

Illustrated book of
More Walks around Gayton
Northamptonshire



PRICE £1.50

**All proceeds to
Gayton Church
Heritage Trust**

More Walks around Gayton



Foreword

This little book is a sequel to 'Walks around Gayton', published in 2006, a collection of 12 walks all starting at Fiveways in the village centre. It was compiled by members of the 'Gayton Walkers' group, which continues to meet twice a month to explore the footpaths of rural Northamptonshire.

Since publishing 'Walks around Gayton', we have built up a catalogue of some 50 walks that start from other villages in the county, all of them no more than a half hour's drive from Gayton.

For this sequel, we have selected 12 walks that start from Gayton's neighbouring villages, all within a 5 mile radius of Fiveways. They are 3 to 5½ miles in length, amounting to some 50 miles of walking along bridleways and footpaths, some of them well maintained and named routes, like Nene Way, Midshires Way, Knightley Way, Grafton Way, Grand Union Canal Towpath, others little used and poorly maintained, but nevertheless public Rights of Way.

These ancient trails are a precious, underused and undervalued asset, gateway to a marvellous rural landscape, that is unspectacular and understated but quite varied and scenic none the less. We live in a noisy, overcrowded island and yet it never ceases to amaze me and my fellow walkers just how quiet and peaceful and remote from the hustle and bustle it can feel when out walking in our county's countryside. Often the only sounds to be heard are birdsong and the whistling wind and on a still winter day, even those are absent!

Once again my thanks are due to Wendy for her fine hand drawn maps and her expertise in putting the booklet together and to my friends and colleagues in 'Gayton Walkers' for their company and support.

Barry Steer, August 2010.



Walk 1: Hulcote, old school building.



Walk 2: Pattishall to Bugbrooke.



Walk 5: River Nene at Kislingbury



Walk 8: Old railway bridge Towcester



Walk 9: Cold Higham church

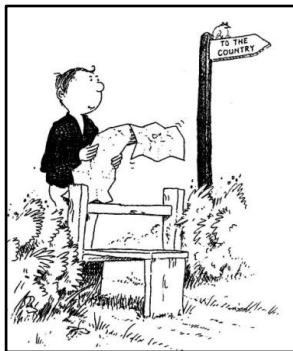


Walk 11: Upper Harlestone

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All distances are approximate



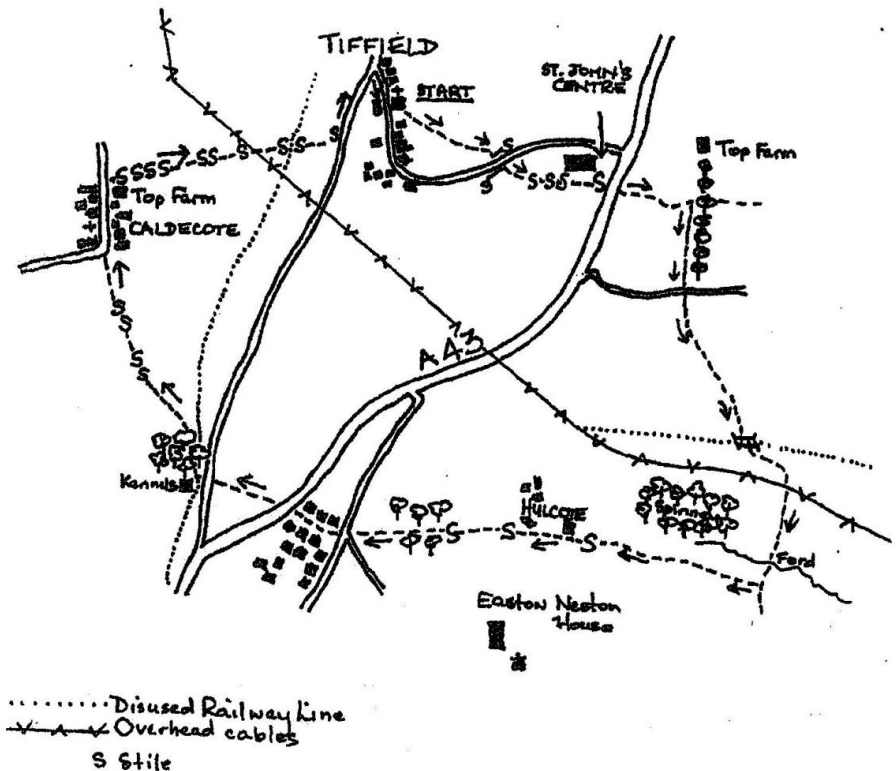
1. Tiffield- Hulcote – Caldecote, 5.1 miles.

The walk begins at Tiffield church. Follow the “Footpath to Shutlanger” sign, through the wooden gate, across the church yard, then over a stile and into a grassy field. Turn diagonally right and head south east across the field, following the well marked path, to St John’s Road, leading out of Tiffield, uphill to the A43. Cross a stile into the road, then another stile on the other side of the road and continue along the same path, in the same direction. At the end of the field, cross a stile, follow the fence to your left to the next stile, that takes you over the fence, into a cultivated field, with a hedge to your right, at the end of which you cross yet another stile into the grounds of the St. John’s Centre, with its massive complex of buildings away to your left. Then you come to the busy dual carriageway A43, which you need to cross very carefully. There is a stile leading onto the embankment, a gap in the central barrier and on the other side, follow the footpath sign through a gap in the hedge into a cultivated field, which you cross, still walking in the same direction, towards a long narrow band of trees running along the whole length of the field from Top Farm, to your left.

When you reach the trees, the footpath continues straight ahead through the trees, but you turn right and follow the bridleway that goes due south in a straight line with the trees to your left. At the end of the trees you cross a narrow road and continue along the bridleway, which is now a wide, hard gravel track. The direction gradually changes from south to south east and you walk under a dismantled railway line through an ancient brick arch. The path continues running south east, and you pass under some HT cables, that sizzle loudly with live electricity. It then turns south and you come to a ford through a stream, but you avoid getting your feet wet, by crossing on an antiquated narrow plank bridge (see below left).



At this point you leave the bridleway and turn right, through a gate and into a grassy meadow on a foot path that heads due west to the estate village of Hulcote, with the hedge to your left and Nettle Spinney to your right on the far side of the meadow. At the end of the meadow, cross a stile into Hulcote. You are now about half way round the circuit. Walk through the village past houses to your left and a green to your right. When you reach a road, turn left, opposite a tiny building with the inscription “School 1816” (see above right), and walk out of the village. Turn right off the road after a short way, onto a signed



footpath that goes through trees to another estate road, then across a stile into a meadow. Cross the meadow to another stile and go across to yet another stile leading into a copse. On the other side of the copse is a stone wall that runs around the Easton Neston estate and you pass through a narrow doorway, right next to the main gates to the drive that leads up to

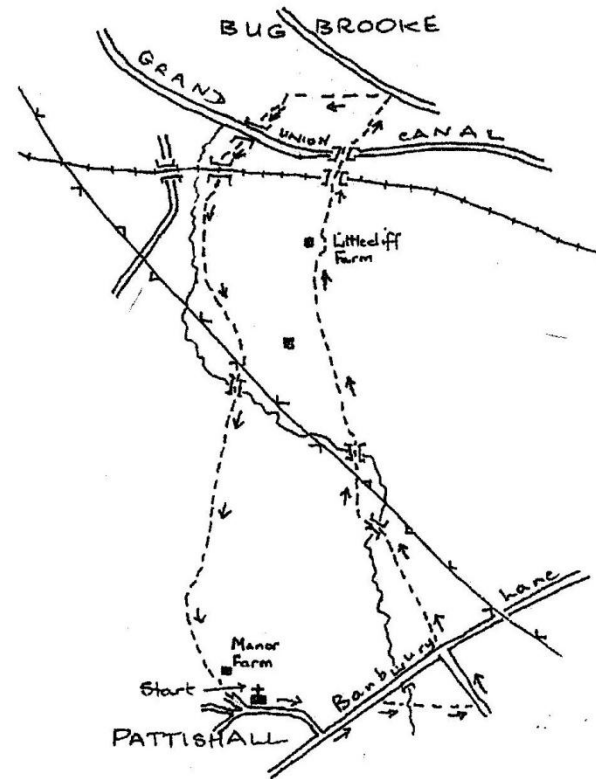
Easton Neston House. Cross the road that runs from the A43 to Towcester and walk between the new houses and across a green to the A43. Once again, take great care crossing this busy trunk route. On the other side, the path goes left up the steep embankment to a gate and into a cultivated field. The path across the field is well marked and heads west to the lane that links the A43 to Tiffield.

