

**Illustrated book of**  
**Walks around Gayton**

**Northamptonshire**

**Updated August 2011**



**PRICE £1.50**  
**All proceeds to**  
**the Church.**

## **Walks around Gayton**

### **Foreword to the Original Version**

The twelve walks described in this booklet all begin and end at Fiveways in the centre of the village. They vary in length from three to six miles and they cover all the public footpaths in the parish and many in the neighbouring villages of Tiffield, Rothersthorpe, Eastcote, Dalscote and Blisworth.

The walks were originally compiled by members of the 'Gayton Walkers' group in 2003/2004 and have been featured in the Gayton News and on the Gayton website. All twelve have been rewalked by the writer in the spring and summer of 2006 and the descriptions and maps have been revised to take account of any changes to our footpaths, such as the new bridge over the railway line and canal on Banbury Lane, replacing the level crossing, and any improvements, such as new stiles, gates and steps.

We are surrounded by beautiful, mostly unspoilt countryside here in Gayton and the network of footpaths described in these pages, gives us easy access to many fine views and points of interest. For our forefathers these ancient rights of way were the essential links between villages and were trodden by them for countless generations, as they went about their daily lives. For the last century or so, they have been less vital perhaps, and less used, but they remain, nevertheless, a priceless asset, available or the enjoyment of all our residents, providing a source of healthy exercise and an escape from hustle and bustle. Even in the turmoil of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, some of the best things in life are still free!

However like any valuable asset, it cannot be taken for granted. Access to our footpaths is far from perfect. As mentioned in some of the descriptions that follow, a number of footpath signs are missing or broken, some stiles and bridges over streams are overgrown with hedges and therefore inaccessible, or are in need of repair; some footpaths are unmarked, where they cross cultivated fields. Constant vigilance is required to ensure these rights of way remain open and accessible.

Finally, a few acknowledgements and thanks – to my fellow members of

the 'Gayton Walkers' group who helped compile these walks, specifically Dennis Shaw, Geoff and Joan Wood, and Carol and David Coppock; to Stanley Watterson, Parish Footpath Warden for providing us with the 'Rights of Way Definitive Map' for our parish and for liaising with the Rights of Way Department of the County Council; to Colin Wicks of the Rights of Way Department, for taking the time to come and talk to us and for responding to our footpaths survey of 2004; and to my wife Wendy, for the fine hand drawn maps that illustrate the walks and her editorial skills in pulling the booklet together into a coherent format.

Barry Steer, June 2006.

### **Foreword to the revised version.**

In this new version of 'Walks around Gayton', the 12 routes are unchanged, but the text has been revised to take account of the several improvements to our 17 footpaths and 1 bridleway, which have been made since 2006. Three new bridges have been installed, one on the bridleway at the boundary with Pattishall, one on the footpath on Tiffield Road and one on the footpath between Park Lane and Wrights Lane near the sewage works. We have a number of new stiles and several new finger post footpath signs. Last but not least, the Village Green development has given us a new tarmac surface on the footpath across the Green between the Village Hall and the School.

Consequently, many of the shortcomings on our footpaths, referred to in the original foreword (written in 2006 and reproduced above), no longer apply. On the other hand there are still broken stiles to repair or replace, and there will always be plenty to do, to keep our footpaths open, clear and accessible. Having taken over from Stan as Parish Footpath Warden, I do try to walk all our paths at least once a year and I know I can count on the help of 'Gayton Walkers' for any clearing work that needs doing.

Several new pictures have been included, many of them illustrating the improvements.

Barry Steer, August 2011.

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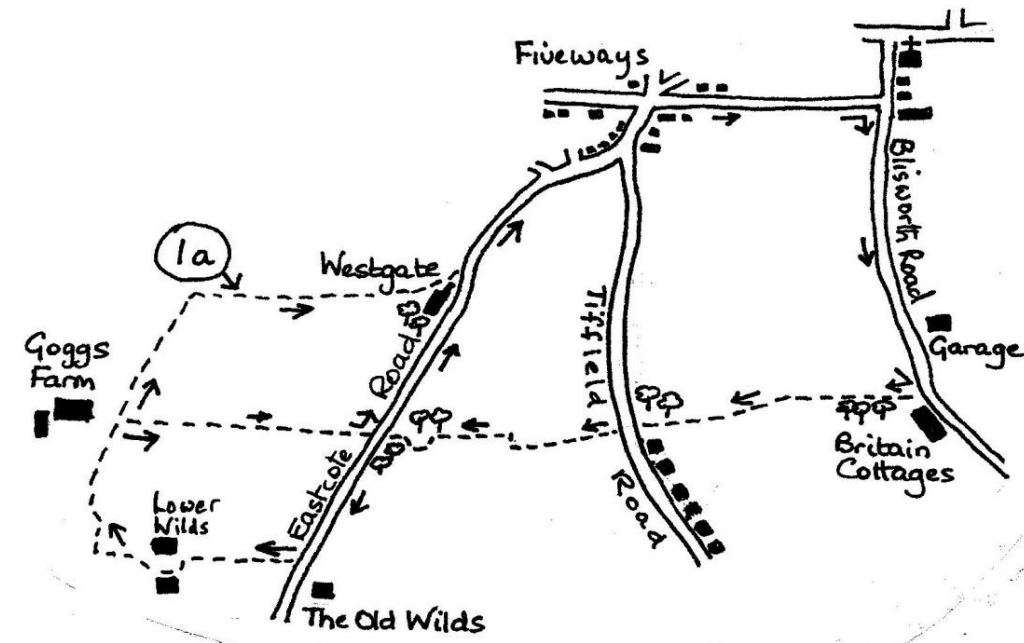
All distances are approximate



Fiveways at Gayton

## Walk 1 – Back Lane/Tiffield Road/Goggs Farm/ Eastcote Road

The walk starts from Fiveways and is a gentle flat walk, nearly half of it on roads, the remainder on footpaths. Set off down Back Lane and turn right on to the Blisworth Road. After about 400 yards, past the Garage at the bottom of the hill, take the footpath on the right, before Britain Cottages. It is well-defined and takes you across a field to Tiffield Road. Cross the road to a smart wooden footbridge (see above) that spans a pond in a small spinney and continue in the same direction across the fields to Eastcote Road.



There turn left and after 300 yards take the marked path on the right side of the road, (almost opposite 'The Old Wilds'). A new stile and new electronically controlled gates were installed in 2010 and the wide track is now the drive to 'Lower Wilds', a residence converted from old barns. At

the end of the drive, the path goes between the house and a new stable building and then immediately right around the end of the garden to a gap in the hedge, which leads onto a horse exercise track. Go straight across the track and through another gate, set into the horse track fence, which you have to duck under – the headroom is about 4 feet. Then walk diagonally across the field to a stile set in the hedge, on your left. Go over the stile, turn right and walk along to the end of the field to another stile, which brings you out to the very grand gates of Goggs Farm. At this point you turn right and walk back towards Eastcote Road along the footpath which runs parallel with the drive to Goggs Farm but to the right of the hedge. The grassy path leads to a stile in the hedge and out onto Eastcote Road.

From there you have a straight walk back to Fiveways via Hillcrest Road and past the Village Hall. From the paths of the latter part of the walk there are extensive views across the countryside towards Bugbrooke.

### Walk 1a

This is a variation on walk 1. When you reach the gates of Goggs Farm, instead of turning right, walk straight on through a gap on the other side of the gates with the fence and hedge on your right. At the end of the first paddock, go through a narrow gate, cross the second paddock and go through another narrow gate. Then cross the third paddock and go over a stile, into a cultivated field. Continue following the hedge on your right and at the end of this field is another stile. The path then veers to the right and takes you back to Eastcote Road just after Westgate. Turn left and walk along the road back to Gayton. *Length of walk about 2.75 miles*

### Walk 2 -Wrights Lane/Rothersthorpe/Grand Union Canal/Park Lane

From Fiveways, set off via Baker Street to Wrights Lane opposite the churchyard. Almost immediately on the right, at the public footpath sign, go through the gate into a paddock. Walk across to the stile in the far left hand corner and go over it into another paddock, cross it and go through a swing gate into a cultivated field. The correct route of the footpath is diagonally across the field, going downhill, to a stile. However the path is not marked and it is easier to walk around the edge of the field on the grassy verge, until you reach the stile, set in the hedge at the bottom of the field. Climb over the stile into a grassy field and walk downhill towards the bridge over the railway line, in the bottom right hand corner. Climb over the stile next to the new gate, walk over the railway bridge and then over the canal bridge.

