

7 RUTLAND HERITAGE TRAILS

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CIRCULAR WALKING ROUTES EXPLORING
RUTLAND VILLAGES AND LOCAL HISTORY

RUTLAND HERITAGE TRAIL #1

BISHOPS, BOMBS AND BONFIRES

DISTANCE: 4 miles (approximately)

START & FINISH: The Green, Main Street, Lyddington

TERRAIN: Mostly footpaths and bridleway through fields. Short stretches of road and/or pavement in villages and along the A6003. Some steep hills and high stiles.

REFRESHMENTS: Marquess of Exeter (Lyddington), The Old White Hart (Lyddington)

MAP DETAILS: This route is covered by the Ordnance Survey Explorer Series Numbers 15 (234) & 224.

Lyddington and Stoke Dry are located South of Uppingham, off the A6003.

ALLOW TWO TO THREE HOURS FOR THIS CIRCULAR WALK, TAKING IN THE VILLAGES OF LYDDINGTON AND STOKE DRY. YOU COULD MAKE A LEISURELY DAY OF IT, STOPPING FOR LUNCH AT ONE OF THE FANTASTIC PUBS EN ROUTE AND VISITING THE BEDE HOUSE IN LYDDINGTON.

The pretty ironstone villages of Stoke Dry and Lyddington are linked by more than just their south Rutland location. Today's quiet village streets hide an eventful past – a tale of bishops, bombs and bonfires.

Nearly 1,000 years ago, the estates of Lyddington, Stoke Dry and Caldecott belonged to the great bishops of Lincoln, whose officials enjoyed visits to the Bishop's Palace at Lyddington, as well as hunting in the deer park to the north east of Stoke Dry.

During the 16th Century, the great church estates were dismantled by Henry VIII and given or sold to new owners. In 1602, the Bishop's Palace in Lyddington became an almshouse, providing shelter for twelve poor men. Stoke Dry became renowned as the home of the Digby family, whose infamous 'son', Sir Everard Digby, was executed for his role in the 1605 Gunpowder Plot.

More than 400 years later, the Lyddington and Stoke Dry skies were a temporary home to a squadron of Lancaster Bombers, practising night-time bombing raids over the newly built Eyebrook Reservoir.



THE WALK

Start your walk in Lyddington. From Main Street, take the Stoke Road (near the Old White Hart pub) out of the village. As you pass the last house on the left, look out for the footpath on the right.

Cross the stile and head across the fields, climbing slightly uphill. In the next field, you face a steeper climb – look back for a beautiful view of Lyddington's church spire. A double stile and bridge take you into a pasture field, cross it diagonally, then into another field. By now you can probably hear the sound of traffic on the A6003 ahead of you. Veer left, aiming for the far corner of this final field.

You exit the fields next to the Lyddington / Stoke Dry crossroads. Cross the road carefully, following the sign for Stoke Dry. A gentle downhill stroll along this quiet side road takes you into the village, with Eyebrook Reservoir coming into view on your left.

EYEBROOK RESERVOIR

Eyebrook Reservoir was built between 1937-1940 by Stewart & Lloyds Steel to supply Corby Steelworks. Now owned by British Steel, the reservoir has operated as a trout fishery since 1942.

As you reach the village, the parish church of St. Andrew is on the left. Information about the church is available inside. Leaving the church behind, walk out of the village, passing a wellhead on your right. A bridleway is marked on the left. Leave the road here and keep to the right hand edge of the fields. Glimpses of the reservoir are visible between the trees.

Continue along the bridleway and through a gateway into a pasture field, heading straight across it. The bridleway now deviates away from the water, climbing upward through fields and gateways to a summit. You then head downhill again, towards the A6003.

At the A6003, turn right. You need to walk along this busy road for a short distance – take care, walking facing oncoming traffic.

SNELSTON MEDIEVAL VILLAGE

The fields to the right contain the earthwork remains of Snelston, with a sunken lane and rectangular house platforms still visible. Mentioned in the Domesday Book, the village is last referred to as a settlement in 1548.

After 500 yards, there is a gas pumping station on the left. Cross the A6003 (take care!) and follow the footpath sign. A stile takes you into the first field; head straight towards another stile and bridge into the next, then diagonally across to another.

Now head to your right, skirting the field with its interesting earthwork lumps and bumps. After a short distance, there is a stile in the hedge line, cut across the corner of the next field, looking out for the large circular Priestly and Bee hills ahead of you.

Soon another stile is visible on your left. Head diagonally across this final field, with its highly visible ridge and furrow, looking for the farm buildings ahead of you on your left.

As you reach the farm buildings, veer left, with the farmyard on your right. Follow the footpath onto the road to emerge next to the village sign. Walk along into Lyddington, with its many attractive 17th and 18th Century ironstone buildings.

As you reach the Bishop's Eye (tower), you must decide whether to continue straight on to your starting point and possible refreshment at one of the village pubs or whether first to explore St. Andrew's Church and the Bede House.

Take Church Lane to the right and follow the English Heritage signs for Bede House. The footpath crosses St. Andrew's churchyard and runs through an alley, under the Bede House itself, into the outer grounds.

To the left, a gravel path – Bluecoat Lane (so-called after the costume worn by residents of the almshouse in the 1600s) – will lead you out onto The Green and back to your starting point.

If you wish to explore further, a right hand path will take you across an area of land known as Little Park, part of the Bishop's Palace gardens. At the end of this unmarked path are the remains of the medieval fishponds.

Retrace your steps to return to your starting point on The Green.

SAFER WALKING

- Be prepared – wear suitable clothing and sturdy footwear, take refreshments and directions.
- Respect the countryside – take care in crops and be considerate of livestock.
- Take care when crossing or walking on roadways and walk facing oncoming traffic.
- Fasten all gates, keep dogs under close control and guard against fire.
- Remember to take nothing but photos and leave nothing but footprints!



RUTLAND HERITAGE TRAIL #2

FIELDS AND FOLLIES

DISTANCE: 5 miles (approximately)

START & FINISH: Oakham Road in Exton, opposite The Green.

TERRAIN: Easy going tarmac or gravel bridleways, apart from a small stretch of field footpath (grass). There are two stiles and some uphill stretches.

REFRESHMENTS: The Fox & Hounds Hotel & Restaurant, Exton

MAP DETAILS: This route is covered by the Ordnance Survey Explorer Series Numbers 15 (234) and 224.

Exton is located in the north of Rutland, close to the north shore of Rutland Water.



ALLOW ONE TO TWO HOURS FOR THIS CIRCULAR WALK WHICH EXPLORES THE VILLAGE AND OLD HALL ESTATE OF EXTON. YOU'LL NEED TO ALLOW SLIGHTLY LONGER IF YOU WANT TO EXPLORE THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST PETER AND ST PAUL.

Surrounded by a landscape of fields and woodland, Exton village has been described as one of the prettiest in Rutland. Attractive 18th and 19th century thatched ironstone buildings are grouped loosely around a shaded village green.

The village is dominated by Exton Hall with its Old Hall ruins, extensive formal grounds, garden follies (closed to the public), stone boundary walls, entrance lodges and gates. Nearby, the restored medieval parish church contains many outstanding 16th to 18th century family monuments.

Away from the village centre, the modern fields contain the evidence of their past life as the extensive landscaped grounds associated with the country house and seat of the Noel family – Exton Hall. The ornamental lakes, avenues of trees and garden follies give a glimpse of the past splendour of a 17th/18th century country house and its landscaped park.



