

THE MEDIEVAL TRAIL

*A Journey through North Kesteven
in the Middle Ages*





SLEAFORD CASTLE

Photograph by Chris Cruikshank

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INTRODUCTION

The Middle Ages cover a period of over 400 years (c. 1066 - 1500) during which the landscape, already shaped in prehistoric and Roman times, was developed into something very near its present form. The fens had already been partly drained and many parts of the district were farmed. Existing villages were brought under the authority of 'Lords of the Manor', new villages were created, castles and churches were built and monasteries founded. The result is a landscape rich in medieval remains of every description.

The Medieval Trail is a series of five cycle or car-based trails featuring some of the outstanding archaeological sites which represent the wide range of medieval remains in the district. Most of these are Scheduled Ancient Monuments and are therefore protected from any disturbance or damage including metal detecting or removal of artefacts.

Public access is allowed to most of the sites but for some this is restricted to public footpaths. Please carefully observe the public rights of way, and do not trespass into areas beyond those marked on the trail maps.

Where public access is permitted, this is often through the courtesy of the landowner or tenant and depends upon continued care in closing gates and keeping dogs under control. Most of the routes are on minor roads or bridleways; major roads have been avoided where possible. However, there are main roads that have to be crossed, and extreme caution should be taken if you are cycling. Please observe the rules of safe cycling at all times. Consider wearing a helmet and carry plenty of water with you.

As well as outstanding archaeology, these routes will also take you through unspoiled and tranquil countryside. You will find welcome refreshment in country pubs and cafes along the way or you can buy provisions in village shops.

The Medieval Trail may be used in conjunction with other North Kesteven publications such as "The Roman Trail" and the 'Stepping Out' footpath leaflets. We have guides featuring countryside walks, village churches and aviation heritage. Our 'What's On' events guide contains details of a whole host of activities in the district.

For more information about car, cycle and footpath trails in North Kesteven please contact the Sleaford Tourist Information Centre on 01529 414294.

LORDS OF THE MANOR

CASTLES

The use of the private fortress or castle is really a medieval phenomenon introduced into England by Norman lords soon after the conquest of 1066. The earliest castles were called 'Motte and Bailey' castles, built quickly from earth and timber to establish control of the country and, later, to defend that control in times of political unrest. These castles consisted of a mound of earth thrown up from a circular ditch, with the top ringed by a wooden stockade and a two or three storey wooden tower in the middle. The mound was called the motte and it was encircled at ground level by another ditch and stockade, enclosing an outer-defensive area known as the bailey.

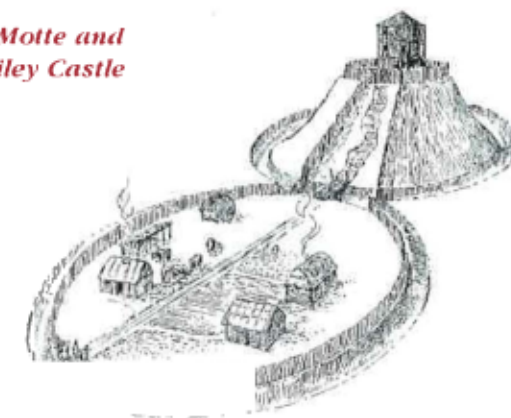
The remains of such castles often consist only of the mound or motte on which stood the keep, and the ditches which formed the moat. Gradually, their main function changed from defence to administration, and in many cases the wooden buildings were replaced by stone. More developed castles were built on different designs. Some survived as centres of agricultural estates, but many fell into disuse.

WELBOURN CASTLE (SK 968 541)

Welbourn Castle stands near the parish church at the centre of the medieval village of Welbourn. A bailey or outer defended courtyard may have existed to the south of the fairly modest mound as is outlined by Beck Street, Castle Hill and Little Lane.

A stone-built structure was first recorded on the site in the twelfth century, probably replacing an even earlier Norman timber manor house belonging to Roger De Malet. Thirteenth century records tell us that the castle consisted of a raised mound with a stone tower and a group of timber buildings which included the kitchen, brew-house and animal shelters. All were surrounded by a wide moat and bank. All that now remains is the mound and part of the moat, seen from Castle Hill Road.

A Motte and Bailey Castle



SLEAFORD CASTLE (TF 065 455)

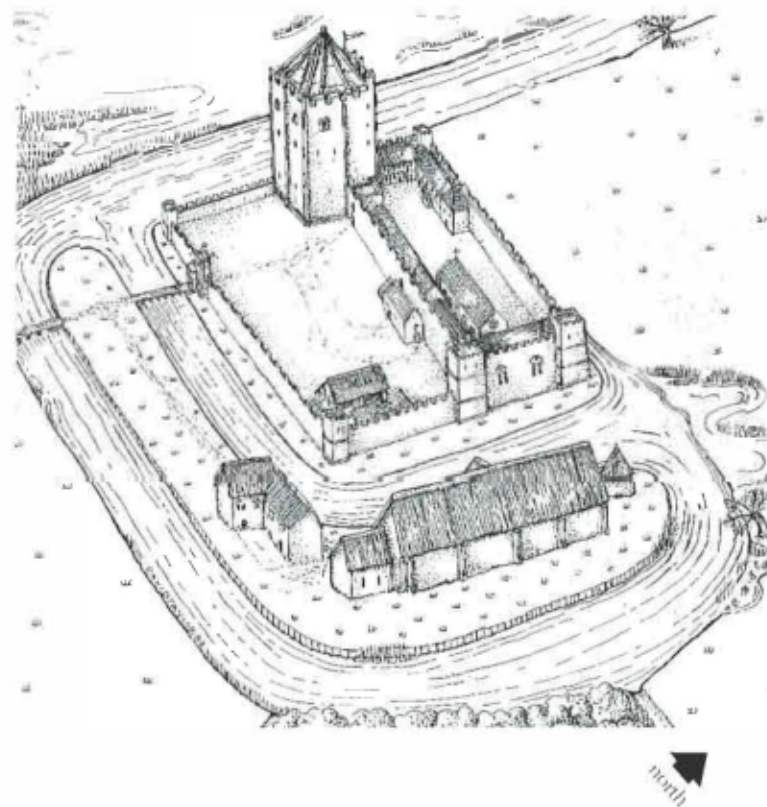
Sleaford Castle was built during the reign of King Stephen in the 1130s by Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln. Although built in a time of civil unrest, the castle was never attacked and served more to store produce and to administer the Bishop's estate.

The layout is easier to understand from the aerial photograph on the inside front cover. This was a more developed type of castle than Welbourn, having better fortifications including a stone keep, gatehouse, inner and outer walls and a double moat. It would have been home to many people not only the Bishop but also the castle guards, chaplain, constable, cooks and other servants. This place would have been full of life and noise as people brought in cartloads of tithes of produce, over the moat to the huge barn.

From the later sixteenth century onwards the castle was dismantled and used as a source of building stone for the town.

If you look around the older buildings of Sleaford you may spot parts of the stonework re-used in such buildings as the 'Manor House' on Northgate (now an architect's office).

What you can see now at the castle site are grass covered mounds of stone foundations and trenches where stone has been dug out and taken away.



*Reconstruction drawing of Sleaford
Castle in the 12th century
drawn by David Taylor*

SOMERTON CASTLE (SK 954 588)

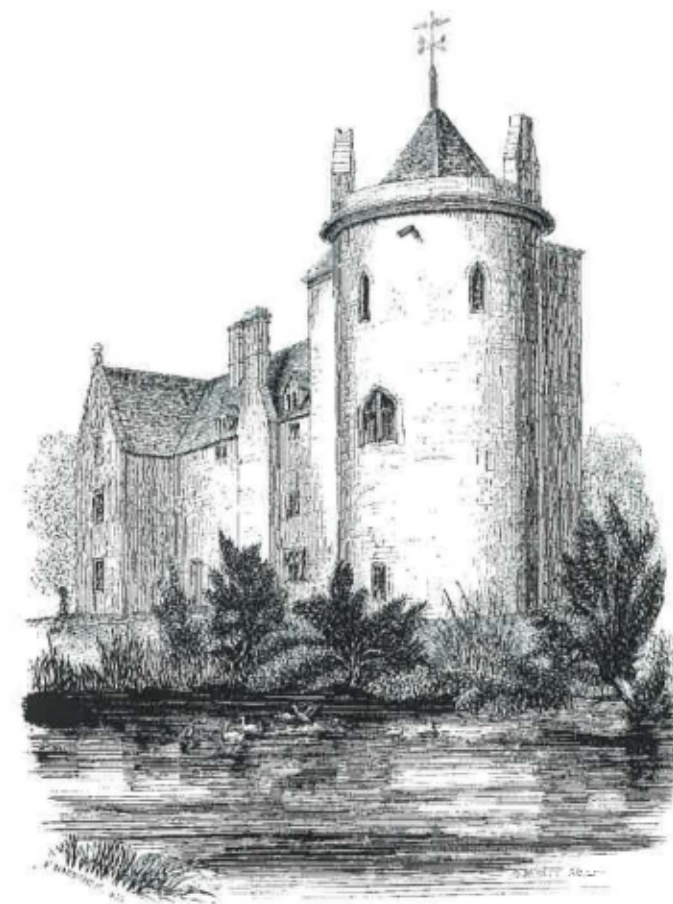
Somerton Castle near Boothby Graffoe is a developed castle dating to the late thirteenth century. It started off as a manor house belonging to the Bishop of Durham who fortified it in 1281.

As a developed castle, it was built in a quadrangular style with four circular towers on the corners, similar to some of the Welsh Castles.

Only the south east tower remains complete, now forming part of a farmhouse which also incorporates a length of the surrounding wall. The bases of two other corner towers also survive in the farmyard and garden.

Somerton Castle is in private ownership and not open to the public.

There is no convenient place to park in order to view it, but from the public road you can see the remains of an enormous bank, and some of the moats around the castle.



*Somerton Castle
Taken from T.H. Turner 1851*

MOATED SITES

Moats were commonly dug in the Middle Ages by the Lord of the Manor, to surround the Manor House and associated buildings. A moat is a large water-filled ditch, and its construction helped to set the Manor apart, physically and socially, from the ordinary villagers. Moats were a symbol of status and gave some security from wild animals, thieves and fire. Moated manor sites are relatively common and have left more traces in the landscape than the simple timber and mud dwellings of the common folk.

Not only manor houses were enclosed by moats; monasteries, granges (monastic farms) and farmsteads are also found within moats along with their gardens and fishponds. Moated sites are often roughly square or rectangular and can be of many different sizes and styles, including double moats, or two separate moats.

Moated manors were of lower status and were much more common than castles, although many castles began life as manor houses. The buildings inside the moat rarely survive and documentary research or archaeological excavation are usually necessary in order to discover the sites and functions of the structures within.

SCREDINGTON (TF 094 407)

HALL CLOSE MOATED SITE

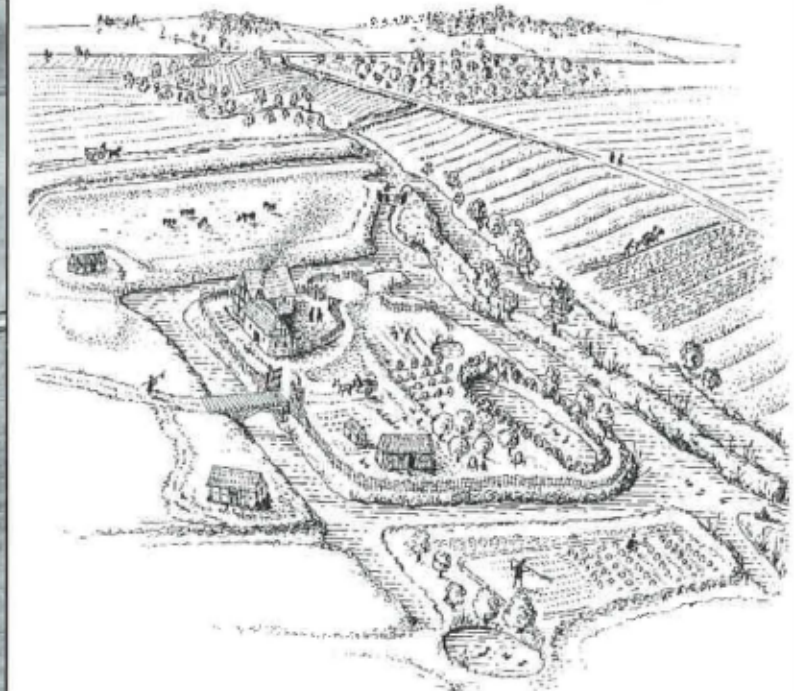
This is the best surviving and the most extensive of the five moated sites in Scredington. From the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries Hall Close was the home of the prominent Pylet family.