Continue in the same direction towards Rothersthorpe, keeping close by the hedge on the right. After about 250 yards, you will arrive at a copse where you need to veer left for a few yards to reach a small opening into



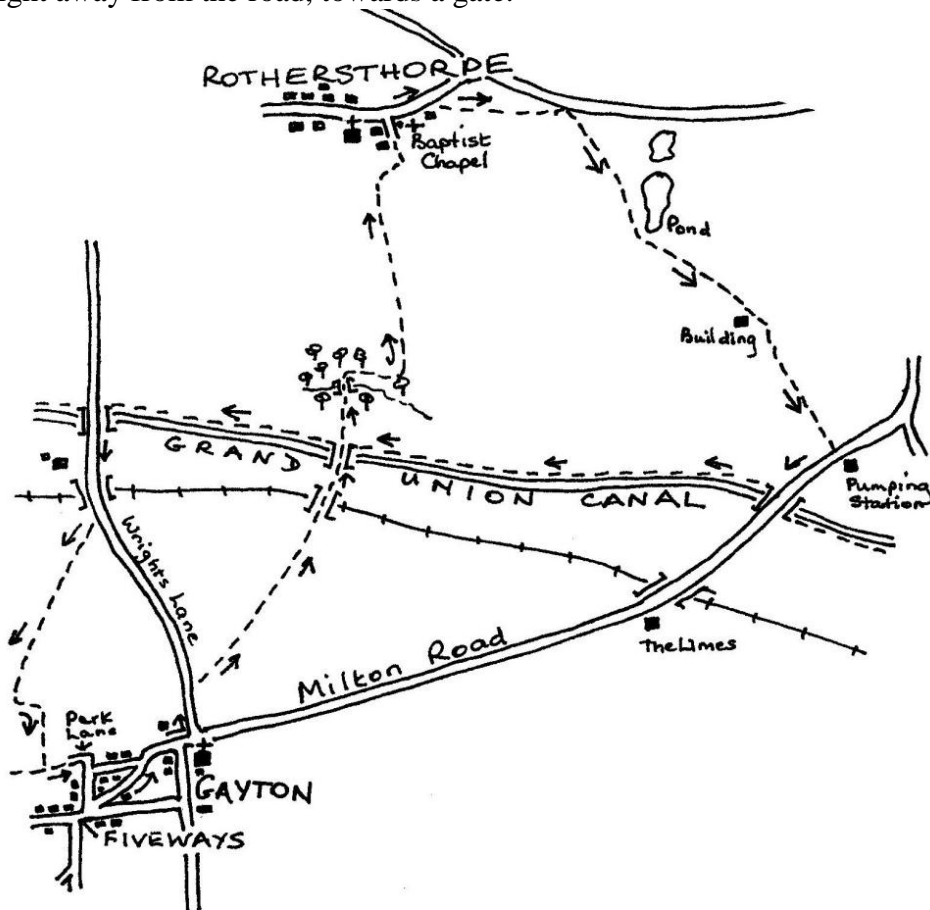
the woods, that leads onto a footbridge (see left) across a stream. After the bridge, the path bears right and continues through the copse for about 120 yards, emerging into a field. Follow the right edge of the field to the corner, where you go through a gap in the hedge and turn left. You then go straight ahead, crossing 2 fields,

keeping the hedge on your left.

Go over a stile and make for the white cottage about 300 yards on the other side of the field. There, go through a swing gate and into a lane by the church in Rothersthorpe. On reaching the road, turn right, soon passing the Baptist chapel and two mid-17th century cottages (the Old Bakehouse and Garden Cottage).

After a few yards, climb over a stile at the gap in the wall on the right. This path leads across a field for about 100 yards to a stile and a bridge

over a stream. In a short distance along the beaten path go over another stile and continue for about 200 yards along the path, bearing partly left to one more stile close to the road. Go over the stile and ignoring the adjacent stile, which leads on to the road, continue on the path bearing right away from the road, towards a gate.



After the gate, the path runs almost parallel to a wire fence, a few metres to your left. The path moves gradually closer to the fence and eventually crosses it via a stile. Follow the path down to a large pond, complete with island and resident ducks. Continue round the pond to a rusty iron gate. Go through the iron gate (not the wooden swing gate to your right) and follow the direction of the arrow marker, bearing about 20 degrees away from the hedge on your right, across a grassy field to a stile just to the left of a stone and brick building in the next field. Go over the stile, walk

around the building (described on the map as Oldfield) and down to a tall hedge on the right. The path follows the hedge to Milton Road. Turn right on Milton road and walk up to the canal bridge. Join the towpath on the near side of the bridge, turn sharp right and walk back under the bridge in the direction of Wrights Lane. Leave the towpath at the second bridge (Wright's Lane) and walk up the road towards Gayton. A short distance past the railway bridge take the sign-posted footpath to the right. The sign post has an elder tree growing round it, so for much of the year is almost invisible. Next to it is a stile, which is overgrown by the hedge and unusable. So go through the adjacent gate. The correct route of the footpath is across the field, but as it is usually cultivated and the path unmarked, it is easier to go right along the edge of the field for about 300 yards to the long wooden bridge over a stream. Crossing this, and keeping fairly close to the hedgerow, on your left, climb gently uphill across the grassy field for about a quarter mile and pass through the gate (there is no stile) into a lane bordered by hedges.

In a short while you'll reach Park Lane and turning left you'll eventually reach the High Street in Gayton via the Eykyn Arms car park. And so going past the two village pubs, you'll arrive back at Fiveways.  
*Length of walk about 4.5 miles*

### Walk 3 – Park Lane/Ridge/new bridge/Grand Union Canal/Wright's Lane

From Fiveways set off down the High Street to Park Lane past the Eykyn Arms car park. Continue to the end of the lane, ignoring the first footpath sign to the right, turn right at the second footpath signpost on to a wide track between two hedgerows. From this track, known locally as the Ridge, are extensive panoramic views all round. The hedgerow on the left ends after about 200 yards and you continue along the track keeping close to the hedgerow on the right. Pause for a while at the green steel seat, located to the right of the path, at a gap in the hedge. From here you can enjoy some of the best views in the county, over the Nene valley, to the Grand Union canal, to Bugbrooke and beyond.

Just beyond the gap, the hedge takes a right-angled turn, but the well marked path continues across the field, bearing slightly to the left and downhill to the trees and hedgerow about 300 yards away. As you go through the wide gap in the hedge, where there is an arrow marker, you look down on the new Banbury Lane bridge over the railway line and canal. It opened in spring 2005 and replaced the level crossing and narrow road bridge.

