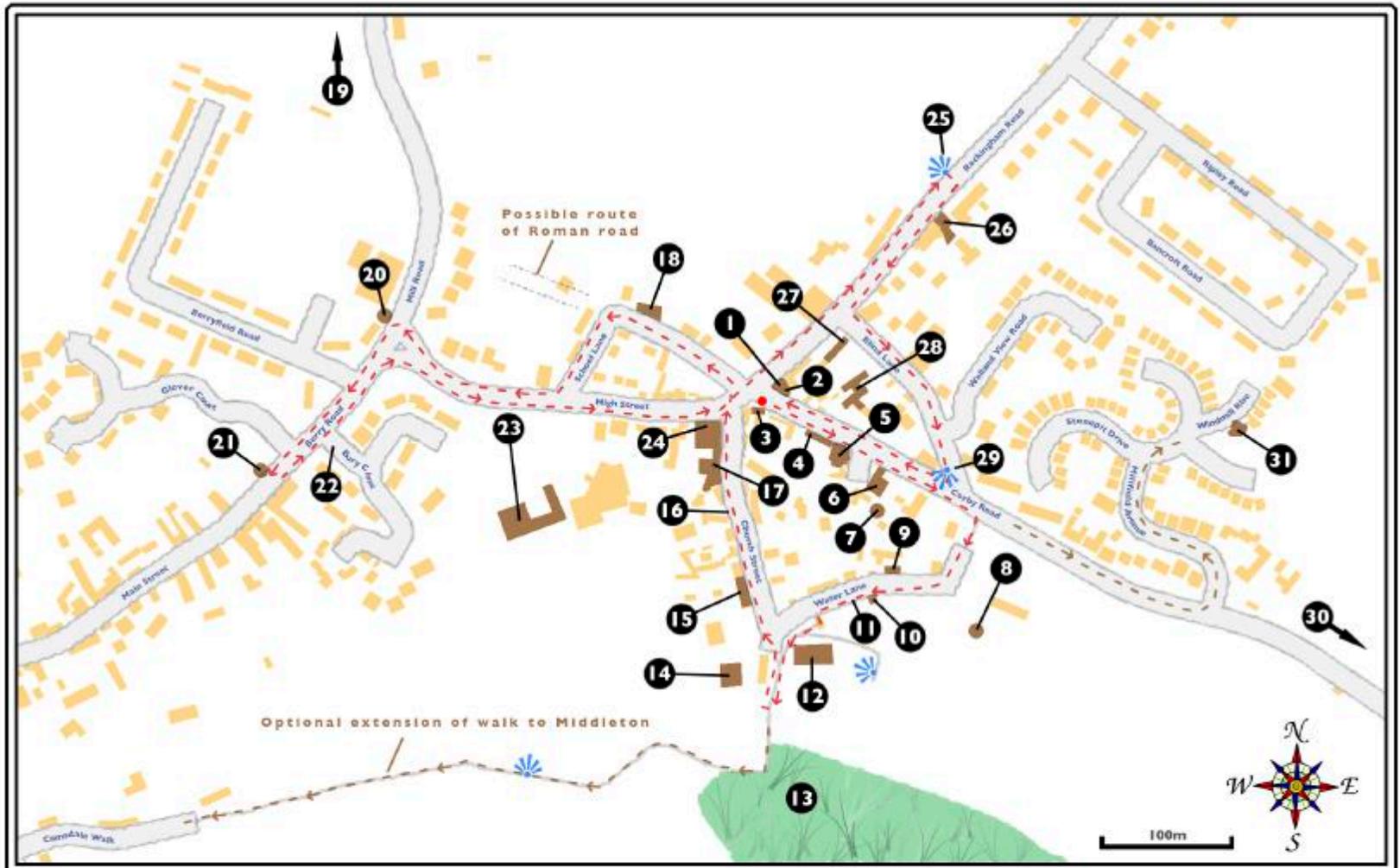


GETTING TO KNOW: COTTINGHAM



GETTING TO KNOW: COTTINGHAM, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