Go through the farm gate and cross the lane to a drive leading to boarding kennels. The drive turns right and passes by the kennels to a gate leading into a small copse. Go through the copse to a stile and into a grassy field, which you cross to another stile, leading into a large cultivated field. The path then runs along the right hand edge of the field, heading NW, with a hedge to your right. At the end of the field you cross two more stiles into the next field and continue in the same direction across another field and two more stiles, then through a gate and onto the road through Caldecote. Walk through the village and as you leave it, shortly after Top Farm, on your right, you take the footpath going right towards Tiffield. Cross a stile into a paddock, then another stile into a vegetable garden, then another stile into a narrow field. Walk straight across to another stile into a big field and walk up hill in the same direction to another stile, followed shortly by yet another. Cross the field to the next stile, set in a tall hedge. At this point you can see the tower of Tiffield church between trees about a half mile ahead of you. Walk down the left side of this field, through a wide gate and down to another dismantled railway line, which you enter over a stile. A sign tells you this is now a "Wildlife Conservation Area". Exit over another stile and walk down to a muddy gateway on your left. Go through it into the last field and walk down to the 27th and last stile and onto the same lane from the A43 to Tiffield. The path ends here, so you turn left and follow the lane into Tiffield, where you turn right and return to the starting point.

2. Pattishall to Bugbrooke 4.4 miles

The start point is Pattishall church. Walk down the hill to Banbury Lane, turn left and after about 500 yards take the footpath to the right. Cross the stile, follow the hedge on your left down to the wooden bridge across a stream. On the other side, climb up the grassy slope and cross the field

diagonally to your right uphill to a stile that takes you into Pound Lane, a pretty, narrow lane, with grassy verges and trees on either side. Turn left and walk down to Banbury Lane. Go straight across, through a gate and onto the footpath to Bugbrooke. At the end of the first field, you cross a stile and follow the path along the side of a stream, to your left, which after a short way you cross on a wooden bridge. The path now runs along the left side of the stream – the path is dead straight, but the stream meanders. At the end of the field, you go through a wide metal gate and at



the same time pass under sizzling HT cables. The stream now bends back towards the path and you cross it again, over a footbridge. The path leaves the stream which continues along the valley away to the left, whereas the path begins to climb, across a grassy field, following a hedge to the right for a short way. At the end of the field you go over a stile set in a fence, and continue in the same direction across a very big cultivated field up a long hill that gets gradually steeper. You pass an old stone barn on your left and at the top of the hill you can pause for a moment and contemplate the view ahead of you – the main railway

line, the Grand Union Canal and beyond that the village of Bugbrooke and still further away, its mill.

You now start downhill, still crossing the same cultivated field, then along a hedge to your right. After a few yards, you go over a stile in the hedge and ahead of you is Littleliff Farm, an abandoned stone farm house with

outhouses. Walk down to the right of these buildings and cross a stile and wooden bridge into the next field, which is cultivated. Go around the left side of the field and down to the modern pedestrian bridge over the railway line. In stark contrast an old brick bridge takes you across the canal and you walk up a tree-lined path to the first houses of Bugbrooke (left).



Just before the houses, turn left on a footpath across a field to a copse. The path goes through the copse and out over a stile into another field. Cross the field and another stile, then go left on a wide track, past the cricket pitch on your right, through a gate, then along a broad grassy path, with a stream to your right, back down to the canal. This time you go under the canal, through a tunnel, then under the railway line through another tunnel (left).



Continue on the wide hard track that bends to the right towards a road. Just before the road, turn left and follow the path along the edge of a cultivated field to your left, with the stream on your right. The path follows the stream and at the end of this field you go through a gap in the hedge and over a footbridge across a ditch into the next field, which is the same very

large one you crossed earlier. The stream now bends to the right, away from the path, then back to the left, and runs parallel with the path for a while. You pass under the HT cables again, then a footbridge takes you across the stream. The path now bears a few degrees to the right and continues almost in a straight line back to Pattishall.

After the stream, you begin to climb again, up a long, quite steep hill. You cross a stile into the next field then keep on climbing. At the top of the hill, you reach a wide metal gate, the highest point of the route and a good place to pause and take in the all round view. Due South, ahead of you

and not far away is the tower of Pattishall church. To the SE is Eastcote. Behind you to the North is Bugbrooke, the railway line, the canal, the M1 and on the horizon Duston and its hospital buildings. Go through the gate, cross a field, then through a maze of big yellow road building machinery, apparently left to rust away and out onto a path that takes you past Manor Farm and back to the start point.

3. Milton Malsor to Collingtree, 4 miles.



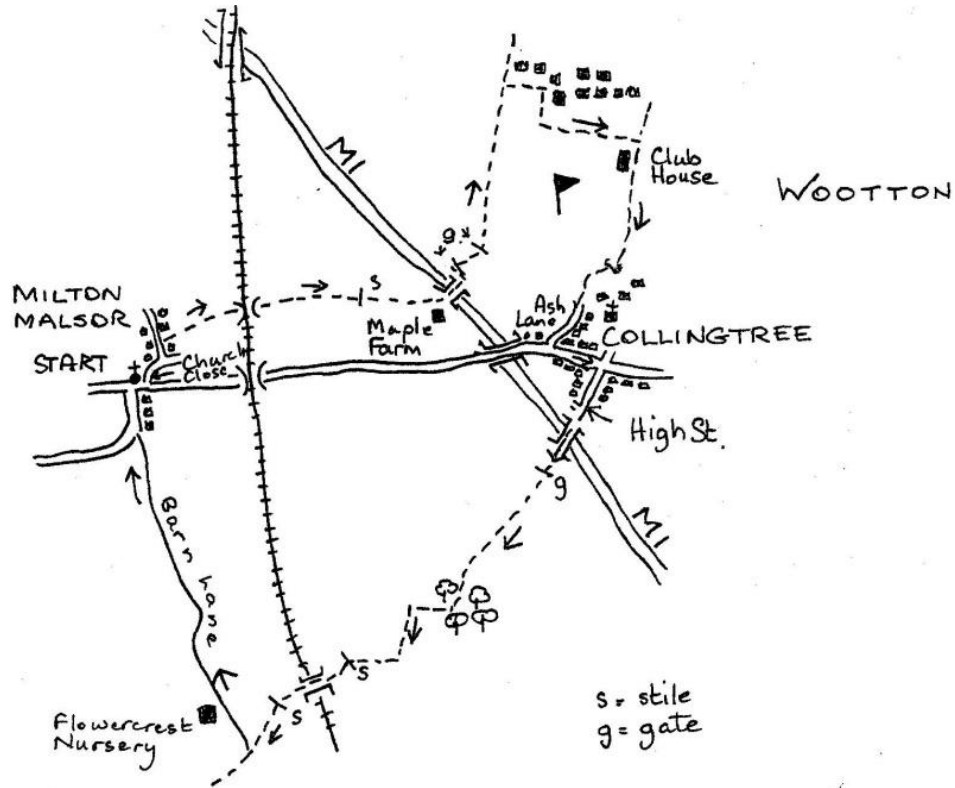
The walk begins at Milton Malsor church (left). Walking away from the centre of Milton along the Collingtree Road, turn left into Church Close. Follow this road round to the right, then go left into Stockwell Way. Follow the footpath sign pointing right between two rows of garages and then onto a narrow path towards the railway line. Almost immediately, the path goes off at 45 degrees to the left, cutting across a field, to a tunnel under the railway line. The path continues across a cultivated field, then runs to the right of a hedge, down to a stile, which you cross and continue walking across a grassy field towards Maple Farm and the M1. You pass the buildings of Maple Farm on your right and join a wide track that curls round to the left then right and

across a bridge that spans the M1.