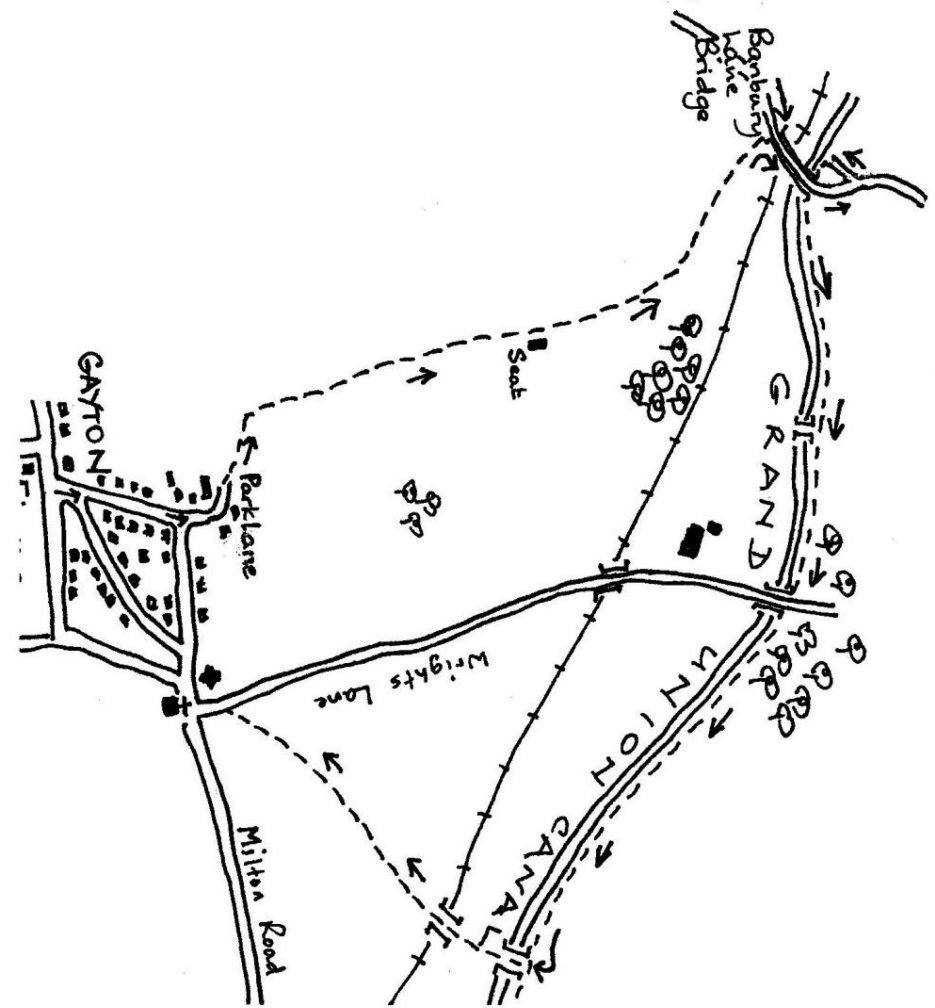


Turn left going down along the side of the uncultivated field until you reach a stile to your right, which takes you onto the new bridge. Turn right and walk across the double bridge, over the railway line and then the canal. Then turn left and go along the old Banbury Lane, leading to the old canal bridge (see left) and level crossing. To the right of the canal

bridge, go down onto the towpath, turn left and walk under the bridge in the direction of Gayton.

Continue under the new bridge. A little further on you pass under a cattle bridge, number 44, then under the Wrights Lane bridge. As the canal sweeps round to the right you have a good view of Gayton and its church tower, at the top of the hill. Continue to the next unnumbered cattle bridge, walk under it, then leave the towpath at this point and walk over the bridge. After 150 yards cross the railway bridge, going through the gate (or over the stile) and then climb gently uphill for 300 yards bearing slightly to the right over the grassy field, aiming for the stile at the gap in the hedge. Cross the stile into the next field. The correct route of the path diagonally across the field is not defined and the actual path follows the left hand edge up to a paddock fence. Turn right and follow the fence until you reach a gate into the paddock and across to a stile into another paddock, then right to the gate that leads into Wrights Lane and from there back to Fiveways.

*Length of walk about 3 miles.*



### Walk 4 - Eastcote via Dalscote – 3.5 miles

Starting with the footpath sign on the green at Fiveways, take the tarmac footpath (see left) that leads past the village hall on your left and the school on your right onto a path which goes between fenced gardens on either side. After about 100 yards, you reach a stile, over which you should climb, continuing straight on in the direction indicated by the arrow marker on the fence along the side of the uncultivated field.



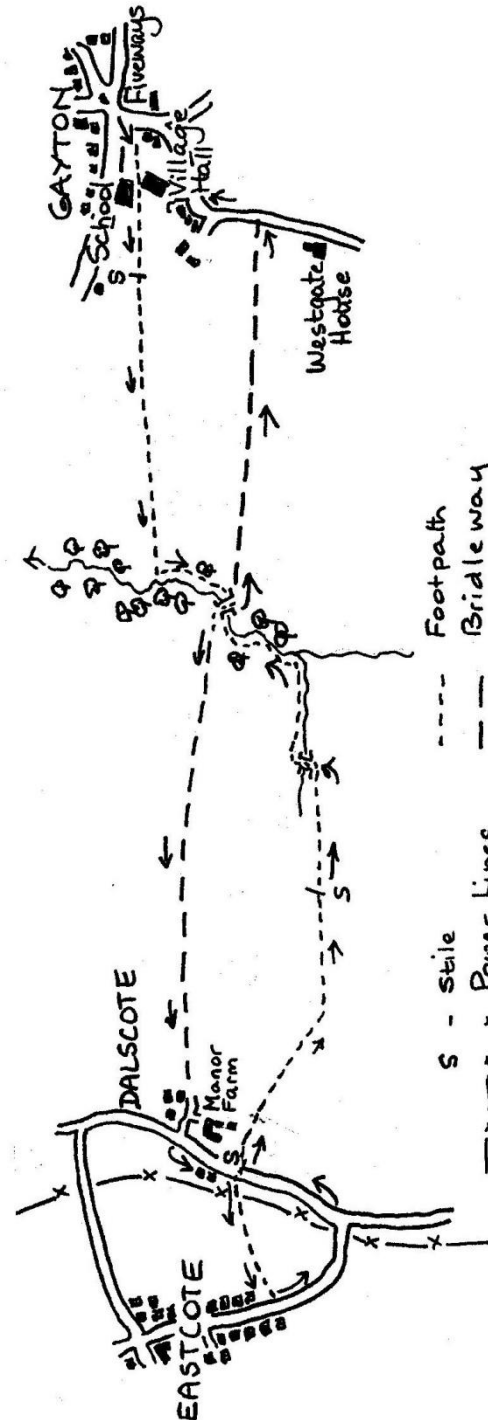
Going gently downhill, continue for about a half mile, keeping not far from the hedgerow on your right until, you arrive at a stream bordered by trees. Bearing to the left, in two hundred yards or so, you reach the bridleway that runs from Eastcote Road to Dalscote. Go right on the bridleway down to a new wide footbridge (installed in 2009, see left). Crossing the bridge and keeping straight on across the field (now outside Gayton parish),



climb the hill and over the brow, you reach the beginning of a lane, about 300 yards from the stream. The lane, (unpaved) climbs gently uphill for about a half mile, before arriving at Anna's Lane in Dalscote. Go right on the short lane, and out to the road through Dalscote, with the large house of Manor Farm on your left.

Turning left into the road and passing two houses on your right, after 200 yards you should take the footpath signposted to Eastcote on the right. This path leads across a field, passing under the electric power lines.

After a quarter mile, the path takes you between houses to the road, where you should turn left. Walk for about a quarter mile along the road on the



outskirts of Eastcote, and then turn left at the T-junction, back towards Dalscote.

After a quarter mile, turn right at the indicated footpath, opposite the sign to Eastcote, going over the stile beside the lane down to the farm. Cross the small grassy field and climb over another stile, passing farm buildings and a small aircraft hangar. Continue straight on for about 200 yards, going gently downhill across the grassy field, and then pass through a gate in the hedgerow.

Take the path diagonally left for about 150 yards across the next field, and climb over the stile in the hedgerow.

Going in the same direction, but bearing right and following the stream on your left, cross it over a wooden bridge after about a quarter mile, and continue walking close to the stream and trees, now on your right.

Within a quarter mile, you arrive at the wide footbridge you crossed earlier. Cross the bridge and continue straight on up the steepest part of the sloping field ahead along the bridleway to reach the gated opening at Eastcote Road. From there, turn left to take you back to

Fiveways via Hillcrest Road and the village green.

*Length of walk about 3.5 miles*

### Walk 5 – Britain cottages/disused railway line/Gayton Wilds

Set off from Fiveways, along Back Lane and turn right down Blisworth Road. Immediately after the disused railway line, turn right at the footpath sign and go through a gate into a grassy field with the disused railway line to your right. The correct route of the path goes diagonally across the field at an angle of about 35 degrees to the disused railway line towards a lone tree in the opposite corner of the field. Next to the tree is a stile, set in the hedge and next to the stile is a post with two arrow markers, one pointing straight ahead across the next field to Gayton Wood Farm, the other going right, along the line of the hedge back to the disused railway line. Cross the stile and turn right, walking towards the disused railway line, with the hedge on your right.

