

NORTH KILWORTH



“
*North Kilworth owes much to
the geology... which form an
aquifer feeding the springs*
”

Enjoy our historic village trails
in beautiful south Leicestershire



NORTH KILWORTH

(NOT TO SCALE)



North Kilworth, a Conservation Area, in South Leicestershire lies close to the River Avon on the Northamptonshire border. At the time of the Domesday survey there were two settlements Chivelesworde and Cleveliorde, which later differentiated into North and South Kilworth.

The geology of North Kilworth is created from clays and gravels making an aquifer that feeds into the unusual springs found here. They were vital to the early settlement and were used as a water supply until 50 years ago. Look out for cobbles and boulders from the sands now found in walls and yards. Notice also the various large boulders of coarse sandstone lying around the village. These are erratics and were dumped by glaciers during an ice age.

There is ample parking towards the rear of the Village Hall. Alternative parking is available in front of the White Lion pub on the A4304. The trail starts by the Village Hall.

1 Belgrave Village Hall - This was built in 1902 to the memory of a much loved rector, the Revd. C. W. Belgrave. The foundation stone was laid by Mrs Entwistle of North Kilworth House (15). In his opening speech Mr Entwistle said he hoped everyone would enjoy "the green white-washed walls".

2 The Old School - This was built in 1847 at a cost of £300 and comprised a "big" schoolroom and a "little" schoolroom. It closed in 1970 when the new school in Dag Lane was opened.

During the Great War, the teacher was a Mrs Hoff whose husband was interned because he was German. Mrs Hoff doted on her German Shepherd dog, but the villagers, full of germanophobia, considered it had to go. It was reluctantly shot by Policeman Robinson.



3 Nether Hall to the left of the churchyard gates is an elaborate mid-Victorian house with ornamental brickwork, chimneys and roof tiles. Outwardly it has not changed much, but its name has. Originally known as The Cottage, it became Nether Hall in the 1930's when lived in by Col. H. D. Belgrave DSO, whose family had held the medieval manor of Nether Hall in the early 16th century. When the Revd. Charles Belgrave died in 1901 his six daughters who had lived with him had to vacate the Rectory (the large house to the right of the churchyard gate; note its wrought iron gates). They all moved into the smaller house next door (Nether Hall) which to them in relative terms was a cottage.

4 The Churchyard Gates were made in 1881 by Balls Royal Implement Works on Lutterworth Road. (see 18). The central post, presumably for a swing system, is unusual. The gates promoted a lengthy and vigorous discussion in the letters page of the Rugby Advertiser suggesting that dogs would roam into God's Acre and that there should be a fence the length of the churchyard to keep them out. Another parishioner stated "the gates are very neat and I only wish the same improvement could be followed up the length of the street, whose condition is a disgrace to the parish!"

The Churchyard contains some interesting 18th century headstones in Swithland Slate.

5 St. Andrews Church - This dates from the 13th and 14th centuries and is made of local cobbles. The church was altered in 1864 when the south aisle, organ chamber and porch were added in angular Charnwood granite, a foreign material for North Kilworth. The hexagonal clock face, given by the Entwistles of North Kilworth House (15) is made of wood; it was restored in 1993. Above it is the bell chamber for 5



bells whose louvres are of slate. Just to the south of the church in the churchyard there is a prominent altar tomb to Man Dobson (1756-1847).

A notable Admiral - Man Dobson, whose home was Ivy House (10) was Admiral of the White Squadron during the Napoleonic wars. His fleet, together with the Red and Blue Squadrons, reported to Lord Nelson. Whilst in the Royal Navy he saw action in many parts of the world. Inside the church, close to his altar tomb, is his marble memorial showing shrouded navel guns.

6 The Churchyard Wall in Dag Lane to the south is very old and is constructed of river pebbles with a stone coping.

Murder in Dag Lane - Dag Lane was the scene of a murder in 1382, triggered by a property dispute between the Rector (John Chamberlyne) and a parishioner. The court records, now held in Leicester, indicate that the Rector and his servant John were found guilty of murdering Nicholas Wiseman, but that subsequently both received a royal pardon.

7 Stoney - an appropriate name for this field. The track (a bridle path) through it commands a fine open view of the Avon valley. It leads past the mill, which was in use until 1928, but which is now a private house. The path then crosses the River Avon to the disused railway line (closed 1966) and across the Grand Union Canal to Welford.

A thoroughly smashing gentleman - When the Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) came to hunt in North Kilworth, he would stay at Wheler Lodge near Welford, returning next morning to London on the milk train. The village was always abuzz with excitement when he came. Everyone thought he was "thoroughly smashing". The children were let out of morning school to see him at the meet. On one occasion a maid, who was cleaning upstairs at Kilworth Hall (16), saw him coming with a lady friend on horseback along the bridle path. When he drew close she shouted out with excitement "Here he comes!" To her dying day she remembered the smile he gave her when he looked up to see who had called out.

8 Blind Man's Lantern - Honey Cottage, previously Stoney Cottage, has a date stone of 1721. Parts of its outbuildings are of mud. In the 19th century, blind Drummer Bennet lived here; at night he would "pilot" people to Welford on the bridle path through the mill to Welford carrying a lantern, but he would blow it out because he could find his way back without it!