THE WALK

Start at the Fox and Hounds Hotel (which was once a large Coaching Inn) on the village green. Find High Street and walk along it to the top where you turn left into West End.

To your right are the brick piers and tiled roof of the Old Pump House on a small green.

A little way along, turn right into a roadway that leads to Home Farm. This 'Private Road – Unsuitable for Motor Traffic' leads you past farm buildings to a cattle grid/gate with signposts for the Viking Way.

Once through the gate there is a choice of two paths – straight ahead or to the right. Turn right, following a tarmac bridleway past farm buildings and a cemetery.

On reaching a junction with another pathway, turn right (still on the Viking Way). The bridleway skirts the trees of Tunneley Wood as it veers to the right. After a while, the Viking Way footpath is signposted to your left; make sure you keep to the tarmac path marked 'Bridle Road to Fort Henry and A1'.

Continue past a large farm building to the right and head towards the trees that signal the location of Fort Henry. After about a mile you reach two lakes – Fort Henry Lake to the left, Lower Lake on the right. Soon after this, a footpath is signposted to the right.



FORT HENRY

In April 1786, a Stamford architect, William Legg, was requested by the 6th Earl of Gainsborough, Henry Noel, to provide designs for a "Gothick building by the pond". Although referred to in building records as the Pond House, the summerhouse soon became known as Fort Henry, as it was used by the Noels for the re-enactment of naval battles.

The pinnacle and turreted structure was built to replace the old boat house at the pond. It became a favourite place for Noel family picnics and parties, and a location for special events held by the Earl of Gainsborough for his Estate workers and tenants.

You must leave the hard road surface for a short while and climb the stile into the field that surrounds Lower Lake. Walk alongside the lake until you reach another stile. This takes you back onto a hard footpath that curves to the right, skirting the bottom end of Lower Lake and leads back towards Exton village.

Another footpath straight ahead leads to Horn Mill – a few steps along this and the site of the deserted medieval village of Horn is visible in the fields on your left.

The footpath begins to climb as you move away from the lakes of Fort Henry into an area quarried for ironstone in the mid-20th century.

Soon you will reach a crossroads – with a choice of two bridleways and a footpath. Take the bridleway marked to the left (still a tarmac surface). As you climb upwards, the church spire of Exton church will come into view ahead of you.

Cross a cattle grid into a field with large horse chestnut trees. Houses start to appear as you near Exton and the bridleway becomes a village street. You come into Exton on Stamford Road alongside a small green. Cross over, taking the road straight ahead to bring you back to the Fox and Hounds Hotel.

You may wish to resist the temptations of the pub for a while longer and instead visit the parish church of St. Peter and St. Paul. If so, turn left and walk a few hundred yards out of the village. The church is down a marked road on the right opposite Church Farm.

The lane to the church itself is green and shaded, passing through the great parkland of Exton Hall. Glimpses of the formal gardens can be seen through the thick hedges on your right. To your left are the remains of earlier houses, cleared in the mid-1800s.

Retrace your steps to the Fox and Hounds Hotel and your starting point on the village green.



SAFER WALKING

- Be prepared – wear suitable clothing and sturdy footwear, take refreshments and directions
- Respect the countryside – take care in crops and be considerate of livestock.
- Take care when crossing or walking on roadways and walk facing oncoming traffic.
- Fasten all gates, keep dogs under close control and guard against fire.
- Please show consideration to village residents by parking cars responsibly and making sure all dog mess is appropriately cleared away.
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RUTLAND HERITAGE TRAIL

ROMANS, ROSES AND POETS

DISTANCE: Allow three to five hours for the longer walk (10½ miles), two to three hours for the shorter route (4½ miles).

START & FINISH: The longer walk begins and ends in Great Casterton. For the shorter route, start and finish in Pickworth.

TERRAIN: Mixture of road walking and bridleways through fields (generally firm walking surfaces).

REFRESHMENTS: The Crown in Great Casterton

Woolfox Golf and Country Club
The Horse & Jockey, Manton

MAP DETAILS: This route is covered by the Ordnance Survey Explorer Series Numbers 15 (234) & 224.

TO THE NORTH-EAST OF RUTLAND, CLOSE TO THE BORDER WITH LINCOLNSHIRE, THE ROADS AND BRIDLEWAYS OF PICKWORTH AND GREAT CASTERTON ECHO WITH THE SOUND OF THE FOOTSTEPS OF PAST TRAVELLERS – A HISTORY OF ROMANS, ROSES AND POETS.

Nearly two thousand years ago, the invading Roman army made its way northwards along the route of Ermine Street, pausing in Great Casterton to build a camp to protect a strategic bridge over the River Gwash.

Many hundreds of years later, soldiers were to march this way again. Two medieval armies, bearing the red and white roses of Lancaster and York, met at the **Battle of Losecoat Field**.

The Wars of the Roses came to Rutland in March 1470 when King Edward IV's Yorkist

army, travelling along the Great North Road to put down a rebellion in Lincolnshire, encountered an army of Lancastrian rebels as he neared Stamford.

Following a barrage of Royal cannon, the rebel army broke ranks and fled, whereupon they were followed and cut down by the King's men. Many of the Lancastrian soldiers were wearing distinctive uniforms or surcoats and their hurry to discard these identifying garments as they fled is the origin behind the battle's name – that of 'Losecoat Field'.

Legend says that the medieval village of Pickworth was destroyed following the nearby battle. Records from the time do show that it was a large village in the 13th and 14th centuries, but by 1491 it was 'empty'. It is more likely however, that Pickworth had already been depopulated due to the great land enclosures of the time, and that the nearby battle was simply the final nail in the coffin.

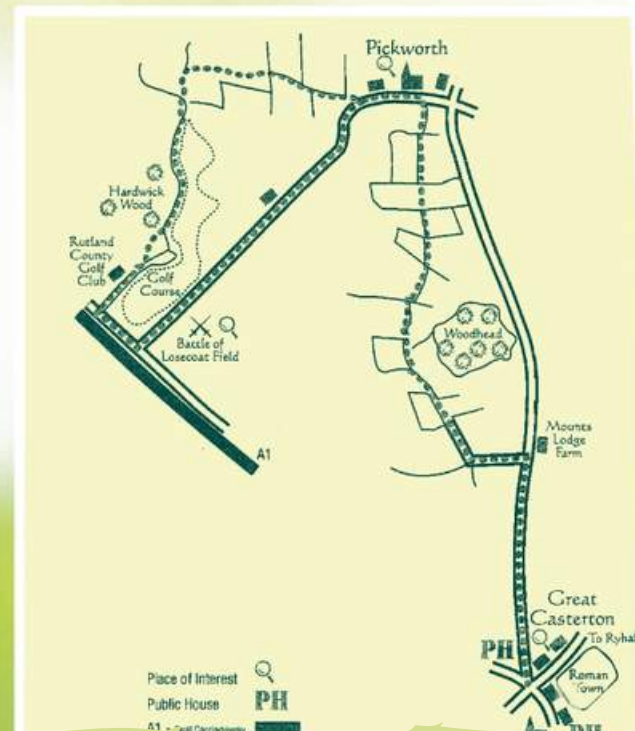


At the beginning of the 19th century, an army of a different kind made its way to the quarries and limekilns of Pickworth. Labourers and limeburners came from far and wide to work here, and included the Northamptonshire 'peasant poet' John Clare.

The tower and steeple of the medieval church remained standing until the early 1700s. Today the site of the village is marked by an isolated medieval arch set amongst irregular bumps and hollows to the east and south-east of Pickworth's **All Saints' Church**, which was built in 1821.