On the other side, ignore the foot path going off to the right, instead turn left and walk along to a swing gate that takes you into a large grassy field, from where there are extensive views across to Wootton. Turn right and follow the hedge on your right for a short way, then go through a gate in the hedge that leads onto a path skirting the edge of Collingtree golf course. Continue in the same direction with the hedge now to your left and another, shielding you from the golf course, to your right, until you reach the NW tip of the golf course. Then turn right, continuing to skirt the golf course. The path is now open and made up and you need to be careful not to get run over by a speeding golf buggy. The path follows the northern edge of the course, bending to the right then left and then straight

past a number of large houses on your left, towards the club house. Before you reach the club house the foot path leaves the made up golf buggy track and continues through trees, with the houses still to your left, onto a private road that leads to the car park and club house. Turn right on this road, go past the club house on your right and where the road bends left you continue straight ahead along a path that leads into the village of Collingtree.

The path emerges onto the end of a cul-de-sac, which you cross and



continue between houses. The path then turns left and after a few yards, you turn right and go through a rusty iron gate, set in a rusty iron fence. You are now on a broad gravel path that leads into Ash Lane. At the end of Ash Lane, turn left on the main road through the village. Walk down to the High Street, turn right and walk to the end, where you will see a sign on your left 'Foot path to Blisworth'. Follow this path onto a bridge and across the M1 again. On the other side of the bridge, one path goes left

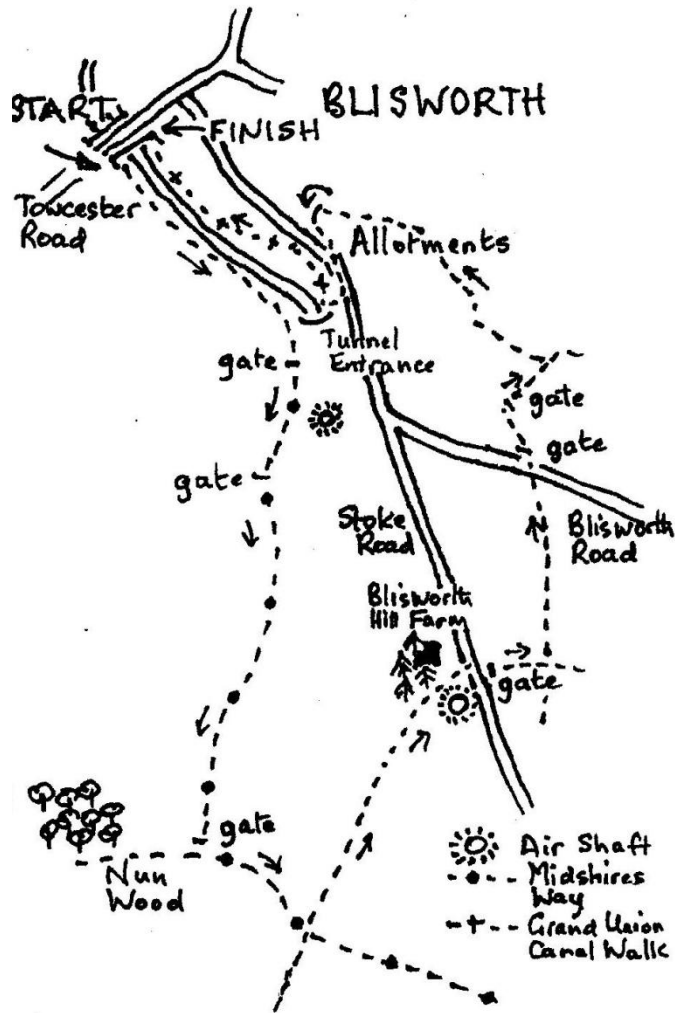
running parallel with the M1, but you take the path that goes straight ahead. After a short distance you go past an iron gate, through a gap on your left and onto a broad track that runs along the edge of a cultivated field on your right, with a hedge to your left. At the end of the field the track crosses a clearing in a copse, then does a Z bend, right, left and right again, then it climbs gently, with the hedge still to your left, for about 200 yards. At the top of the rise, the path goes through a gap between two hedges and turns left. To your left is a tall hedge and deep ditch, to your right a large cultivated field and ahead a copse. Walk along the path towards the copse and after about 200 yards you come to an arrow marker on a post pointing right across the field. Follow the path to the other side of this field to a stile where you should pause and take in the view.

Just ahead of you, at the end of the next field is the Northampton branch railway line. Beyond that on a distant hill top is Gayton, you can make out the church tower. Below that are the M1 and the main West Coast railway line. To your left, on the horizon is Blisworth and to your right the spire of Milton church and beyond that Northampton. Cross the grassy field to the bridge across the railway line, then cross another grassy field to a stile. Ahead of you and below you across yet another pasture is Barn Lane. Turn 45 degrees left and walk down to a stile in the corner of the field that takes you into Barn Lane. Turn right and walk along the lane, past the Flowercrest Nursery on your left. Continue along Barn lane to Milton Malsor and the church which stands at the junction of Barn Lane and Collingtree Road.

4. Blisworth, along the Midshires Way towards Stoke Bruerne, 4.2 miles.

The walk begins in Blisworth, where the Towcester Road crosses the Grand Union Canal. Go down the steps next to the bridge on the west bank and the opposite side of the Towcester Road to the old mill building and Gayton Road. Take the footpath towards the tunnel entrance. For a few hundred yards the path is a hard, well-maintained surface, and runs through trees close to the canal. You then pass through a new and solid swing gate onto grass. Cross the grassy meadow which starts climbing away from the canal, visible below at the bottom of a steep, tree-covered

bank. As you climb higher, you have a good view of the canal in both directions, bending sharply behind you, back towards Blisworth and ahead of you disappearing into trees as it nears the entrance to the Blisworth-Stoke Bruerne tunnel (opened in 1805). As the trees thicken, you lose sight of the canal and around this point you go through another new wooden swing gate, then turn left and follow the path as it swings right around the edge of a field, with a high hedge on your left.



Some 300 yards after the gate, your path joins the Midshires Way, (identified by its double acorn motif fixed to every gate along the way), where it crosses over the canal from Stoke Road, just after the tunnel entrance and turns left through a galvanised metal gate. Go through the gate, with the hedge now on your right, across a grassy field. The path is running parallel with the line of the tunnel and Stoke Road, both to your left. Ahead of you, about 30 degrees to the left you can see a brick tower,

which is the first of a series of airshafts from the tunnel. At the end of the

field you walk between two hedges and there is a stream below you to the left. Just before the tunnel's first airshaft, the path bears right, heading away from the tunnel. You go through a wooden gate and walk across a grassy meadow with a hedge to your right and the stream and other hedge still on your left. The grass then narrows down again, as the two hedges converge and you cross another small stream running into the one on your left. At this point the Midshires Way bears left and another footpath goes off to the right through a gate. The airshaft tower is now away to your left. Continue along the Midshires Way still following the stream on your left. Go through an iron gate and continue straight ahead, through another iron gate into a small copse. The Way is often very muddy along this stretch, churned up by massive tractor wheels and horses. After the copse the path emerges into a large grassy field and runs uphill along the right side with the hedge to your right and a wire fence to the left. At the top of the rise and the end of the field the path goes through an iron gate and turns 90 degrees left. Pause here to look back at the view. Blisworth is straight ahead and Blisworth Hill Farm is at about 2 o'clock. About 200 yards to your left is Nun Wood. Continue along the Midshires Way with a cultivated field to your right and the hedge to your left. After a while the path bends right 45 degrees, then slightly left again. About 200 yards before the end of this field, there is a wooden plank bridge, set in the hedge to your left. Cross the bridge, leaving the Midshires Way and joining a footpath going straight across a cultivated field.