THE VILLAGE WALK

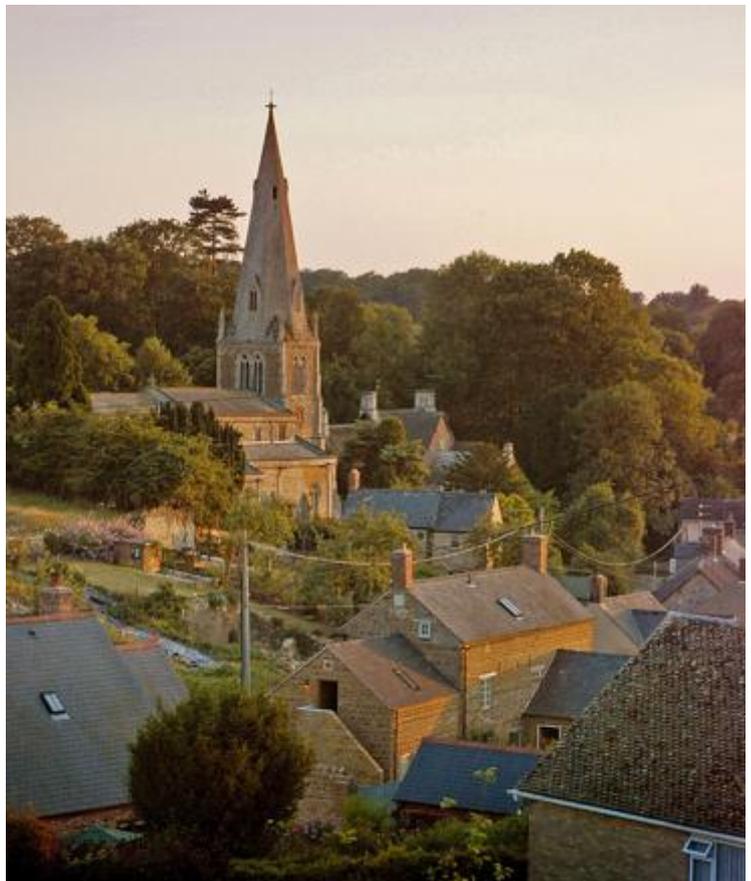
Cottingham (SP844901 SatNav LE16 8XL) is 3 miles NW of Corby and 2 miles WSW of Rockingham Castle. It was designated a conservation village in 1975. The origin of the name is Anglo-Saxon possibly meaning a settlement of Cotta's people, although this is disputed.

Walk duration: 1 ¼ hours.

Walk distance: 1 ½ miles

Walk type: Mostly pavement, easy with some steps and hills.

Please observe all the highway and countryside codes.



Start at the main crossroads in the village, known as 'The Cross', and head up Corby Road.

1. The Millennium Village Sign

The sign (which was designed and crafted by Cottingham's Chris Owen) depicts notable elements of the village and general area including its sister village, Middleton: the village church, a horse trough, a horse-rider, the village war memorial, a heron and a windmill.

Cottingham is part of Rockingham Forest and the royal pursuit of hunting in the forest had a profound impact on the villagers. It was King John's favourite hunting forest. This explains the horse-rider significance. The heron indicates the vicinity to the River Welland's floodplain grazing marsh. A windmill is important as there were three mills in the village over the centuries. Now there is only part of one windmill remaining which has been incorporated into a house. The horse trough, based on one you can still see in Middleton, is symbolic of the water that arises from springs in the villages. You'll be seeing evidence of the importance of the spring water for Cottingham, and you'll be introduced to the village church along the way.

2. The Well-Head

This triangle of land was the site for the village well-head, which was an old-fashioned pump decanting into a trough. The area is well known for its natural springs and in 1854 the important village landowners (copyholders) provided a water supply. You'll come across pumps and springs that demonstrate this water supply on the walk. Mains water was only supplied to the village in 1957 and the well-head was dismantled in the 1960s.

