

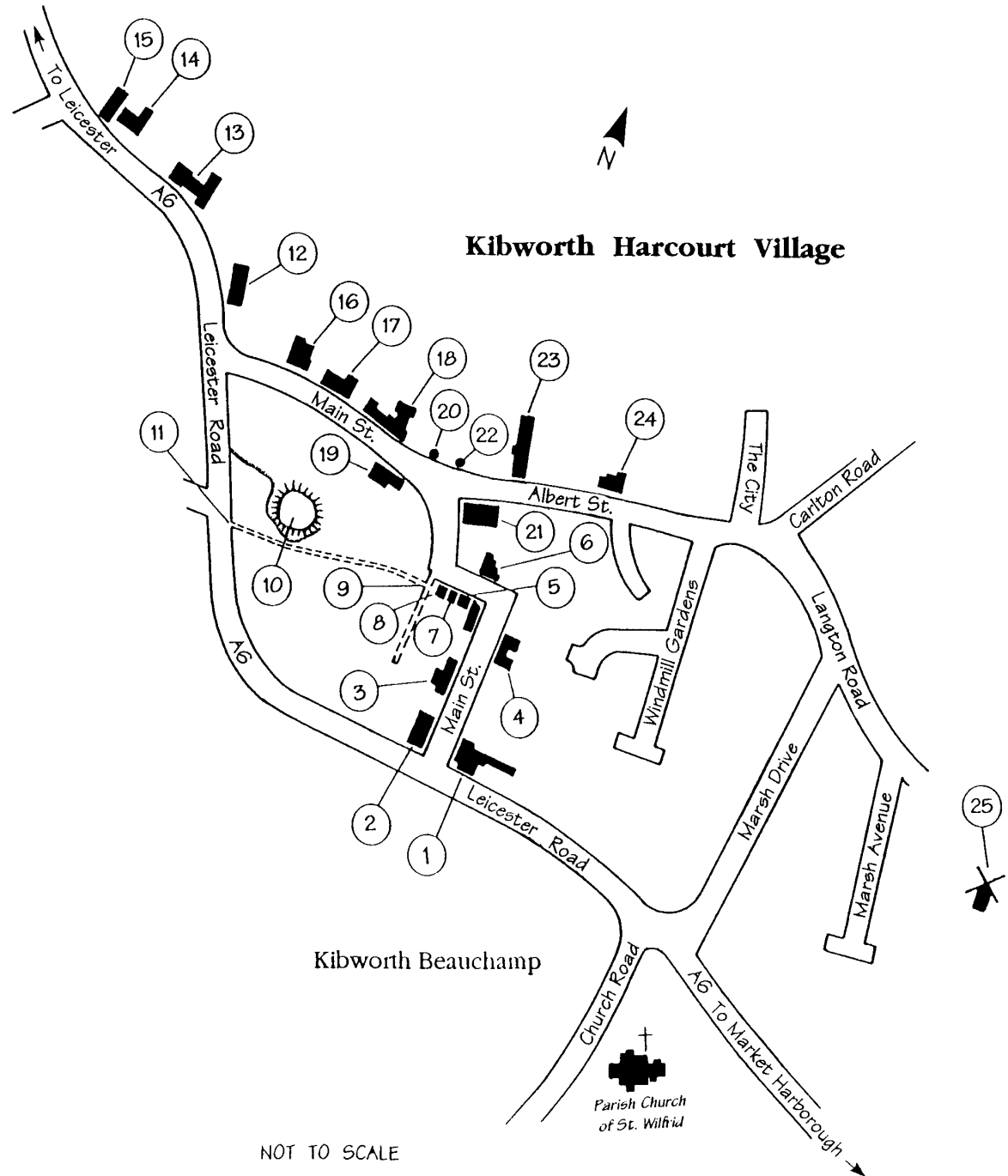
KIBWORTH HARCOURT

South Leicestershire

Historic Village Trail



Harborough Tourism



NOT TO SCALE

KIBWORTH

To the present day traveller hastening along the A6 to the south of Leicester, Kibworth appears to be just one village some nine miles from the City. In fact it is two distinct villages - Kibworth Harcourt lying mainly to the east of the main road and the other, Kibworth Beauchamp, to the west.