On the other side of the field about half a mile away is a clump of tall conifers and the buildings of Blisworth Hill Farm; walk straight towards them. You come to a concrete drive that leads from the farm buildings to Stoke Road. Cross the drive at the point where it turns 90 degrees, coming from the farm (ahead of you) and going to Stoke Road (to your right). Walk through a gateway, with a stile on the right, then through a second gateway which leads into a grassy field.



About 200 yards ahead of you, on a mound is one of the airshaft towers (left).

Walk to the left of the airshaft and you emerge onto Stoke Road through the stone pillars and across the cattle grid that marks the entrance and drive to the farm house. Cross Stoke Road and take a foot path just a few yards to your right. Go past a wide green steel gate onto a hard wide track. After 150 yards, leave the track and go left onto a footpath that follows a line of telegraph poles across a cultivated field. On the other side of the field go through a gap in the hedge into the next field and follow the edge of the field with the hedge on your left. At the end of the hedge you reach Blisworth Road.

Cross it and go through a gate into the next field and continue with the hedge still to your left. In the far corner you go through a broken gate; the hedge is now to your right and to your left is a wooden fence. At the end of the fence, you go through a gap in the hedge and into a very big cultivated field that stretches almost a mile to the right and a quarter mile to the left. Cross the field on the marked path, and on the other side, about 200 yards across, is a post with a number of arrow markers, offering you a choice of routes – straight ahead leads to Courteenhall Road and then Milton, but you go left towards Blisworth. Walk along the right hand edge of the big field and at the bottom right hand corner you go through a gap in the hedge and then straight ahead past a way marker post with the hedge now on your left. After 20 yards, go left over a stile into a paddock. Cross it to a stile a little to your right, then cross the next paddock to another stile a bit further right. From here you can see Blisworth below you, at about 45 degrees to the left of your path which continues straight ahead between two fences, across to a hedge. Go through a gap in the hedge, then through a gap in the next hedge on your left. Walk along the edge of the field towards the houses, with the hedge to your right. When you reach the houses, turn left and walk down to the allotments, keeping the fences of the houses to your right. The path leads in to the allotments then turns left and goes through the middle of them to Stoke Road. Turn left on Stoke Road and after about 200 yards, turn right on to a broad track, which goes across the top of the canal tunnel. Do not cross the tunnel, but turn immediately right after leaving Stoke Road and walk down the slope that leads to the tunnel entrance and the east bank of the canal. You are now back on the Midshires Way and you follow the path and the canal back to the Towcester Road.

5. Kislingbury to Bugbrooke 4.5 miles

The walk begins in Kislingbury at the Sun Inn. The first mile and a half are along the Nene Way towards Nether Heyford. Follow the Nene Way marker opposite the Sun Inn and walk along Mill Road to the end, continue straight ahead along Willow View, past the Kislingbury Baptist Chapel on your left. At the end of the road the Nene Way continues in the same direction, through a swing gate, past a paddock, through another gate and across a field to another gate, across the next field and through a gate, leading to the M1. Go through a tunnel under the M1, then continue straight ahead across three more fields – field, gate and footbridge, field, gate, footbridge, gate, field - to Bugbrooke Mill. The path bears left before the massive sprawl of the mill complex and skirts around its south side, along the edge of a field with a hedge to the right. Go through a swing gate and cross the road leading into the mill. Walk along a drive leading through the grounds to another swing gate. At this point a path goes off to the left towards Bugbrooke, but the Nene Way, bears right towards the main mill buildings and the river Nene, still on a tarmac drive. On reaching the river bank, the drive bears left and follows the river on the right.

The drive then bears left, heading south, but the Nene Way bears right on a wide track still following the river. The track then goes right, crossing the river, but the Nene Way continues straight ahead into a copse for about 200 yards. At the end of the copse, you go through another swing gate and the path now heads away from the river across a grassy field, with a hedge to the right and continues straight ahead in the same direction to Nether Heyford.

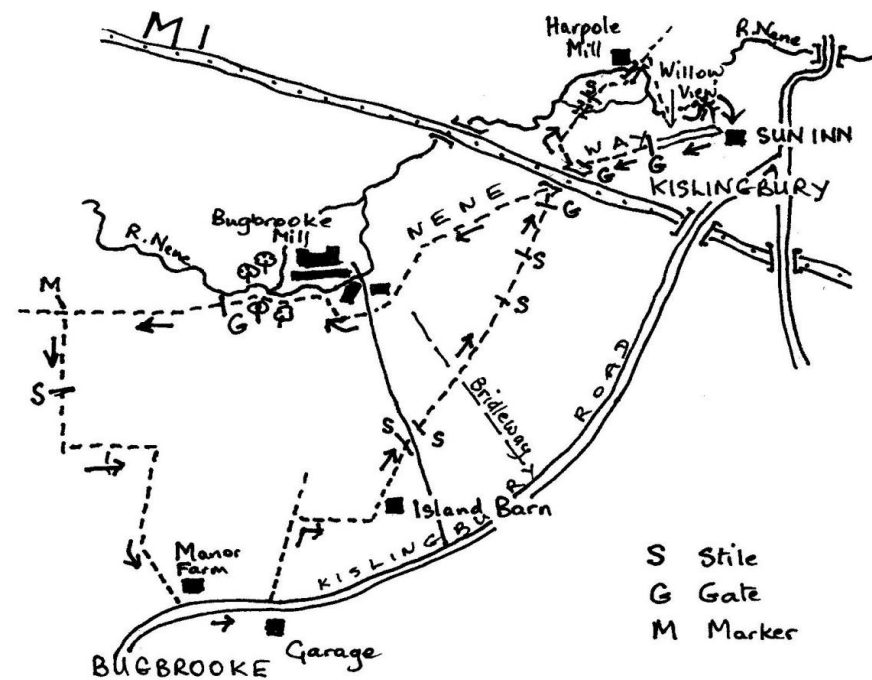


Nene Way near Bugbrooke Mill

Go through two more swing gates and then about one third of a mile from the point where the path heads away from the river, you come to a marker in the middle of a field pointing to your left, due south towards Bugbrooke. Follow this path uphill across the field. At the top of the field, cross over a stile to the right of the facing hedge and follow the path which now runs between two hedges. At the end of the next field

the path swings 90 degrees left, still running between two hedges, then after about 400 yards it swings right again and takes you past Manor Farm, on your left and into Bugbrooke.

Turn left on the Kislingbury Road and after about 200 yards, opposite a garage, there is a footpath sign, pointing north in the direction of Bugbrooke Mill. Take this path, and after about a quarter of a mile go right on a path leading to Island Barn. Just before the barn, the path goes left, now heading NE across a cultivated field to the road leading into Bugbrooke Mill. Cross a stile into the road, cross the road and go over another stile into the next field, which you cross to a bridleway. The path continues in the same direction, crossing the bridleway and another field. At the next hedge and stile the path splits into two. Take the left path, which heads NNE. After crossing the next stile, the path goes around the edge of the cultivated field, instead of across it (as indicated by the OS map). Follow the edge of the field with the hedge to the right to some farm buildings, where you go left on a wide track that follows the edge of the field down to the Nene Way. Turn right on the Nene Way, and retrace your steps to the MI tunnel.



On the other side of the tunnel, you go through a swing gate and turn immediately left, leaving the Nene Way, and following the M1 bank for a few yards, to an arrow marker that points right, NW, across the grassy field to a gate and stile. The path bears right, NE, and crosses a cultivated field to a bridge and stile across a branch of the river, then you cross a small field to a cattle bridge across the second wider branch, site of the Harpole Mill – nothing is left of it apart from a few stones and bricks. After the bridge, cross to another stile and at this point the path continues in a northerly direction to the A45 and Harpole, but you take another path going east and back to Kislingbury.

