



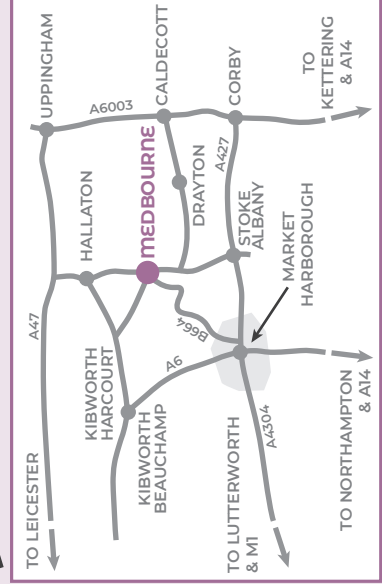
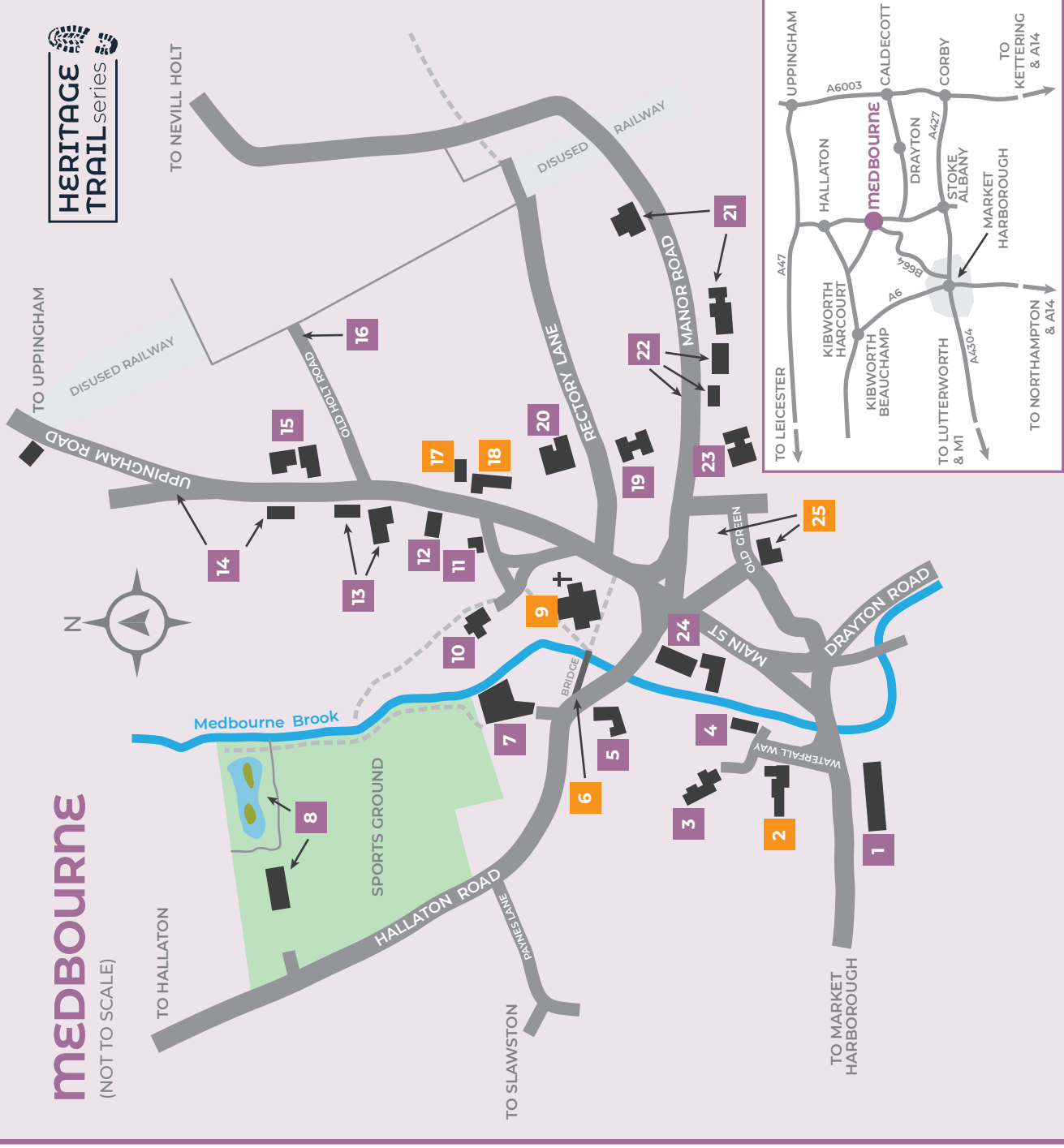
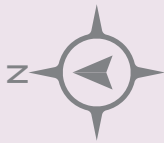
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Medbourne has been a settlement since pre-historic times

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Situated on the edge of the Welland Valley within quiet unspoilt countryside, the village of Medbourne is found on the B664 seven miles from both Market Harborough and Uppingham. Highly attractive, its central feature is the stream which runs alongside the church and under the medieval pack-horse bridge. The cottages are mostly built from honey coloured stone and these, together with the brook make Medbourne a photogenic location, especially in the spring.