9 The Farmyard - This was built in 1858 (see the date stone) and, as many of the mid-19th century, shows attention to detail. The wall on the left of the entrance was deliberately rounded and corbelled to avoid injury to cattle passing through the gateway. Note the patterned roof tiles.

10 Ivy House, previously called The Billet. The house and dovecote are both listed. It is one of the finest houses in the village and dates from the late 17th century. It was the home of Man Dobson (5) who modernised and extended it in the 1790s to give a fashionable appearance. It looks out to its garden opposite, which has interesting iron railings. Alongside is a jitty, the remnant of an early routeway.

11 Tudor Cottages - These timber-framed thatched cottages are examples of the 17th century box framing. The little extension to the right is a brick rebuild of an earlier mud building with hipped thatched roof. The low brick building alongside, now offices, was formerly the blacksmith's shop.



12 The Washpit was used by drovers for watering cattle. It was on the old road from Leicester to Rugby and was built at the time that the east-west turnpike road bypassed the village in 1755, prior to the enclosure in 1756. The pit was used by the blacksmith to shrink metal tyres onto cartwheels, and by carters to swell the wooden wheels to create a tight fit of the spokes.

The Little Well opposite provided spring water for villagers' daily use until 1956.



Optional detour 13 – 15

13 The Shoulder of Mutton was a popular village pub which closed around 1934 when the former main Leicester to Rugby road was realigned by an innovative new road constructed of concrete.

14 The old road from Leicester entered the village opposite the White Lion, cut down beside the pub, and continued round the corner by the washpit and over the concrete road of the 1930s. Its course towards Rugby can be discerned with an exit close to the Sports Club.

15 Kilworth House is one mile (1.4km) west of the village and can be seen across the fields and park from opposite the entrance to the Kilworth Springs Golf Club. The house was built in the late 19th century as a Dower House and Hunting Box for the Entwistles (1), a prominent Lancashire family from Rochdale.

Attached is a magnificent conservatory built by Messengers of Loughborough. The grounds were used annually by villagers for flower shows, sports days, rifle shooting, long alley skittles and fund-raising events.

16 North Kilworth Hall - This house dates back to the 17th century. A considerable area of land around the Hall was once owned by the estate. Note the pair of stone gatepiers opposite, and the wall with stone caps to its piers in Old Road leading round into Hawthorn Road.



Hawthorns for a Victoria Cross - Paul Aloysius Kenna (1862-1915) who lived at North Kilworth Hall was awarded the Victoria Cross for his gallantry in the Battle of Omdurman in the Egyptian campaign in 1898, the last time there was a full cavalry charge by the British army. He later fought in the South Africa campaign (1899-1901) taking part in the relief of Kimberley. As a Brigadier General in the Great War he was shot by a Turkish sniper at Gallipoli and was buried at Sulva Bay. It is thought that red hawthorn trees were planted in the grounds of North Kilworth Hall to commemorate his achievements. So, as a Millennium project, a new avenue of red Hawthorns was planted in Wash Pit Lane alongside the grounds of North Kilworth Hall.

17 Western Cottages - This row of six cottages on the A4304 was built in 1871 by George Ball for his workers at the Royal Implement Works. They cost £90 each.

18 Landeau House and the Royal Implement Works - The Ball family has worked in the village for nearly two centuries and in the 19th century set up the Royal Implement Works. This was a hive of industry employing over 50 people making carriages, carts, wagons, specialist vans and agricultural implements. Many of their goods went to Royal estates at Sandringham and Windsor. The adjacent fine red brick house with bay windows and ogee mesh porch was named Landeau House in recognition of the carriages produced by its owner.

19 Bed of Roses - The rose beds on the corners of Leicester Road are planted with 'Kilworth Gold' roses. They were created by Douglas Gandy, one of the country's leading rose breeders who has large fields of rose nurseries on either side of the village. He chose North Kilworth because of its special seam of clay alongside the local sand and gravel.

Return to the Village Hall car park via:

20 The narrow **High Street** alongside the **White Swan Inn**. On the west (right-hand) side is the **former Methodist Chapel** of 1856 externally unaltered, now a private house.

21 The Green with its central **War Memorial**. It is overlooked by a mixture of 18th and 19th Century houses. **The Close**, the large 3-storey house on the west side, was used to billet German prisoners of war during the Great War.

22 Spring Cottage - This thatched cottage, renovated in the 1990s, is aptly named from the natural springs around it. It is partially (the left-hand side and rear) built of mud, a traditional building material of the area.

23 The Bogs is a rare wetland site, full of natural springs, which is being restored having been used as a village tip for many years. Visible during the Winter and Spring are two Victorian brick access points where villagers drew their water before water mains were laid in 1956. Butterbur grows well here; its large leaves used to be used for wrapping churned butter before refrigeration. Return to the Village Hall Car Park via the raised walkway to:

24 The Millennium Green which was created in 1999 from part of the Belgrave estate. It has ample boardwalking for all weather access. It contains a square moat, probably dating from the 14th century, which enclosed the site of a medieval manor house. A house stood here until 1839. Such moats were intended as status symbols for prestigious residences; they were not built for defence. The site is registered as of archaeological significance and provides a quiet breathing space as well as encouraging wildlife.

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