The route of the path as shown on the OS map is straight across the field, but on the ground the path skirts around the edge of the fields, following the river bank, all the way to a foot bridge that crosses the river and brings you back to Willow View and the starting point.



River Nene at Kislingbury

6. Courteenhall to Quinton, 3.9 miles.

The walk begins at the junction of the road from A508 to Quinton with the single track road leading into the village of Courteenhall. Walk along this road into the village. After the first few houses, the road bends round to the right and at the last row of cottages you turn left up a narrow lane leading to the 'Old Rectory'. At the end of the lane a bridleway goes left down into a gulley and a footpath continues straight ahead through an iron gate (see next page).

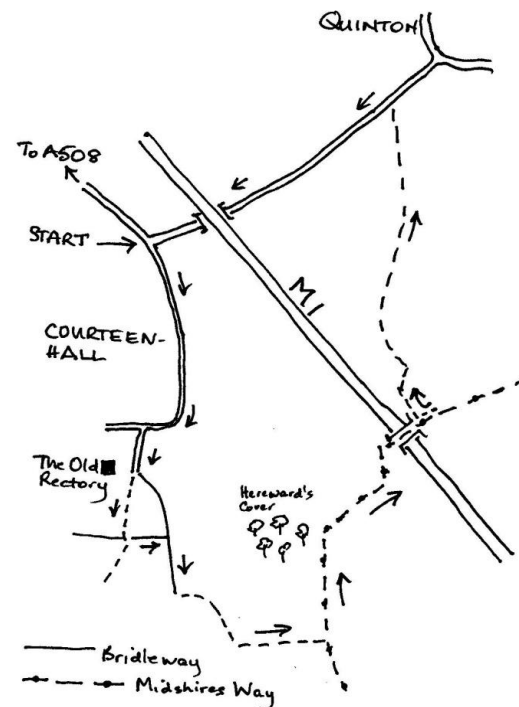


Take the footpath, go through the gate and then over a stile to your left into a grassy meadow, which you cross to a stile, set in a fence, then continue to another stile, leading into a small copse which you walk through and emerge onto a grassy path and a stone windowless barn. A path leads straight ahead across

cultivated fields to Roade, but you turn left at the barn and go along a grassy path for about 200 yards, then through a gated opening onto a bridleway. Turn right and walk along the wide grassy way, enclosed by hedges on both sides. At the end of the hedges you turn left onto a footpath, (the bridleway goes right and onto Roade). The footpath follows a hedge to your left, at first heading SE, then after 200 yards or so it bends left to go east. At the end of the field it goes on through a small copse and runs into the Midshires Way, with its double acorn motif, which is fixed to every gate from now on until you leave it after crossing the M1.

Go through the first gate, then turn left, 90 degrees and go through a second gate and into a grassy field. The path runs along the right side of the field, with a high hedge to your right, towards a copse known as Hereward's Cover. Just before you reach the copse, turn right through another gate and ahead of you, about a third of a mile away, is the busy M1 and to your left a sprawling dairy farm. Follow the path across another grassy field to a narrow swing gate, then immediately through a second swing gate. Then turn left and walk up to the gate that leads onto the bridge across the M1. It's a 21st century all steel and concrete bridge, rebuilt in 2007.

At the end of the bridge go through an open gateway and at this point you leave the Midshires Way, turning sharp left onto a footpath that skirts around the edge of a cultivated field. It takes you back towards the M1, then runs parallel to the M1, heading NW. At the end of the field the path goes right, still skirting the field to a stile. Cross the stile and walk straight ahead, with the hedge to your left and ahead of you is Northampton and the lift tower. The path continues in the same direction, now almost due north for a good half mile, with the hedge always to your left, until you come back to the road from Quinton to the A508. Turn left and walk



along the road for about two thirds of a mile, under the M1 and back to the starting point.

The Courteenhall estate has been home to the Wake family for many generations. The principal house was built in the late 18th century and sits in a fine parkland setting designed by Humphrey Repton. The small village of Courteenhall is still largely owned by the estate. Hereward the Wake was an 11th century Anglo Saxon leader who led the resistance to the Norman conquest and was consequently labelled

an outlaw. According to legend Hereward's base was the Isle of Ely and he roamed the fens leading popular opposition to William the Conqueror.

7. Stoke Bruerne, Ashton, Roade 4.8 miles

Start at the car park on the east bank of the Grand Union Canal, south of Stoke Bruerne between the A508 and Lower Lock Farm. Cross over the lock to the west bank and walk down the towpath to the next lock. Cross back across the bridge and then go left on the foot path to Ashton at Lower Lock Farm.

Go over a stile into a grassy field and walk straight ahead past a lake on the right. Go over a stile into the next field with the stream to your left. Follow the left edge of a large cultivated field. The path curves gently to the right. Almost at the end of the field go left through the hedge and

continue in the same direction between 2 hedges into the next field and continue following the left edge. At the end of this very large field are the ruins of a brick building. Walk to the right of it then strike uphill, in the same direction, across the field to a gap in the hedge that leads onto a wide track. Cross the track into a spinney and go left down to a stile and into a large paddock. Follow the right edge of this field, at the bottom of a steep bank, across to a wide metal gate. Go through the gate to a narrow wood gate leading onto a path between 2 smaller paddocks, with a fence on either side. At the end is a metal gate, after which you go left, passing large stable buildings on the right and a paddock on your left. Go through a wood gate then through a second wood gate into another paddock. There are rugby pitches to your left. Turn right and follow the right edge of the field to a wood gate, then through a hedge and through another gate into the next paddock, which you cross to a stile and onto a grassy path that leads to the Ashton to Stoke Bruerne road.

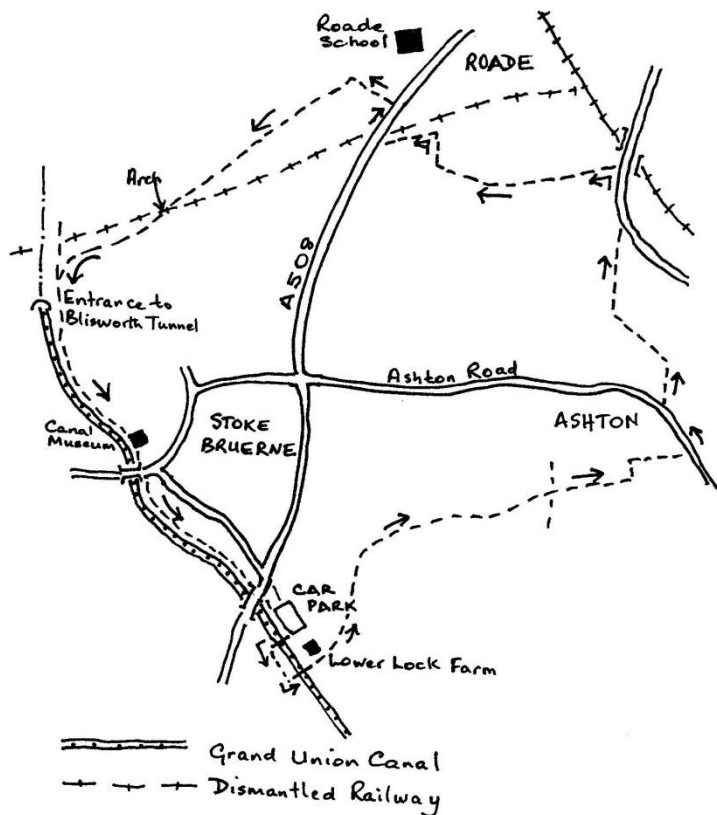
Turn left and walk along the road, past the village sign 'Ashton 2000' and take the second footpath to the right heading NNW towards Roade. Go over a stile into a field and follow the left edge of the field to a stile and a foot bridge and another stile. Follow the right bank of the stream to a newer and longer foot bridge and cross it to the left bank. Then go about 45 degrees right, uphill to the top right corner of the field and over a stile onto another footpath that goes due north, with the hedge to your left to the road from Ashton to Roade. Continue in the same direction along the road and just before the

railway bridge, go left on a footpath. You pass a garden fence on your right, then cross a field downhill to a gap in a hedge, then go 45 degrees right and walk uphill, passing the telegraph pole on your right to a gap in the next hedge. The path goes right, with the hedge on the right and a fence on the left and leads to a dismantled railway line. Go through a wire gate onto the line, then left along the line and follow the path to steps leading down to the A508.

