

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 farmstead 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 here and also office of Chief Panteler (banner carrier, dresser, butler) to the King in the 13th century.

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. A leading industry was framework knitting which developed from a cottage industry to small workshops 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 public car park in School Road in the centre of the village (see map at back of leaflet).

1 Turn right out of the car park and you will find the Methodist Chapel is located on the right 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 chapel is the 1874 extension which was formerly the minister's residence. A further extension was added in 2002.

30 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 remain, although the horse trough is now part of the Victorian street setting at the Newarke Houses museum in Leicester.



31 Continue left along the A6 main road. 56-62 Leicester Road, Navvies Row, or Navigation Row, were built to house those working on the construction of the Midland Railway line between Market Harborough and Leicester. Here the A6, generally, forms the boundary between the two Kibworth villages.

Further along the A6, passed a large Gothic style house, formerly The Gables, are two jitties, or passageways.

Take the first of these to:

32 Hillcrest Avenue, built after World War II primarily to house returning servicemen and their families. Part of the land between Hillcrest Avenue and the A6 was used as a prisoner of war camp during WWII.

Continue directly across Hillcrest Avenue and along another footpath, passing the school and recreation field, with its medieval ridge and furrow system still evident, to the railway bridge.

33 To the left of the bridge, looking along the railway tracks, was the site of the former sidings from which cattle and sheep were sent to markets in Harborough and elsewhere. Hundreds of thousands of baby chicks were also despatched, across the world, from the Evans' hatchery on the A6.

34 Passing over the railway bridge you will see on the right some of the remaining buildings of the Old Grammar School - later the High School and more recently converted into flats.



Its foundation is believed to have been as early as 1359, thereby making it one of the earliest 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. A few yards further on and you return to the Grammar School Hall car park. The old school hall is now a wonderful facility for the whole of the ancient parish of Kibworth.

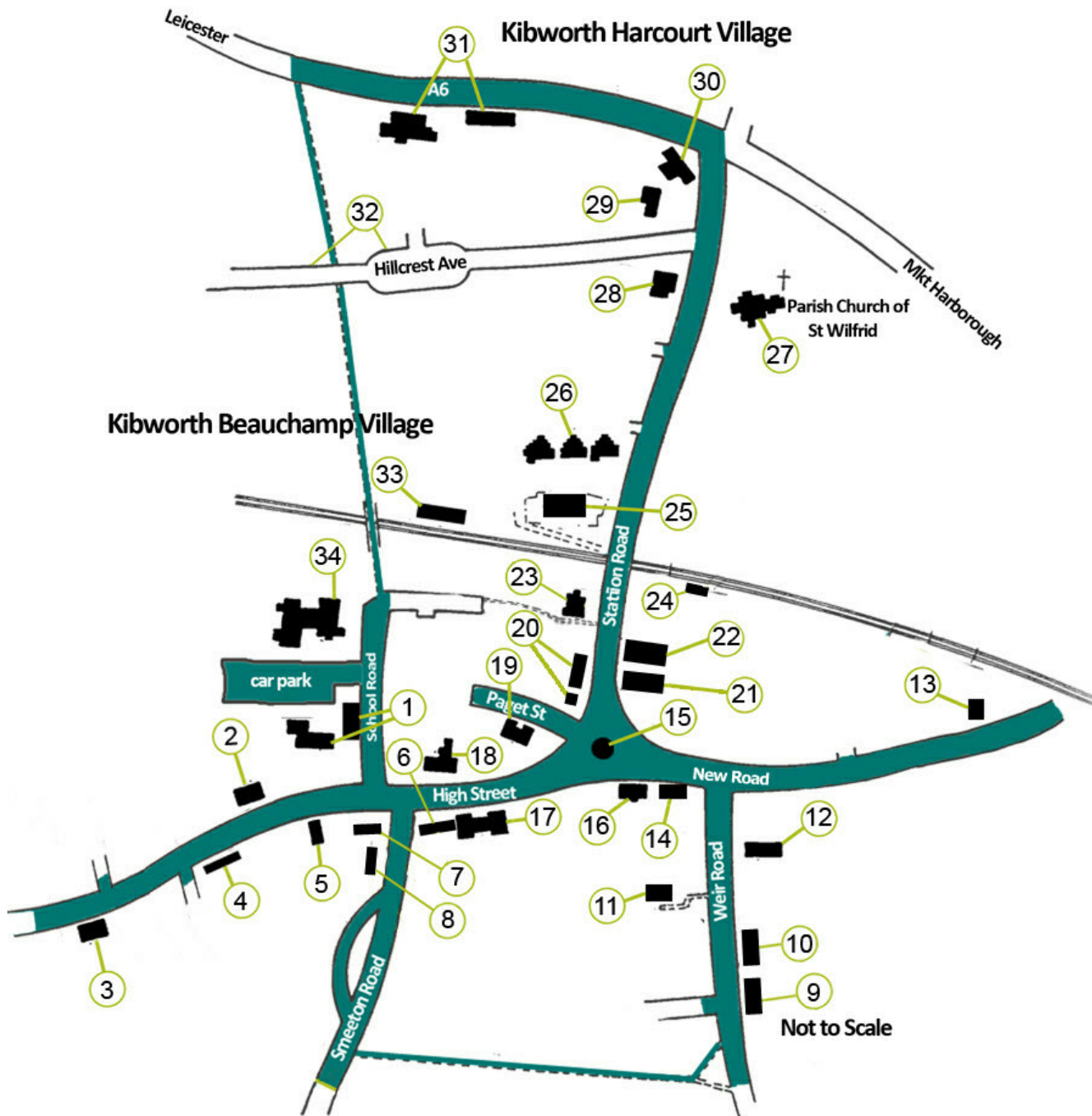
You have returned to your starting point and we hope that you have enjoyed your walk around our village.