There is evidence to show that Medbourne has been a settlement since pre-historic times. Subsequently it was a staging post and market town on the Roman (Gartree) Road. The Saxon period gave the village its name, it being derived from the Anglo-Saxon 'Meadbourne' meaning Meadow Stream. The population was recorded as being 22 at the time of Domesday and rose to a maximum of 580 in 1861. It now stands at around 500.

Medbourne Brook, usually a tranquil stream can become a raging torrent in a matter of hours and it was not unknown for the residents of the adjacent cottages to be flooded out of their homes on a regular basis. After the last major flood in June 1981 when more than twenty homes were flooded, a flood defence scheme was constructed higher up in the valley.

1 The Fernie Hunt Stables were built in 1890 by Sir Bache Cunard, owner of the Nevill Holt Hall, whilst he was Master of Hounds. The stables were used until 1924 when the Fernie moved to Great Bowden, near Market Harborough. The round hole above the arch was intended for a clock but this was never installed following a disagreement with the village council. The stables have been converted into housing but the fox weather vane records the building's former use.

2 The Nevill Arms is now the only pub in the village. The original building on this site was destroyed by a fire in 1856. It is thought that a spark caused the fire after the village blacksmith wagered he could support an anvil on his chest whilst a horseshoe was forged upon it. Rebuilt in 1863 in the Tudor style using local ironstone, the initials MGN over the doorway are those of Mary and George Nevill, who was brother and heir to

the Holt estate. At the side of the building is a fine carriage archway.

The cottages adjoining the Nevill arms are all thought to date from the 1700s. The initials JK on the date stone refer to John Kirby, the village miller, who refurbished the cottages. One of the dwellings was at one time the village bakers and according to tradition, each week the villagers would bring their Sunday joints to be roasted in the ovens.



2 The Nevill Arms

3 The thatched cottage is **Saddlers Cottage**, once the home of Thomas Searcy who was the last saddler to live here. Inside there is a date of 1689. In 1721 a tessellated pavement, the atrium of a Roman villa, was found in the grounds immediately around the cottage. It was removed and subsequently lost. Additional Roman remains were found only a few years ago.

4 Waterfall House is the property overlooking the brook. This used to be a farm where the village milk was delivered in churns. The building has been much changed with brick infilling at first floor level, decorative cast iron window frames to the rear with the date 1883 immediately under the chimney.

Brookside: There used to be a ford to the right of the footbridge. The path beside the stream is a delight especially during the spring when the bulbs planted in the bank enhance this pleasant walk.

5 Manor Farm dates from the early 1600s although the large rear wing was added later in the 17th century. In 1859 a fire started in the farmyard, a south-westerly gale blew sparks across the brook and a number of cottages were totally destroyed. The church was saved by the wind changing direction and the onset of rain.

6 The medieval **packhorse bridge** (pictured on front) is of 13th century origin. The large cutwaters on the north side give an indication of how ferocious was the flow of the stream. More details can be obtained from the plaque which was erected in 1977 to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

7 **The children's playground** was refurbished as a Millennium project and is maintained and updated by a village charity.

8 Further on past the playground is the **sports field**, where the Sports Club pavilion can be seen beyond the football and cricket pitches and next to the tennis courts. A brook side footpath leads to the "Hollow" nature area, a once derelict clay pit now transformed with ponds and islands and extensive planting.

9 Situated in its circular churchyard is the 13th century **Parish Church of St Giles**. It is believed that a church was on this site before this date but was destroyed by fire – the calcined stones being re-utilised. It has also been conjectured that the site was once moated. The church was restored in the 19th century which was just as well for it had been described as being "in a vile state of dirt and disorder and encumbered with the most detestable pews."



9 The Parish Church of St Giles

10 Set back from the road is **Old Queen House**. Dating from 1733 it was once a public house called the Queens Head Inn until 1905.

No 4, Springbank, the stone house with the gable end facing the road and the decorative bargeboards, was once a garage owned by Mr Tobbit. It was from here that the village bus used to run to Market Harborough. Mr Tobbit was also noted as having the first radio in the village, a fact which created considerable interest at the time.

11 Like most villages, Medbourne had several shops, although only one remains now. The very popular **village shop and Post Office** with the Victorian front occupies what was once the butchers shop until it closed in 1986.

12 The large red brick building decorated with polychromatic brickwork was built by the Independent Wesleyans as their **Mission Hall** in 1870. It was used as a place of worship until 1986; subsequently it became a fashion designer workshop but is now a private dwelling. Alongside is Chapel School House, built at the same time as the chapel.

13 Opposite Old Holt Road is **Pagets Farmhouse**, originally built in the 17th century. Beside the road stands an old barn which has been converted into a private dwelling.