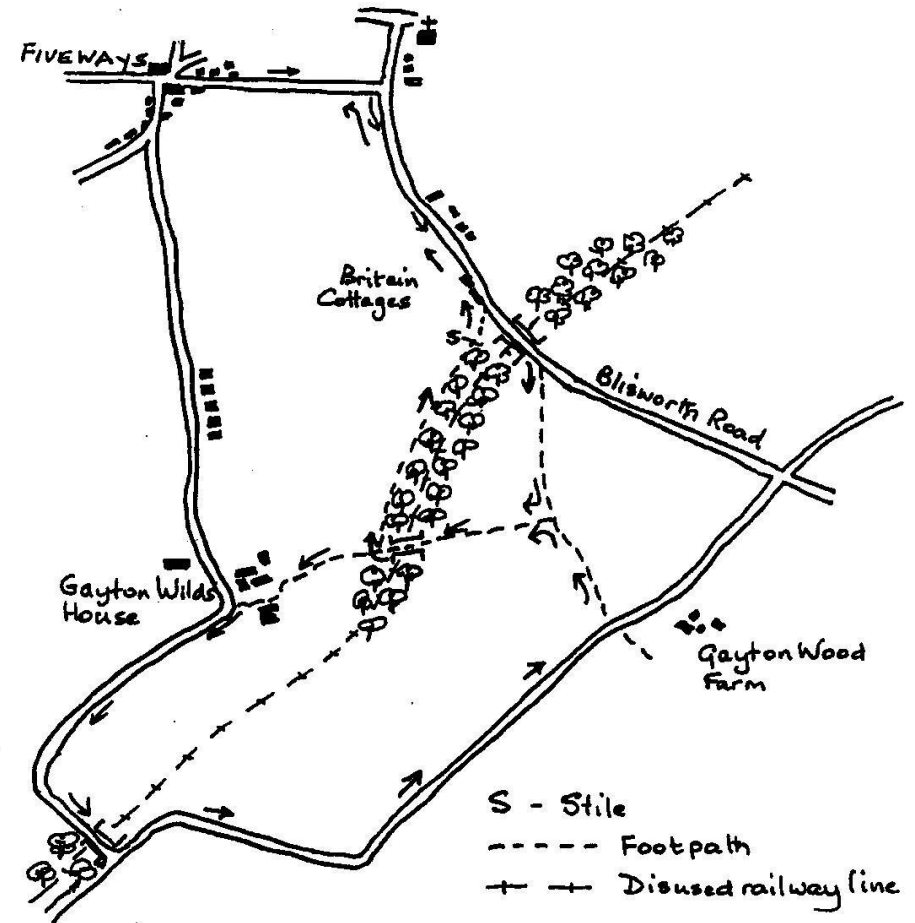
At the end of the hedge, in the corner of the field, go through a broken wooden gate, set in the very tall hedge that borders the railway line. The



path, which is overgrown with nettles in the spring and summer months, now takes you over an old ivy covered brick-built bridge (see left) which spans the deep and densely wooded ravine of the old railway line some 40 feet below. As you walk through the tree tops, looking down over the side of the bridge, through the branches and the vegetation,

you could almost imagine yourself in the Amazonian jungle. On the other side of the bridge, there are two arrow markers, one pointing straight ahead, the other to the right. Go straight on along a narrow path between wooden fences. You pass Gayton Wilds House on your left, and emerge onto a wide track with the new stone houses on your right. Go left on the track onto Tiffield Road and turn left.

Walk along the road across Gayton Wilds, over the disused railway line again and turn left along the road which leads to Gayton Wood Farm. The entrance to the farm is on your right, and on your left is a footpath sign pointing back towards Gayton over a cultivated field. Follow this path which is clearly marked and leads back to the stile which you crossed earlier, next to the lone tree in the corner of the grassy field.



At the stile, turn left and walk back to the disused railway, retracing your earlier steps, over the brick bridge again, and then right on the path to



Britain Cottages. The path runs along the edge of the field, with the tall hedge and disused railway line to your right. At the end of the field there is a stile, and on the other side a pleasant grassy path leads down to Blisworth Road. Turn left here and walk back to Gayton.

*Length of walk about 3 miles.*

### **Walk 6 – Blisworth Tunnel/Grand Union Canal/Midshires Way.**

From Fiveways go along Back Lane and turn right down Blisworth Road. Immediately after the disused railway line, turn right at the footpath sign and go through a gate into a grassy field with the disused railway line to your right. The path goes diagonally across the field at an angle of about 35 degrees to the disused railway line towards a lone tree in the opposite corner of the field. Next to the tree is a stile, set in the hedge and next to the stile is a post with two arrow markers, one pointing straight ahead across the next field to Gayton Wood Farm, the other going right, along the line of the hedge back to the disused railway line. Go straight ahead, crossing the Gayton Arm/Tiffield Road, and head towards Gayton Wood Farm along a well-defined track. Crossing a stile on the left of the track, the path leads across a field towards the A43 dual carriageway. The path is unmarked, and so the point at which it crosses the A43 is not immediately apparent.

A stile and steps lead down to the edge of the dual carriageway, where great care must be taken, when crossing first to the central reservation, and then to a second set of steps and stile on the Blisworth side. The footpath then leads straight across the field to Blisworth, coming out on the slip road opposite the old mill (now converted to flats), that overlooks the canal. Turn right on the road, passing the mill, cross the Towcester Road and then descend the steps leading to the footpath on the right bank of the canal.

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 wooden 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 (see left)



and ahead of you disappearing into trees as it nears the entrance to the Blisworth-Stoke Bruerne tunnel (built in 1805).

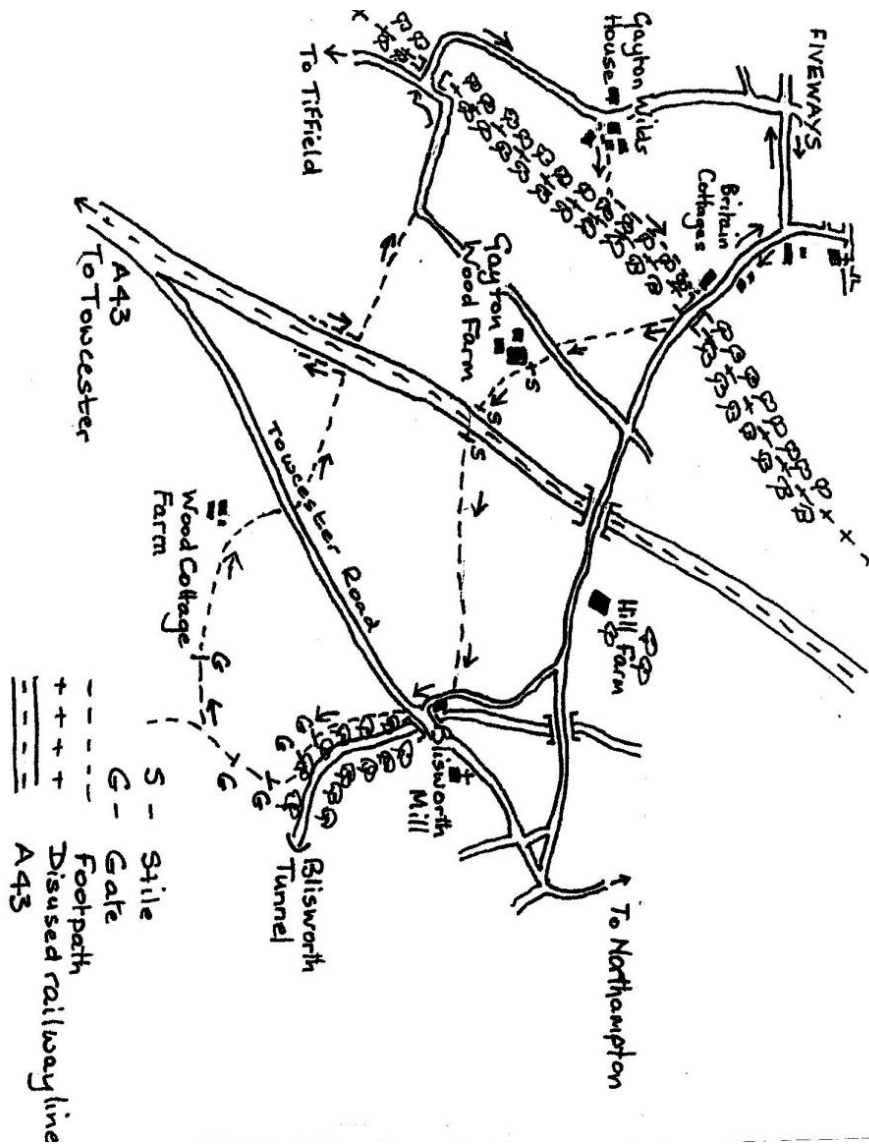
As the trees thicken, you lose sight of the canal and around this point you go through another wooden swing gate, then turn left and follow the path as it swings right around the edge of a field, with a high hedge on your left. Some 300 yards after the gate, your path joins the Midshires Way, where it 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.