Within the moat lay a pond which can still be seen, and the Hall, while outside are the remains of boundary ditches, drainage channels, possible house platforms, and garden plots which reveal something of the extent of the medieval village of Scredington. The northern-most channel of the moat no longer exists and the causeway over the moat's southern side is modern. The aerial photograph will help you to understand the layout.

One may well wonder why there were five moated sites in Scredington and Northbeck: Hall Close, Hambleton, Thorney Close, Church Farm and Pinfold. They belonged to different families who were tenants to two absentee landlords. They therefore had the opportunity to amass the resources and status to build moats. Perhaps another reason was the good water supply and ready availability of clay to line the moats.



Hall Close Moated Site, looking west (May 1950)
Reproduced by kind permission from Cambridge University Collection of Air Photographs



*Reconstruction of Hall Close Moated Site,
Scredington looking west.*
Drawn by David Hopkins.

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, SCREDINGTON

Although most of the church was rebuilt in 1869, the medieval fabric can still be seen in the font, doorways, north arcade, and the filled-in north doorway. The tomb of William Pylet, dated 1403 is in the church.

HADDINGTON MOATED SITE (SK 914 628)

The settlement of Haddington has its roots in the Anglo-Saxon period being once the place of Hada's people, whence it gets its name. Lying by the banks of the River Witham, south of the present village, is a double-moated area enclosing the site of a probable thirteenth or fourteenth century manor house. However, if there ever was a manor house here, it has since been replaced by what appears to be two fishponds.

The site has never been excavated, the medieval date is derived from artefacts that have been found on the surface. The features in the adjoining rectangular moat to the north appear to be elements of a sixteenth century ornamental garden, including a possible walkway and 'prospect mound' for observing the view.

The stone dovecote to the north of the moats is thought to date from around 1420 or later. It has nesting boxes for 500 birds and would originally have been roofed. Doves (or pigeons) were a popular source of food in the middle ages and dovecotes are often found near manor houses.

Please do not enter the dovecote unless signs say otherwise.

You can see humps and bumps in the area to the west of the dovecote which are thought to represent a later building, Haddington Hall.

Aubourn Hall, in the next village, contains wooden panelling which is early sixteenth century in date and thought to have been salvaged from this building at the time that it was demolished in the later sixteenth century.

Some parts of the medieval strip field system survive as ridge and furrow on the field. Once common, this traditional landscape is fast becoming rare in Lincolnshire.

A mill stood on the other side of the river, which may have been the one referred to in medieval documents. A more modern mill remembered on this site was demolished in the 1970s.

To the east lie the earthwork remains of the medieval village for, although Haddington still survives as a village, it has shrunk since medieval times.



Aerial photograph of Haddington Moated site - NKDC 9

BURTON PEDWARDINE MOATED SITE AND SHRUNKEN MEDIEVAL VILLAGE (TF 119 422)

Burton Pedwardine is a very good example of a medieval village which has shrunk in size since the medieval period. In Anglo-Saxon times the name of the settlement was just 'Burton' meaning 'borough ton' (a settlement next to a fortified place). 'Pedwardine' was added in c.1280 when the Manor was held by the family of that name.

The earliest known feature is a twelfth century mound to the west of the church upon which stands the nineteenth century successor to the Manor House. Until recently it was nearly completely moated and was quite clearly the site of a substantial defended dwelling or castle. This could be the 'borough' or fortified place referred to in the placename. It stands in a landscape of earthworks which represent its own formal gardens and some of the house plots belonging to the village.

As you walk through the shrunken medieval village north and south of the main road you can see raised house platforms, ponds, hollow-ways or streets and a possible village green.

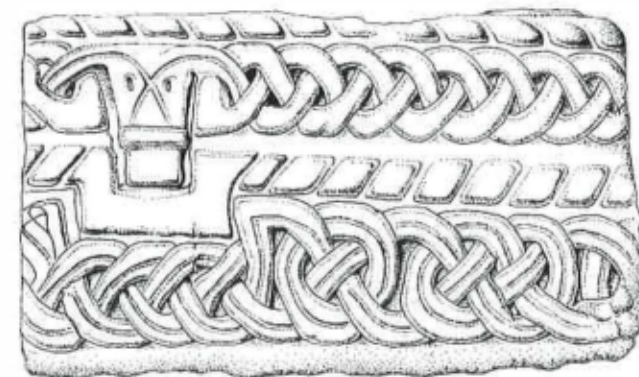
ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, BURTON PEDWARDINE



Engraving of Burton Pedwardine Church before re-building in 1912

This church is largely a nineteenth century rebuild of The Pedwardine's church of 1340. Of the medieval church, the north east transept still survives. Fragments of Anglo-Saxon stonework from the tenth and eleventh centuries are built into the west side of the nave on the inside, and medieval tombs and inscriptions tell the story of some of Burton's early inhabitants.

There is a sign to say where the key can be obtained.

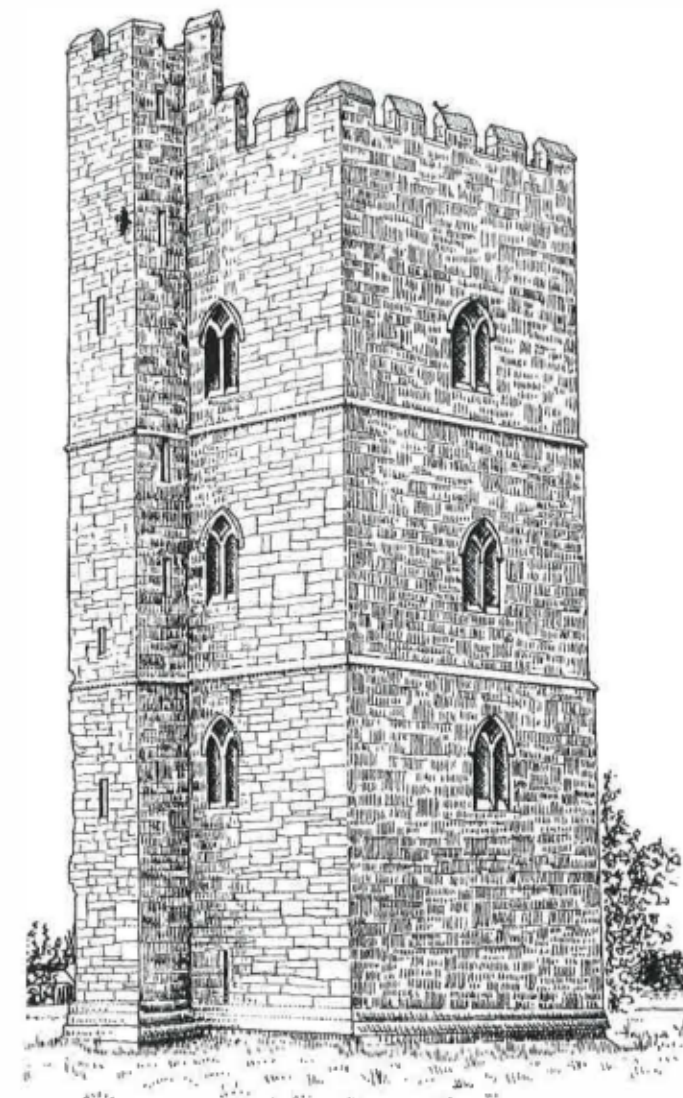


*Anglo-Saxon carved stone at Burton Pedwardine Church
Drawn by David Hopkins*

CHURCH OF ST MARY AND ALL SAINTS AND PRIORY, SOUTH KYME - See Section 2

SOUTH KYME MOATED SITE (TF 168 496)

South Kyme Tower was constructed in the mid-fourteenth century as part of a fortified manor for the Umfraville family. It may, however, occupy the site of an earlier manor of the de Kymes. The stone tower is all that remains above ground of the medieval manor house which was perhaps a partly timber-built structure. The site is surrounded by a series of ditches which once formed a triangular moat and traces of fishponds are also visible nearby.



*South Kyme Tower
Drawn by David Hopkins*

CHURCH AND CLOISTER

MONASTERIES

Apart from the parish church, the main religious institution of the Middle Ages was the monastery. Gifts of land were made to religious houses in return for which, prayers for the donor's souls were regularly said. Often these gifts were in uncultivated areas which the monastic community subsequently brought into use for arable or sheep farming. Monastic sites, therefore, varied greatly in size and importance from abbeys and priories, which were the centres of religious activity, to outlying farms or 'granges'. They also included 'hospitals' for the accommodation of the aged and the sick.

Several different religious orders were established in North Kesteven during the Middle Ages, each distinguished by the 'rule' obeyed by its members. The Rule of St Benedict, which formed the basis of most later rules, prescribed a life of obedience, simplicity and separation from the world. While the Benedictine order soon became one of the wealthiest of the Middle Ages, the Cistercians sought a return to the original principles of the rule, and established working communities in wild and isolated places. Augustinian canons, on the other hand, were priests who combined a monastic lifestyle with their clerical

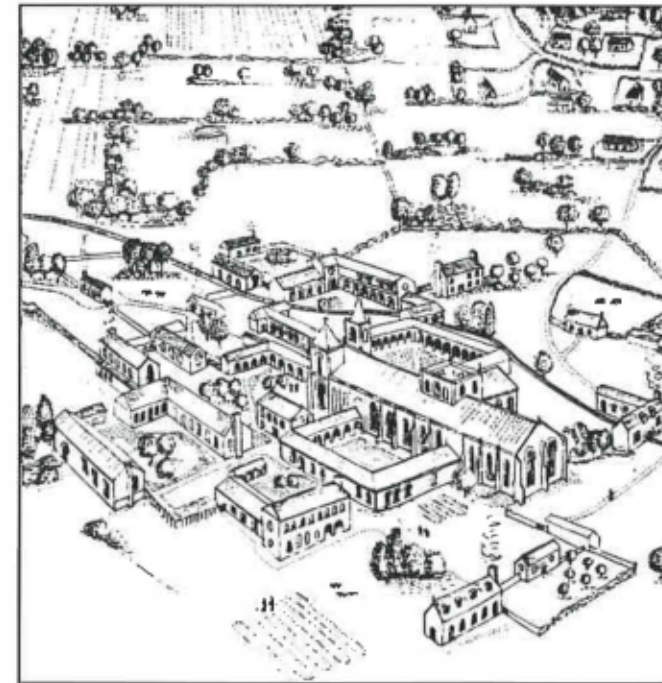
duties in the local community. The Gilbertine Order, which was founded in Lincolnshire, included both nuns and canons. The Knights Hospitallers, who were originally formed to care for poor and sick pilgrims in the Holy Land during the Crusades, eventually became a military order like the Knights Templars, combining religious and military ideals.

At the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 1530s, much of the monastic property in the country was sold off. Some monastic churches survived as parish churches, or were converted into country houses; most monastic buildings, however, fell into ruin or were demolished.

GILBERTINES

The Gilbertine order was founded in Lincolnshire in the early twelfth century by St Gilbert, the son of a Norman knight and is the only English order. Gilbert was a parish priest at Sempringham near Billingborough and this is where the first community started. The order soon gained in popularity and by the time of Gilbert's death in 1189 there were already thirteen communities in England. The Gilbertines differed from other religious orders in that men and woman were housed in the same establishment.

They were, however, strictly segregated into separate quarters, and there was usually a solid wall down the centre of the church to prohibit contact during services.



*Reconstruction drawing of the first Gilbertine Priory at Sempringham, after which Catley Priory may have been modelled.
drawn by Kathy Holland*

CATLEY PRIORY (TF 119 556)

Catley Priory was founded in the twelfth century as a double house for nuns and canons of the Gilbertine order. It was never a very prosperous establishment despite the variety of economic activities, including sheep-rearing, which were practiced here.