3. The Village Stores and Café

Village shops and Post Offices played a strong part of history for many villages. They bonded the community. This village shop was certainly open in the 1920s as a General Store. It became the village Post Office in the late 1970s. The store closed for a couple of years from 2009, but luckily the present stores reopened with grants from the European Union Leader scheme, the Lottery, the Plunkett Foundation, and support from local people. It is run with the help of village volunteers. Do pop in for a chat, walk provisions, home-made snacks, food essentials, local produce, newspapers, delicacies, internet access and more ... There's an old photo of the well-head trough on the café back wall too.

4. The Old Bakehouse: 6 Corby Road - a Grade II listed building

The Old Bakehouse is notable for the late 17th, 18th and 19th century features including bands of square ironstones in the main building, precision-carved stone heads to some of the windows, a mullion stone window, and skilfully worked cut stone gable parapets and their support stones.

There were three bakehouses in Cottingham in 1901. Notice another 'Old Bakehouse' in Church Street when you pass it later, and there was also one in Rockingham Road too. This one here was the last working bakehouse though.

5. The Methodist Chapel

From Corby Road you are viewing two parts to the Chapel built at separate times. The part on the right is the oldest being built in 1808 but you are looking at the brick back of the building. The front of this old part, facing the church, is ironstone with distinctive large windows. The addition on the left (New Wesleyan Chapel) was built in 1878. The main entrance in this 'new' part is just off on the right from the main road. The Wesleyan Guild contributed greatly to village life as did the Cottingham Wesleyan brass band, strongly active until 1939. Various events are still held in the chapel schoolroom and it is available for hire at a very reasonable rate.



Opposite the Wesleyan Chapel, built sideways on to the road is our next building of interest.

6. Greystones: 12 Corby Road - a Grade II listed building

Greystones dates from the mid to late 18th Century. This building again displays the bands of ironstone but some of the windows have wooden lintels and 19th century hinged windows. The main door and bay window are also 19th century. This apparently used to be a butcher's and slaughter house.

Take care and cross over Corby Road as the footpath on the right disappears.

7. Dovecote/Pigeonnierie (remains)

As you move along the main Corby road look across the road and stop when you can see the church clock to the left of the narrow flue protruding from the roof of a far house. In the mid-distance you can just make out some squared holes underneath the rounded top of an old wall. These are the remains of a square dovecote/pigeonnierie. (Binoculars will help, if you have some.)

Similar dovecote/pigeonnierie constructions are found all over Europe, even dating to pre-Roman times. In Medieval times, dovecotes were controlled by law as only nobles were granted permission to have them. Later, they became important sources of food and could be found more widely such as in farmsteads. In some parts of Europe the pigeon droppings were/are used in leather tanning to soften the hides. Apparently this pigeonierie was used for food. It is on private property so please respect the owners' rights and only view it from here.

Continue along Corby Road and on the opposite side watch for a footpath heading downwards towards Water Lane. Cross carefully and take the footpath.

8. The Limekiln: a Grade II listed structure

As you walk down the footpath, you'll get a fine view of the remains of the limekiln in the field on your far left. This is private land so please just view the remains from the public pathway. You can see large grey stones in a rectangular shape (the furnace) with a partial archway and trees growing out of the top. Lime was used in the 18th and 19th centuries for building (mortar and plaster) and as a fertiliser for farming. Lime was made by burning limestone with coal inside the furnace. The large archway supplied a good stock of oxygen to help the burning process.

9. Stonewalls 1863, 11a Water Lane

Notice the stone faces and carvings near the roofline. We'll see more of these later. The house name might give you a clue that a stone-mason lived here at one time and he used these to show his skills. Building using stone was a strong occupation around these parts. Ironstone was plentiful, workable and durable... which led, of course, to Corby's fame as a steel producer later. Limestone occurs too, as the kiln would suggest, and it is used in local buildings as we'll see.