Just before the tunnel's first airshaft, ( a brick tower), the path bears right and shortly after this point, you leave the Midshires Way, which continues south to Stoke Bruerne, and go right through a gate and onto a bridleway in the direction of Gayton. Walk along the edge of the field, on the broad, well-maintained path leading to Wood Cottage Farm, then onto the Towcester Road close to the top of the hill leading out of Blisworth. Cross the road, and continue along the bridleway to the A43 dual carriageway. At this point, the path turns 90 degrees left and follows the A43 for 100 yards or so, along a narrow, overgrown and almost impassable passage, to the A43 crossing point

After carefully navigating the dual carriageway, turn right for about another 100 yards, returning to the bridleway. This wide, tree-lined track continues for about one third of a mile, then emerges onto the Gayton Arm/Tiffield Road at the point where the road bears sharp right at the top of the hill coming up from Gayton Wood Farm. Proceed along the road, turning right over the disused railway line, and following it to Gayton Wilds House. Here, leave the road and take the footpath round the back of the house, and at the disused railway, turn left along the path. At the end of the field is a broken down stile behind Britain Cottages, and a grassy

path leads down to Blisworth Road. Here turn left, and follow the road to Gayton.

*Length of walk about 6 miles.*



## Walk 7 – Bugbrooke Road/Grand Union Canal

From Fiveways walk along Bugbrooke Road past the school and between the last bungalow and the new houses, take the footpath on the right. At the beginning it runs to the left of the hedge, but after a short distance, goes through a gap in the hedge and runs along the right side of the hedge to the end of the field, where you reach a wide often muddy track. Turn right on the track and walk back towards Park Lane and Gayton, then before the first house, turn left on the footpath that leads down the hill, between two high hedges. Continue until you reach a metal gate that leads into a grassy field. At this point you have extensive views down to the railway



line the canal and to Northampton. Go through the gate and walk down across the field towards the bottom right corner. You pass the sewage works on your right and reach a bridge at the bottom of the field (see left), which crosses a stream and a hedge and leads into a

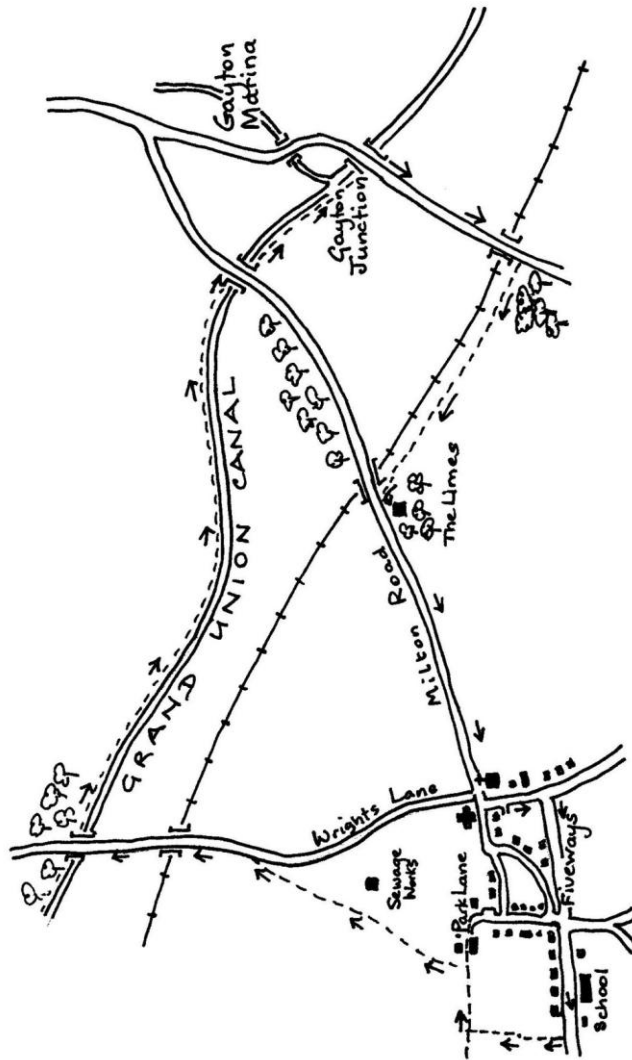
cultivated field. After crossing the bridge, turn left and skirt around the edge of the field (the correct route of the path is diagonally across the field, but it is not marked), to a rusty metal gate which leads into Wrights Lane.

Turn left and walk along Wrights Lane, over the railway bridge and over the canal bridge, then on the far side of the bridge go down the steps to the left and onto the canal towpath. Turn left and walk under the bridge towards Blisworth. From here you have a wonderful view of Gayton and its church standing out on top of the hill away to your right. Follow the towpath all the way to Milton Road, then cross to the other side of the canal and continue along the towpath as far as Blisworth Arm, the junction of the Grand Union Canal and the Northampton Arm.

Leave the towpath at this point and turn right, walking up the road to the railway bridge. On the far side of the bridge, take the footpath on the right. It leads down some steps, into a triangular shaped grassy field. The

path follows the line of the railway fence, on your right, across the field, then across a wooden bridge that spans a stream and up a slope to Milton Road. Turn left and walk up the hill to Gayton and Fiveways.