Cross to the pavement, and turn right, walking uphill towards Roade. Just before the Roade sign, go left onto a footpath into school grounds. Go left down to a wooden fence, then go right following the fence on your left until you reach a stile. Cross the stile and cross the grass down to a foot bridge and stile, then walk uphill across a grassy field, heading SW, to another stile. Then cross a large cultivated field to a gap in the hedge and follow a grassy verge between 2 fields, with trees on the right. At the end of these fields, you continue across the next cultivated field to a stile. Go through trees down to the remains of a brick arch, that used to carry the railway line across the path. Walk through the arch to a stile, turn right, go through a swing gate and continue straight ahead with the dismantled railway on the right and a fence on the left. Go through another swing gate and continue along a grassy path with the hedge to the right and a cultivated field to the left.

At the end of this field, go down steps and onto the Grand Union Footpath. The sign reads left to Stoke Bruerne and right to Blisworth. Go left and walk along the wide track which was once a tramway, before the tunnel opened in 1805: -

"The Act for the Grand Junction Canal received the Royal assent on 30th April 1793. By the autumn of 1796 the canal was open between Braunston and Blisworth. This enabled



Warwickshire coal to reach Northampton with land carriage of a few miles. Four years later a route to the South was in use. But as Blisworth Tunnel was not completed till 1805 a temporary railway was used between Blisworth and the bottom of Stoke Bruerne locks. This was Northamptonshire's first railway and was a double tracked tramway. The cast iron rails were 'L' shaped and sat on stone blocks. The wagons had no flanges which meant that sidings were not needed at each end. When the tunnel opened the tramway was removed and re-laid as a single line from Gayton to Northampton opening in October 1805."



Grand Union Canal at Stoke Bruerne

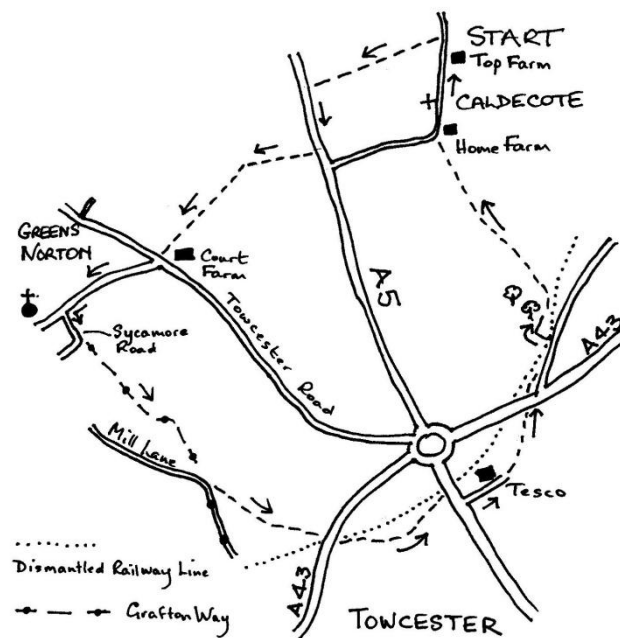
After a short distance the path goes downhill, you pass the entrance to the canal tunnel on your right and join the towpath on the east bank of the canal. Follow the towpath, through Stoke Bruerne, past the canal museum, past the flight of locks and back to the start point.

8. Caldecote to Greens Norton to Towcester 4.5miles

The walk begins at the northern end of the village. Opposite Top Farm a foot path goes southwest over a stile towards the A5. The grassy path goes past a house to your left, over another stile into a paddock, which you cross, continuing in the same direction to the right hand corner, where two stiles take you through the thick hedge and over a ditch, into a large grassy pasture. From here you have an extensive view across the field to the A5 and beyond, on top of a hill you can see the buildings of Court Farm and beyond that, well over a mile away, the steeple of Greens Norton church. Walk in the same direction across the long field and after about a quarter mile you reach the A5, which you access over a stile, next to a wide blue farm gate. Turn left and walk along the pavement for about 280 yards to a footpath sign on the opposite (west) side of the road. Cross

the A5 and take the path, down some very steep and rather treacherous steps in to a field. The path is well marked across the first cultivated field. You cross a wooden bridge into the next also cultivated field and follow the path all the way to Court Farm. The path emerges onto the road from

Towcester to Greens Norton.



Walk along the road into the village and go left on Sycamore Road. Where this road bears right, you go straight on along a footpath, between houses, to another road, which you cross to the path that continues between houses to a swing gate, marked Grafton Way. From here the path heads south east

across a paddock to another swing gate and continues across a large cultivated field, from where you have a view across the fields to the A43 and Towcester. On the other side of the field, you go through a gap in the hedge and cross another large field, downhill to a wide track and a footbridge that goes through a hedge into the next field. You cross the corner of this field to a footbridge and a road – Mill Lane. Go left on the road, cross a bridge over a river and then leave the road on a footpath that heads SE across a field towards the A43. At the other side, you go through a gap in the hedge and follow the left edge of the field to the end, where you turn right and after about 30 yards you come to a stile leading onto the A43.

Cross very carefully to the central reservation and then to a stile on the Towcester side. The stile leads to a path between 2 tall hedges, which is

the route of a dismantled railway track. A path continues along the top of the old railway embankment all the way to the A5, but after a short distance, you go right down the embankment to a stile. On the other side are 2 footpaths, one heads SE across a cultivated field towards houses, the other goes east with the field to the right and the railway embankment to the left. Take this path and at the end of the field, go through a swing gate and onto a hard path leading into a pleasantly landscaped park. Ahead of you on the other side of the path is a river, where it bends to your left and goes under an old iron bridge spanning the dismantled railway. Turn right on the path and where it divides, take the left branch which follows the river. You come to a high wooden foot bridge spanning the river (left).



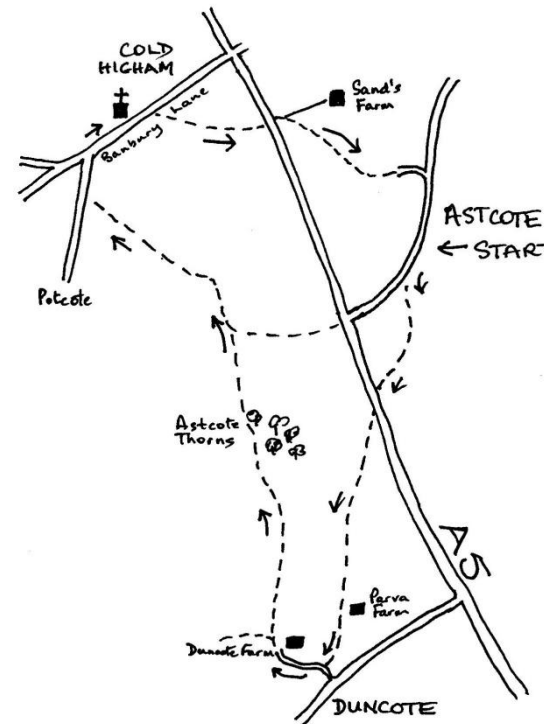
The path bears right up to houses, but you continue ahead to the bridge. Cross it to the other side of the river and follow the hard path through the lush flood meadows to the A5, with the railway embankment still on your left. On a distant hill beyond the A5, you can see Tesco and Homebase.

You cross the A5 and walk up the road towards the shops. You go past Tesco and then Porsche on your left. The path then goes left away from the road and crosses a bridge over the former railway track. Then it goes downhill to the A43.