10. The Limekiln Assay Office

The tiny building on the left opposite the gap between 7 and 9 Water Lane, was the assay office for the limekiln. Carts laden with lime would pull up here to be inspected for the quality and amount. The building has been recently restored.

11. Natural Springs - Water Lane

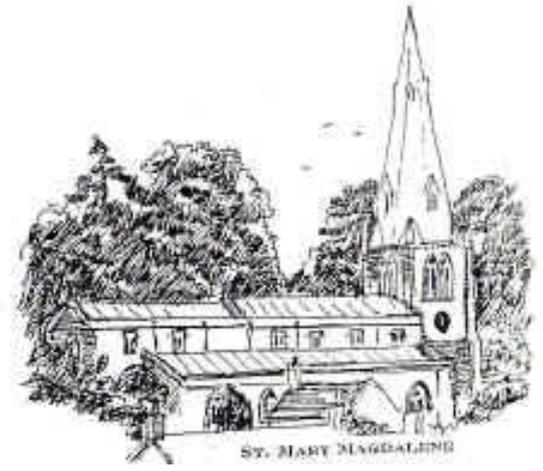
As you'd expect from the road name, water from springs has served the village for hundreds of years and may be one of the reasons that evidence of Anglo-Saxon and Roman settlements has been found around the village. This spring was part of the water supply connected to the well-head (No.2) in the mid 19th century. You may see the spring running out underneath the left bank along the side of the lane into the drain.

Look out for the stepped path on the left before the end of the lane that will lead you up through part of the graveyard to the church.

12. St. Mary Magdalene: Grade I listed (represented in the village sign)

The church itself is now only open for designated services which are listed on the notice board. Until the mid 1960s there used to be a permanent Rector who played a great part in the village history. The Parish Rolls recording births, marriages and deaths from 1533 - late 19th and early 20th centuries are available at Northampton Record Office or via The Northamptonshire Family History Society. The Parish Rolls and gravestones bear many of the family names that shaped the village and still do.

St. Mary Magdalene church dates from the 12th century and has building styles from many of the following centuries as well. The construction shows a mixture of bands of ironstone and limestone: square and regular. The spire is crafted from cut limestone. All around the tower you'll notice more carved heads. Many of the windows have tracery, trefoils and quatrefoil circles. If you look carefully there are three gargoyles. The graveyard displays memorial stones and tombs dating across several centuries. In the newer second section, third row and several graves in, is the grave of Colonel George Ripley who died from his injuries sustained in France in 1916. The grave is maintained still by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the Colonel is commemorated on the village war memorial that you'll see later. There are some fine views of the village from the top of the graveyard.



From the entrance gate to the church turn left up the track, for about 50 yards until the kissing gate that leads into The Dale. This track is part of the Jurassic Way walk, as the right-of-way markers indicate.

13. The Dale Pocket Park

The idea of Pocket Parks began in Northamptonshire. They are small, local natural areas that have been adopted by villagers. This one was bought off the church in 1985 with the help of the county and parish councils, the Amenity Society and strong support from the villagers. They wanted to save it from agricultural change. The Dale is a rare, natural limestone meadow with steep sides and is particularly popular when it snows. It has a seasonal succession of traditional meadow flowers. Enjoy them, but please don't pick them. You may also see some cattle, possibly a rare breed, grazing the pasture. Similar grazing has happened for centuries here. To the left after the sycamore tree, you can still see the remains of a ridge and furrow strip field - an old farming method which is becoming harder and harder to find. Opposite the gate into The Dale in the former Rectory Garden is a rare small-leaved lime tree which is one of the largest in Britain.

