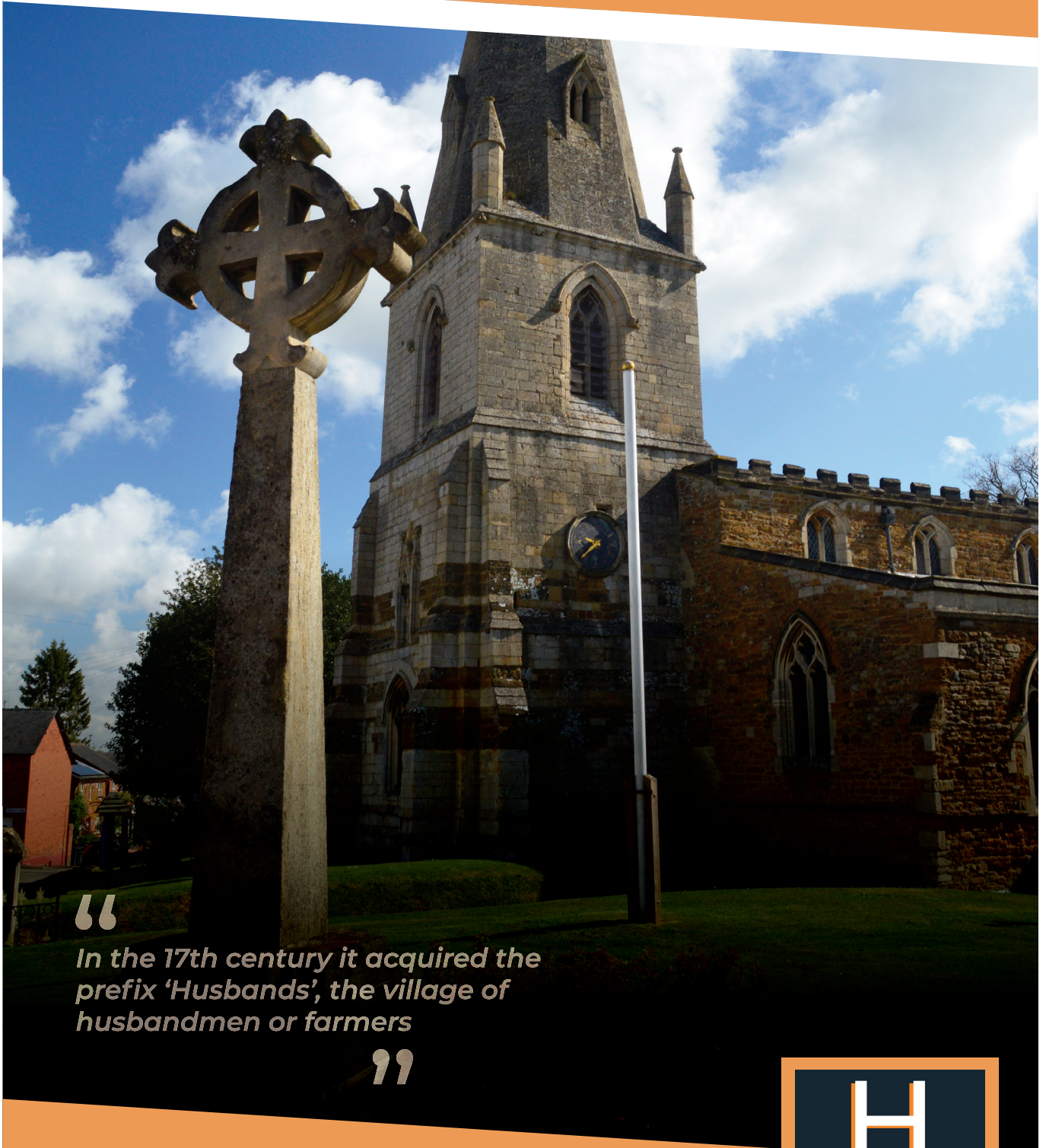


HUSBANDS BOSWORTH



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Enjoy our historic village trails
in beautiful south Leicestershire



HUSBANDS BOSWORTH

(NOT TO SCALE)



The village is close to the Northamptonshire border, about 14 miles south of Leicester and equidistant between the historic market towns of Market Harborough and Lutterworth. Situated on a ridge, the village lies on the watershed between the Avon which flows west to the Severn and the Welland which flows east to the Wash.