THE WALK

These directions assume you choose to begin and end this figure-of-eight walk in **Great Casterton** (a distance of just over 10 miles). Also shown is a shorter route visiting **Pickworth** and **Losecoat Field** battle site.



Take Pickworth Road out of Great Casterton and once past the houses, walk along the road, heading slightly uphill for about a mile until you reach Mounts Lodge Farm to the right. Take the bridleway opposite, continue for a short distance until you take a right turn to stay on the bridleway rather than carrying straight along a farm track. From here on, the bridleway varies between grassy tracks and stony paths, with the trees of **Woodhead** visible to your right.

As you continue along the bridleway, to your right are the heavily overgrown remains of Eayres Lodge. You may spot the apple trees that were once part of its gardens.

Shortly after this, the stone path becomes a grassy track once more. Keep the field boundary/hedge to your right and leave the trees of Woodhead behind. Continue along the track keeping the hedge line to your right. Veer slightly to the left and follow the bridleway round the left-hand side of the field.

WOODHEAD CASTLE

To the south of Woodhead are the remains of a defended medieval moated site called **Woodhead Castle**. Described in the 1600s as 'Woodhead, formerly a village and chapel, now only one house and that in ruins', the surviving earthworks include a roughly square moat surrounding a wide platform containing substantial building foundations. Please note that this is Private Property.



RUTLAND HERITAGE TRAIL



Pickworth's limestone houses will start to come into view ahead of you now; another break in the hedge takes you onto the final stretch of bridleway down into the village, where you emerge into the road opposite All Saints church. You may wish to explore this 19th century building before continuing your walk.

For those wanting a shorter walk, this is where you start:

From Pickworth church, head west out of the village, following the road. Once you have passed the Manor House, look out for a small clearing (on the right) that contains the restored limekiln where the 19th century 'peasant poet' John Clare worked as a limeburner in the early 1800s

BLOODY OAKS

On the other side of the Great North Road is a woodland known as 'Bloody Oaks'. There is a legend that this wood is so-called because of the bloodshed that took place here as part of the Battle of Losecoat Field. However, on a map of 1645 the wood is shown as 'Royal Wood'. More probably, the wood became known as Bloody Oaks following the execution of John Bowland, a highwayman, at Empingham corner in 1769.

(he also worked in Great Casterton). In 1820, John Clare married a local girl, Patty (Martha) Turner, in Great Casterton church.

Continue along this road, climbing upward and across a cattle-grid into open pasture fields. On the right are the earthwork and stone remains of the small hamlet of Top Pickworth, abandoned in the 1920s. Cross another cattle grid to return to the hedged roadway that leads to the A1; the Great North Road. After another mile and a half, with the golf course on the right, you will reach a junction. To your left is the site of the **Battle of Losecoat Field**.

At the junction, turn right (walking along the grass verge) and follow the signs for Hardwick Farm and Woolfox Lodge. After 500 yards, turn right into the



Woolfox Golf and Country Club. Continue past the golf club buildings to a tarmac lane with houses on the left.

After the last house, head left through a gateway and walk diagonally across this field, towards the golf course. The track skirts the edge of the golf course with hedges and trees to your left.

Continue until you reach the top left-hand corner of the golf course, where you need to look out for a gate in the hedge line to your left. Go through this into the field and then turn right following the field boundary on the right. Once you reach the end of the hedge line, continue straight ahead, following the grass track through the field.

"LOOK OUT FOR A SMALL CLEARING THAT CONTAINS THE RESTORED LIMEKILN WHERE THE 19TH CENTURY 'PEASANT POET' JOHN CLARE WORKED AS A LIMEBURNER IN THE EARLY 1800S"

As you approach a marker post, there is a bridleway to the right, cutting straight across the field. Take this, keeping **Pickworth Great Wood** on your left until you reach the field boundary. Here the bridleway curves to the left. At a gap in the hedge line, take the stone trackway to the right. With the field boundary on your left, follow this path back to the roadway where you should turn left to return into Pickworth village.

End of shorter walk

From here, you can return to Great Casterton by retracing your steps along the bridleway opposite the church or by continuing through the village to the crossroads and taking the right-hand turn to walk back along the Pickworth Road. Either route will take you back to your starting point.

In Great Casterton, take some time to view the substantial remains of the Roman town. The earthwork remains of the town defences can be seen in the fields next to Bridge Farm, about 200 yards along Ryhall Road on the right-hand side. Excavations have revealed the extent of the fort and town as well as the existence of a villa to the north, the finds of which are in **Rutland County Museum** in Oakham.



ROMAN CASTERTON

The Romans erected a fort at Great or Bridge Casterton shortly following the invasion of A.D. 43. It protected a strategic crossing of the River Gwash and lay alongside the Roman Road, Ermine Street. The fort was in use for around 30 years, after which a Roman staging post or 'Mansio' was established.

The first civilian settlement probably grew up to serve the needs of the fort and then served as a local market town. In the late 2nd century, the town was enclosed by a great stone wall and ramparts. The site was re-defended with new corner bastions and a deeper ditch in the second half of the 4th century, and occupation of the town continued well into the 400s.

SAFER WALKING

- Be prepared – wear suitable clothing and sturdy footwear, take refreshments and directions
- Respect the countryside – take care in crops and be considerate of livestock
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RUTLAND HERITAGE TRAIL

MILLS, QUARRIES AND RAILWAYS

DISTANCE:
4 miles

START & FINISH:
The Parish Church of St John the Baptist, North Luffenham, LE15 8JR. Car parking along lane to church or in Church Street.

TERRAIN:
Mixture of field footpaths and metalled road. Some uphill stretches and busier roads.

REFRESHMENTS:
North Luffenham
The Fox Country Pub & Dining

South Luffenham
The Boot Inn

MAP DETAILS:
This route is covered by the Ordnance Survey Explorer Series Numbers 15 (234) & 224.

THIS CIRCULAR WALK TAKES IN THE VILLAGES OF PILTON, NORTH AND SOUTH LUFFENHAM.

South-east of Rutland Water the villages of Pilton, North and South Luffenham bear witness to the industrial past of the county – a tale of mills, quarries and railways.

Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries the south-eastern half of Rutland was excavated for its rich deposits of ironstone – the prize of a geology that gives Rutland soil its rich red colour.

Quarries were opened and narrow-gauge tramways built to link them to the great railway lines that criss-crossed the county. Alongside them, people also harnessed the power of wind and water.

One by one the quarries were closed and their tramways fell into disuse. Today, the scars of the quarries on the landscape have largely healed, but some evidence for the busy industry of these Rutland villages still remains for those who wish to find it.



THE WALK

Start your walk at North Luffenham parish church. Cross over the stone stile located in the right-hand churchyard wall, just past an entrance to the school playing field.

The school and adjacent fields are on the site of the original Luffenham Hall, built in around 1635. The hall was demolished at the start of the 1800s but remains of its ornamental gardens are still visible. To your right is a ha-ha – a sunken stone boundary wall designed to separate the formal gardens close to the house from the wider countryside without intruding on the view. The Hall was besieged by Parliamentary forces in 1642.

Head to your left, walking diagonally down the field towards the trees at the bottom. Cross over the River Chater by the footbridge and continue, aiming for the trees ahead which mark the route of the Oakham to Stamford railway line. As you near them, look for the metal gate in the right-hand hedgerow leading to the North Luffenham road.

