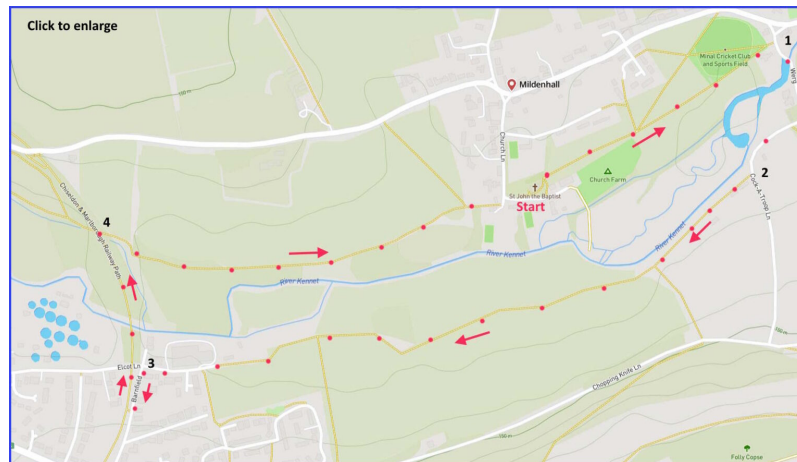




MILDENHALL

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An easy 3-mile field walk alongside river Kennet. Suggest start from parking area set for church visitors. Click [here](#) for an arial view. Click here for a downloadable PDF of guide.



(Routes suggested from each map point + metres to next point)

Start: Exit churchyard at east; follow path through grazing field, then alongside sports field until road: 570m

1: Turn right, over river until path sign to Ecot and Werg: 320m

2: Take right past at this sign, forward through hedgerow and then large field edge: 1.4Km

3: Just before overhead bridge, take left lane uphill to cut on right into old railway. Follow line to right, over river, until downward steps on right: 480m

4: Follow field path towards starting point: 850m

The pictures below are in the order things were seen on this walk. Clicking on any one will enlarge it (and the slideshow)



[C]



[D]

This walk starts at the parish church (which has a helpful car parking area for visitor). Then the route through two fields beyond the churchyard takes you to a crossing over the River Kennet [B] and – to your left – the area of a Roman settlement. After walking parallel to the river, [F] pick up a disused railway (now cycle) path to cross the Kennet and take a river-parallel route back to the church. (You may like to conclude at the [Horseshoe Inn](#) on the main road.)

Mildenhall village

The village lies on an alluvial plain, with the Marlborough Downs to the North and Savernake Forest to the South. Through this valley runs the River Kennet.

Evidence suggests that this area was occupied since the iron age. More significantly, it was the site of a large Roman settlement (see more on this below). After the Roman departure, the area continued to support an Anglo-Saxon community. At the time of the Domesday Book 20 households were recorded here. It has always been a farming area, with extensive sheep farming in the 14th century dominated by the Hungerford estates.

The present village layout indicates a traditional gathering of dwellings around the parish church and Church Lane, and then a larger development around the main road. A recent survey claimed that all this came together to make Mildenhall one of Wiltshire's five "[poshest villages](#)" to live in. Estate agents need to amuse themselves this way – you can perhaps use the walk to make your own mind up. However, the village's [online presence](#) does suggest a lively community, whether or not it is also a 'posh' one.

The church

There may have been a church here since the 9th century. The present parish church of St John the Baptist is described by Pevsner as "a perfect example of the small village church of many periods, exceptional for its late Georgian furnishings". That fine interior furnishing was thanks to a refit about 1815. As well as the box and family pews, don't miss the "children's benches" facing each other at the wet end of the nave.

In 1978 the Revd. Courtman here was the oldest vicar in the country (94 years). Although of particular interest is his achievement in making official the spelling of "Minal" – the name of Mildenhall that has long been preferred informally in the talk of locals.

Cunetio

A little distance after you cross the river near the start of this walk [\[B\]](#), the fields to your left are the site of a large Roman settlement: Cunetio. Here there was a walled Roman town until the 5th century, although it was only discovered recently (in the 1940s) and as a result of ariel photography. So any sign of this sizeable community will not be visible now – at least not to the untrained eye. Cunetio was most likely an important trading area, as it would have been a junction point for significant roads that once variously joined London, Bath, Winchester and Cirencester.

An account of excavations at this site can be found [here](#). Although a more detailed story of this work is covered by a TV documentary in [this episode](#) of the Time Team series. The Romans had a habit of burying large quantities of coinage (there are many accounts of why they did this – for example [this one](#)). Accordingly, in 1978 a hoard of 54,951 such coins were found at this site – variously dated between AD 260 and 275. But don't be tempted to start your own search for more – such searching might not be uncommon but it [would be unwise and unwelcome](#)..