The present remains comprise only about half of the full extent of the priory. The site extended into the field to the north east which has now been ploughed flat.

The aerial photograph shows the site before it was ploughed and the remains of buildings in the centre show clearly. At the centre stood the church with separate cloisters for nuns and canons to each side.

The moat surrounding the buildings, and a group of fishponds on the south-western corner are still clearly visible. Life here must have been fairly bleak and hard especially for the nuns who led a more restricted and secluded lifestyle.



Aerial photograph of Catley Priory, 1965 looking south. Reproduced by kind permission of the Cambridge University Collection.



SOUTH KYME PRIORY (TF 168 498)

St Mary and All Saints Church is part of South Kyme Priory Church. The stonework of the west end of the south aisle shows the tell-tale signs of the earlier church. The Priory was founded in the twelfth century by Philip de Kyme for a group of twelve Augustinian canons and was dissolved in 1539. The rest of the priory buildings stood to the north in an arable field known as 'Abbey Yard' and to the west in the pasture field, now surviving as earthworks.

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

The Knights Templar were an order of soldier-monks formed in 1118 during the aftermath of the first Crusade. Their main function was to protect pilgrims on the road to the Holy Land. The Templars took their name from the church, the Temple of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, where they were first given accommodation. The Templars set up houses or 'preceptories' where they ran farms to provide revenue for their work in the Holy Land.

Pious landowners all over Europe showed their support for what was seen as the battle of Christianity against 'the infidel' by donating land to this Crusading order. The great wealth and privilege that the Templars acquired, however, led to greed and a lapse of their strict religious vows.

Eventually the Templars fell victim to their own success and many were arrested on trumped up charges of heinous crimes. By 1312 the whole order had been abolished which conveniently left their wealth to the European rulers of the day. The Templars still live on in the legacy of placenames around the country such as Templecombe in Somerset and Cressing Temple in Essex.

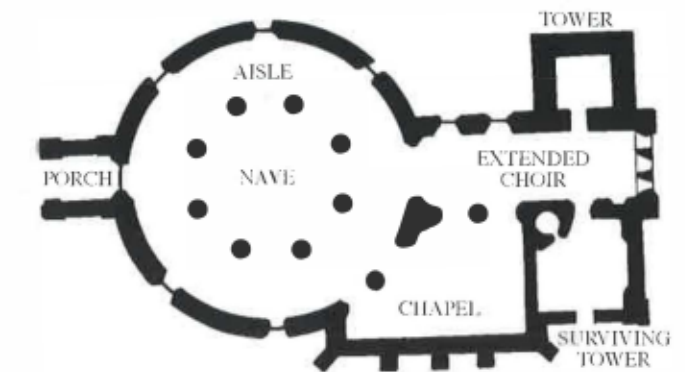
Other preceptories in Lincolnshire were at Eagle Hall, near Eagle (not open to the public), South Witham, East Mere, Aslackby and Willoughton.

TEMPLE BRUER (TF 008 538)

Temple Bruer is well worth a visit, being one of only a few upstanding remains of a Knights Templar preceptory. Founded in the mid-twelfth century like many monasteries, it would have been made up of religious, domestic and farm buildings.



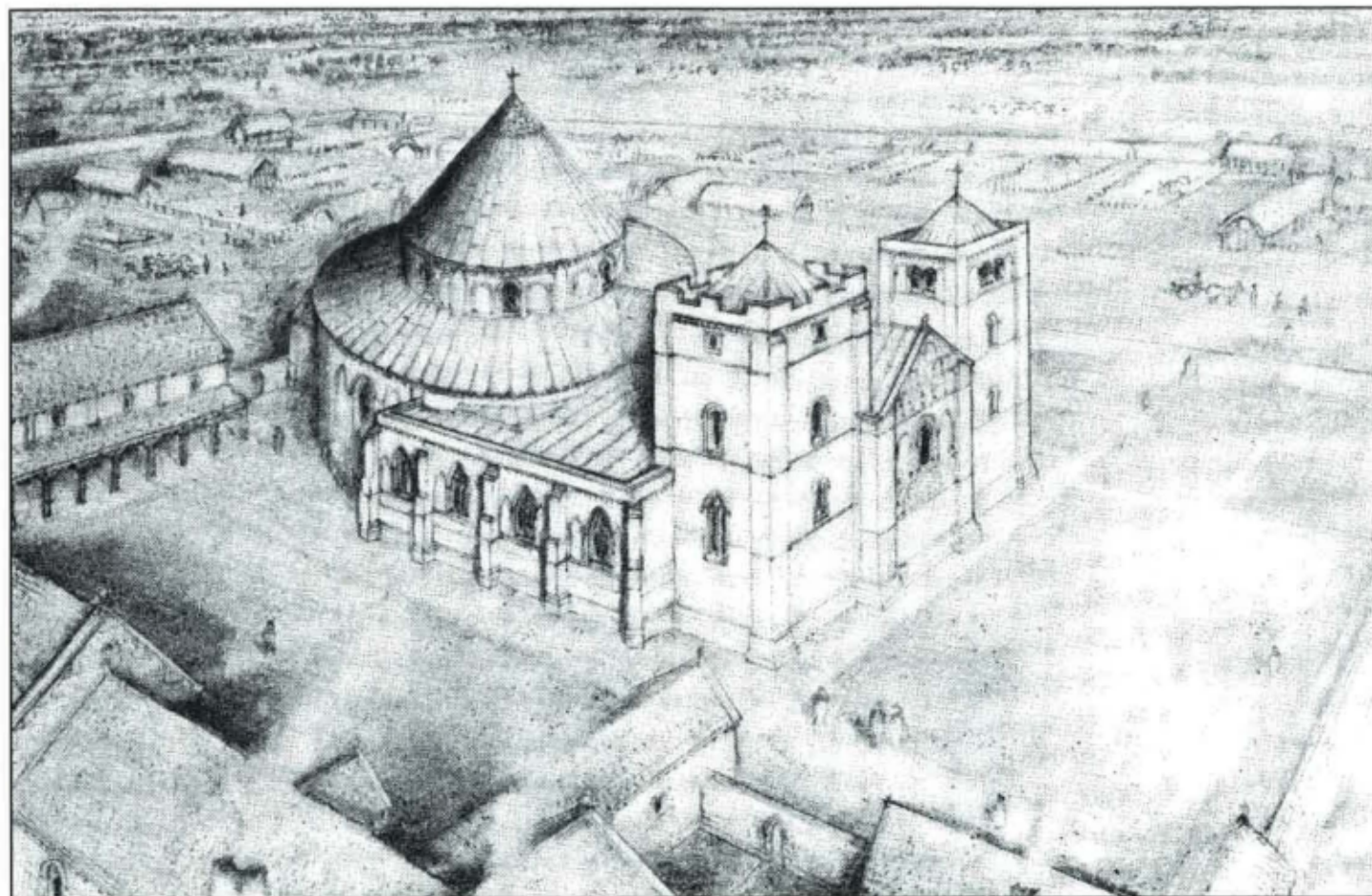
Knight Templar



Floor Plan of Temple Bruer Preceptory

The only surviving building is one of a pair of towers which stood at the east end of the church. Excavations in the 1830s have revealed that it had a circular nave (in the area of the present car park) — a unique feature of Templar Churches.

Peasants were colonised here to farm the 4000 acres of the preceptory's land. The remains of their village are now under ploughed fields to the south east. It was on this spot in 1308, at the second most wealthy of English preceptories, that Edward II sent the sheriff of Lincolnshire to arrest the knights and have them locked up in Clasketgate, Lincoln. Temple Bruer was passed to another crusading order 'the Knights Hospitallers' (also known as the Knights of St John) who occupied the site until the 1530s.



*Reconstruction view of Temple Bruer
from the south-east c. 1400*

Drawn by David Vale

NOCTON PRIORY (TF 075 648)

At the top of Abbey Hill, Wasps Nest, near Nocton, was a twelfth century monastery founded by Augustinians. This site is not accessible to the public at the time of writing.

CHURCHES

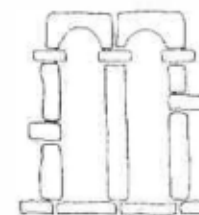
Christianity was established in England in Anglo-Saxon times during the sixth and seventh centuries. Churches of timber were built in the succeeding centuries, but it was not until after the Norman Conquest that the stone church became, as it is now, one of the characteristic features of every village.

Churches were built to glorify God and, to the average medieval peasant who hardly ever left his village, they must have been awe inspiring. The church was the focus of people's lives in many different ways: it was the place where they started life and eventually ended it. Its impressive size and the sound of the bells reminded people, whether they were in the fields or the village, of their duties to God. Once inside, the beautiful statues, carvings and, later, stained glass would have impressed upon the illiterate peasant some understanding of the life on earth and the life to come.

The common people were bound to the church in more practical ways, they were bound to giving one tenth of their produce, a 'tithe', to the church. All the medieval churches in North Kesteven have been subject to centuries of alteration and rebuilding and sometimes contain traces of over a thousand years of history.

To orientate yourself it is necessary to know that the altar is usually at the east, and the tower at the west end of the church. A good way to date a church is to look at the shape and decoration of the windows and other openings. These display a development through time from round-headed arches to pointed arches, which gradually change from tall, narrow openings to quite broad and flat ones.

ROUNDHEAD ARCHES (Romanesque)

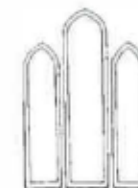


"Anglo Saxon"
6th - 11th centuries

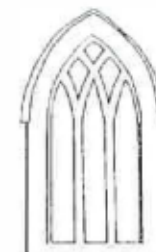


"Norman"
11th - 12th centuries

POINTED ARCHES (Gothic)



"Early English"
(lancets)
12th - 13th centuries



"Decorated"
13th - 14th centuries



"Perpendicular"
14th - 16th centuries

CHURCH OF ST PETER, AUBOURN (SK 928 628)

This tiny church was not always this size. It used to be more than twice the size up until 1862, when the nave was demolished and the Victorian facade and bell tower was added to the remaining chancel. Notice the narrow lancet windows with the deep recesses from the 13th and 14th century.

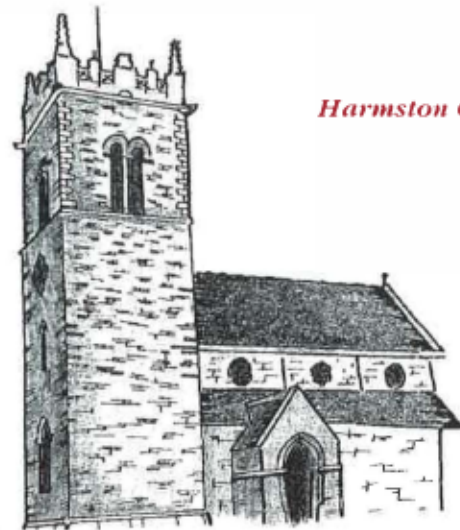
Inside the church are coats of arms and wall tablets of some of the leading local families from centuries past. They include the Meres who used to own the Hall next door. Outside in the graveyard, the position of the nave and the south porch are still obvious on the ground from the outline of the foundations. The reason for the partial demolition was that a new church was being built. You can see the shell of this Victorian church on Bridge Street. Nowadays things have reverted back, with the new church redundant and the old church being used for services.

Aubourn Hall

The Hall may be on the site of an earlier Medieval Manor House. It was built for the Meres family in the mid-sixteenth century—a great period of house building. The opening times are Wednesday afternoons in July and August.