KIBWORTH HARCOURT

The name Kibworth is a derivation of Chiburde, which appears in the Domesday Book, and means the farmstead or settlement of Ciber or Cybba. Over the years this became Shyburd, then Keeburth and eventually Kibworth. Harcourt's name is in recognition of the Norman family of de Harcourt who held the manor in the 12th and 13th centuries.

Excavations in and around Harcourt have provided indications that a farming and trading community was in existence here right back to the time of the Roman occupation. To this day, farming is still very much in evidence. As befits a medieval agricultural village, at one time the village had many inns or ale houses. Today only two remain of the seven that once existed.

The older central part of Harcourt village has around twenty listed buildings and enjoys Conservation Area status. A feature is the number of fire insurance plaques affixed to buildings - a relic of the days when fire brigades were funded by insurance companies.



The Rose & Crown

The trail starts at the Rose & Crown, a former coaching inn on the main road. Parking is permitted as a courtesy in the car park.

1) The Rose and Crown is believed to have been built in the 18th century. It was a famous coaching inn with up to twenty four coaches a day stopping for passengers' rest and refreshment.

2) Main Street was formerly the through route from Leicester to Market Harborough. Most of the cottages were built in the 18th century. The first two on the corner opposite the Rose & Crown are unusual in that they still retain a thatched roof. Traces of blocked - in doorways can be seen indicating that originally there were probably four separate cottages in this block. At the rear was stabling for twenty horses.

3) In bygone days the street had several shops. No. 10 was a butchers and the Old Bakehouse further down on the left really was a bakers complete with delivery yard through the arch at the rear of the building.

4) 15 Main Street, 'The Smithy', once housed the local wheelwright, a vitally important trade in the days of horse drawn transport. It was here that the wheel of a wagon belonging to the famous preacher John Wesley, was repaired when he passed through the village on one of his evangelical journeys.

Highway disaster

The end of the 'Old Bakehouse' used to be perfectly square, but several coaching accidents occurred at this spot, and in 1810 the end wall was rebuilt at the angle you see today. At least one incident resulted in a fatality when a coach overturned and several outside passengers were pitched through the windows of nearby houses.

5) 20 Main Street was originally two cottages - only recently have they been made into one. Note the date 1791 on the gable end.

6) 31 Main Street was in earlier times the 'Admiral Nelson' public house. The granite setts in the pavement are evidence of the horse drawn traffic that once used the gateway.

7) 24 Main Street, 'Harcourt Cottage' was at one time 'The Navigation Inn'. The window above the arch is original whilst the shutter catches are an unusual feature.

8) 28 Main Street is the oldest cottage of this group. Notice the attractive upstairs windows and the distinctive brickwork. The front room was once used as a shop whilst the shop door, located just to the right of the existing door, has long been bricked up.



28, Main Street

9) Turn left and look for the narrow jitty (footpath) between numbers 60 & 62 to your right. However before turning into it take in the view of Harcourt Terrace and maybe explore a little. Passing between the houses notice the outside 'privvies' in the gardens to the right. Imagine how cold it was in winter!

10) The footpath passes through a kissing gate and emerges into an open space with a prominent mound to the right. Known locally as 'The Munt', its origin is obscure, it being possibly a burial mound or the mound of a motte & bailey castle. Excavations have unearthed burnt wood, iron, teeth, bones and traces of paved flooring.

The Long March

In October 1936 the Jarrow Marchers stopped at 'The Munt' to rest during their long journey to London. They were addressed by Ellen Wilkinson, M.P. for Jarrow, who accompanied the march all the way.

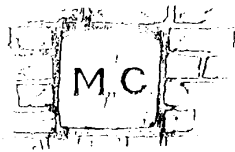
11) Turn right where the path exits to Leicester Road via a second kissing gate. This section of road is part of the route adopted in 1810 in order to avoid the sharp corners and restricted width of Main Street.

12) Just beyond the junction with Main Street is 'The White House' which stands on the site of an original building of circa 1575. The present building dates from the 18th century when it housed the Kibworth Academy - a major place of learning for Nonconformists. Later still it served as a coach staging post and was known as the Crown Inn.