Again cross very carefully to the other side and walk along a hard track that brings you out onto the lane to Tiffield. After a short distance you go left into a drive leading to boarding kennels. The drive turns right and passes by the kennels to a gate leading into a small copse. Go through the copse to a stile and into a grassy field, which you cross to another very narrow stile, leading into a large cultivated field. The path then runs along the right hand edge of the field, heading northwest, with a hedge to your right. At the end of the field you cross two more stiles into the next field and continue in the same direction across another field and two more stiles, then through a gate and onto the road through Caldecote. Walk through the village to Top Farm and the start point.

9. Astcote, Duncote, Cold Higham 4.6 miles

Starting at Astcote on the road leading south west out of the village towards the A5, take the footpath on the left that heads almost due south. Cross the grassy field to the double stile and plank bridge set in the far hedge. Continue walking SSW to the SW corner of the next field. Go through the gap in the hedge and cross the A5. Walk down the bank into the field and cross it now heading almost due south and pass to the left of the old stone barn, through the gap and into the next field. You can see the spire of Greens Norton church straight ahead. Continue in the same direction across the field to the stream and follow the right bank to a footbridge. Cross it and turn immediately right, following the left bank to the hedge in front. Jump over the ditch and up the bank into the next field and continue following the stream on the right. At the end of this field you



go over a stile set in the hedge and continue following the stream to the next hedge where there is a double stile. To the left is a farm house, Parva Farm. Cross the next grassy field to a stile and footbridge in the south west corner. Then walk up a steep hill in a grassy pasture to a stile, leading into a back garden. Cross to a gate which leads into a drive and walk along the drive with the house on your left and onto the lane in Duncote.

Turn right and follow the lane down past Duncote Farm to a farm gate leading onto a bridleway, heading due north towards Cold Higham. An arrow marker indicates that you are on the "Patishall 2000 Millennium Walk". At first the bridleway is a wide track partly paved with large uneven rocks and hedges on either side. At the top of a rise you enter a field and the bridleway becomes a grassy verge with a

hedge on the left. At the top of this field, go through a gate and continue following the hedge up to a wood, Astcote Thorns. Continue north, following the left edge of the wood. At the end of the wood, go right through a gap in the hedge and continue in the same direction, north, with the hedge now to the left. The bridleway swings left from north to north west and follows the hedge on the left all the way to the end. Then go through a gate and cross a cultivated field to another gate, leading into a grassy pasture. Continue across it with the hedge to the left to another gate, into another grassy field. You are heading NW and to the right, north, you can see the tower of Cold Higham church in the distance (below).



Continue to the end of the hedge and about 20 to 30 yards right along the facing hedge is a metal gate leading out onto the lane that goes due south to Potcote. Go right to Banbury Lane and turn right again into Cold Higham. Take the footpath on the right that goes between houses to a gate leading

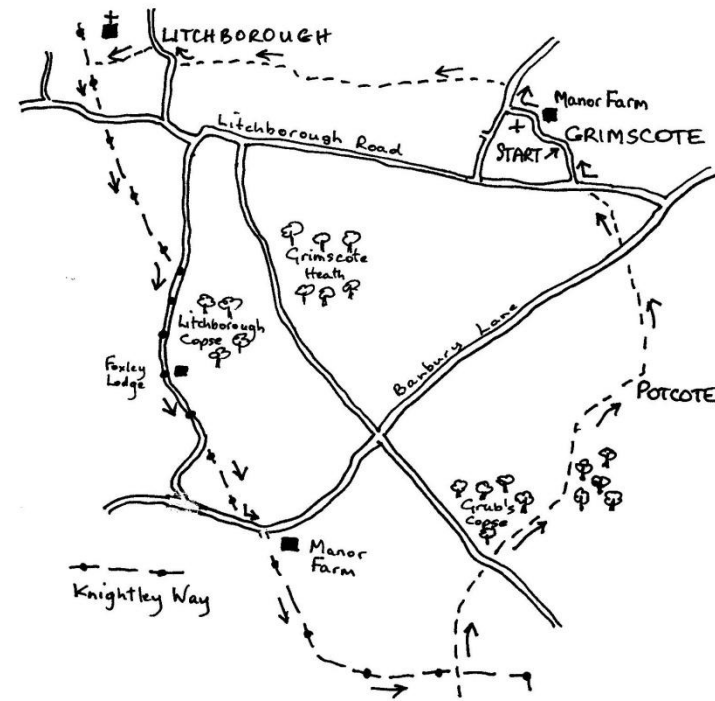
into a grassy field. Continue across the field to a double stile. Cross the next field to another stile. After crossing it, turn left and follow the hedge to the A5, which you access via a stile or farm gate.

Cross the A5, then turn left and walk a few yards to the double footpath sign. One follows the drive going ENE to Sands Farm, the other goes ESE across a cultivated field towards Astcote. Take this path and cross to a stile, then turn a few degrees right and continue over the next field. Go SE to the corner of a hedge that juts out and follow the western edge of the field, with the hedge to the right. At the bottom of the field go left and follow the southern edge to a stile and footbridge on the right. Cross over and continue following the hedge now on the left to a stile set in the fence opposite. Cross the pasture, following a garden fence on the left, to a small gate in the opposite hedge. Go through the gate, turn immediately right and follow the narrow footpath between 2 fences up to a stile. Next you cross a paddock to another stile and follow the path as it skirts, right, left and left again round a garden, with a tall hedge to the left and a fence and paddock to the right. It comes out onto a wide hard track that leads

out to the road through Astcote. Turn right on the road and back to the start.

10. Grimscote to Litchborough and Foxley 5.5 miles

Starting in Grimscote, go along Manor Road through the village, past Manor Farm on the right



As you leave the village you come to a road junction, turn right, walk downhill and then up to a footpath sign 'Footpath to Litchborough 1 mile'. Go over a stile and up a steep bank (there are steps) to another stile. Cross the stile and go left, following the

left edge of the field to a double stile. Cross the next narrow field to another double stile straight ahead. Then cross a concrete track and another narrow field to another stile. The next field is much wider and you cross to a stile and follow the left edge of the next field with a hedge to your left. From this high point there are excellent views extending many miles to the north and to the south are the woods of Grimscote Heath.

At the end of this wide field, go past the end of the hedge that faces you and continue straight ahead, still following the left edge. About ¾ of the

way across this field the path bends right and left and the hedge is now on your right. After a short while the path has a hedge on both sides and then you come to Towcester Road and the outskirts of Litchborough. Cross the road and continue straight ahead, following the right edge of the field for a few yards, then cross a stile in the fence and continue with the fence now on your left, past a house garden and then across a narrow pasture. On the right of this field is an old stone wall running the whole length and beyond that is Litchborough church. At the end of the fence, you go left over a stile and onto the Knightley Way, heading south.

Follow the right edge of the field to a gap in the corner that leads out onto Litchborough Road. Cross the road to a stile, then cross the next field heading east south east towards Litchborough Copse. There is a white disc Knightley Way marker and a gap in the hedge in the SE corner of the field. Cross the next field to a footbridge set in the hedge and out onto a lane going due south towards Banbury Lane and Foxley. Go right on the lane, past Litchborough Copse on the left and just after Foxley House, the road bends right but the Knightley Way leaves the road and goes straight ahead, south east across a field to Banbury Lane, where you go left to Manor Farm. Walk into the farm yard along a made up track. You leave the track over a stile on the right and walk past a telegraph pole with a way marker attached. Go past farm buildings to the left and onto a wide grassy path with boxed in trees on either side (below).