Turn left and walk along the road, crossing the railway bridge, until you reach a crossroads. Take the right-hand turn (signposted Pilton 1 mile). As you walk along this road, notice to your right the earthwork remains (a series of low banks and a possible hollow way or sunken road) once thought to be the location of the deserted medieval village of Sculthorpe.

The fields on the left-hand side of the road were part of Pilton Quarries, which operated between 1919 and 1969. As you continue you will pass over the deep cutting for the quarry tramway, with its red and blue brick bridge complete with parapets and decorative ironwork.

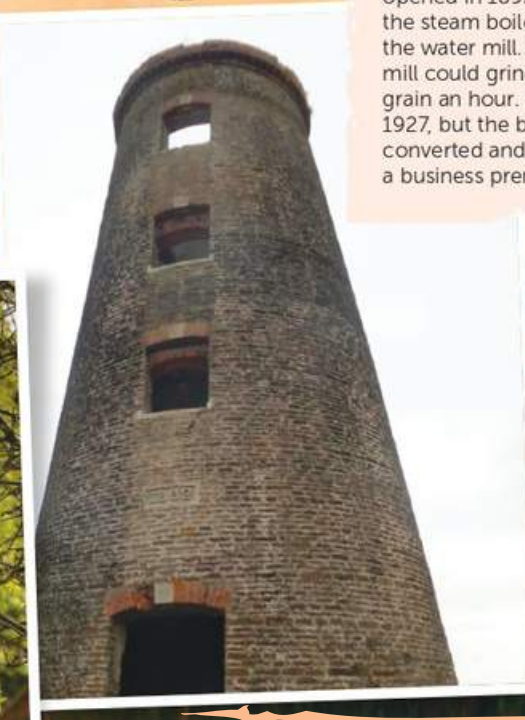
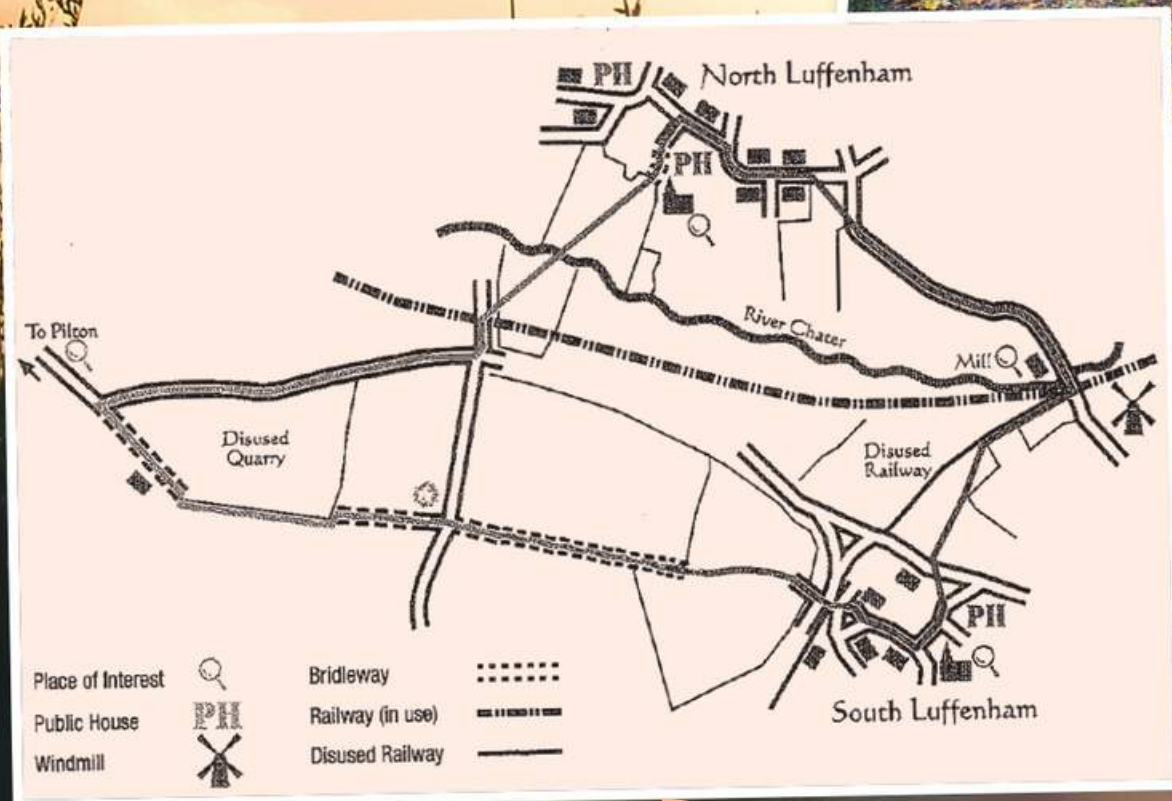
As the road veers to the right, look out for a bridleway to your left. This is the route of our walk. You may wish to make a detour first, to visit Pilton village, about 600 yards further on.

THE WIND, WATER AND ELECTRIC MILLS OF SOUTH LUFFENHAM

Close to the level crossing and railway junction are the remains of three mills. The windmill, now only a shell, was built in 1832. It continued in use until 1908 even though a storm in 1895 had blown its top off.

The watermill on the opposite side of the road also dates from the 19th century. Originally it ground flour, but after 1910 when a steam-driven mill was installed, it concentrated on milling heavier grain such as split beans and maize. It was finally closed in 1948, when the water channel broke and the river's course was altered.

The steam and electric mill was opened in 1892, with water for the steam boilers pumped from the water mill. At its peak, the mill could grind 20 sacks of grain an hour. It was closed in 1927, but the buildings were converted and are still in use as a business premises today.



RUTLAND HERITAGE TRAIL



PILTON

One of Rutland's smallest villages, the mainly stone farmhouses, cottages and barns of Pilton are grouped around the small parish church of St Nicholas.

The church was probably built in the 13th century and was used as a school in the 16th century. A report into the condition of the church in 1584 states that its stained glass windows had suffered as a result. The church was restored during Victorian times and until 1900 had its own curate who lived in the rectory (now known as Willoughby Cottage).

Most of the houses are limestone but some are built of a rose-coloured brick that was manufactured locally. During the 19th century, there was a brickworks along the Pilton Road between the village and North Luffenham, which made the bricks for the building of local railway bridges.



The Boot Inn - South Luffenham

Follow the bridleway past a brick building (an electricity substation that supplied power to the quarry machines) on your right. Carry straight on through a gateway with the field boundary to your left. Pieces of ironstone are still visible in the soil.

Follow the bridleway, climbing slightly uphill and look to your left for clear views of North Luffenham and its church spire. This wide green lane leads to North Luffenham Road.

As you approach the road, the copse to the left hides an ancient earthwork. Could it be a castle mound or a Civil War gun emplacement? The most recent interpretation of the site suggests it may be an ancient garden feature.

Cross the road and continue on the bridleway straight ahead. Stay on the bridleway as it goes between two hedges and then opens out onto an arable field. Carry on straight ahead across the field until the bridleway emerges in South Luffenham next to Foxfoot House.

Turn right and follow the road (over a dismantled railway line, closed in the 1960s) into the centre of the village. Once over the railway bridge, follow the road to the left.

THE WELLAND VIADUCT

Known as the Seaton or Harringworth Viaduct, depending on which side of the Rutland/Northamptonshire border you live, this ¾-mile viaduct carried the London, Midland and Scottish railway line across the low-lying Welland valley. Built between 1875 and 1878, over 2,000 men worked on the viaduct, using an estimated 20 million bricks to create its 82 arches.