The unusual double-barrelled name is of recent origin. In the Domesday Book it was known as Bareswarde, the place or farm of Bar. In the 17th century it acquired the prefix 'Husbands', the village of husbandmen or farmers. This was to avoid confusion with the other Leicestershire Bosworth which became known as Market Bosworth.

A feature of the village is the large number of farmhouses, now converted to other uses.

Surrounding the village are fields with markings of 'ridge and furrow', a legacy of the farming carried out prior to the enclosure of the Parish in 1764. Other earthworks were created by the Grand Union Canal which tunnels through the ridge and the Rugby to Peterborough railway line.

Husbands Bosworth was almost self-sufficient in the 19th century with craftsmen, tradesmen and shops supplying almost every need. It was a good centre for hunting, within reach of several packs and many of the larger houses were built or let out as 'Hunting Lodges'.

The village trail starts from the small green opposite the Bell Inn. There is also an extended walk, just over a mile in length, which features the attractive canal towpath.

1 **The village hall** was built in 1895 in memory of Sir Francis Fortescue Turville of Bosworth Hall. It served as a library and reading room in its early years. During WWII it was used as an officer's mess for the squadrons stationed at the nearby airfield. Located a mile south of the village the airfield is now The Gliding Centre.

2 The **Wesleyan Methodist Church** next door was built in 1913. This is the second Methodist place of worship in the village (see No 24) which had a strong non-conformist tradition. It is now closed.

3 **The village school** built in 1858 has played an important part in village life for nearly 140 years. In distinctive polychromatic brickwork, the building originally incorporated the teacher's domestic accommodation. There is a long history of education in the village from an early grammar school (see No 18) to a 19th century Seminary for Young ladies which proudly announced that each boarder had a separate bed!

4 The outbuildings to the left of the Bell Inn indicate that this has been an important staging post for travellers for many years.

5 Number 3 Bell Lane, **Wheatsheaf House** is one of the oldest houses in the area. It is a good example of 16th century close studded timber framing, a sign of wealth and prosperity. The house was once an inn and a farm. The lower range of buildings to the right is probably even older in parts. However, the massive stone chimney has been added at a later date when the original open hall was converted into a two storey building.



6 Opposite Brook House is **32/34 Bell Lane**. Its steeply pitched roof was previously thatched. This was one of the old village farmhouses and the converted buildings next door were once the farm outbuildings.

Poles apart - The telephone pole located here is one of Husbands Bosworth's curiosities. Unusually it is made of steel instead of wood. Another one can be found on the walk, complete with maker's plate. See if you can spot it!

7 Before turning down Hillcrest Lane, look at the **Victorian houses** here. The doorway and windows of No1 Hillcrest Lane and the decorative roof tiles and bargeboards of the house in Bell Lane indicate that these were built as houses of quality.

8 Berridges Lane is named after a village family who were bakers. To the right is **Bosworth House** noted for its collection of superb terracotta chimney pots and distinctive tripartite windows. Opposite, in the wall of the modern development are the foundation stones of the Baptist Chapel which previously occupied this site.

A Victorian Family - The 1851 census provides details of one of the Baptist Ministers and his family. Living in the small manse at that date was William Williams, the minister, and his wife Maria with their eleven children, born between 1829 and 1849. Their names were Mercy Mary, Maria Ann, Truth Jane, Grace Catherine, Peace Rebekah, Elizabeth Dorcas, Hannah Sekerson, Emma Emma, Samuel Elimelech, Jemima Rachel and, last but not least, Eliza Bumpus.