Non-Conformity in Kibworth

Founded in 1715 by the Rev. John Jennings junior, Kibworth Dissenters' Academy became a centre for theological education with a large number of pupils. One was Philip Doddridge. He took great interest in Jennings' work and decided to follow in his tutor's footsteps by being both a minister and tutor in Kibworth. Subsequently he moved to Northampton and set up an academy of his own which lasted from 1729 to 1757. Another student John Aiken junior married John Jennings' grand-daughter, Martha in the early 1770s. Consequently we can see that the ministry and academy were quite a family affair.

13) Nos. 69 & 71 were originally built as a farmhouse. The building is dated 1704 in dark bricks high up on the end gable. Of interest is the number of window changes that have taken place on this wall. It is owned by Merton College, Oxford, as is much of the surrounding farmland. Note the stone block inscribed 'MC' built into the boundary wall adjacent to the road.



14) The Congregational Chapel was originally instituted in 1662 by Rev. John Jennings who is buried in the local parish church. Notable people connected with the chapel are hymn-writers Dr. Philip Doddridge and Dr. John Aiken.

Thomas Cook - travel pioneer

The present Chapel which is still in use, was built around 1760. It was associated with Thomas Cook, the travel and tourism pioneer, who was a fervent teetotaler and at one time, travelling preacher. A plaque affixed to the building commemorates the connection.



Congregational Chapel

15) Joined to the Chapel by a brick arch, the Manse was built in the early 19th century. The building was still in use by the Minister until about 1960. Historically the kitchens were used to prepare meals for the congregation which stayed for both morning and evening services. The house is now private residential accommodation.

This spot is the extremity of the trail in this direction. Please retrace your steps to the top end of Main Street.

16) Built on the site of an older property, 'The Limes' is an extensive villa dated 1880. In amongst much older buildings, this imposing house is a good example of Victorian domestic architecture.

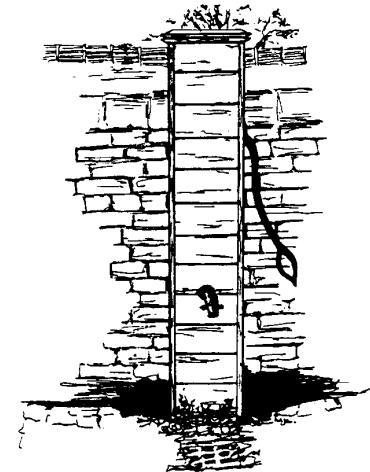


The Limes

17) 41 Main Street, Priory Farm is another fine farmhouse building. Built around a timber framework, the infilling is of ironstone and brick.

18) Manor Farmhouse, although dated 1702 has medieval origins. Note the unusually placed letter box in the wall of the house and the Sun Insurance Company's insurance plaque higher up. The garden wall is decorated in a distinctive pattern of bricks known as diapering, whilst to the left of the garden entrance gateway are three dated terracotta plaques. Each signifies a major piece of construction or modernisation. The date of 1475 represents the first stone building on the site; 1695 signifies when much of the brickwork replaced the original stone whilst 1860 signifies when further extensions were built together with the present garden wall.

19) 78 Main Street, on the other side of the road, is yet another former public house. This was originally known as the Red Lion Inn.



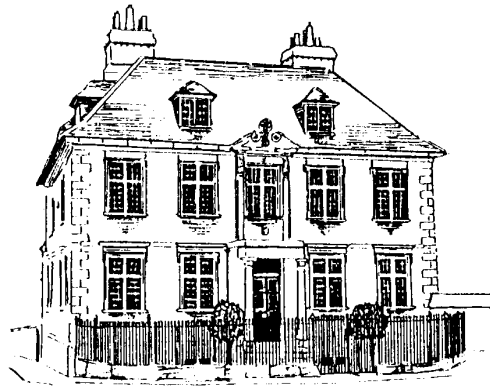
The Village Pump

20) The village pump located under the substantial horse chestnut tree is well cared for but not in working order. Part of the mechanism was removed when the water was found to be unsuitable for drinking.