14 Medbourne had its own railway, opening in 1883. However, it suffered an early closure being the victim of the nationwide rail cuts instituted in 1916. The three terraced cottages were built for railway employees. Further up the road you can see the massive stone capped brick piers which once led to the station and yard, part of which has now been built upon with bungalows.

15 Built in 1908 **no. 35** was originally the Co-op. It sold groceries and other household requirements to Medbourne and the surrounding villages and also operated a delivery round until 1968 when trading ceased and it was converted into a private dwelling. Next door with its gable facing the road is what was originally constructed as the village **Reading Room** but which later became used as the Village Hall until it closed in 1988. It now has a combination of commercial and domestic use.

16 **Old Holt Road** used to be a through road to Nevill Holt before the railway was built. The funeral bier and the village dirt cart were once both kept at the top of the road; the latter being used to collect sewerage from each house once a week.

17 The stone house with the gable end facing the road is **Crown House**. This used to be the pub 'The Crown Inn' until it was de-licensed in the late 1920s.

18 **The Old Forge** was built in 1875 by William Letts on the site of the village workhouse. The shoeing shop was at the front – the wide arched doorway can still be clearly identified. The shoeing of the horses ceased in 1958, but as a reference to the building's former use, blacksmith's implements in wrought iron decorate the gable.



Before turning up Rectory Lane, observe by the church gates the last remaining gas lamp standard in the village. Originally Medbourne had its own supply complete with gas house manufacturing gas for the local stables, cottages and Nevill Holt Hall.

19 Shielded by mature trees is the **Old Hall** – one of the large houses which give Medbourne its distinct character. It is an imposing H-plan house built in the mid-seventeenth century and features a fine Collyweston stone roof.

20 Opposite is the **Old Rectory**, dominated by the magnificent plane tree on the front lawn. The house was remodelled in 1845 at a cost of £1,300 by the Leicestershire architectural practice of the Goddard family (see 24 below).

Continue walking up the lane and along the path over the old railway cutting. Note how the stone capped brick piers first encountered at the station are repeated. After the kissing gate turn right down the hill turn right down the hill.

21 The first stone house on the right is the **Manor House**. It is the oldest house in the village and is thought to date from the thirteenth century. During renovations wall paintings believed to date from the reign of James I were discovered. In 1878 the house was renovated by Sir Bache Cunard for his huntsman. Outside a mounting block can be seen – a memory of a bygone age. The buildings opposite were originally the kennels for the Fernie Hunt but following their move to Great Bowden they were converted to domestic dwellings.



22 Set in the wall on the right-hand side is one of the many wells which once supplied the village's water supply. Opposite is a tile hung terrace of four houses dated 1884, built specifically to house the staff that supported the Fernie Hunt. A few doors away is **Spring Cottage** and **Nevill Cottage** (no. 18 & 20 Manor Road). Again, the MGN mark of Mary and George Nevill can be seen.

23 Towards the end of Manor Road, on the left-hand side is **Dale Farm**, a large H-plan house built by John Wade in 1731. It is surrounded by a new wall incorporating two stone piers from the original structure.

24 Beyond the war memorial is a row of cottages, **School Row**, and next to them is the old village school. Designed by the Goddard family of architects, it, and the adjoining schoolhouse, were built in 1868/9 in the Gothic style. It is richly ornamented with fishscale roof tiles, terracotta ridge tiles and cast iron window frames. The heavy doors are particularly fine. All this for a cost of £1,277! The school closed in 1981 and is now used as the Village Hall.

25 To your left and beyond, the village bowling green, on **Old Green**, is a thatched three storey building, once the '**Horse & Trumpet**', yet another of Medbourne's pubs but it is now a private dwelling.



If you continue around Old Green it leads to **Drayton Road** opposite Brook Terrace. The cottages there were once the homes of stable men and their families. To the right is the car park, the commencing point of the trail.

NEVILL HOLT

The hamlet of Nevill Holt situated one mile away from Medbourne up the steep Manor Road, has been closely associated with the village for many years. Enjoying spectacular views, the magnificent grouping of buildings that was the Nevill Estate rarely fails to impress.

The main building complex incorporates the 14th century Great Hall and 13th century church of St. Mary which was used as a place of worship until the Nevills departed. Adjacent is the 17th century stable block with its symmetric west front dominated by a fine clocktower.

The estate passed into the hands of Catherine Palmer, wife of William Nevill in 1474. They were the first of a long line who gave their name to Nevill Holt for almost 400 years until the estate was sold by Cosmo George Nevill in 1876 to the Cunard family.

The current owner, David Ross, bought the house in 2000 and Nevill Holt has become known for both its opera festival and its outstanding collection of modern British art and sculpture. In the summer of 2018 Nevill Holt Opera opened its new theatre on the Nevill Holt estate to great critical acclaim. Why not take a look at their upcoming events? The public road from Medbourne to Nevill Holt passes through the magnificent iron gates adjacent to Buffalo Lodge. Beyond is a superb avenue of lime and oak trees.



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This leaflet has been prepared by Harborough District Council with assistance from some Medbourne villagers.

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