(Angle Lane) round to the Square. Take the tarmac pathway ahead (signposted as a footpath) known as Church Lane. It leads alongside a field and over the stream to the east side of the village, emerging opposite a small green and the parish church of St Mary. Turn left and follow the road round past the **The Boot Inn**.

At a fork in the road, take the left-hand route, passing the Old School House on your right. Soon after this, take the tarmac path to the left, passing a large pond, to reach Pinfold Lane. Opposite, a metal gate leads to a footpath across the fields. This grass path is marked at several points by concrete slabs, which are still visible underneath – was this a tramline connected with the Luffenham Quarries and the nearby railway line?

Cross the field, heading to your left until you reach a wooden gate and go through this to walk along a narrow, hedged track (the line of the old disused railway) which opens out as you reach the modern line and Station Road.

To your right are the remains of a disused windmill and as you turn left to follow Station Road over the level crossing (take care!) passing the old train station to the left and Old Mill Farm, a 19th century watermill.

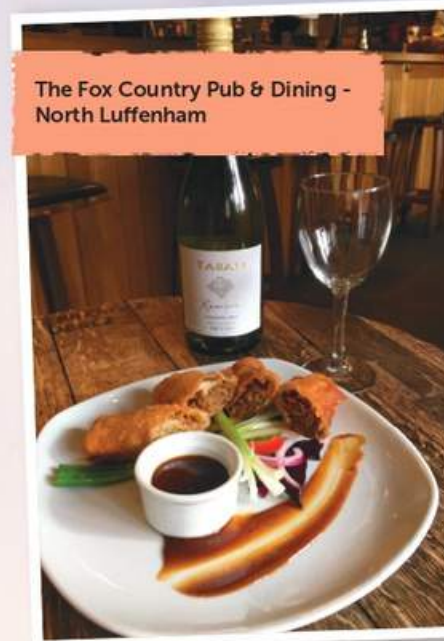
Cross the bridge and follow the road (take care as visibility is poor in some places and cars travel very quickly along this stretch) past a row of brick cottages and the sewage works. After about ½ mile you will see the village sign for North Luffenham. Close to this, a concrete World War II gun emplacement still survives in Digby Farm.

Just past the village sign, take the footpath marked to the left, over a stile into an area of conifer planting. Make your way to the right through the trees (or follow the edge of the field if you prefer) to a stile that brings you onto Digby Road. Turn left here and follow the road to your starting point. Look out for the 18th century farm buildings to your left and as you approach the right-hand bend the Jacobean gateway to Luffenham Hall. Pass the Wesleyan chapel on the right and turn left into Church Street.

Luffenham Hall, dating from the 16th century and known (until the demolition of Old Luffenham Hall) as the Digby Manor House, is on the left. Little can be seen of the building behind the high stone walls, but a stone octagonal tower or gazebo overlooks the road and a peep through the decorative ironwork gates will provide a glimpse of the old stone and timber framed barn built in 1555.

As you pass the gates of Luffenham Hall you come back to your starting point near the parish church.

A little further along is the **The Fox Country Pub & Dining**, a traditional village pub with a contemporary twist, offering a warm welcome, real ales and a tempting seasonal menu (which changes monthly) as well as a delicious Sunday Roast.



The Fox Country Pub & Dining - North Luffenham

CHURCH OF ST MARY, SOUTH LUFFENHAM

Dating to just after the Norman Conquest, the parish church of St Mary contains a memorial to Rose Boswell, the daughter of a 'king of the gypsies'.

She died in 1793 whilst her family were encamped just outside the village near Fosters Bridge. At first the local church wardens refused to bury her in the church but they were overruled by the curate.

A marble slab dedicated to Rose can still be seen in the church, along with a 14th century tomb with an effigy of a member of the Culpepper family.



SAFER WALKING

- Be prepared – wear suitable clothing and sturdy footwear, take refreshments and directions
- Respect the countryside – take care in crops and be considerate of livestock
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RUTLAND HERITAGE TRAIL

FORESTS, MONKS AND PAGANS

FROM BRAUNSTON TO CALDECOTT, LAUNDE TO LYDDINGTON, MUCH OF THE SOUTH-WEST OF RUTLAND WAS, DURING THE MEDIEVAL AGES, COVERED BY THE ANCIENT ROYAL FOREST OF LEIGHFIELD.

DISTANCE: 5 miles.

START & FINISH: Parish Church of All Saints, Braunston.

TERRAIN: Mixture of footpaths and metalled road. Some uphill stretches.

REFRESHMENTS: The Blue Ball, Braunston.

MAP DETAILS: This route is covered by the Ordnance Survey Explorer Series Number 15 (234).



Spanning the river valleys of the Chater and the Gwash and containing the villages of Braunston, Belton and the now lost Leighfield, the Leighfield Forest was the remnant of the much larger Forest of Rutland.

The forest was also home to a religious order. In Brooke, a small priory of Augustinian canons was established, whilst at Braunston there is evidence of much earlier pagan beliefs.

THE ROYAL FOREST OF LEIGHFIELD

During the Middle Ages, large areas of land (not always completely wooded) were set aside as royal hunting grounds. The forests were protected by strict laws and forest officials appointed to govern them.

In Rutland, a large royal forest was established soon after the Norman Conquest. It covered most of the southern half of the modern county, along with a narrow strip of western Leicestershire. By the end of the 15th century however, the Forest of Rutland had shrunk considerably in size. The remaining forest (from Braunston to Caldecott and from Launde to Lyddington) became known as Leighfield Forest, and remained in use until the middle of the 17th century. It was finally disafforested (the forest laws repealed) in around 1630.

Today, most of the trees have disappeared. Only a small remnant of the ancient forest (Prior's Coppice), the parish name and the Leigh, Lambley and Cottage Lodges survive to remind us of the Royal Forest of Leighfield.



THE WALK

Starting in Braunston, from **All Saints'** parish church, head out of the village via Wood Lane, passing the weir on your left and the late 16th century Hall Farmhouse to the right.

Follow the road for about a quarter of a mile until the road bends sharply to the left. Take the dead-end track straight ahead, following it past some farm buildings until you reach a footpath marked to the left. Go through the kissing gate and head diagonally across the field to the hedge-line opposite.

Pass through another kissing gate and footbridge here and walk across this next field towards the edge of **Prior's Coppice**. Pass over a stile. Keeping the trees on your left, start to climb uphill skirting the wood. As the ground starts to level out and you reach a stony farm road, great views of the valley will appear ahead of you.

Cross straight over the farm road to the footpath marked straight ahead. Keeping the hedge to the right, walk downhill until you reach another farm road. Follow this straight ahead. A few yards past a tree plantation, a footpath is marked on the left, leading across the field. Stay on the stone farm road (by permission of Wills Estate) heading round to the left. As the road bends, another road straight ahead is marked as strictly private.

You are now approaching Leigh or Leighfield Lodge, a collection of many interesting buildings – including a late 16th century large stone house, a stone and brick barn (notice the triangular ventilation holes) and the decorative octagonal building in the gardens to the right. The Lodge is place-name evidence for the Leighfield 'town' that once existed in the medieval forest.



Leigh Lodge circa 1910 from the Jack Hart Collection at Rutland County Museum



RUTLAND HERITAGE TRAIL



THE WALK (CONTINUED...)

Alongside the main buildings of Leigh Lodge you will come to a signpost indicating a bridleway to the left and right. If you wish to see the remains of the medieval fishponds and the 16th century house, take a short detour on the right-hand road leading round the back of the buildings. As the road dips, the River Chater meanders through the fields either side, with slight earthworks to the left and an ornamental pond to the right.