21) The Old House is a rare example in Leicestershire of a 17th century fully developed brick Renaissance house. The house was built in 1678 by William Parker who died in 1699 and whose monument, inscribed in Latin, is in the Church. The front is particularly fine and the house was considered by the late Professor W.G.Hoskins to be one of the most beautiful houses of the Charles II period in the County.

A centre of change

The village was never granted a royal charter for a market but it is likely that bartering took place in this central area in front of the Old House. Merton College archives hold a sketch thought to have been drawn circa 1780 showing no front garden to the Old House, the village pump on an isolated island and a cross in the centre of an open area much larger than is apparent today.

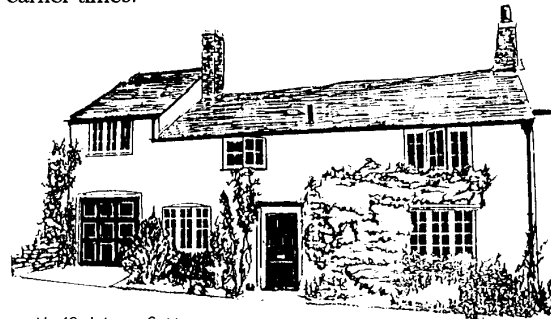


The Old House

22) The village cross, in the form of a simple pillar structure, was re-erected in 1994 as a result of a local initiative. The original base stones were located having been distributed around the village whilst the pillar shaft was re-created in a style that matched the original.

23) The Old Barn, converted in recent times to provide living accommodation, was probably built in the late 17th century. It is thought to be one of the original outbuildings of the Old House.

24) On the left is another attractive row of cottages, this time in Albert Street (formerly known as Hog Lane). Number 12 Joiners Cottage, once incorporated a sweet shop. It is thought to have been a joiner's workshop in earlier times.



No 12 Joiners Cottage

City limits

Exhaustive research has failed to discover the origins of the unusual street name 'The City'. However it is known that this area was originally outside the village limits and housed the poorest section of the community.

This is the end of the guided trail. Please either retrace your steps back up Albert Street and turn left into Main Street or continue around the Langton Road and turn right along Marsh Drive and right again along the Leicester Road (A6) to the Rose & Crown.

25) Some distance away on Langton Road, but visible from several points in the village is Kibworth Windmill. It is believed it was built in the early 17th century although the main post has a carving dated 1711. The mill was in use until the 1920s. *Access is only possible by prior agreement with the owner.*

Early maps show a windmill at another site. Legend has it that this mill was moved, on rollers, the half mile or so to its present position.

The expression 'ground to a halt' came from a miller's method of stopping a windmill by over-feeding grain in order to clog the millstones.

This leaflet has been prepared jointly by the Kibworth Harcourt Conservation Society and Harborough District Council. Support has been received from Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council and The Countryside Commission.

Further information on the village and the Conservation Society can be found on the notice board located at the junction of Albert Street and Main Street.

Refreshments

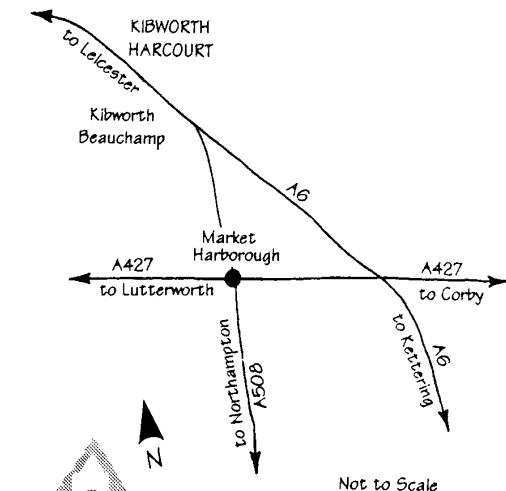
Bar snacks, lunches and evening meals are served in 'The Three Horseshoes' and 'The Rose and Crown'.

Kibworth Beauchamp

A separate village trail leaflet on Kibworth Beauchamp is available. A circular walk commencing at the Parish Church concentrates on the core of this adjacent, but very different village.

Transport

Kibworth can be reached easily by bus from Leicester, Market Harborough and Northampton. Car drivers are asked to use the nominated parking area.



Not to Scale



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