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, HARMSTON (SK 973 623)

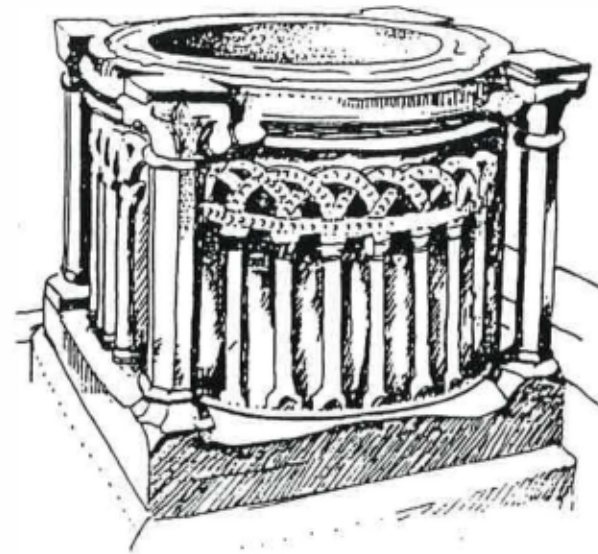
Christians have worshipped in this building for over 900 years. The eleventh century late 'Anglo-Saxon' tower is the earliest part of the church, being constructed by an Anglo-Saxon mason probably after the Norman Conquest. Observe the typical 'Saxon' features such as the double-belfry windows with a shaft supporting a slab of stone, which runs through the full thickness of the wall. Most of the rest of the church was rebuilt in the Decorated Style in 1717 and again in 1868. Internally the fine tower-arch is Norman, as is the bowl of the font. Inside you can also see a fragment of an Anglo-Saxon cross shaft with a panel of a Crucifixion on the front. The eight bells are still in working order.



Harmston Church

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, COLEBY (SK 975 606)

Judging from the architecture, the lowest part of the tower (reaching to just below the present clock) is likely to be eleventh century Anglo-Saxon. It is possible that this part belongs to the earlier church which was in existence before the Norman Conquest. The characteristic keyhole-shaped window with leaf moulding on the south face of the tower was made by Anglo-Saxon hands. The new Norman church was built onto the existing lower tower.



Coleby Font

Reproduced by kind permission of Coleby Church

Much of the Norman church survives, including the arch above the doorway, the round arches of the nave, and the font which has been used to baptise Coleby children from the twelfth century to the present day.

The impressive spire is fifteenth century. The rest of the church is a mixture of medieval architectural styles.

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, CRANWELL (TF 033 499)

This delightful little church has its roots in the tenth century. Stones from a grave cover and cross shaft dating from 950 AD were revealed early this century. Behind the organ in the north east corner of the nave are 'long and short quoins'—remnants of the corner of the late Anglo-Saxon church. The Saxon nave gave way to a late Norman or Early English nave as witnessed by the fine Norman arches opening up the north aisle.

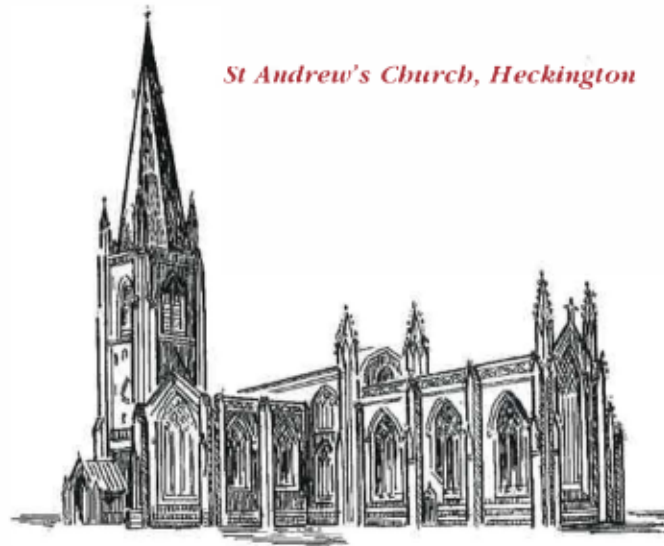
The building is very simple, not even having tower, only a bellcote in which the bell is suspended. On the right-hand pillar of the inner door to the church are very heavily carved Tudor figures, one possibly a depiction of Henry VIII.

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, HECKINGTON (TF 143 441)

This church is often described as the 'Cathedral of the Fens'. Apart from its size, it is also the finest and most complete example in the country of the 'Decorated' style of architecture, prevalent in the fourteenth century. The term describes the elaborate flowing tracery of the windows, particularly the east window over the altar. The church is renowned for some ornate pieces of medieval stonework, most notably the Easter Sepulchre near the altar where the consecrated host (wafer) was kept during the Easter ceremonies.



Easter Sepulchre, St Andrew's Church, Heckington. Taken from Trollope, 1872



St Andrew's Church, Heckington

Also in the chancel are the sedilia or priests' seats, the piscina, a basin set into the wall for washing the vessels of the mass, and the tomb of Richard de Potesgrave—the church's rector and benefactor. All are elaborately carved with foliage and some interesting human figures. Further carved figures are visible on the outside of the porch.

Before leaving the churchyard note the shaft and base of a medieval cross, moved to the churchyard from elsewhere in the village. It may be the original village cross.

CROSSES

In many villages in Lincolnshire, among the grave-stones or in a forgotten corner beside the village green, stand the remains of a stone cross. Often only the base and stump of the shaft survive, although some have been restored in recent times as village features or war memorials. Most of these standing crosses were erected during the medieval period and served a variety of functions.

In churchyards they were stopping places for outdoor religious processions, particularly those connected with Palm Sunday. At other times they were sites for preaching, public proclamation and penance. Crosses were also erected in market places where

their presence sanctioned commercial dealings and later provided a focal point for municipal ceremonies and official announcements.

The commonest type of standing cross has a stepped base with the cross shaft set in a socket stone on the uppermost step. The cross shafts are usually square or octagonal. The cross-heads took many forms, from simple crucifixes to elaborate lantern shaped structures. Very few original cross-heads survive, as they were considered to be Papist symbols at the time of the Reformation and were systematically destroyed during the 16th and 17th centuries.



Map showing locations of medieval crosses still standing in North Kesteven

NORTH KYME VILLAGE CROSS (TF 152 527)

The cross stands about three metres high at the road junction in the village centre—as prominent in the life of the village now as it was hundreds of years ago. The cross-head is unusual in surviving intact and is not actually a cruciform but a cone shape. It is believed to occupy its original location and is principally medieval in date. The inscription 'IT 1821' records its restoration.

DIGBY VILLAGE CROSS (TF 082 548)

Standing at the road junction in the village centre is the village cross with its stepped base. Most of the five foot tall cross is medieval apart from the head. We do not know what purposes it served. Perhaps it was built to commemorate something or to invoke the help of a particular saint. It may have been the place where important announcements were made or meetings held.

HOWELL VILLAGE CROSS (TF 135 463)

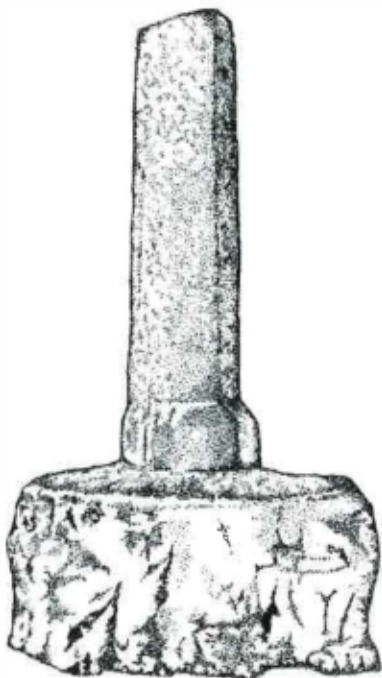
The cross is situated near the south porch of St Oswald's Church. Hours of workmanship went into the creation of the foundations, steps, socket stone and the carving of the shaft. John Spencer, the rector from 1428 to 1448, is commemorated in an inscription running in a band around the shaft.

If it is in its original location it would have been part of the religious life of the community perhaps for outdoor preaching or procession.

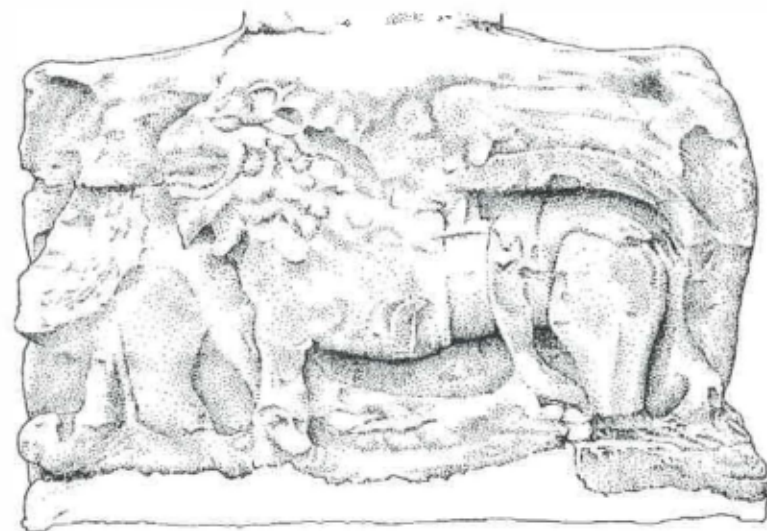
SILK WILLOUGHBY VILLAGE CROSS (TF 056 430)

Situated at the main road junction, the cross is believed to stand near its original position.

This cross is likely to have served a religious function due to the unusual carvings symbolising the four evangelists on the four sides of the socket stone; on the south east face a man (St Matthew), on the north east face a winged lion (St Mark), on the south west a winged calf (St Luke), on the north west an eagle (St John). You may be able to make out animals carved into the corners as well.

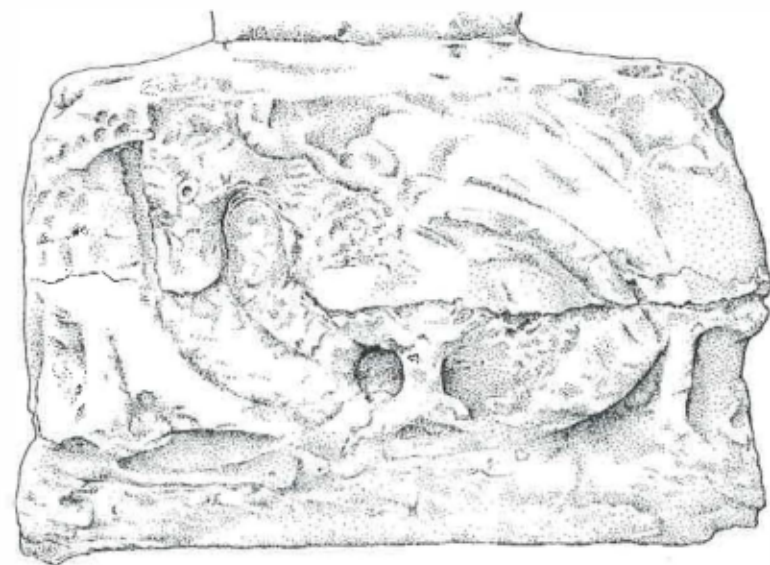


Silk Willoughby Village Cross



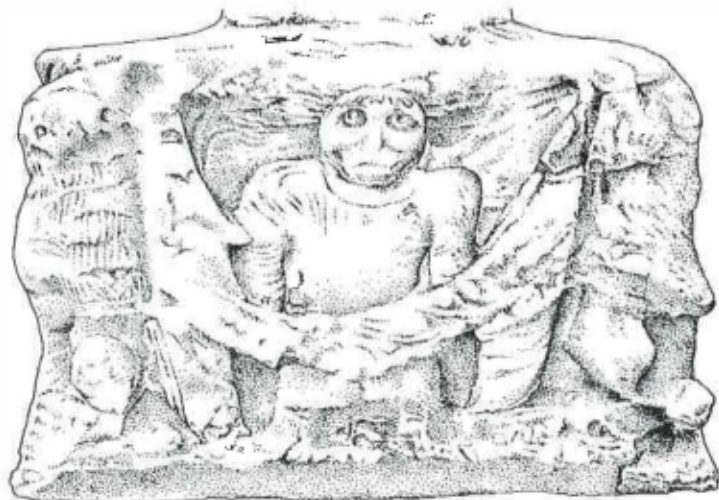
*Silk Willoughby Cross
North-east face, St Mark*