9 **The Fernie Court Mews** development stands on the site of the Fernie Lodge Hotel, which was built originally as a hunting lodge called Highcroft. Later, as 'The Fernie' it enjoyed a reputation for hospitality and fine dining at a time when pub fare consisted of crisps, salted peanuts and chicken in the basket.

10 The footpath before Fernie Court is **Dag Lane** and marks the original outer boundary of the village. Dog/Dag/Dug Lane is a common name for small paths and roads in this part of Leicestershire. The origin is unclear – it might be that, like the proverbial dog's leg, the paths were bent, or it might be they were dug to mark the boundary between the village and fields.

11 Where the path turns sharp right, pause to enjoy the extensive views of the Welland Valley grazing meadows. On the skyline is the spire of Theddingworth Church.

The path emerges at the top of the bridle road to Mowsley, the starting point of the towpath walk.

12 To the right there is a small area of grass dominated by an oak tree. This is **the Old Green**, the traditional centre of the village.

13 Just below the green, on Honeypot Lane is **The Old House**. Look at the front of the house which has a timber framing filled in with narrow handmade bricks. There were several clay pits in the village and the older bricks may have been made locally. The T.B.D. and the date 1712 mark the year when the house was modernised for Thomas Blakesley and Diana his wife. The house is certainly older than this. You can see the line, above the timber frame, where the roof was raised.

14 Opposite is **The Homestead**, number 34. Once a farmhouse, it was owned by the Marsh family until 1979. They farmed in the parish for 145 years and served as church wardens for many decades.

15 The attractive name of Honeypot Lane is believed to refer to the rich farmland hereabouts. No. 20, **Railway Farm** is far older than its name would suggest, it being an 18th century farmhouse. The name comes from the fact that the farm once extended down to the railway line built 100 years later. The coloured brick headers make an attractive pattern, a feature of many buildings in this part of the village. Next door is Honeypot Farm, the last remaining farm in the village.

16 At the corner of Church Street is a brick and slate building which once housed a small factory making specialised shoes. Further along on the right-hand side of the road is an old pump. This is called **Judy's Well** and is the only remaining public pump in the village, although now not working. Mains water was not connected until 1956. Before then everyone relied on wells and pumps of which there were at least 45.

17 At the far end of the Lane are **two cottages** built by the Turville family of Bosworth Hall in 1874. Their family crest is set into the brickwork under the dormer windows. On the opposite side of the main road, hidden by the trees is the Catholic church of St Mary built in the grounds of Bosworth Hall in 1873.

Witches - In 1616 nine Bosworth women were executed as witches in Leicester. The grandson of Erasmus Smith, then living at the Hall, suffered from what appears to have been epilepsy. The ailment was little understood, and the women were accused of causing the fits by witchcraft. The women were convicted at Leicester Assizes and hanged. The boy's fits continued and a further six women were arrested. It is recorded that King James I visited Leicester at this time, and he examined the boy himself and took justice into his own hands. The Judge and Sergeant were disgraced publicly, and five women were released, one having died in jail.

Retrace your steps and turn up Church Street. Here are a variety of properties, mostly built of handmade brick.

18 The Parish Church of All Saints (pictured on front cover) dates from the 12th or early 13th century. The broach spire is 14th century and was hit by lightning in the 18th century. The porch is dated 1746 and is noted for the two sundials incorporated into the gable. The church clock was restored in 1983 by Geoff Armitage, a village resident. A particular feature is the churchyard with its fine array of Swithland slate gravestones.

To the right of the porch is a small doorway, now blocked up. Behind is the vestry, the site of the original village 'grammar' school held here between 1707 - 1820. There are records of complaints of noisy children playing and shouting.

19 From the graveyard the **Victorian lodge cottage** of Bosworth Hall can be seen. The Hall, which is a private residence, stands on the site of one of the original Manors of the village. The Hall has been a centre of Catholicism for many centuries, ever since Grace, widow of Sir Francis Fortescue came to live here in 1635.