If you'd like to continue along the track over the top fields with stunning views it will take you into Middleton and you can return to Cottingham to pick up the walk via Main Street to the parish boundary marker shown on this map. The extra walk may be muddy especially after rain and take you about 30 minutes as an amble. It's about 1½ miles. Along the way notice the avenue of young lime trees on the right. These were planted by villagers in 2000 to replace the old elm trees killed by Dutch Elm disease.

Otherwise follow the walk as marked on the map, going back along the track and down the steps in front of the main entrance to the Church into Church Street. There's more evidence of the village springs just against the wall on your right where there's an old cast iron trough and constant running water. The trough is a bit murky now but it would have been very active in its day. This one is a recast replacement for the original that cracked. It was donated by a former Church Street resident.

14. The Rectory and stables, 22 Church Street, (now Wood Hollow with outbuildings and a garage) Grade II listed

Mid 17th – 19th centuries. It's built of Ironstone and limestone with a Collyweston (see no. 15) slate roof. This property is well hidden and little is visible of the main building or stables. Please respect the present owner's privacy. You can see the next two listed buildings with some similar features to The Rectory particularly if you stand at the junction of Church Street and Water Lane.

15. 16 + 14 Church Street: Grade II listed

Number 16, Church House, is Mid 18th century ironstone with a limestone facade at the front which makes it noticeably different from many of the other buildings around. It has a Collyweston slate roof. Collyweston is a Northamptonshire village near Stamford. Collyweston roof tiles are not actually slate but are thin limestone tiles that are prized for their difference. The stone window and door surrounds are original.

Number 14 was originally two houses but is now one. They date from the late 17th century and late 18th century. They are ironstone and limestone with slate roofs. The windows differ. Those on the left are under wood lintels but those on the right are stone with a fine three-part mullion window on the first floor. The old four panel doors under stone arches add character.

16. Village Pump

Outside the driveway of 6a Church Street you'll see the remnants of a water tap that was part of the early water provision for the village. This like the Water Lane spring was linked to the well-head, now the site of the village signpost. (See No.2)

17. 4+2 Church Street: Grade II listed

Number 4, ('Museum Casts'), used to be Chamberlain's Post Office and Grocery Store. The square bay shop-style window has external shutters boxed away at the side. The building is listed as early 18th century with subsequent remodelling early 19th century. (This dating is under discussion.) It is crafted ironstone and limestone with a slate roof. Just after the old carriage archway was the village reading room dating from the mid 19th century. If the archway is open you might glimpse some old Kettering shop signs from the early 20th century. Number 4 Church Street is not a museum. The nameplate is a business name and the owners make displays for historic buildings and museums.

On the opposite side of the street, notice the house called, 'Old Bakehouse'. This is the second one we've seen on the walk.

Number 2 Church Street is thought to date from the late 17th century. It is built of squared ironstone and has a Collyweston roof. It has a fine 17th century stone doorway with a plank door that was apparently the entrance to the Reading Room.

At the end of Church Street, we're back to The Cross in the village centre, so cross over with care to go down School Lane.

18. School Lane and the Old School House (No. 4)

This lane was the continuation of the old Roman Road, Via Devana, linking Chester to Colchester. The lane used to be called Dag Lane but was given its new name in 1901 influenced by the old village school which was built here in 1871. The school served the village well until it was closed in the early 1970s. The Northamptonshire Record Office have retained the school's administration records. They make fascinating reading - if you're inclined. The current C of E Primary School opened on Berryfield Road. You'll notice this new school when you visit the war memorial. The Old Schoolhouse here is now a private residence. There is a prominent bend in School Lane, but the old Roman Road would have continued straight on and its route can easily be seen in the straight sections of road clearly visible on a map.

19. Site of Water Mill, Mill Road

The newer houses on the right of the High Street would have been fields looking out over Mill Road to the River Welland and you'd have been able to see the water mill that was sited there from the 16th to the early 20th century. You'll meet Mill Road on your right at the end of the High Street. It is likely that the Cottingham Mill recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 was across the River Welland near here, but the course of the river has changed over time. There are a few inaccessible remains of the more recent Cottingham water mill on the present north riverbank. The mill was most active over the 18th and 19th centuries, was disused by 1922 and was demolished in 1936.