Drawn by David Hopkins



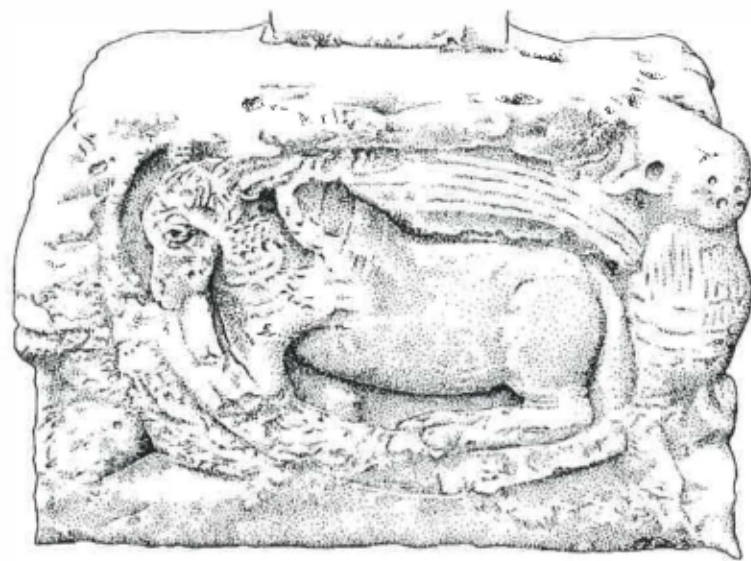
*Silk Willoughby Cross
North-west face, St John*

Drawn by David Hopkins



*Silk Willoughby Cross
South-east face, St Matthew*

Drawn by David Hopkins



*Silk Willoughby Cross
South-west face, St Luke*

Drawn by David Hopkins

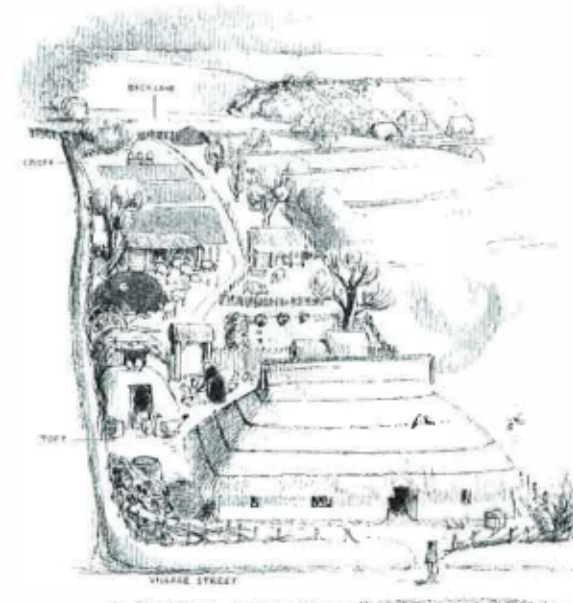
RURAL LIFE

VILLAGES AND FARMING

Villages did not appear in their present form until the late Anglo-Saxon period and early Middle Ages. Although much of North Kesteven had already been settled by farming communities for thousands of years, the population was lower then and settlements tended to be smaller and more scattered, perhaps consisting of only two or three adjacent farmsteads. With the development of agriculture in the Middle Ages, however, settlements grew, often along a road, stream or around a green. Most medieval villages in North Kesteven have survived to form the basis of modern settlements, with the original shape of the village still detectable at its centre.

Some medieval villages, however, became deserted, or shrank greatly in size over the centuries. Abandonment was sometimes due to natural causes such as the Black Death or repeated crop failure. There were also many cases in which the lord of the manor simply evacuated his tenants and turned the land over to pasture for sheep-rearing. The remains of deserted villages often survive in such pasture and the position of building platforms and plot boundaries can be traced. Similar earthworks can be found on the edge of shrunken villages.

Medieval villages commonly consisted of a row of plots on each side of a main street. A typical plot would contain a house platform ('toft') on which stood the dwelling, made of mud and straw on a timber frame and a longer garden or yard ('croft') where some animals were kept and vegetables grown.



*Drawing by Sheila Sancha from "A Luttrell Village"
Published by Collins, 1982*

Beyond lay the village fields. The lord of the manor operated a strip system of farming within open unenclosed fields. Within each strip would be ridges and furrows formed by the plough as it turned soil over to one side over centuries. Generally the deeper the ridge and furrow, the longer the field was in use.

BRAUNCEWELL DESERTED MEDIEVAL VILLAGE
(TF 048 526)

The earthwork remains of the original village lie mainly to the east of the Church of All Saints, which was largely rebuilt in the nineteenth century. Like Dunsby, the village of Brauncewell shrank gradually in the Middle Ages but was not finally deserted until the last century. The present Manor Farm lies at the centre of the remains and is probably on the site of the medieval manor house. The peasants who lived and worked in the village would have been tied to the land and to their obligations to the lord of the manor by the feudal system.

Brauncewell Deserted Medieval Village, 1969
Reproduced by kind permission from Cambridge University Collection of Air Photographs



South of the church is an unusual arrangement of earthworks which may be the remains of ornamental gardens belonging to the manor house. Most of the village remains lie to the north and east of the farm; house foundations with yards to the rear show clearly on either side of the village street, which runs as a hollow-way through the middle of the field from the end of the long barn to the trees at the eastern edge of the field. The former course of a stream also runs east to west starting from near the stile.

DUNSBY DESERTED MEDIEVAL VILLAGE (TF 039 515)

Alongside the A15, four miles north of Sleaford on the opposite side of the road from the layby, just before the turn-off to Ruskington, lie the grassy mounds of Dunsby. Mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, Dunsby was never very large; its population gradually decreased during the Middle Ages, and in the sixteenth century the church and vicarage were finally pulled down, the peasants evicted and the land was given over to sheep-rearing.

Grassy ridges and ditches are all that remains of former buildings, roads, drains and property boundaries. One of these buildings was the Old Hall which was last occupied by Parliamentary troops in the Civil War. The Church of St Andrew, which would have been the focus of the community, may have occupied a site now west of the A15.

Please note there is no public access to this site.

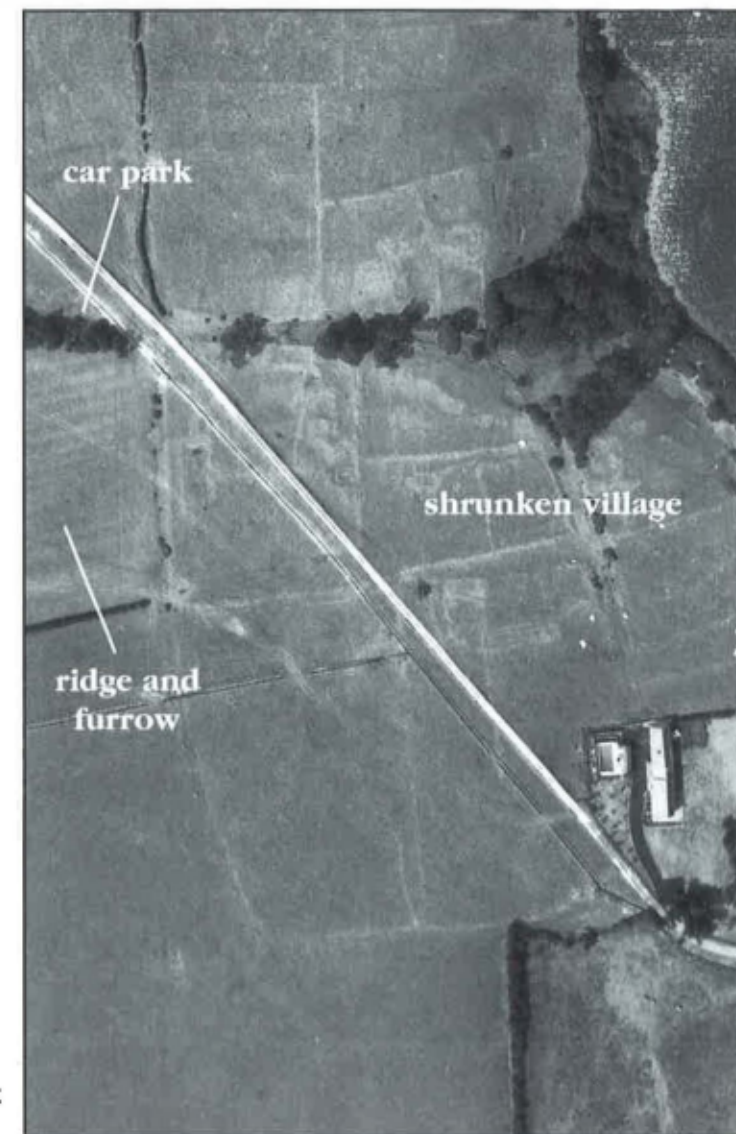
NORTH RAUCEBY SHRUNKEN MEDIEVAL VILLAGE
(TF 019 468)

This settlement occupies one of the highest points in Lincolnshire and the spire of the Medieval church of St Peter is something of a landmark. The village and church were in existence at the time of the Domesday Book of 1086 and were, at the time of the Norman Conquest, taken from the Saxon landowner and given to the King's loyal supporters.

People in the Middle Ages inhabited a larger area of the village than they do today. Gradually the village shrank leaving only grassy mounds where dwellings once were. The best preserved area of shrunken village is in the north west of the modern settlement, either side of the trackway leading down to Rauceby Grange. The aerial photograph clearly shows the main road, rectangular house plots, ponds and fields where ordinary people lived and worked.

On the other side of the trackway is the remains of Ridge and Furrow; undulating strips created by the action of the medieval plough, which turned the earth to one side only. The ridges and furrows were grouped into strips within two or three large open fields. They were shared out as smaller units that could be farmed by different individuals and, if required, carried different crops.

Photograph reproduced with kind permission of Mr Ireland of Ireland Farms



TRANSPORT

A thousand years before the beginning of the Middle Ages, the Romans had constructed a series of major roads through the country, mainly for long-distance travel for their army. Some were paved with cobbles or flagstones; others simply consisted of packed clay or gravel. Many of these roads, such as Ermine Street and Fosse Way have never gone out of use and were important routes in the medieval period.

The construction and maintenance of less important roads, however, was difficult to achieve in the medieval period and much land transport was carried out by packhorse over rough tracks which were unsuitable for wheeled vehicles. In wet areas the tracks might have been paved, and bridges were built where a heavily laden animal might be unable to ford a deep or muddy stream.

SCREDINGTON PACKHORSE BRIDGE (TF 097 409)

The stone bridge crosses North Beck next to the present ford. It is formed of two arches. The bridge is wide enough to carry a cart and is therefore not strictly for a packhorse. The bridge is thought to be medieval but an exact date is not known. The concrete bases are modern.



Packhorse Bridge, Scredington



MARKETS AND FAIRS

Markets and fairs were a vital part of medieval life. They provided an important opportunity for trade, especially for items not produced locally. They also created a much-needed diversion from the rigours of everyday life. Markets and fairs usually took place on 'holy days' (our 'holidays'). Markets were often held on Sundays next to the parish church so that religious and commercial duties could be performed in a single journey. Many fairs were associated with a particular religious festival. The fair at Stow Green, for example, started every year on the eve of the Feast of St John the Baptist (June 23rd).

STOW GREEN FAIR SITE (TF 095 350)

Stow Green lies by the side of the old Roman Road, Mareham Lane. This north-south route was much used in the Middle Ages and, with the medieval east-west route (the present A52), brought much trade to the fair which was held annually from the late thirteenth to early twentieth century.

Permission to hold a fair here was granted to the landlord, the prior of Sempringham in 1268. There was once also a village at Stow and a chapel which survived until the eighteenth century. In recent years the discovery of eleventh and twelfth century

gravestones, human bone and building stone has indicated its position, and the outline of the precinct wall is sometimes visible. The name 'Stow' usually signifies 'holy place' and may indicate a monastery of the Anglo-Saxon period.