Return to the signpost and head left, uphill along the tarmac farm road. A steady climb will bring you to a gateway, flanked by stone pillars, with farm buildings and Leigh Lodge Cottages on the right and **Prior's Coppice** on the left.

Continue along the roadway, now open to cars, through another pair of stone gate pillars and along to the highway. There are good views across to Braunston on your left.

When you reach the roadway, turn right and walk along it until you reach a junction (just under half a mile). Here take the left-hand turn (signposted for Brooke) and head down into the village.

Our route is to the left, but why not take some time to visit **St Peter's Church**, a short way to the right. Used in the 2005 film adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, it's one of Rutland's smallest churches.

PRIOR'S COPPICE

The only substantial remains of the medieval forest, **Prior's Coppice** is now a Nature Reserve run by the **Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust**. Visitors are welcome to explore the various paths in the wood.



ST PETER'S CHURCH, BROOKE

Although the small parish church of St Peter was (unusually) rebuilt during the reign of Elizabeth I, much remains of the earlier Norman building. The low plain tower dates from the 13th century, but you enter through a fine zigzag archway and the north arcade has three Norman arches.

There is much to see inside the church – from the medieval wooden chest to the 12th century font and the Elizabethan oak screen.



THE WALK (CONTINUED...)

Follow the road to the left. Once past the last house of the village, you will start to notice substantial earthworks in the fields on your right. These are thought to be the remains of the medieval priory and the later Noel house and gardens that once stood here.

On the sharp right bend, take the footpath that runs the other side of the hedge and parallel with the road, passing Town Park Farm on your left until the buildings of the present-day Brooke Priory come into view on the right. The path turns left here and skirts the field with the hedge on your right. Head towards the far end of the field, where you cross the waters by way of a footbridge on your right then onto a stile that takes you out onto a wide green lane.

Cross the lane and over the stile opposite and heading to the left make for another stile in the hedge-line. Once over the stile turn to the right, following the grass strip along the hedge-line. As you continue, with the **River Chater** to your right, you will come to another stile into another field. Continue through this field – the sewage works can be seen and heard (but hopefully not smelt!) to the right.

Continue straight ahead now, through the field gateways, until you can see the houses of Braunston ahead and to the right of you. In the final field, head for the right-hand corner, where a stepping stone will take you over a small stream and then a fence into Panter's Lane. This is a right of way leading past back gardens and along a driveway to take you back into Braunston, emerging opposite the church.

Cross the small bridge over the **River Gwash** to return to your starting point. You may now wish to explore 12th century **All Saints' Church** before enjoying the refreshments offered at the village pub, **The Blue Ball**.

BROOKE PRIORY

A small priory of Augustinian Canons, a dependent house or cell of the abbey at Kenilworth, was founded at Brooke in the mid-1100s. Today, 'Brooke Priory' is a much later brick house. It incorporates some remains of the mansion built on the medieval priory site when the parish was bought by the Noel family in 1549. In the gardens, there is an octagonal dovecote which was once the Porter's Lodge. A medieval 'reliquary' (a casket for religious objects) was found in the modern **Brooke Priory** in 1805. It is now on display at **Rutland County Museum** in Oakham.

THE BRAUNSTON SHEELA-NA-GIG

Outside Braunston's parish church, alongside the wall of its western tower, stands a small stone carving of a naked woman with prominent features. What its history is no-one knows, but it's believed to be a 'sheela-na-gig', an ancient pagan fertility symbol, possibly indicating that the church was built on an ancient pagan site. Until 1920, this pagan idol was being used as a step with its features face down.



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RUTLAND HERITAGE TRAIL

MYSTERIOUS MAZES AND VANISHED VILLAGES



DISTANCE: 5½ miles (approximately)

START & FINISH: The Maze in Wing (signposted)

TERRAIN: Mostly a mixture of footpaths and bridleways across fields and stretches of road. Short walk along A6003 with two crossings of this busy main road.

REFRESHMENTS: The King's Arms, Wing

The Horse & Jockey, Manton

MAP DETAILS: This route is covered by the Ordnance Survey Explorer Series Numbers 15 (234)

ALLOW TWO TO THREE HOURS FOR THIS CIRCULAR WALK, ALLOWING MORE TIME IF YOU WISH TO EXPLORE THE VILLAGES OF WING, MANTON AND PRESTON.

This circular walk to the south of Rutland Water takes in the ancient turf maze in Wing, the villages of Manton and Preston and gives walkers a glimpse of the long-lost medieval village of Martinthorpe. Find out more in *Discover Rutland's Deserted Settlements* on page 52.

THE WALK

Starting at Wing maze, head left towards the village then take the left onto Morcott Road. Follow this road until, just before **The King's Arms** take Middle Street on your right. Turn left at the end onto Bottom Street and take the footpath on your right as the road bends left.

Climb the stile and as you begin making your way across a paddock, head over to the left and look for an old stile and a waymark post in the fence ahead. After you cross the stile, turn right and keep to the edge of the field as you continue down the hill. When you near the bottom of the hill, a wooden bridge over the River Chater should come into view.

Cross the bridge and immediately bear left. Look for a gap in the hedgerow where you should find an old gate post and a waymark post. Passing through the gap will bring you out into another pasture field. Head straight across the middle of the field to the opposite corner, where you will find a wooden field gate alongside a stile. Pass over the stile and ahead of you will be a brick arch railway bridge, but in front of that is a hand gate, go through the gate, onto the track and under the bridge.

After the bridge, look for a footpath on your right that goes between the railway line and a brick tower. Take this path. On your right you can see across the railway line to Manton Junction where the railway works and tunnel entrance are visible. The path passes along the back of a barn and onto a drive before turning right along the side of an arable field and coming out onto a tarmac road.

This road leads into Manton and onto Lyndon Road. Now turn left and walk along Lyndon Road towards Manton Top and the junction with the A6003. Cross over with care and make for the Bridleway marked opposite.

The bridleway begins as a stony farm track. Pass through the double field gates and follow a double line of trees across the ridge and furrow (a sign of medieval ploughing) until you reach a dry-stone wall

and a pair of metal gates. You will see the newly renovated Martinthorpe House (formerly known as 'Old Hall Farm') ahead of you. **Gunthorpe Hall** can be seen across the valley to your right.

If you wish, you can examine the remains of Martinthorpe medieval village (the bridleway continues straight on past the earthworks and building to reach the remains of a 17th century carriage road). A panel containing more information about the village and **Martinthorpe Hall** is located near to the stone building.

To continue the walk, turn left at the dry-stone wall and walk downhill towards Fox Covert. Keep the wall to your right as you follow the footpath through a gate and onto the wooded path. The path leads out into open fields, keep the hedge on your left and continue straight on towards the spire of Preston church, which is visible ahead.