20. The War Memorial, Mill Road

Remember this was depicted in the village sign. It was erected just after the 1st World War 1914-18 and lists those from the village killed in that war. If you saw Colonel George Ripley's grave in the churchyard, you'll understand why his name is here. The memorial actually says 1914-1919. 1919 was the year when the Treaty of Versailles was signed. On the back, it lists those killed in the 2nd World War 1939-45.

However, the village would have seen turbulent times of fighting well before these wars. Because Cottingham is so near Rockingham Castle, (two miles), it has been influenced and affected by this proximity. Rockingham Castle has not been as troubled by enemies and fighting as other castles because it was often used as a Royal residence for hunting in the fine forests around it. But the English Civil war 1642-1651 saw this part of the country feature strongly. Charles I garrisoned Rockingham Castle with his royalist troops (Cavaliers). There were several skirmishes with the Parliamentarians (Roundheads) and in 1643 the castle was captured by them. Later, the Battle of Naseby (1645 in nearby Market Harborough) was considered a key battle and Charles lost. It is not hard to imagine Cottingham embroiled in all this turmoil as it was so close although we don't have precise records of the village in relation to the Civil War at that time.

The Cottingham and Middleton Village Hall is a new building just at the back of the school. Previously the Wesleyan Chapel served as Cottingham's hall.

21. Boundary Marker, Berry Road: Grade II listed

This probably dates from the mid 19th century. It's a cast iron three-cornered post with a hollow back. It denotes the parish boundary between Cottingham and Middleton. Over time these once distinct villages have almost become one as you can see.

22. Bury Close

The street names around here are significant. The main house of Cottingham was called 'Bury House' among other names and in older versions 'Bery' or 'Berry House'. Spellings varied as reading and writing were not common skills until the 19th century. This explains 'Berry Road' and 'Berryfield Road', and now 'Bury Close'. These bungalows were built on part of Bury House's land that was developed in the 1960s. Roman remains were found here linking Cottingham to the Romans more strongly than first thought. Coins, a 1st century vase, evidence of iron workings, drying ovens, 2nd-4th century pottery and more were recorded.

23. Bury House (now Cottingham Hall): Grade II listed

This house is a private residence. Please respect the privacy of the owners.

Bury House is described as a country house. It dates from the late 17th Century, built with crafted limestone and ironstone. It has a Swithland slate roof. Swithland is a small village in Charnwood, Leicestershire. This type of slate roof was popular until the 19th century and had been used by the Romans, but the slate industry in Swithland then declined and the quarries are now disused. The house has panelled double doors with steps leading to them and moulded stone window surrounds. As you'd expect, the consecutive owners of Bury House have been prominent members of the Cottingham community. In the 1960s the stables and outhouses were turned into what is now 'The Hunting Lodge' (the driveway is on your left). This has had a chequered history being a casino, a ballroom, a hotel and it may become a residential home.

24. The Spread Eagle

This used to be a thatched cottage and has been around since about 1854. It was a much smaller building than now, but as a pub central to the village, it featured strongly in many village occasions. The new Spread Eagle was built in the 1960s at the back of the original Spread Eagle which was subsequently demolished. This pub closed in 2012 but has now reopened under new management.

Now you are back at The Cross, cross over carefully to go up Rockingham Road a short way uphill to the viewpoint.

25. Viewpoint over the Welland Valley to Leicestershire and Rutland

This will give you a feel for the lovely vistas that are around Cottingham. They would have been more abundant over the centuries for the inhabitants but the village retains its charm and character even today. The views have been called some of the finest in Northamptonshire. Rockingham Castle was built higher on a hill about two miles down this road, so you can imagine why a defensive building was placed there. The site of a second windmill for Cottingham is believed to have been near here. It is recorded as being on land near Rockingham Road in 1887. There was a brickyard near here too in the late 19th and early 20th centuries where many of the red bricks you can see in the village in houses of this period were made. About half a mile further down the road you can find a house called Brickfield House. The heavy clay soil (boulder clay) is prevalent in these parts and has helped shape the agricultural and historical character of the villages in Rockingham Forest.