A medieval fair in a Lincolnshire Village

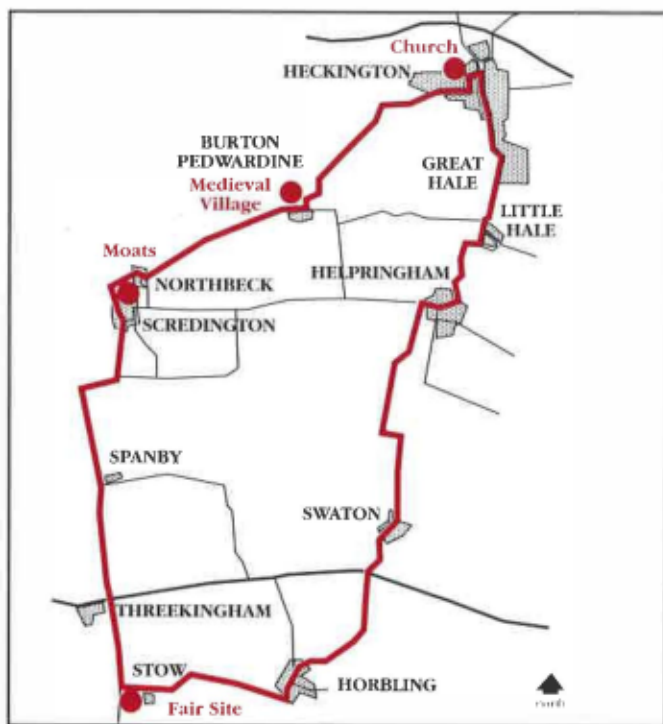
*Drawing by Sheila Santha
from "A Luttrell Village", Collins 1982*

**HOW TO GET THERE:
MAPS AND DIRECTIONS**

This section is divided into five circular cycle routes which are also suitable for cars except where stated to the contrary. The distance is given for each route. Where shorter alternative routes are possible, this is stated.

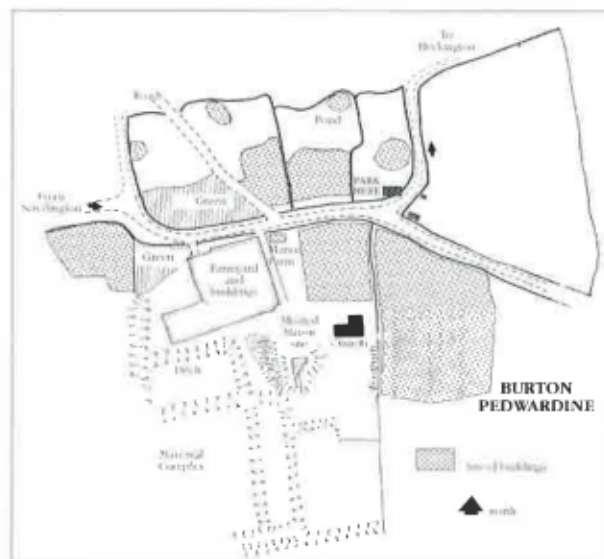
SCREDINGTON MOATS TRAIL 31km.

START AT BURTON PEDWARDINE.
(See Moated Sites Section)



If you are starting cycling from Sleaford, come via Silk Willoughby. Park or stop on the corner of Heckington Road on the verge, opposite the school house. Walk up the footpath opposite, towards the Parish Church. Please be careful to put the bar back in place. There is a sign on the door to say where the key can be obtained. There is no access to the Manor and formal gardens but they can be seen from the east from the back of the church or from the north from Mr Bird's land.

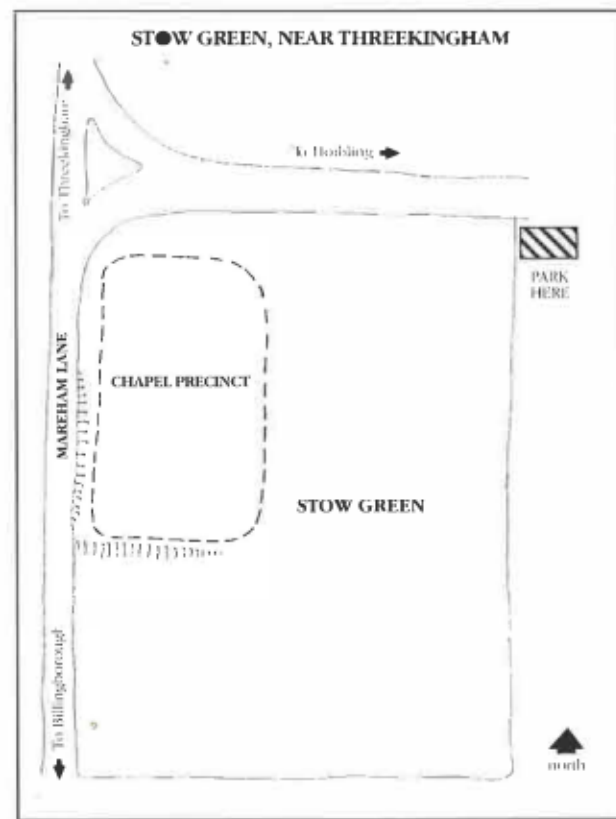
Access to the medieval village remains on either side of the main street is only allowed by prior arrangement with the owners, Mr and Mrs Bird, who live in the modern house called Manor Farm on the Main Street tel: 01529 460220. No dogs or metal detectorists are allowed. As you walk through the shrunken medieval village north and south of the main road you can see raised house platforms, ponds, hollow-ways or streets and a possible village green.



ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, HECKINGTON
(See Churches Section)

The church is often open, however, there is a sign on the door with the addresses of keyholders.

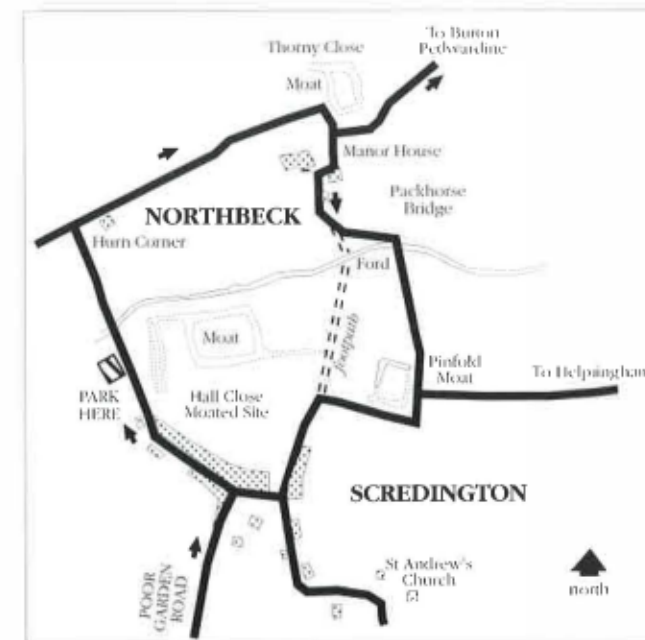
STOW GREEN FAIR SITE (See Markets and Fairs Section)
Park or stop on the left hand verge of Horbling Road. There are no boundaries or gates to the site. There is free public access to the site but please do not stray into the adjoining fields.



HALL CLOSE MOATED SITE, SCREDINGTON
(See Moated Sites Section)

Come up Poor Garden Road and turn left onto Station Road. Before you come to the bridge over the stream, park on the verge on the right, being careful not to obstruct the road. Enter the pasture on your right through the kissing gate.

There is permissive access for the public on foot over this field but no dogs are allowed as there is livestock in this field and there may periodically be agricultural operations.

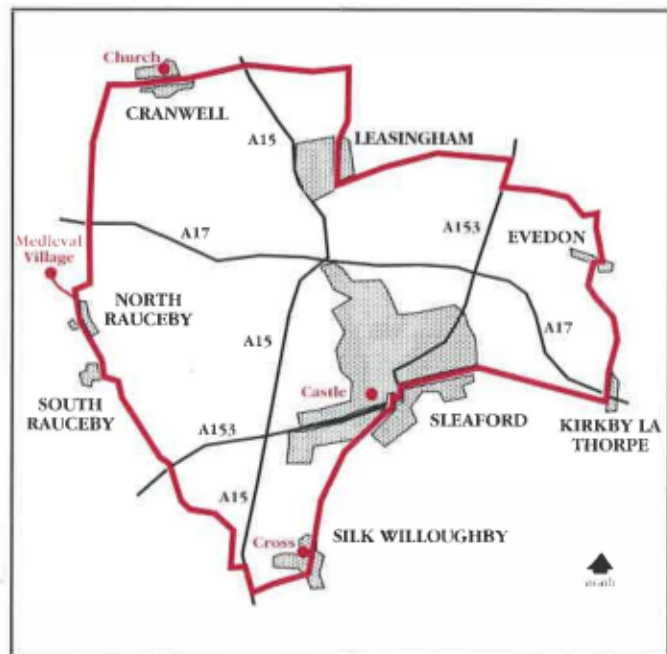


SCREDINGTON PACKHORSE BRIDGE
(See Transport Section)

The Packhorse Bridge is at the ford. There is a parking space.

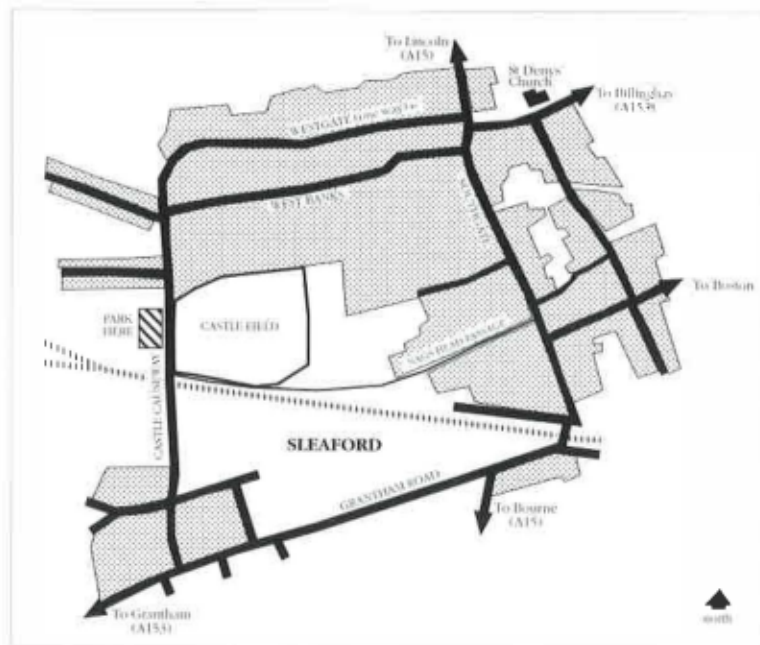
SLEAFORD CASTLE TRAIL 29km

START AT SLEAFORD CASTLE (See Castles Section)



Park and enter from the Castle Causeway entrance. For pedestrians, there is a pathway down Nags Head Passage from Southgate.

The castle site is owned by the Town Council who allow free public access.



SILK WILLOUGHBY CROSS (See Crosses Section)

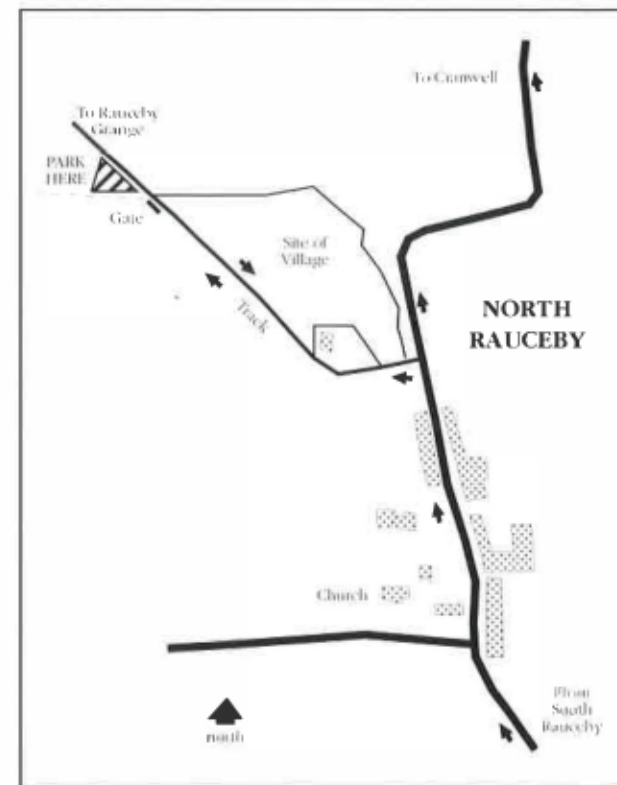
Park in the pub car park. If the car park is busy it would be advisable to ask permission inside the pub or post office first. The medieval cross stands at the intersection of the main street with School Lane.