Ahead of you are a number of the familiar white disc markers. At the end of the field, cross a stile and follow the hedge on your left. At the end of this field go through a gate and bear 45 degrees left, crossing the field with a fence on your left. At the end of this field go left through a gate in the fence, leaving the Knightley Way and onto a

footpath, going north. Follow the hedge on your right up to the end of the field, go through a gate and turn immediately right through another gate and turn left, following the hedge now on your left up to the top of the field. You go through a tiny coppice out onto a road. Cross the road to a stile and then follow the right edge of Grub's Copse. At the end of the copse, follow the hedge on your left to a stile on the left. Go over the stile

and go right, following the left edge of the next copse. The path bends left still following the edge of the woods, to a stile on the right leading you into the woods. Follow the path through the woods for a short while to another stile, which takes you out of the woods onto a track which you cross to a gate. Go through the gate into a field and cross it, now heading NE to a stile in the top right corner of the field. Go across to a gate and walk up the next field to the farm buildings of Potcote. Walk through the buildings, then go to the right of the hedge and follow it up to Banbury Lane. Cross the road and go through a steel gate and continue walking NNW to a gate and then onto to another gate that brings you out onto Litchborough Road. Cross the road to Manor Road that takes you back to Grimscote and the start point.

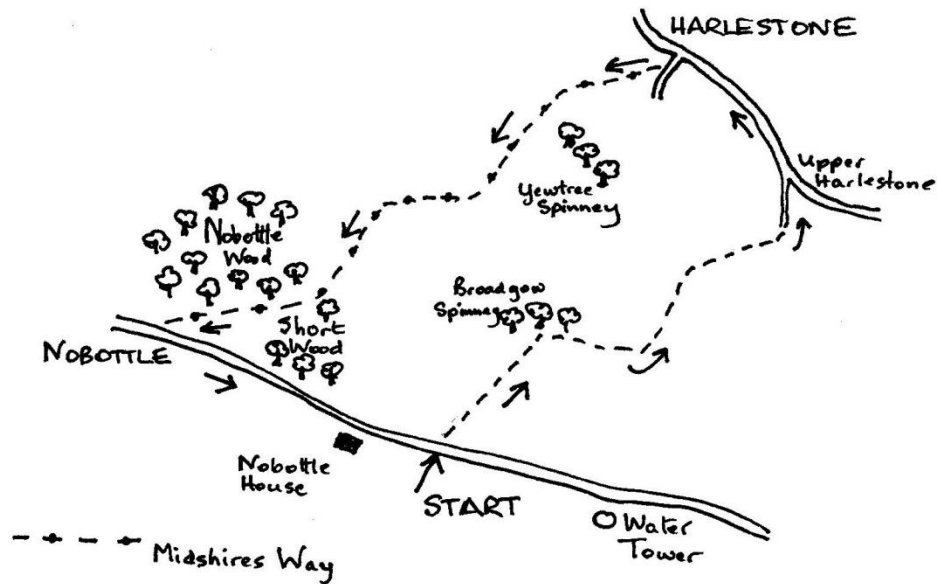
11. Nobottle to Upper Harlestone 3.5miles

Start on the Northampton to Nobottle road between the large white water tower and Nobottle House, where a bridleway goes north east from the road to Upper Harlestone. The path follows the right edge of a cultivated field towards some woods, known as Broadgow Spinney. When you reach the woods, the path bears right and follows the edge of the woods on the left and a cultivated field on the right. At the end of the wood the path bears 30 degrees right and follows a hedge on the left. At the corner of the field, the path bears 90 degrees left and goes to the right of a hedge that runs NE. Follow this hedge along the edge of a very long cultivated field. At the end of the field the path goes left and right around a copse to a wood gate and a track leading down to the road. Turn left on the road and walk down to Upper Harlestone. You pass 2 footpath signs on the right,



and when you reach a small triangular green with a seat and a very large tree, go left on a narrow lane leading uphill. After a short way, opposite 'Cross Hill Farm', a tall ironstone farmhouse, you leave the lane, through a wood gate, onto the Midshires Way, a grassy path going uphill across a paddock (left). On the far side of the paddock, go through a farm gate, turn left and follow a stone wall on your left, to a double iron gate, which you go through and turn immediately right and follow the path along the right edge of a cultivated field, with a tall hawthorn hedge to the right. You can see the

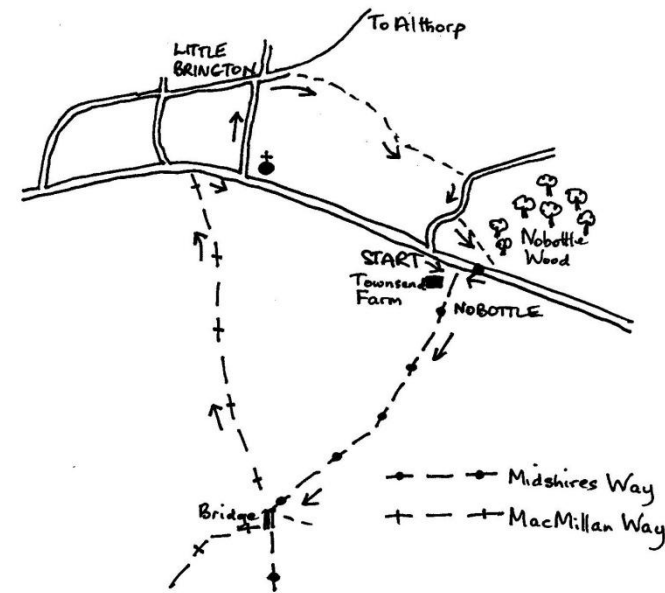
white water tower away to your left. When you reach the bottom corner of this field, you pass the right end of a long thin copse, 'Yewtree Spinney', which borders the south edge of the field, then follow the arrow marker, pointing SW and cross the next field, diagonally from corner to corner. At the opposite corner stands a small stone barn with a tiled roof and an arrow marker on the wall, pointing across the next field. The path bears 30 degrees right. At the other side, go through a gap in the hedge, go 30 degrees left and cross another field to the south east corner of 'Nobottle Wood'.



Go right 30 degrees and the path follows the southern edge of the wood. Away to your left is a large complex of farm buildings, a barn and silos. Ahead is 'Short Wood', which is joined to the south end of 'Nobottle Wood' and at that point the path goes into the woods, emerging on the other side of 'Short Wood' and continuing to follow the southern edge of 'Nobottle Wood'. On your left is a cultivated field, at the end of which you go through a wood gate and bear left across a grassy meadow to another wood gate, set in the corner of a paddock. Cross the paddock to another gate that leads you onto the road at Nobottle. Turn left and walk back along the road to the start point.

12. Nobottle to Little Brington 3.1 miles

Start at Nobottle, Townsend Farm, where the Midshires Way goes south towards Glassthorpehill. It begins as a hard track and you pass Chinkell House and Stone House on the right, then it turns to dirt and then to grass. To the right is a high hedge and ditch and to the left a cultivated field. At the end of the field, you go through a gate and bear 30 degrees right. Cross the grassy field to a gap and cross the next grassy field to a bridge, where the Midshires Way intersects with the Macmillan Way.



The bridge leads onto the Macmillan Way as it heads south west, but instead of crossing the bridge, you turn sharp right and head due north with the hedge on the left. At the top of the field you go through a gate on the left and turn right, still heading north but with the hedge on the right and a cultivated field to the left. At

the end of the field go through a gap and continue up a fairly steep hill, still with the hedge right. Ahead is a church tower. At the top of the hill you come back to the road and turn right. Turn left at the church tower and walk down to Little Brington.

Where the road goes left into the village, you go right on a 'Private Road'. After a few yards you go through a gate and continue along the track to another gate, where a notice advises you are entering the Althorp Estate and a private drive to the House. A footpath goes right off the drive heading east across a cultivated field. On the other side of the field, you go through a gap in the hedge, across a footbridge and a stile. Cross the

next field to a stile and cross the next field to the SE corner, where you come out onto a narrow road.



Carriage Drive to Althorp House from Little Brington. (picture Colin Simmonds)

Turn right on the road and after a short distance, where the road bends right, you take a footpath going left and heading downhill across a grassy field to the corner of Nobottle Wood. At the bottom of the field, on the right, is a gate that brings you out onto the road at Nobottle and the starting point.



(Picture Colin Simmonds)

The End.