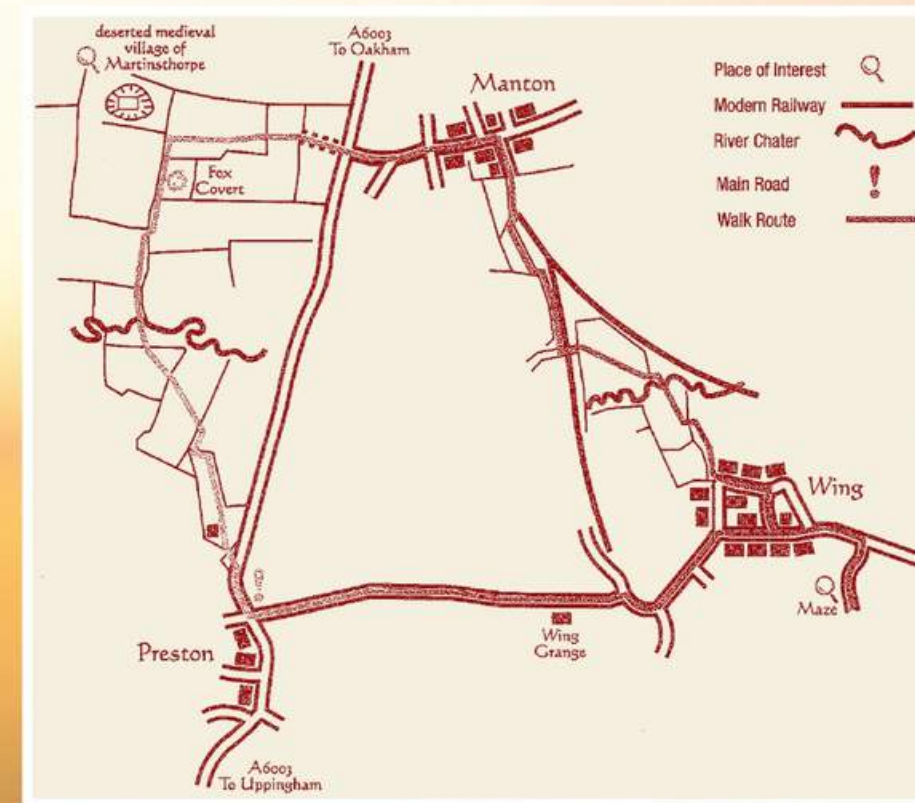
You will come to a stone bridge that crosses the Chater. After crossing the bridge, go through the gate and bear left. Pass through a field gate, then head straight ahead through a gap in the hedge, bear immediately right towards a stile. In the next field, head uphill to the far corner where, when you cross the stile, you will find yourself back on the A6003.

Walk along the verge to the outskirts of Preston, cross over with care and take the turning towards Wing. Follow this road past **Wing Grange** (remember to face oncoming traffic) to a junction. Turn right and climb uphill for the final ¼ mile back into Wing. As you reach the edge of the village, you may notice the earthworks in the field to the right – possible remains of a medieval village.

Continue through the village back past **The King's Arms**, turn right into Glaston Road and to **Wing Maze** where you started.

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RUTLAND HERITAGE TRAIL #7

CANALS & CANTERBURY, WATER & WESTMINSTER

DISTANCE: Approximately 11 miles (8½ if you take the shortcut)

START & FINISH: Market Overton. Parking along Thistleton (Teigh) Road along from parish church and The Black Bull.

TERRAIN: Mostly a mixture of footpaths and bridleways across fields and stretches of metalled road.

REFRESHMENTS: Market Overton – The Black Bull, 01572 767677

Whissendine – The White Lion, 01664 474233

Langham – The Wheatsheaf, 01572 869105

MAP DETAILS: This route is covered by the Ordnance Survey Explorer Series Numbers 15 (234) and 247.

ALLOW AROUND FIVE HOURS FOR THIS DELIGHTFUL CIRCULAR WALK THAT TAKES IN THE VILLAGES OF MARKET OVERTON, WHISSENDINE AND LANGHAM; ALLOW LONGER IF YOU WANT TO EXPLORE THE VILLAGES.

In the north-west of Rutland, close to the border with Leicestershire, a 200 year-old waterway winds its way across the countryside. Boats no longer travel along the Oakham to Melton canal – parts of it have dried up and been filled in – but its memory lingers on in the sudden appearance of rectangular stretches of water across the fields and the old buildings and canal names that survive in the local villages.

Close by sits the ancient village of Langham, whose lands and church were once the interest and property of the great Abbey of Westminster. The village was the birthplace of Simon de Langham, the 14th century Archbishop of Canterbury who, as first a monk and then abbot of Westminster Abbey, is said to have helped rebuild the Langham church.

THE WALK

Start in Market Overton near The Black Bull pub and parish church. Walk out of the village, downhill on the Teigh Road. After ½ mile you will see a group of buildings on the left which were once part of the canal wharf. Continue, following the zigzag of the road until you reach a junction. Right is the small village of Teigh. The churchyard of Holy Trinity church is the burial place of Anthony Jenkinson, the 16th century explorer and first Englishman to visit central Asia. The Old Rectory was the filming location for Mr Collins' parsonage in the BBC's 1995 *Pride & Prejudice*.

Turn left at the junction and then almost immediately take the bridleway marked on the right. This wide green lane and farm track leads to Whissendine. Walk until you reach an unmanned level crossing. Cross with care and go through a gate into the gardens of Teigh Gatehouse. Go out through a gate with brick pillars and continue along the lane – now a slightly firmer surface. As you walk the two or so miles to its end, look out for a WWII pillbox and then, peeping through the hedges on the right, the earthworks of a medieval moated site. This may be the remains of the 14th century Moorhall manor.

At the end of the lane, turn left onto the road and walk into the village. You will come to a junction with Main Street alongside the parish church. Turn left here (a right turn will bring you into Whissendine and refreshment possibilities!) and follow the road out of the village. Look for a bridleway on the right as the road bends sharply to the left.



If you wish you could take a short cut now. Follow the road to Ashwell, missing out Langham and reducing the length of the walk by about 2½ miles. You can rejoin the main walk at Ashwell crossroads.

Walking along the left-hand side of the field, continue as far as a field entrance where the path swaps to the left-hand side of the hedge line. Carry on to the end of this second field to where a bridleway is signposted both to your left and right.

Turn right following the edge of the field, through another field entrance until you spot a double stile in the hedge line to your left. Cross over this and walk straight ahead, with the hedge line to your left. The spire of Langham church is now visible ahead.

Follow the grass path and cross a footbridge to another hedge line. Now follow the footpath round to the right until you reach a footbridge. Turn left here, over the bridge and head towards the right-hand edge of the field and then towards the church spire. Soon you will reach a kissing gate that leads you onto a clear footpath around the edge of the field and through a metal gate down into Langham, onto Manor Lane.

Turn right here, and then left into Orchard Road. This emerges into Well Street, turn left and walk to the church of St. Peter and St. Paul. Pass this, taking a footpath to the right that leads out onto Burley Road. Now turn left and look for a footpath to the left.

Walk a short way along this tarmac path, until you reach a footpath marked to the left into the field alongside the sewage works. Follow this footpath around the edge of the field until you come to a footbridge on the left. Cross this and turn right. Continue to a marker post and then head straight across the field to reach a kissing gate and Ashwell Road.

Turn right here and follow this quiet road into the village and a junction. Turn left here and look for the well on your left before continuing to the crossroads. The stone structure encasing the well was erected by the Reverend William Butterfield, a Victorian vicar of Ashwell, possibly on the site of a medieval well. Look out for the inscription above the arch.

At the crossroads (rejoin the walk here if you have taken the short-cut), turn right and continue until you reach Braeside on the left. Here a narrow kissing gate takes you onto a footpath – the final stretch across fields back to Market Overton.

The Wharf

This group of buildings was once part of the Market Overton canal wharf. At the beginning of the 19th century they consisted of a private house, stables, workers' cottages, a three-storey warehouse (which has been converted into cottages) and a maltings. They belonged to Thomas Bennet, a local farmer, beer retailer, maltster, coal and corn merchant.