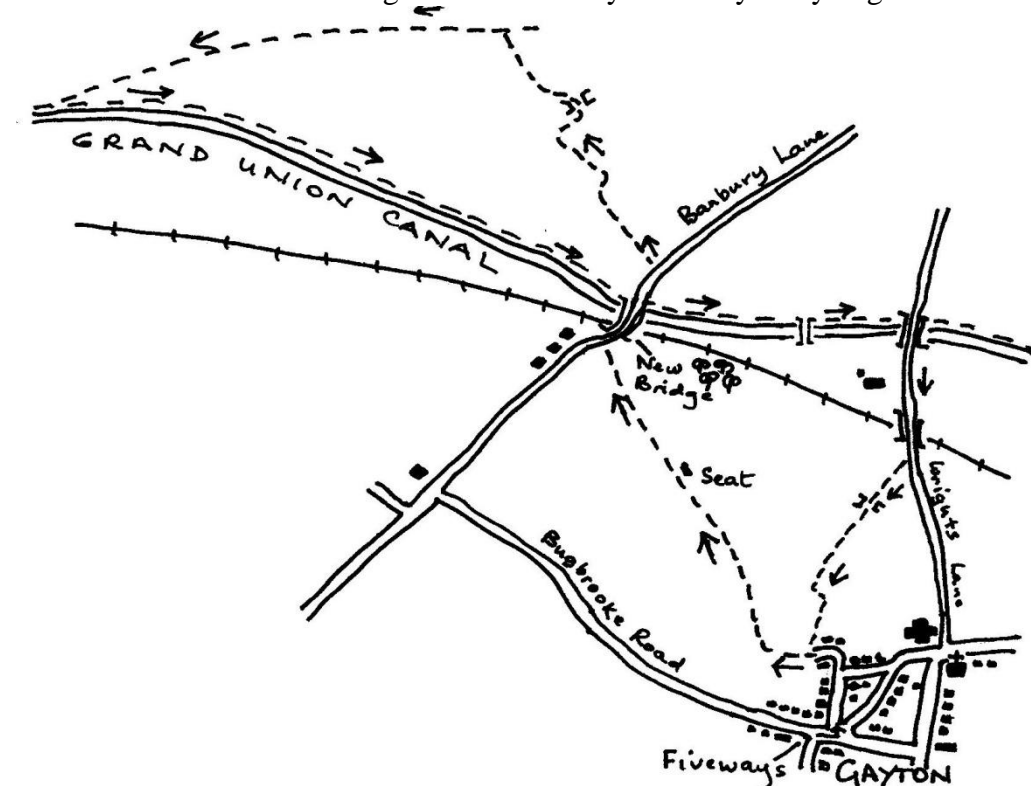
*Length of walk about 3 ½ miles.*



### Walk 8 –Grand Union Canal towards Bugbrooke

From Fiveways set off down the High Street to Park Lane past the Eykyn Arms car park. Continue to the end of the lane, ignoring the first footpath sign to the right, turn right at the second footpath signpost on to a wide track between two hedgerows. From this track, known locally as the Ridge, are extensive panoramic views all round. The hedgerow on the left ends after about 200 yards and you continue along the track keeping close to the hedgerow on the right. Pause for a while at the green steel seat, located to the right of the path, at a gap in the hedge. From here you can enjoy some of the best views in the county, over the Nene valley, to the Grand Union canal, to Bugbrooke and beyond.

Just beyond the gap, the hedge takes a right-angled turn, but the well marked path continues across the field, bearing slightly to the left and downhill to the trees and hedgerow about 300 yards away. As you go



through the wide gap in the hedge, where there is an arrow marker, you look down on the new Banbury Lane bridge over the railway line and canal. It opened in spring 2005 and replaced the level crossing.



Turn left going down along the side of the uncultivated field until you reach a stile to your right, which takes you onto the new bridge (see left). Turn right and walk across the double bridge, over the railway line and then the canal. Continue along Banbury Lane in the direction of Rothersthorpe for about 300 yards to the foot path sign on your left. Take this footpath, heading northwest in

the direction of Bugbrooke, with the hedge on your left. At the end of the hedge, the well marked path crosses a cultivated field to a wooden bridge over a stream. Continue over another cultivated field, and about three quarters of the way across, you come to a fenced grassy field to your right. Continue along the path with the fence on your right to an arrow marker pointing left. Turn left, go over a stile and along a grassy path for about 200 yards to another stile.

You are now on a wide farm track, which you follow to the junction of Bugbrooke road and the Grand Union Canal. Turn left and walk down onto the canal tow path, then left again and walk back towards Gayton. You walk under the old Banbury Lane bridge, then under the new one, then under a cattle crossing bridge and you leave the tow path at Wrights Lane.



Cross over the canal bridge (see left) towards Gayton, cross the railway bridge and take the footpath to the right. There is a footpath sign in the hedge and a stile, which is unusable, because it is overgrown by the hedge, so go through the gate. The

path should go diagonally across the field, but is unmarked, so it is easier to follow the grassy verge around the edge of the field with the hedge on your right, until you reach a wooden bridge, that goes through the hedge and over a stream. You then walk uphill across a grassy field to the gate in the top left hand corner. Go through the gate, (there is no stile) and up the track which brings you back to Park Lane. Turn left and return to Fiveways.

*Length of walk about 5 miles.*

### **Walk 9 - Midshires Way and Grand Union Canal**

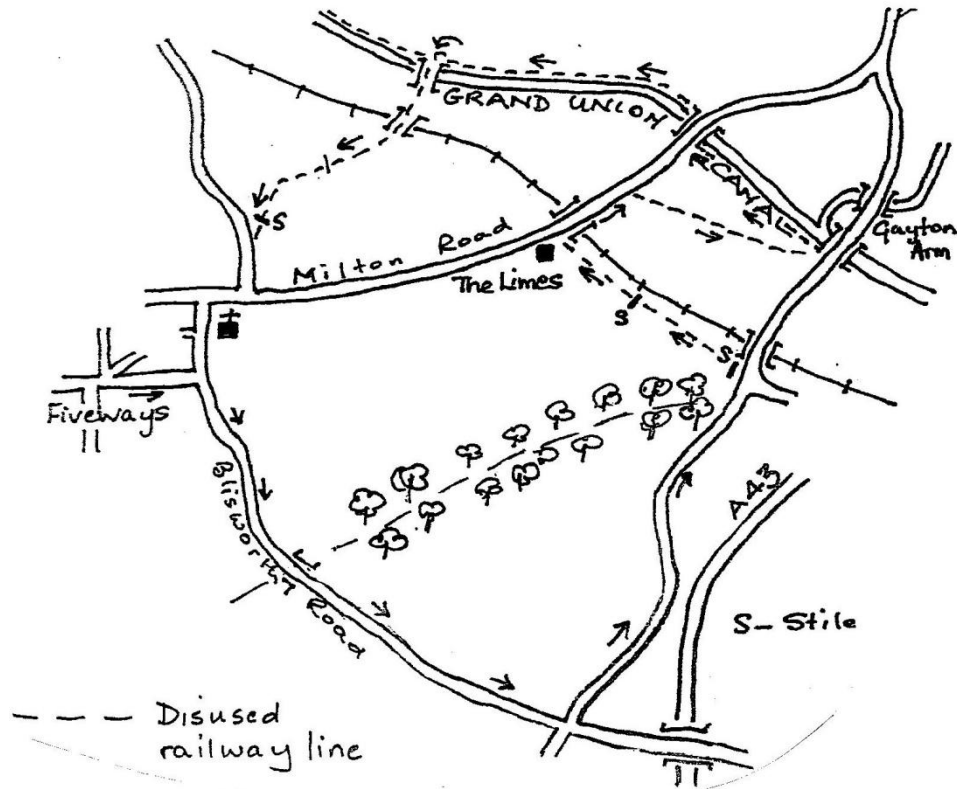
Leave Fiveways via Back Lane and turn right into Blisworth Road, the route of the Midshires Way. Continue as far as the crossroads, then turn left following the road that runs parallel with the A43, down the hill. Where the road swings right passing under the A43, carry straight on to the railway bridge. Take the footpath on your left, indicated by a fingerpost, on the brow of the bridge. There used to be a tricky scramble



down a steep slope here, but the descent is now quite easy thanks to steps that were installed, according to a notice, as a "Project carried out by the RAMBLERS working with NCC, improving access to the countryside" (see left). Follow the path, staying close to the galvanised post and rail fence, cross a stream and a stile and arrive at the gate on Milton Road by "The Limes".

Turn right, and after about 200 yards take the footpath to the right, heading diagonally across the field towards Gayton Arm. At the corner of the field, stone steps lead up through a gap in the hedge and onto the canal footpath. Turn left and walk towards the Milton Road bridge, where you cross to the opposite bank, continuing along the towpath to the next bridge. Cross the canal over this bridge, then cross the railway bridge and continue diagonally half right, up the hill, across the grassy field towards

Gayton. Cross the stile, set in the hedge, and go into the next field. The correct route of the path diagonally across the field is not defined and the actual path follows the left hand edge up to a paddock fence. Turn right and follow the fence until you reach a gate into the paddock and across to a stile into another paddock, then right to the gate that leads into Wrights Lane and from there back to Fiveways.



*Length of walk about 3.7 miles*

### Walk 10 – Northampton Arm of Grand Union Canal/flight of locks/ Rothersthorpe.

From Fiveways, walk along Back Lane towards Blisworth Road, turn left, then right into Milton Road and continue down to the railway bridge. Turn right onto the footpath marked with a finger post, just before the bridge. The path runs parallel with the railway line until the next road bridge. Climb the steps at the end of the path and turn left onto the railway bridge. Walk along the road, cross the bridge over the Grand Union canal, pass the Old Toll House on your left and Arm Farm on your right.

