

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 Kibworth Beauchamp to the west.

KIBWORTH BEAUCHAMP

The name Kibworth is a derivation of Chiburde, which appears in the Domesday Book and means the farm stead or settlement of Ciber, or perhaps Cybba. Over the years this became Shyburd then Keeburth and eventually Kibworth.

The name Beauchamp is derived from the de Beauchamp family who held the Manor by right as Chief Pantelers (banner carrier, dresser, butler) to the King on the day of his Coronation. For instance in 1246 this service was performed by Walter de Beauchamp.

In the 17th century the Manor passed into the hands of the Halford family. Subsequently the village did not stay in single ownership and this made it possible for entrepreneurs to develop areas of land. This allowed small industries to become established, giving Kibworth Beauchamp a very different character from its sister village. The main industry was framework knitting which developed from a cottage industry to small work shops and finally by the beginning of the 20th century to several factories, the largest of which employed over 400 people.

The trail starts from the car park opposite the Parish Church. Please try to avoid using the car park during the times of church services.

1) The Parish Church of St Wilfrid serves both Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt. There are two porches; north for Harcourt and south for Beauchamp. The building dates from the second half of the 14th century. The ancient font was removed from the Church by John Yaxley the puritan minister in the 1650s and was used as a horse trough. It was re-instated in 1864 and the plain 17th century font was given to a church in Zanzibar.

The tower which was built between 1832 & 1836 houses the clock which is signed by John Hanbury of West Haddon and dated 1834.

A guide to the church giving full details can be obtained inside.



The Manor House

High Jump Champion

The original church tower and spire had a height of 160 feet and the six - faced spire was said to have been visible for seventy miles. On 23rd July 1825 the whole structure collapsed across the road and into the field beyond. One small girl ran home and announced that she had just jumped over the church steeple, to be soundly rebuked by her incredulous family!

2) Turn left down Church Road towards the village centre. The row of large Victorian houses to the right are 'The Villas', built in the late 19th century by John Mason, a local builder, for his sons.

3) The road continues on an embankment built when the railway was constructed in the 1850s. To the right on the original land alignment is Station Hollow. Known in the past as 'under Church Hill', 'Little End' or 'Ballas Ole' (Ballast Hole), this is one of the oldest parts of the village.

4) Just before reaching the railway bridge, look left to the old Midland Railway line and station. Notice the old goods shed with three arches and decorated brickwork. On this site stood the pre-1788 Rectory.

Who Slept Here ?

Legend has it that either Cromwell or Charles I visited the Rectory on the night prior to the decisive Battle of Naseby in 1645. If truth be told probably neither did!

5) Look beyond the timber yard for a view of the newly opened Stuart Court, a home for retired Anglican clergy. To the left is the Midland Railway station with its distinctive decorated iron windows. Opened on 8th May 1857, the station was a victim of the "Beeching cuts" and closed on 1st January 1968.

6) Stop again outside No.21 Station Road for a view across to the 'Railway Arms'. At the top of the yard the single storey building was once used as a blacksmith's forge.

7) Continue to the Village Hall opened in 1866 where early highlights were the fortnightly entertainments known as 'penny readings'- a showcase for local talent! Across the road is the old school (now a surgery) with its distinctive bell tower. The first Parochial School was built on this site in 1812, the existing buildings being constructed in 1842. The adjacent house to the left was the headmaster's.



Kibworth Beauchamp Village Hall

8) Opposite is Paget Street (formerly Pudding Bag Lane) named after a 19th century benefactor, Major Paget. The old infants' school built in 1907 was the starting point of most village children's education. It closed in 1959. Today it houses a craft industry.

9) The village centre, once known as the Bank or Cross Bank, was the site of a market cross. In 1221, Henry III granted Walter de Beauchamp a licence for a Monday market; during the early 19th century a statute fair was held for the hiring of servants and labourers.



Cross Bank House

10) 14 High Street, Cross Bank House, is one of several fine Georgian houses in this area. This particular house was once the home of one of the village doctors. An unusual window and bell pull can be found on 4, High Street, Lantern House a few doors away.

Dropped from the sky

Across the road is a shop now known as 'The Spot'. During World War II, this was F.G. Hare's drapery shop. At 6.45 on 10th January 1942 a barrage balloon collapsed on to it and enshrouded it for two hours before it could be removed.

11) Turn right down Weir Road, known until lately as 'Wire Lane'. On the far side at the corner once stood the village stocks. The derelict cottage at right angles to the road was once part of a group. Some are now used as farm buildings. In one of these in the 19th century lived a blacksmith John Collins, whose skills ranged from furniture-making to dock repairing. In addition he was an avid reader of Spurgeon's sermons.

18) Further along the High Street is Beauchamp Hall, known as St Wilfrid's Hall since 1924. It was built in 1885 as a Baptist Church at a cost of £450. The foundation stones were laid by the same Underwood family who lived in No. 33 High street (see no.17 above).

19) Retrace your steps and turn up School Road. The Methodist Church is located on the left partially hidden by a cottage. It was built in 1846 on the site of an earlier building. To the right of the main building of the church is the 1874 extension which was formerly the minister's residence.

