church, the mill on the river, the village green and the school. Wealth came from the coaching inns, the farms and the mill. Before the names of the roads were standardised in 1948 and the houses numbered, some of the roads had been known by different names, some of which are mentioned while on these walks.

For hundreds of years the Parish and Settlement of Eaton Socon were in Bedfordshire and the county boundary ran along the River Great Ouse. In 1965 it was decided to replace the increasingly busy A1 running through the centre of the village with a new bypass in the fields to the west of the village. This resulted in the county boundary moving to the line of the bypass and all the land to the east moved into Huntingdonshire, and a few years later into Cambridgeshire when Huntingdonshire ceased as a separate county.

Since then, the land to the east of the A1 has been developed with large housing estates and the parish church is in a unique position with its building in Cambridgeshire while most of its parish is still in Bedfordshire and its registers go to Bedford Archives. There are two village signs on Eaton Socon village green, see below, the Bedfordshire Festival of Britain Sign linking the settlement with its former county and its wooden sign which many Cambridgeshire towns and villages have.

These trails explore the older village lanes and the newer areas developed since the A1 bypass was built. Wander around the trails to discover more about the original village and how it has grown.

Trail 1 Start: Village Green, Eaton Socon  
Distance: 2 miles  
Time to complete: Allow 2 hours

Trail 2 Start: Village Green, Eaton Socon  
Distance: 3 miles  
Time to complete: Allow 2 – 2 ½ hours

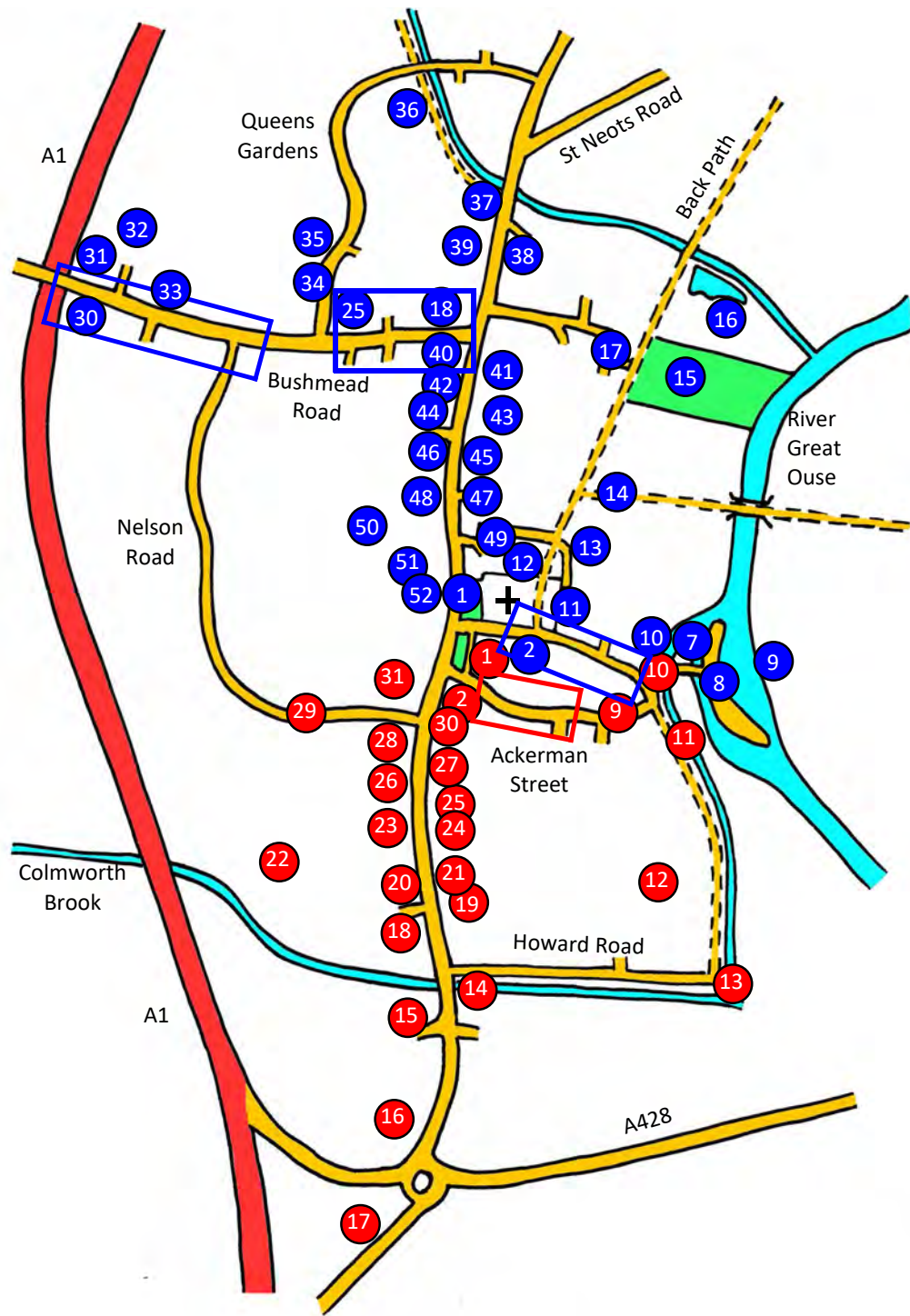
● Plaque

■ Heritage Board



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## Eaton Socon Trails



## EATON SOCON TRAIL 1

This trail takes you to some of the oldest buildings in the original village of Eaton Socon and to the newest developments in the former hamlet of Little End. We hope you will enjoy a glimpse of what has passed and the present and maybe ponder on what lies ahead!

Start: Village Green, Eaton Socon  
 Distance: 2 miles  
 Time to complete: Allow 2 hours

### Village Green

Here is the centre of the original village of Eaton Socon, having the important Great North Road running its length, with clusters of cottages, a few larger houses, coaching inns and pubs to sustain travellers. This green was once much larger and was the centre for parish festivals and events such as the annual Statute Fair and May Day Celebrations. Beyond the immediate properties along the Great North Road were fields until the 1980s.

### 1 Walk towards the shops at the far end of the green passing -

- **170 Great North Road and 2 School Lane** - built as one house between 1800 and 1810 using some of the village green. The owner, William Hall, was the publican of the Old Falcon and also a butcher. In the sale of 1857 the house was described as 'a very capital dwelling house with every convenience; in the best, most pleasant and airy situation in this picturesque village'. By 1910 the original house had been split into 2 properties and in WW2 the house facing the green (known as Rozel) was the home and workshops of Mr Cattmull, the cobbler; a master craftsman at the shoe-making trade. During the war years the authorities required him to concentrate on repair work for the forces. At the busiest time he employed 50 people. For many years Mr Cattmull was Leader and Conductor of the very successful St. Neots Silver Band. "People would come to work for him to mend shoes, and to be in the band as well. If they were musical they got a job."

- **This corner** of the Great North Road and School Lane was known for many years as Falcon Corner after the coaching inn facing the green.

- **168a and 168 Great North Road** - these two white-painted houses were originally one and formed the Old Falcon with its maltings and outbuildings. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the building was enlarged from a much smaller property, see right. In a sale of 1857 the Falcon had a good brewhouse with stabling for 10 horses.



## Map of Eaton Socon in 2019