Oakham to Melton Canal

Built at the end of the 1700s, the 15½ mile long Oakham to Melton canal opened in 1802. Starting in Melton Mowbray, the canal wound its way eastwards across the countryside, round Saxby and Stapleford Park, close by the village of Edmondthorpe and then to Market Overton. There it turned southward, passing through Barrow and Ashwell to come to an end in Oakham, where Wharflands House (part of Oakham School) is named in its memory.

The canal was designed as part of a water navigation system that would link Leicester and Stamford, but the stretch between Oakham and Stamford was never built. The Oakham to Melton stretch had other problems too – it leaked, parts dried up in hot weather and the construction of the Melton to Stamford railway line in the 1840s brought its useful life to an end.

Today, large sections of the canal have silted up and disappeared, but some parts are still visible and clues to its existence can be found in the buildings, names and structures in the north-west of the county.



RUTLAND HERITAGE TRAIL #7



St Peter and St Paul, Langham

The earliest parts of Langham parish church date back to the 13th century, but there also appears to have been a major rebuilding of the main body of the church in the 14th century. This might be connected with the rise of Simon de Langham, a local man who, in the mid-1300s, became first Abbot of Westminster, then Archbishop of Canterbury and finally a Cardinal. He is said to have made several donations to the church in his place of birth.

Inside the church, look for the 14th century stone font and a 15th century alabaster grave slab engraved with the figures of John Clarke and his wives.

Market Overton

The settlement at Market Overton probably dates back to Roman times; many Roman artefacts have been found in the village and the earthworks to the north and east of the church are thought to be Roman in origin.

The village was important in Saxon times too; an early pagan cemetery to the south-east produced many fine grave goods, and the church tower dates to the 10th century.

There are references to a market here from the early 12th century – hence the name – and the village green probably marks the location of the medieval marketplace. Today, it is home to the village stocks and whipping post!

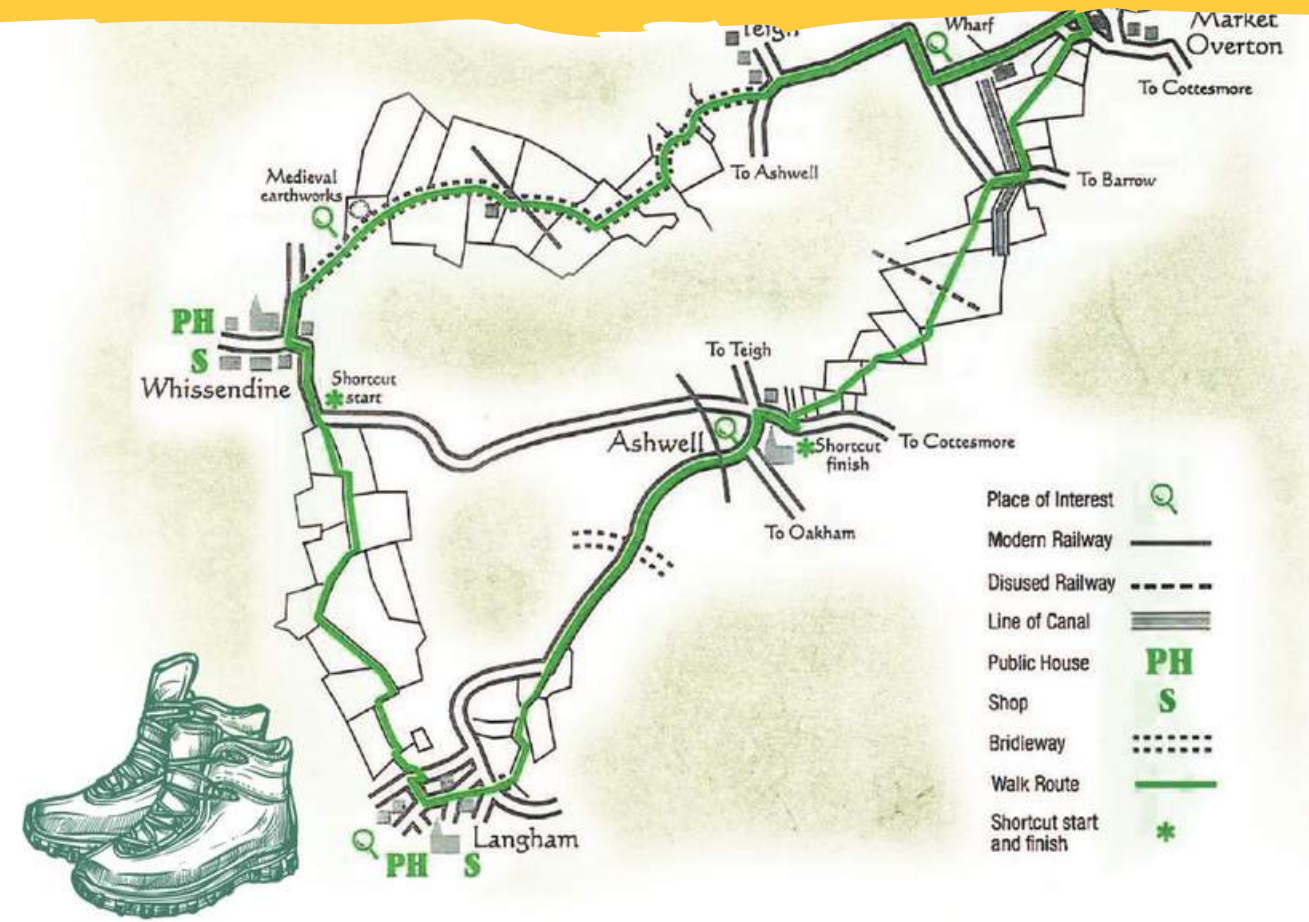
Continue along the Main Street, from the village green and turn left into Bowling Green Lane and you will arrive at a small enclosed quiet area. This is the village pinfold, historically an area for impounding stray animals, and was restored by the parish council. To the south of the village you will find The Lodge Trust Country Café, with children's play area and country park.



Head to the right across the fields, following the clear yellow waymarking signs. The first field contains some interesting earthworks, old enclosures and possible building foundations. The next two fields contain a well-preserved ridge and furrow (a sign of medieval ploughing). Continue through a kissing gate, still heading across the fields. At a gap in the hedge line, cross over a footbridge and head, slightly to the left, towards the field boundary and a sleeper bridge. Once across the sleeper bridge, there is a Waymark on your right. Walk diagonally across this next field, over a drainage channel, to a gap in the hedge line.

Here is the line of a dismantled railway (now a grassy lane) on which Rocks By Rail: The Living Ironstone Museum is located. Unfortunately, as pretty as it looks, you can't walk this route because it's private land, but do plan a visit to the museum another time. Cross over the lane and head back out into a field. Walk diagonally across two more fields, over a footbridge and then through a kissing gate to reach the road.

This quiet back road leads to Barrow. Turn right and follow it for a short way until you see a footpath Waymark to your left. Cross over the stile into the field. To your left you can see the remnants of the Oakham to



Melton canal – a deep hollow, stretches of water and hawthorn boundaries. Walk alongside it until you reach a stile and footbridge on the right.

Cross over and follow the left-hand edge of the field round to a stile and another footbridge. Now head across the field to a gap in the hedge line that takes you onto a grass path which is the final uphill walk into Market Overton, emerging on Berry Bushes. Turn right to reach the village green with its stocks and whipping post.

Turn left, past the village shop to return to your starting point near the church.

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For more inspiration, visit discover-rutland.co.uk