20 Butt Lane recalls the days when the men of Bosworth practised archery each Sunday, as required by the statutes of the realm. The defence of England depended on the archers' skill and every man who could draw a bow was expected to keep in practice.

All of a quiver - At one point a zealous steward of the Manor attempted to fine all the men in the village two pence for

'not shooting according to the statutes'. However, by then the practice had died out and although the records do not tell us the outcome, we suspect that the men of Bosworth did not pay up!

21 On the corner of Butt Lane is a brick house with the date 1738 and the initials T.G. on the gable wall. This was once **The Bakehouse** and the Tilley family baked bread here for nearly 100 years. One of the Tilley families consisted of 12 children, nearly a Baker's Dozen. Next door to this house was **The Smithy**, now converted but once the meeting point for the men of the village. You could always pick up the latest gossip, warm yourself at the forge and watch the world walk or trot slowly past on the road.

22 The High Street is the 'commercial' part of the village, with pubs, shops, and workshops. At one time there were two bakers, two butchers, four grocers, a draper, saddler, blacksmith, and off licence as well as the Post Office, a tailor's premises and four public houses. There was also a carpenter and builders who provided undertaking services to the village.

23 As well as the two surviving pubs there are houses in the village which once served as inns or ale houses. No 34 High Street was the '**Red Lion**' and No 30 was once the '**Graziers Arms**'. The latter still has the painted sign 'Phipps & Co. Ales and Stouts, Northampton' painted on the brickwork.

24 The houses in the High Street have been built in a variety of styles. No 29 was the village's original Methodist place of worship, whilst **Vine House** was once the home of Harry Cross and his son Dick the carrier. He operated a regular service to Market Harborough and Lutterworth which continued until motor buses were introduced.



A few hundred yards further on is the green where the trail started.

The Grand Union Canal Walk - This walk incorporates the local features of the Leicestershire Section of the Grand Union Canal.

Starting from the Old Green, walk down Broad Lane. Soon the earthworks of the abandoned London and North Western Railway branch from Rugby to Peterborough will be seen. Cross the site of the level crossing and immediately beyond is the canal bridge No 46. From the top is a superb view of the wooded cutting leading to Husbands Bosworth canal tunnel.

Take the path down to the canal towpath and follow this to the tunnel portal. The dates 1813 and 1924 show when the tunnel was built and when the portal was rebuilt. Although the official sign says the tunnel has a length of 1170 yards, the eagle eyed will see the original stone with the accurate length of 1166 yards – 2 feet.

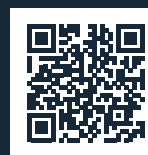
It is possible to view the canal from the portal top by following the towpath which continues at a higher level between the canal and the railway. The railway track bed continues to converge on the line of the canal and at the point where the towpath crosses the railway by a three arched bridge, the canal tunnel is directly below you.



In a short while the main Leicester road (A5199) is reached. The towpath continues ahead to the tunnel's other entrance. To the right are the spoil heaps created by the construction of the tunnel. Originally this track enabled the canal horses to be walked from one end of the tunnel to the other, meanwhile the boats would have been 'legged' through by the male crew members.

Return to the village by turning left along (A5199), turning down the footpath, Dag Lane, immediately after Fernie Court. From this point follow Dag Lane to the start point.

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This leaflet has been prepared by Harborough District Council and the Husbands Bosworth Historical Society. Thanks to **RJ Brand Design** for design and photography (rjbranddesign.co.uk).

Husbands Bosworth Historical Society - The society holds a fine collection of old photographs, documents and artefacts for the village. For more information and to make an appointment to visit the Archive please contact the Society Archivist, Melvyn Forman on 01858 880281 or e-mail: m.forman@talk21.com

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All the information in this leaflet is correct at time of printing.