NORTH RAUCEBY SHRUNKEN VILLAGE (See Villages Section)

As you are coming out of North Rauceby village, turn left up a track towards Rauceby Grange. Park in the car park on the left and enter the field on the opposite side of the track, through the gate. Please make sure that you shut the gate as there are normally cows kept on this field.

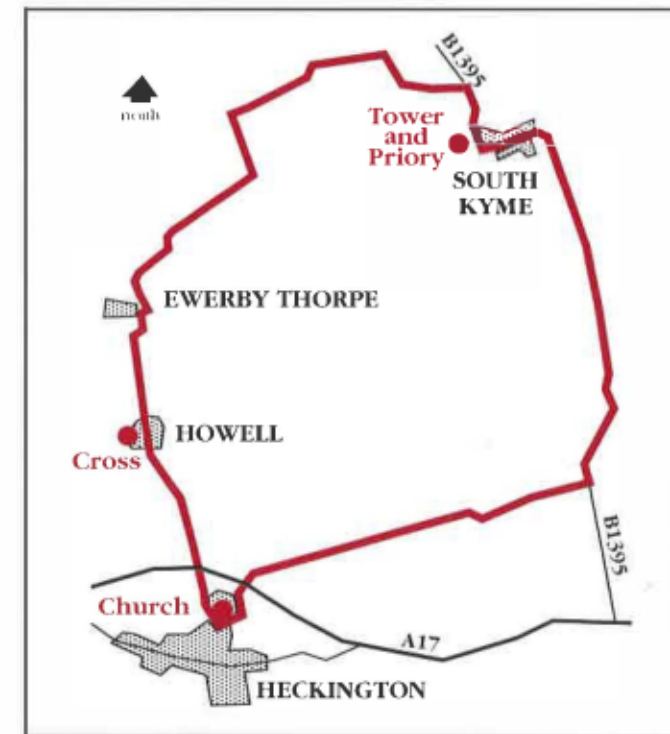
SOUTH KYME TOWER TRAIL 20km

Open access for the public is allowed to this field under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. Go back to the main road and turn left. Go up a steep hill.



CRANWELL CHURCH (See Churches Section)

The church is usually locked but the key can be obtained from the post office.



HOWELL CROSS (See Crosses Section)

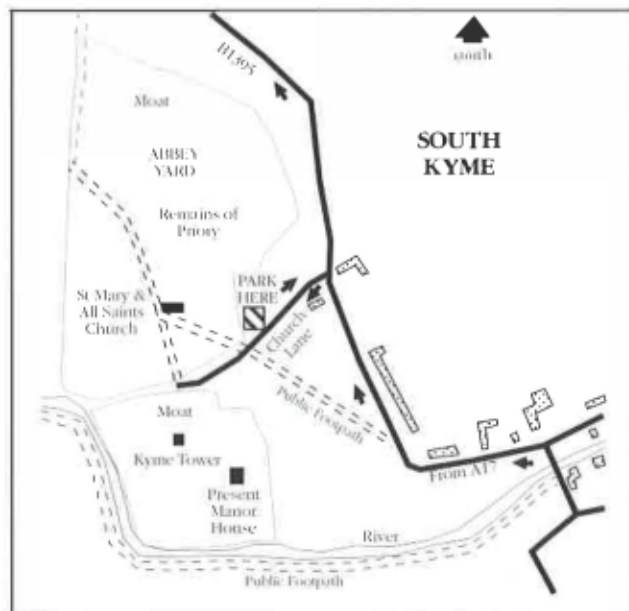
The best way for cyclists to link up to this trail from Sleaford is via Boston Road, Kirkby la Thorpe and Ewerby. The church and cross lie off the main street. Please park on the verge, being careful not to block the drive to Manor Farm.

Go out of the village to Heckington. There is a subway under the A17 for cyclists and pedestrians

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, HECKINGTON

(See Churches Section)

The church is often open, however, there is a sign on the door with the addresses of keyholders.



SOUTH KYME MOATED SITE AND ST MARY AND ALL SAINTS CHURCH

(See Moated Sites and Monasteries Sections)

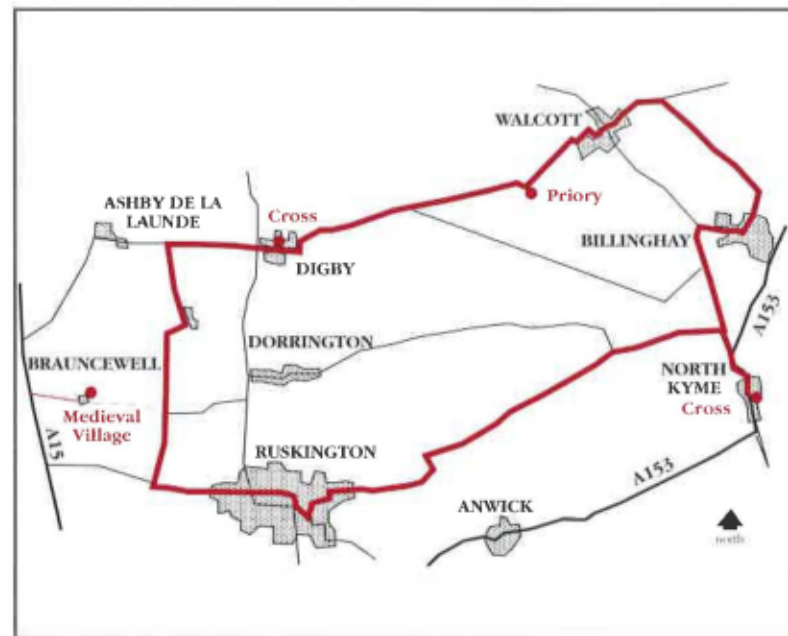
Park, if driving, in the paved area. Please be mindful that this area is owned by the church and should be kept free of litter.

The Priory Church - walk up the path to the church. It is usually locked but there is a sign to say where the key can be obtained.

The Moated Site - from the parking area, go through the clapper gate on the left and walk across the deer park, keeping to the footpath.

There is no access into the tower but there is a good view from the footpath. When the footpath meets the main road, turn left and left again down Church Lane. If you want to see the moats, there is a footpath by the river.

CATLEY PRIORY TRAIL 30 km



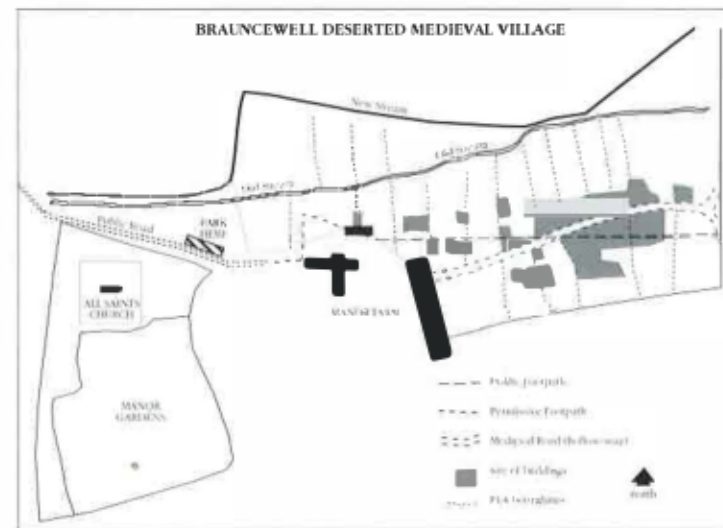
START AT BRAUNCEWELL DESERTED MEDIEVAL VILLAGE

(See Villages Section)

The best way for cyclists from Sleaford to link up with this trail is via Boston Road, Kirkby la Thorpe, Ewerby and Haverholme Priory. At Haverholme Bridge, cross over the A153 and go up a track to Ruskington, (this track is not suitable for cars.)

Head out of Ruskington on Westgate. Turn right up towards Bloxholm. After passing the turnoff to Dorrington, there is a waymarked footpath on the left.

The footpath takes you through the deserted medieval village. Please keep to the footpath and note that cycling is not allowed. You can then go through the stile/kissing gate at end of the field, turn left and look at the church. The church is locked but the key can be obtained from the Manor Farm House. Retrace your steps down the footpath back to the road.

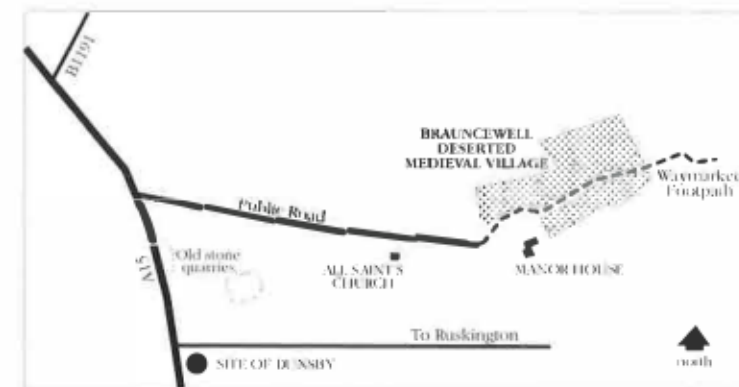


You can also view Brauncewell by car if you come from the A15. (It is not advisable to cycle on this part of the A15.)

Turn off towards Manor Farm. Park on the verge near the church, being careful not to block any entrances.

Do not go into the farm but follow the waymarkers, go over the stile/kissing gate into the field.

The paths in this area are likely to alter in the future. Therefore please follow any new signs and waymarkers.



DIGBY CROSS

(See Crosses Section)

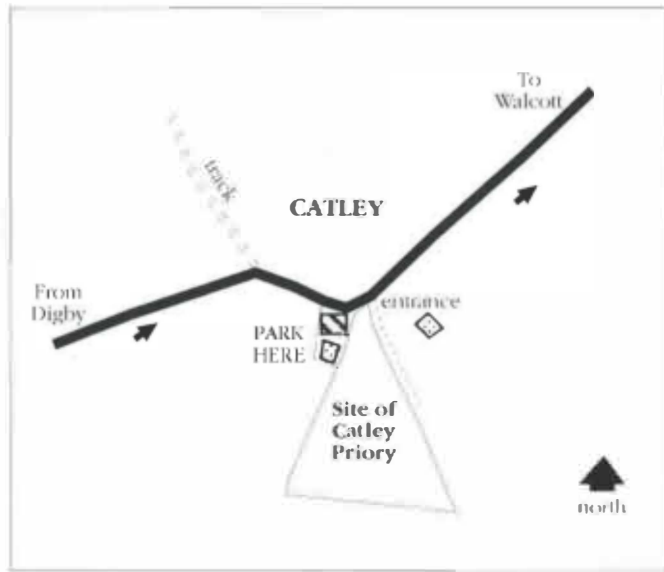
The cross stands in the middle of the main street.

CATLEY PRIORY (See Monasteries Section)

After Rowston Grange there is a kink in the road with some cottages on the right—'Catley Cottages'. The site of the Priory and the access is owned by the County Council. Metal detecting is illegal and no dogs are allowed. Mr J.A. Luke, the tenant, will allow parking in the farmyard. Please avoid blocking any entrances.

If parking on the verge of the road please park carefully in accordance with the Highway Code. Public access is allowed on the site, and entry can be gained from the roadside by walking down the track to the left hand side of the cottages.