26. Old clothing factory (now Burghley House)

Around 1870 a successful clothing firm from Kettering, Wallis and Linnell, built this factory. By the early 1900s over thirty villagers were working here. In the 1980s it changed into a shoe factory that then expanded into making other leather goods until it closed in 2000. Now the building has been converted into three apartments. Notice the carved faces on the building, these are similar to ones we saw earlier in Water Lane (See no. 9).

27. Mutts: Chutneys, Jams and more ... Blind Lane

On the corner of Blind Lane (house no. 2) you'll see lists of tempting, award-winning, home-made goodies that are made on the premises. Can you resist them!

28. The Royal George, Blind Lane

This became a pub in 1780 and was named after the Royal George flagship that was commissioned in that year, but the building had been in existence from the 13th century. This is one of the oldest buildings in Cottingham. It has several sections and its history explains the rather ad hoc shape. The lower lounge was a farmhouse from the 13th century, the middle lounge is from the early 14th century. The pub apparently contains the earliest domestic roof cruck in Britain, tree-ring dated to 1262 – but note that this is in a private room and is not accessible to the public. Other rooms have been added and adapted making The Royal George well worth a visit for good beer and a wide range of food.

29. Viewpoint

As you drop down Blind Lane into Corby Road there are lovely views across to St. Mary Magdalene church where you can appreciate the rural, picturesque, typical (but disappearing) English village scene. There is also a mysterious 'cairn' on the adjacent hill. No one seems to know how or why the three large blocks of ironstone recently appeared!

30. 2nd World War Observation Post. (For information only)

Further along Corby Road, out of the village in a field, there used to be an observation post in the second world war. After the war, this observation post was apparently converted into a tiny underground nuclear war bunker, probably just intended for one or two people. Of course, it was top secret!

The last that was known about this post was that it was flooded and full of rubbish. The bunker is on private land so please don't trespass to try and locate it.

Also, along Corby Road two bombs were dropped during the war that apparently left a crater as big as a bus!

At this point you can return right along Corby Road back to the Cross where you started, or, you can take in the last village landmark. The windmill has been incorporated into a house at the rear of the housing estate in Windmill Close. It is a bit of a trek uphill for about half a mile there and it you can just see the central part of the old windmill, greatly shortened, surrounded by house extensions.

31. Windmill, Windmill Close

This mill was a four floor, tower mill. Believed to date from the late 18th century, a previous mill might have been on this site as one was recorded in 1536. In the late 19th century the mill fell into disuse and had a chequered history as a storage unit until it was converted and integrated into the present house during the late 1980s and early 1990s. This is the third windmill mentioned for Cottingham and the only one that survives, albeit partially. Remember that a windmill featured on the village sign you saw at the beginning of the walk and is symbolic for the village.

If you have viewed the windmill, return to Corby Road and back to the Cross where you started the walk.

We hope you've enjoyed the Cottingham Walk and have learned more about your village, if you're a local. If you're a visitor, we hope you feel that you're almost a villager yourself now. You can find out much more of the history and culture of Cottingham at the excellent village website: www.cottinghamhistory.co.uk

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Printable online version available at www.atsf.co.uk/walks

Drawings by Chris Owen. Photos: Pete Bowman and Andy Finney

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Cottingham History Village website: www.cottinghamhistory.co.uk

Northamptonshire Family History Society: www.northants-fhs.org



Free Middleton walk also available at www.atsf.co.uk/walks/Middleton_Walk.pdf

This walk available at www.atsf.co.uk/walks/Cottingham_Walk.pdf