



# Hidden St Neots Family Trail

Start your trail at the blue bike shelter between Waitrose car park and the library car park.

1. You are on the site of St Neots Priory which was here from 1081 to 1539. Can you find the 3 hexagons in the road nearby? They are the position of column bases from one of the many Priory buildings which used to be here. This is a picture of what it might have looked like.



Cross the road and walk through Cross Keys Mall and stand at the entrance on the High Street.

2. Look up – can you see the big Cross Keys sign hanging down? This site has been an inn or hotel for several hundred years. The sign is of the crossed keys is a symbol of St Peter's in Rome and was a common sign for a religious hostel. It may show a connection with guest accommodation at the Priory centuries earlier.



Cross the High Street and walk to the alley besides Shepherd Stubbs, 20 Market Square

3. Can you see the 'Surgery' sign at the end of the alley? There was a Doctor's surgery here for at least 130 years until Dr Craven Veitch left in 1960. Plus...if you look through the windows of Shepherd Stubbs you'll see some beautiful ceilings.

Walk along the Market Square towards South Street. Stop by the alley, Chandlers Wharf, just before the Dogs Trust.

4. Look carefully at the walls of the alley. This was the entrance to the Bull Inn pub yard where horses would be rested from coaches and travellers in Georgian times / 1700s when St Neots was on the coach route from Cambridge to London. Can you see what the writing says?

Walk down the Market Square and right into South Street. Stand opposite the Il Girasole restaurant.

5. This building was a bakers from 1838 until the 1970s. The picture shows the baker, Ernest Whiting in 1903 outside the shop. What is the same as today and what is different?



Walk down to the end of South Street / corner of Brook Street

- 6. Can you see the flood marker in the wall?
- This is a photo of the High Street when it was flooded in 1947. The first shop on the left is now Costa. How tall are you compared to the flood heights?



Now walk along Brook Street and into St Mary's Church yard.

- 7. Look up.
- St Mary's church is decorated with lots of carvings of heads and creatures. There are lots to spot if you look carefully.
- Which is your favourite?

Walk down Church Walk until you get to the High Street.  
Look towards the front of the Kodak shop.

- 8. These shops are in an Elizabethan building dating from 1590.
- You can see some great Tudor details including the twist decoration on the horizontal beam or bressumer and the timber construction.
- The main windows and door are all modern. This used to be a merchants house and gives us a glimpse of Elizabethan St Neots

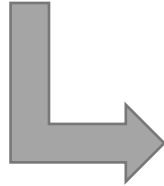
Turn right, along the High Street to the Halifax Building Society shop.

- 9. If you look up just above the Halifax windows you'll see some stained glass windows. These are what is left of the Royal Oak Hotel which was built in 1885 on the site of a much older inn. It closed in 1989. The name comes from when Charles II, then a Prince, hid in an oak tree to avoid capture after his father, King Charles I was defeated at the Battle of Worcester in 1651.



Walk along the High Street to outside Subway

- 10. This narrow, long private road is called Windmill Row. We don't think there has ever been a windmill here but it was built by James Tristham, a Victorian miller who owned a windmill on Paxton Hill and one in Little Paxton by the river.



Walk along the High Street until you are opposite Costa.



- 11. Look up at the upper part of Costa and the fancy decoration on the roof edge. This shop used to be the International Stores and is in the photo of the flood from 1947. You can just make out the roof line decoration in the old photo. This building has been a shop since at least 1823 and in 1860 it was run by Ebenezer Bedells and had chests of tea and cones of sugar in the window and was well known for its selection of Leicestershire cheese.

Walk along the High Street until you are outside the Corner House pub.

- 12. Last Stop – Look up at the side of the Nero café building over the roof of the Corner House. Can you see the fading advertising sign? It's quite difficult to read but it's about A. Howe and Co piano shop in Bedford with 'tuning a speciality'. There still is a Howe piano company in Bedford today.



## St Neots Museum

[www.stneotsmuseum.org.uk](http://www.stneotsmuseum.org.uk)

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