When you reach the bridge over the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union Canal, take the path to the left of the bridge down to the canal towpath and turn right, walking under the bridge towards Northampton. To your left is the old world tranquillity of Gayton Marina and to your right the constant roar of a thousand combustion engines, speeding along the A43 dual carriageway, which runs almost parallel with the towpath down to the M1. Pass under another bridge, to a former lock keeper's cottage, (now converted and extended into a large house) opposite which is a sign welcoming you to the Grand Union Canal, Northampton Arm, flight of locks, Top Lock no. 1.



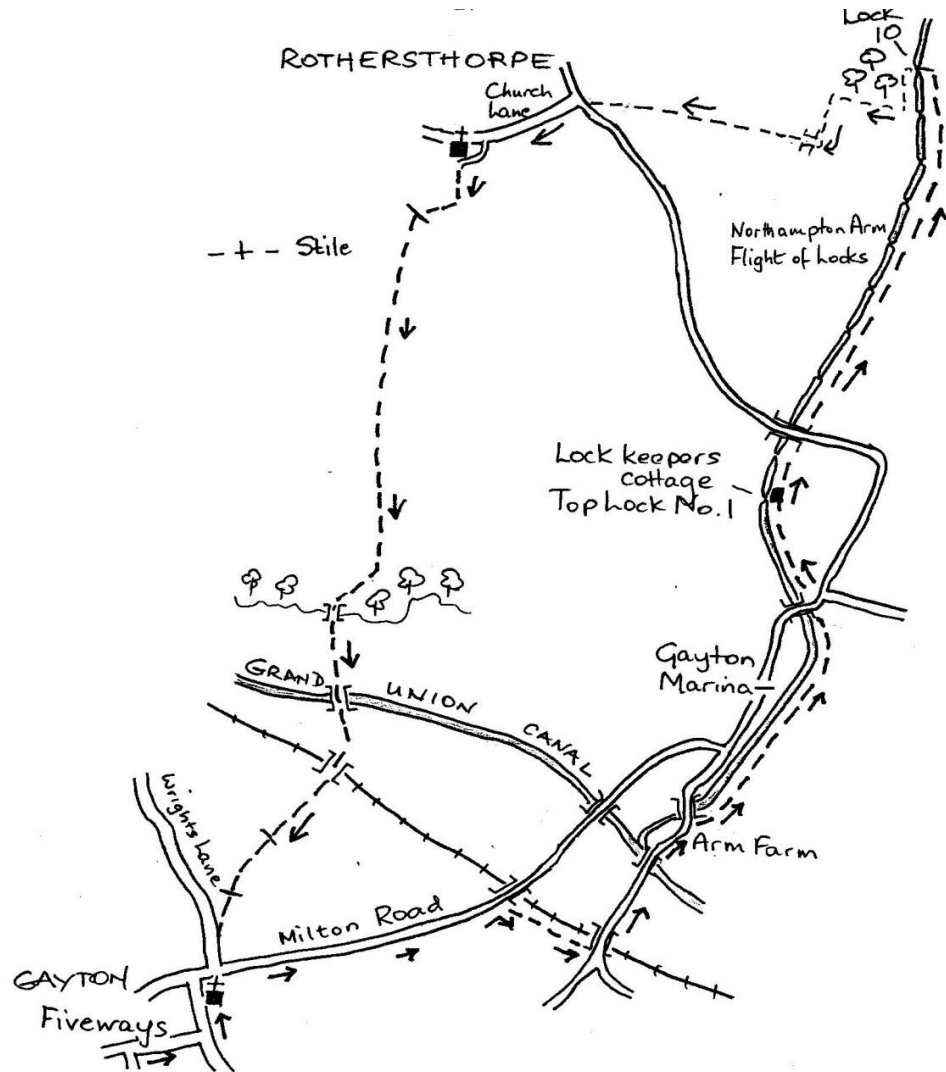
Lock gate and cattle bridge.

continues on the other side of the canal. Take this path, crossing over the canal by means of the lock gate, turn left again and after a few paces, cross the concrete overflow

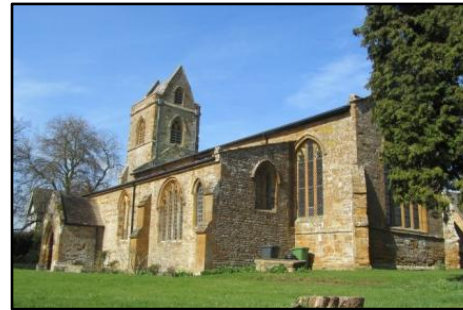
Continue under another bridge, (the road to Rothersthorpe) and a broad grassy path takes you down past locks 2 to 10. The canal continues under the M1 and onto Northampton, but at lock 10, there is a footpath which comes through the gate in the hedge behind the picnic area with wire-sculptured figures, and

ditch (you have to jump!) and head along the edge of the spinney until you reach a field. Alternatively it is a little easier to cross the canal at lock 9 and join the path where it enters the field.

On the map, the path now crosses cultivated fields and is unmarked. The actual path follows the edge of the field, with the spinney to your right then goes left, following the hedge and stream to the right. Ignore the first gap in the hedge, identified by a plank and two large diameter pipes, and cross the stream at the next gap, over a concrete bridge.



The path is still unmarked, so keep to the right side of the field heading in the direction of the houses ahead (Rothersthorpe), then follow the farm track to the road (North Street). The official footpath joins the road about



30 yards down on the left – see finger post – opposite Church Lane. Crossing the road into Church Lane proceed past Rothersthorpe Manor on your left, towards the church.

Just before the church (see left), take the small lane on the left, past a pretty white-walled thatched cottage to a stile. Cross the stile and

follow a well-worn grassy path, across a stream, to the right corner of the field. Cross another stile and follow the hedge on the right. At the end of this field, pass through a hedge gap into the next field still keeping the hedge to the right. At the corner of this field, turn right through a gap into the next field and follow the left edge of the field for about 30 yards, where the path disappears into thick woods. Follow the path through the woods for about 120 yards to a footbridge spanning a stream.

Cross the stream, the parish boundary, turn left, and then follow the hedge keeping it to the left. Continue straight ahead, over the canal bridge, then over the railway bridge, and head diagonally half right across the grassy field using the large barn in the distance as a landmark. Cross the stile in the hedge into the next field. Here again, the correct route of the path diagonally across the field is not defined and the actual path follows the left hand edge up to a paddock fence. Turn right and follow the fence until you reach a gate into the paddock and across to a stile into another paddock, then right to the gate that leads into Wrights Lane and from there back to Fiveways.

*Length of walk approx 5 miles.*

## Walk 11 – Tiffield Pocket Park

From Fiveways, walk along Eastcote Road past the allotments on your left and where the road swings right, continue straight ahead on Tiffield Road, past Gayton Wilds House, where the road bears right and crosses Gayton Wilds. Just before the bridge over the disused railway, on your right is the entrance to Tiffield Pocket Park, the John Mawby Trail.

Go through the wooden gate and pause to study the magnificent and informative notice board. It tells you that this is a linear park, just over one kilometre in length, following the track of the old Northampton to Banbury railway line that was constructed in the late 1860's and abandoned in the 1960's. It has pictures of the flora and fauna that inhabit the park, such as the common spotted orchid, early purple orchid, great spotted woodpeckers, jays and barn owls. There is also a map showing points of interest along the way, such as the pond, which is visited by a kingfisher, is home to a colony of pond snails, as well as grass snakes, frogs, stoats, muntjac, dragonflies, damselflies and butterflies. To your left are steps and a hand rail to guide you down the steep bank and onto the path below.