20) Continue along School Road to the site of the former Grammar School. Its foundation is believed to have been as early as 1359, thereby making it one of the oldest schools in the country. The present school house and master's house date from 1725 and were extended in the 19th century. Local legend suggests that an underground tunnel once linked the Grammar School and the Parish Church.



The Old Grammar School

If you wish to shorten the walk, turn right at this point down School Walk then turn left along Church Road to the car park. Otherwise take the path to the left of No. 2 School Walk.

21) Continue to the railway bridge. To the right, on the left hand side of the tracks can be seen the site of the former sidings from which cattle and sheep were sent to London's Smithfield Market. To the left the 'Tin Bridge' can be seen. Ahead, children might appreciate a break in the play area whilst watching passing trains on the busy Midland Main Line. Then continue straight on, taking the right hand footpath which runs alongside the hedge.

CARE - Cottage and Rural Enterprises Limited

The central office of CARE, a registered charity is located on the right hand side. Founded in 1966, CARE concerned with giving support through the provision of residential accommodation and work facilities to those who have a learning disability (mental handicap). To date, eight CARE communities have been established nationwide each with workshop activities which produce a wide variety of goods.



12) The street numbering on the right hand side of the road appears to go astray after No. 17 - the neighbouring house being No.37. However the jitty (footpath) between the two houses leads to Barrack Yard where nine cottages were once to be found. At one time the cottages housed war pensioners.

Hypothermia

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Joseph Bailey, a frame-work knitter lived in one of these cottages. He would visit surrounding villages to sell his hosiery and on one bitterly cold winter's day he was found frozen to death while returning from his rounds.

13) Nos 24 to 34 were known as Factory Houses as they were converted from a frame-work knitter's shop that failed in the mid-19th century.

14) In spite of its development as a semi-industrial village based upon textiles, farming was also an important industry. A variety of farmyard implements can be seen on the left in the yard of Mulberry House and on the right outside No. 51. All that's missing is the horse!

Turn right along the footpath when you reach the triangle of grass. The view across the school playing fields is to the woods and the hills surrounding the village of Gumley.



Cottages, Smeeton Road

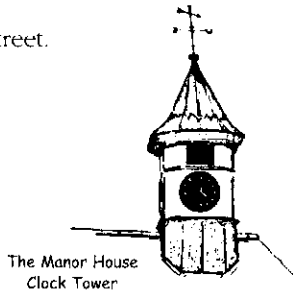
15) Turn right along Smeeton Road (once known as Victoria Street) passing on the left the fine Victorian villa known as Beauchamp House. Further along on the same side notice Nos.1-11, probably once framework knitters cottages. The large windows were provided to give the knitters the maximum amount of light.

16) Turn right into the High Street.

On the corner are the stables with the ornamental clock tower belonging to the Manor House.

These were built in 1913.

The Manor House, No 30 High Street is the oldest house in the village dating from the late 16th century. It is an 'H' shaped Tudor House designed as a compliment to King Henry.