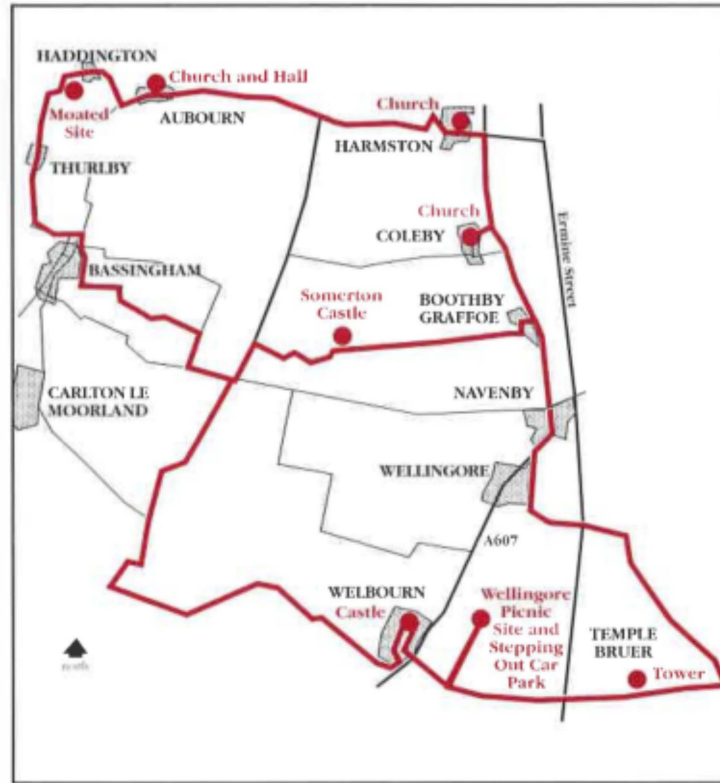
Please remember to shut the gate after you and do not wander into the ploughed fields.



NORTH KYME CROSS (See Crosses Section)
Stop at the pub on the left to view the cross.

TEMPLE BRUER TRAIL

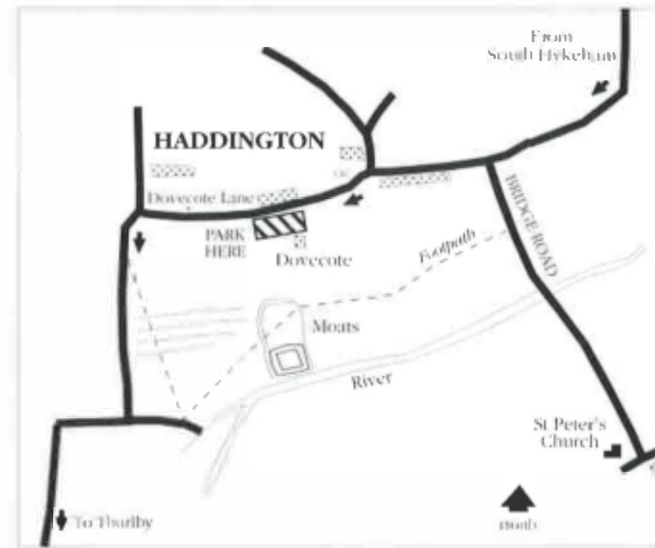
This trail can be done as one long cycle ride or two shorter rides—Northern half 24km, Southern half 28.5km.



START AT HADDINGTON MOATED SITE
(See Moated Sites Section)

Cyclists from North Hykeham and Lincoln can join up with the trail from Mill Lane, North Hykeham, through South Hykeham, to Haddington. Turn down Dovecote Lane and park on the left or on the corner further on.

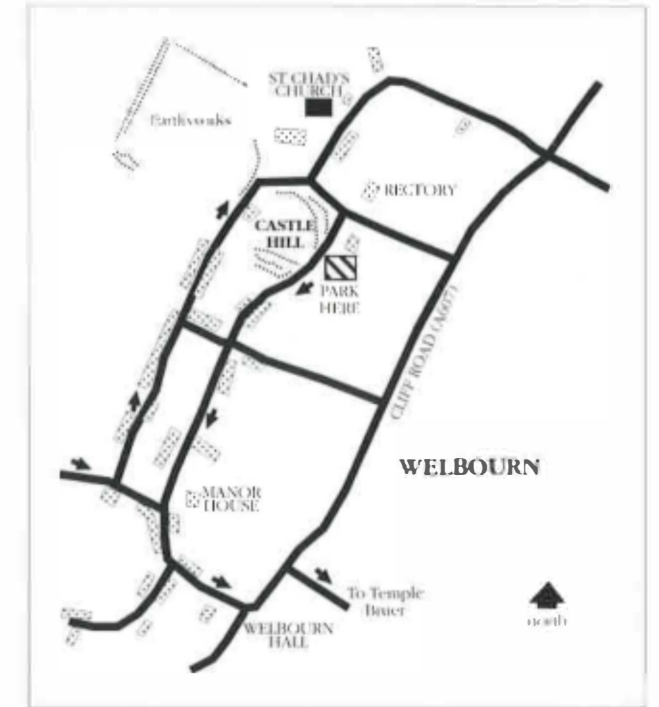
At the time of writing the accesses are from the north west or south west corner of the field along the public footpaths. However, another access is likely to be added from Dovecote Lane in near future. Please keep to the footpaths as shown on the map.



After Thurlby, turn left into Bassingham. There is a Heritage Room in the Old Methodist Chapel opposite the Post Office. The stretch of road along Torgate Lane is not suitable for cars, neither is the road between Brant Broughton and Welbourn.

WELBOURN CASTLE (See Castles Section)

The site is on Castle Hill. There is no public access into the castle site at the time of writing but the moat can be clearly seen from Castle Hill road. Park in the Village Hall Car park.

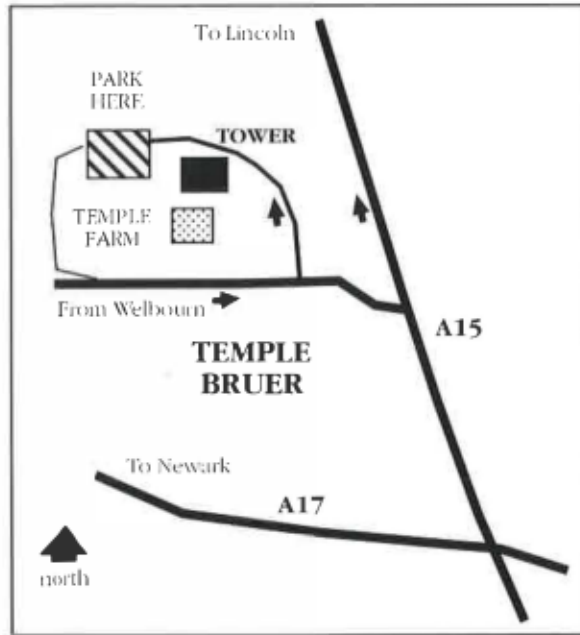


You will go up a steep hill out of Welbourn and turn left onto Pottergate Road. Wellingore picnic site is signposted on the left of Pottergate Road, in an area of woodland, before Wellingore.

WELLINGORE PICNIC SITE

This is a good viewing point over a broad stretch of the historic landscape of the cliff edge across the Trent Valley. Imagine the landscape as it would have been in the Middle Ages, without fences or hedges. Many villages in the Wellingore area were sited on the cliff edge, where natural springs provided a water supply, to take advantage of both the lowland and heathland resources.

Ten medieval church spires and towers show the location of villages established up to a thousand years ago. See if you can spot from your left: Dry Doddington, Fenton, Beckingham, Brant Broughton, Stapleford, Carlton-le-Moorland, Norton Disney, Bassingham, Aubourn and Wellingore Churches.



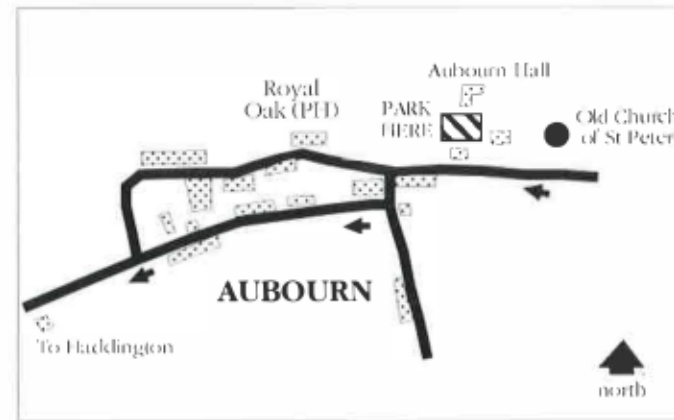
TEMPLE BRUER PRECEPTORY (See Monasteries Section)
Entry to this site is through the farmyard on the route shown on the map. Please park in the marked parking area next to the tower.

Please take care as this is a working farm with machinery. Access is to the tower only and has been given with the kind permission of the owner. The County Council act as guardians of the tower.

On the way to Coleby you will pass two Heritage Rooms in Wellingore and Navenby.

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, COLEBY (See Churches Section)
If the church is closed, the sign on the door will let you know the address of the key holder.

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, HARMSTON (See Churches Section)
If driving, park outside the church on the High Street but not on the Main Road which goes down the hill. The church is open in the daytime.



ST PETERS CHURCH, AUBOURN AND AUBOURN HALL
Parking is available in the drive behind the estate offices. The church is open during the day from the end of March to the end of October.

Outside these times please obtain the key from the Church Warden whose address is on the sign. The Hall opening times are Wednesday afternoons in July and August.

Shorter Route - The Temple Bruer route can be shortened by going via Somerton Castle. This road (Castle Lane) links up to the A607.

SOMERTON CASTLE (See Castles Section)
There is nowhere to park here and no public access to this site. However, one can see the moats of the castle from the road.

CYCLE HIRE AND SALES

NORTH HYKEHAM
Arrow Cycles, 312 Newark Road
Tel: 01522 694564 (Hire, sales and repair)

SLEAFORD
Nev's Cycles, 52 Southgate
Tel: 01529 302810 (sales and repair)

WOODHALL SPA
Wheelabout Woodhall, Jubilee Park, Stixwould Road
Tel: 01526 352448/352461 (Hire)

PLACES TO EAT AND DRINK ON ROUTE

AUBOURN	The Royal Oak, Royal Oak Lane
BASSINGHAM	Five Bells Inn, High Street The Bugle Horn, Lincoln Road
BILLINGHAY	The Ship Inn, High Street The Coach and Horses Hotel, Tattershall Rd The Golden Cross, Church Street
COLEBY	The Bell Inn, Far Lane Tempest Arms, High Street
DIGBY	Red Lion Inn, Church Street
DORRINGTON	Musicians Arms, Main Street
EWERBY	The Finch Hatton Arms Hotel, Main Street
GREAT HALE	The Nags Head, Grove Street
HARMSTON	Thorold Arms, High Street
HECKINGTON	The Nags Head Inn, High Street The Royal Oak, High Street Inge's Restaurant, High Street Pearoom Craft Centre, Station Road
HELPRINGHAM	The Nags Head, The Green
KIRKBY-LA-THORPE	The Queens Head
LEASINGHAM	Duke of Wellington, Lincoln Road

NAVENBY	The Kings Head, High Street The Lion and Royal, High Street The Butchers Arms, High Street
NORTH RAUCEBY	Cheerio Cafe, Newark Road
NORTH KYME	The Plough, Church Lane The Old Coach House Tea Rooms and Cafe, Church Lane
RUSKINGTON	The Shoulder of Mutton, Church Street The Red Lion, High Street Beckside Restaurant Black Bull, Rectory Road The Coffee Pot, High Street Elite Fish Restaurant, High Street Speedway Cafe, Anwick Lane End
SILKWILLOUGHBY	The Horseshoes Inn, London Road
SLEAFORD	There are several Public Houses, Cafes and Restaurants in the town
SOUTH KYME	The Hume Arms Hotel, High Street
SOUTH RAUCEBY	The Bustard Inn, Main Street
THREEKINGHAM	The Three Kings Inn
WALCOTT	The Plough Inn, High Street
WELLINGORE	Marquis of Granby, High Street Red Lion Inn, High Street
WELBOURN	The Joiners Arms, High Street

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the farmers and landowners who have been helpful and co-operative in offering information and allowing access to some of the medieval sites in their care, particularly the County Council who own Catley Priory.

Thank you also to Rodney Jells for helping to create the cycle trails.

WRITTEN BY:

Kate Orr (Heritage Officer)

(based on an original by Alison Peach)

DESIGNED BY:

NKDC Graphics

PRODUCED BY:



TEMPLE BRUER

Photograph by Philip Crome



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