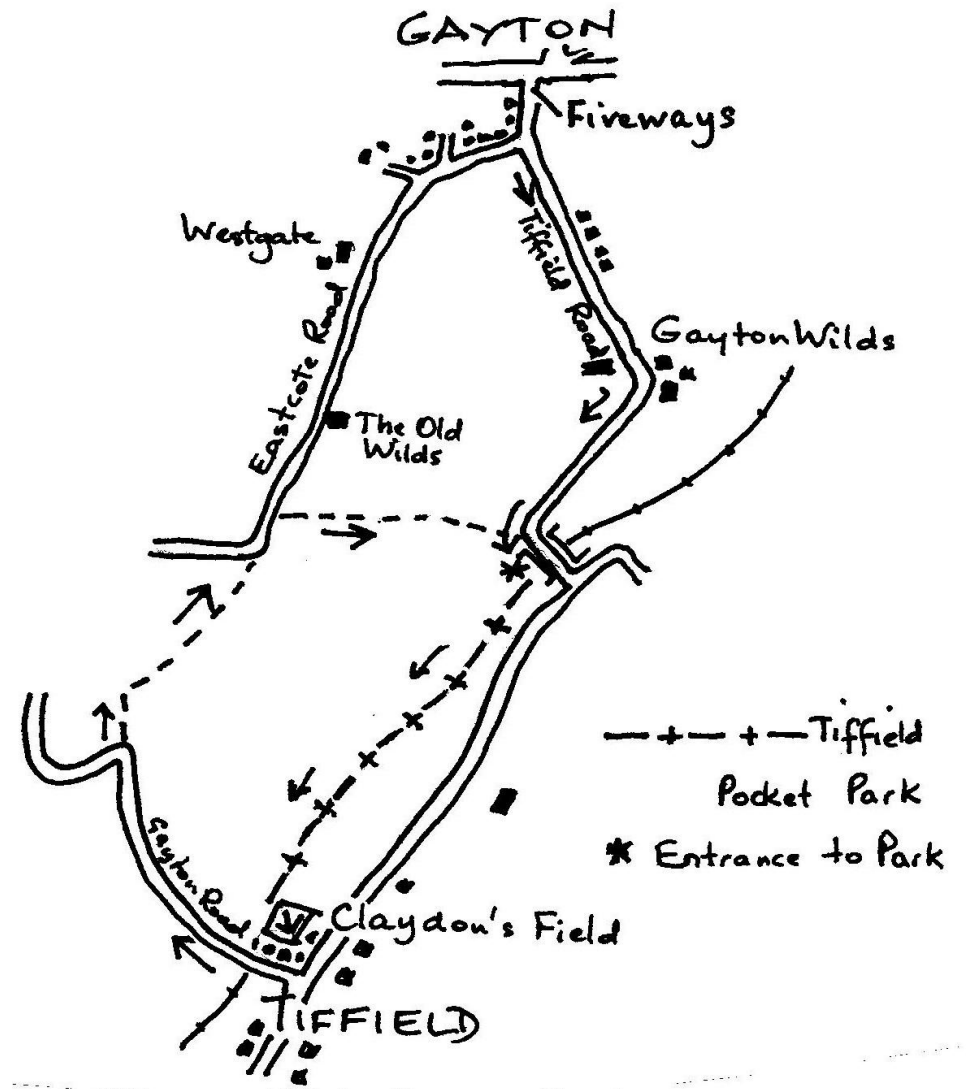


When you reach the path, turn right, leaving behind you the massive, high brick arch of the road bridge. Straight ahead as far as you can see, runs the former rail track, now returned to nature as a rustic footpath, beneath a canopy of trees (see left). Follow the path to Tiffield, stopping for a few moments to sit on the rough log seat that overlooks the pond on your right.

You reach a playing field on your left, known as Claydon's Field, at which point you leave the park through the wooden gate, walk diagonally across the field to the far corner, where you exit

onto Gayton Road. Turn right and walk past the remains of the old rail bridge, where the former railway line crossed over the sunken road. Shortly after the gates of 'The Folly', on your left, the road turns sharply

left, but you walk straight ahead onto the bridgeway – there is an arrow marker on the telegraph pole – which leads to Eastcote Road.



The bottom and top ends of the bridgeway are narrow and usually grassy and firm, but the middle stretch widens out; it used to get churned up by



horses and was very muddy but it was recently resurfaced and is now easier to walk.

When you emerge onto Eastcote Road (see left), continue straight ahead in the direction of Gayton and after about 30 yards, turn right onto a byway, which leads, almost in a straight line, with the hedge to your left, back to

Gayton Wilds. You reach the road just before the entrance to the Pocket Park. Turn left and walk back to Gayton.

*Length of walk about 4 ¼ miles.*

For a shorter walk, comprising the 2 ¼ mile circuit starting at the entrance to the Pocket Park, you can drive and park off the road at the start of the byway, a few yards before the gate leading into the pocket park.

### Walk 12 – Grand Union Canal to Blisworth

From Fiveways, walk down Baker Street, along Springs' Orchard, enjoying to your left the panoramic view of rolling green countryside and straight ahead the Elizabethan manor house, an architectural Tudor gem, and Gayton's ancient church. Continue along Milton Road, down the hill,



Marina at Blisworth Arm.

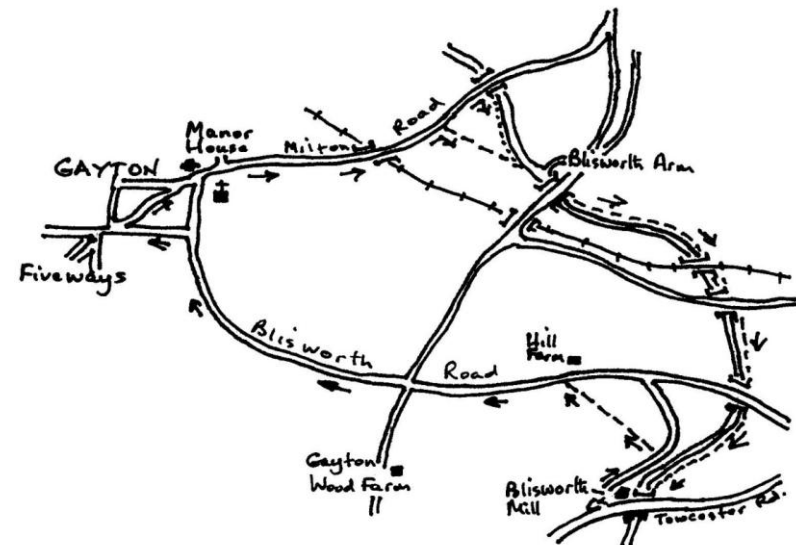
can continue down Milton Road to the canal bridge and walk along the towpath, on the right side of the canal, towards Blisworth.

over the railway bridge and take the footpath to the right, which leads across fields to Blisworth Arm, the junction of the Grand Union Canal and the Northampton Arm. Alternatively, you

At Blisworth Arm, cross over the road bridge to the left side of the canal and follow the towpath to Blisworth, walking under two road bridges on the way.

At Blisworth, you walk past the garden gates of the houses on your left and the former Blisworth Mill, now converted to flats, on your right. Continue under the Towcester Road bridge, then leave the towpath here, walk up the incline to the Towcester Road, cross the road, turn left and right along the road that leads back to Gayton with Blisworth Mill on your right. There is a footpath on the left side of this road, opposite Blisworth Mill, which leads back to Gayton via Gayton Wood farm. Go past this and take the second footpath. There is a wide grassy entrance, between the end of the hedge and the end of a cottage garden, opposite the entrance to a canal hire company. It leads to a wide padlocked wooden gate, with a swing gate for walkers on the left.

Go through the gate and cross a grassy meadow, up a steep slope to the opposite corner, where there is an oak tree, surrounded by thick nettles. A narrow path leads through the nettles, (long trousers recommended here), to a stile. Cross over the stile and follow the very well marked path uphill through a large cultivated field. It joins the Blisworth Road just after Hill Farm. From this point you walk along Blisworth Road, route of the Midshires Way, and back to Gayton. *Length of walk about 4 miles.*





## WINTRY SCENES AROUND GAYTON



GAYTON FROM THE RIDGE FEB '09.



TOBOGGANING SPRINGS ORCHARD FEB '09.



MILLENNIUM SPINNEY DEC '10.



FIVEWAYS FEB '09.



GAYTON WALKERS NEW YEARS DAY '09

## SPRINGTIME IN GAYTON



MANORHOUSE AND CHURCH APRIL '06



PRUNING THE SPINNEY JAN '10



THE SPINNEY WITH COWS APRIL '11



THE ALLOTMENTS APRIL '11



FIVEWAYS APRIL '11