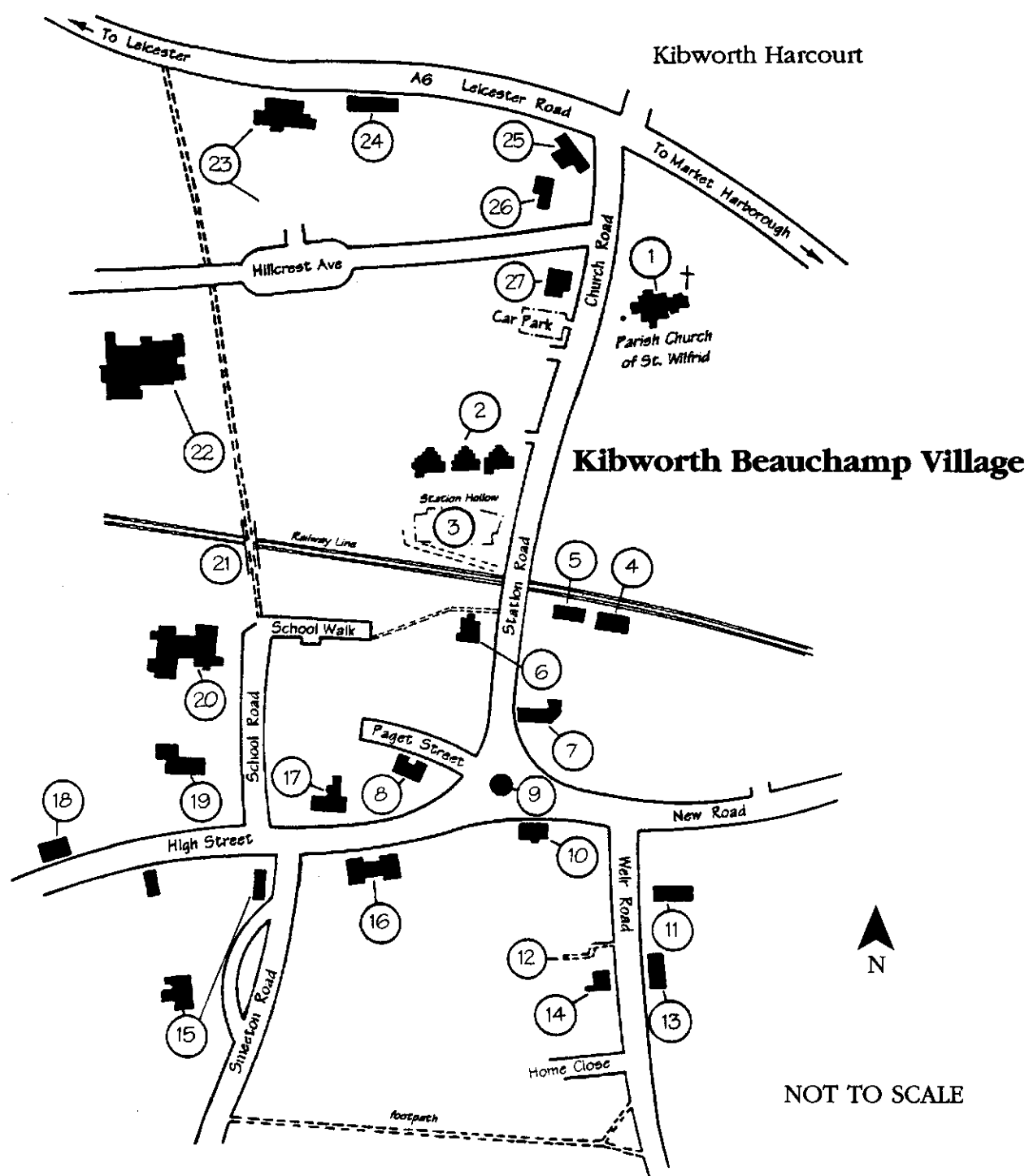


The Manor House Clock Tower

17) Retrace your steps and cross the road at the pedestrian crossing. No.33 is an early 18th century house refronted in the early 19th century. In 1833 this was one of four private schools in the village. By the 1880s it was the home of W.W. Underwood and local Baptists held services in the outbuildings.

Highly Strung

No. 36, now the teashop and restaurant Beauchamps, was once part of the Royal Oak pub. From here one day in the 1870s a tightrope was strung across to a thatched cottage on the corner of School Road. Villagers watched agog as the famous Canadian, Blondini, balanced a stove and cooked a pancake aloft - a rather tame feat after pushing a wheelbarrow over Niagara falls.



22) From the footpath there are views of the Primary School, built in 1959. From near the gate at the top of the path look back towards the Tin Bridge and you will see evidence of the medieval ridge and furrow system.

23) Cross Hillcrest Avenue built after World War II primarily to house returning servicemen and their families. The land to the right of the footpath was used as a prisoner of war camp during the War. Worthy of note is the large Victorian villa 'The Gables'.

24) Turn right along the A6. Nos. 56-62 Leicester Road were formerly known as Navvies Row, or Navigation Row and were built to house those working on the construction of the Midland Railway line between Market Harborough and Leicester. Here the A6 forms the boundary between the two Kibworth villages.

25) The Coach and Horses, as its name suggests, is an 18th century coaching inn situated on the old turnpike road. Once a wooden pump and horse trough with a mounting stone stood in front; unfortunately no sign of them remains.



The Coach & Horses

26) Turn right into Church Road. The first house on the right, the Grey House, is 18th century. The later cast iron railings that front the property are particularly fine. Opposite is an interesting and varied row of cottages which largely date from the early 19th century.

27) No. 30 Church Road, Rectory Cottage, was probably once the house of a curate. Adjacent to it is the car park where the trail commenced.

This leaflet has been prepared jointly by the Kibworth Family History Society and Harborough District Council. Support has been received from Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council the Countryside Commission and Market Harborough Building Society.

Refreshments

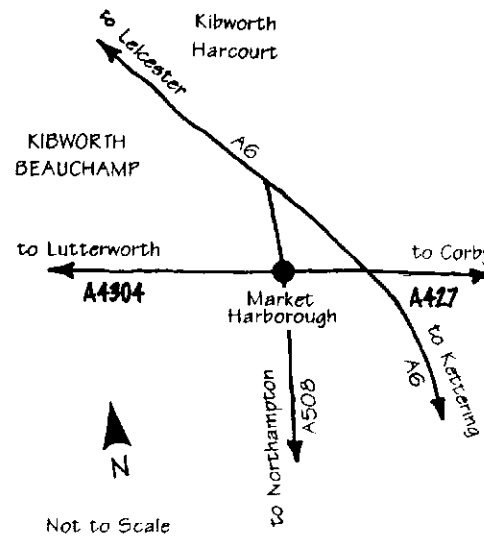
Bar snacks, lunches and evening meals are available in the village pubs. Light refreshments, lunches and afternoon teas are served in 'Beauchamps'.

Transport

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

Kibworth Harcourt

A separate village trail leaflet on Kibworth Harcourt is available. A circular walk commencing at the 'Rose and Crown' public house concentrates on the core of this adjacent, but very different village.



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KIBWORTH BEAUCHAMP

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