This leaflet has been prepared by
Kibworth History Society

www.kibworth.org

KIBWORTH BEAUCHAMP

South Leicestershire



Village Heritage Trail

The church tower, which was built between 1832 and 1836, houses a clock which is signed by John Hanbury of West Haddon (Northants) and dated 1834.



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.

28 30 Church Road, Rectory Cottage, opposite the church, was previously a post office.

29 Passing Hillcrest Avenue you will see the Grey House on the left. This 18th century house has a fine set of cast iron railings, and one wonders how they avoided the demand for metal during WWII. Opposite is a row of cottages from the early 19th century.

2 Turn right along the High Street and you come to Beauchamp Hall, known as St. Wilfrid's Hall since 1924. It was built in 1885 as a Baptist Chapel at a cost of £450. The foundation stones were laid by the Underwood family who lived at 33 High Street (see **18** below).

3 Continue along High Street to Fleckney Road and you will come to the Scout & Guide Headquarters on the opposite side of the road. This building was previously Barratt's auction and salesroom, doubling as a cinema as well as showing lantern slides. Customers at the cinema or slide show would sit on whatever furniture Mr Barratt had in his saleroom; sometimes a comfortable sofa or a hard dining chair.

Pause for a moment and imagine the large hosiery factory of Johnson & Barnes with 400 employees that was once situated further along Fleckney Road.

4 Retrace your steps to the village centre along the right hand side of the road and you will see a mud wall, all that survives from an old mud cottage, with thatched roof, demolished in 1947.



5 36 High Street, now divided into three shops, was once the Royal Oak pub. Local reports state that 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 Frenchman, Blondin, balanced a stove and cooked a pancake aloft - rather a tame feat after pushing a wheelbarrow over Niagara Falls!

6 Before turning right into Smeeton Road, you will see an ornamental clock, built in 1913, on the stables belonging to the 16th century Manor House.



7 Turning into Smeeton Road, the new development on the right, Smeeton Court, is on the site of the other major hosiery employer in the village, Poyhors, and later the design studios of J E Slater.

8 You now pass numbers 1-11 Smeeton Road. These cottages housed the families of framework knitters. Larger windows on the first floor replaced the original small windows, in the 1930s, together with additional windows over the front doors, the installation of gas lighting, and the provision of outside toilets, all made by the owner after the cottages had been condemned and threatened with demolition.



24 Opposite the pharmacist and down Isabel Lane is all that remains of the old Midland Railway station with its distinctive decorated windows. Opened on 8th May 1857, it was victim of the ‘Beeching cuts’ and closed on 1st January 1968. Around 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!

25 Across the road from the old station and over the railway bridge is Station Hollow. Known in the past as ‘under Church Hill’, ‘Little End’, or ‘Ducks’ Paddle’, this is one of the oldest parts of the village.

26 Continuing up the hill towards the A6 main road and on the left is a row of large Victorian houses, The Villas, built in the late 19th century by John Mason, a local builder.

27 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 reinstated in 1864 and the plain 17th century font was given to a church in Zanzibar.

18 Cross the road by the pedestrian crossing to 33 High Street, set back from the road, an early 18th century house re-fronted 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 WW Underwood and local Baptists held services in the outbuildings. In the second half of the 20th century it housed the Electricity Board.

Turn back down the High Street towards the roundabout, keeping to the left hand side, and to Paget Street (formerly Pudding Bag Lane) and named after Major Paget, a 19th century village benefactor.

19 Behind the library you will see the old infants' school. Built in 1907, this was the starting point of most village children's education. It closed in 1959 when a new school was opened in Hillcrest Avenue.

20 Just beyond Paget Street on Station Street is the old school (now a doctors' 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 house to the left was the headmaster's.

21 Across the road is the entry to Stuart House. This house contains a carved beam of 1627 and a stone chimney of the same date. Beyond the house can be seen Stuart Court, a home for retired Anglican clergy.

22 Next on Station Street can be seen the village hall, opened in 1866, where early highlights were the fortnightly entertainment known as 'penny readings' - a showcase for local talent. It later functioned as the village cinema.

23 Across the road, beyond the Railway Inn, is the pharmacist's shop, formerly the business of Alonzo Freeland, village chemist, dentist, mineral water manufacturer, photographer, publisher, and poet.

Cross the road, passing the Health Centre and Kibworth Court, and take the footpath on the left between Beauchamp Gardens and the High School, with views across to the woods and hills of Gumley.

9 At the end of the footpath turn left along Weir Road and continue for a short distance until you come to Tudor Cottage on the right, the location of the discovery of the 'Kibworth Beauchamp Ox', the largest pre-historic ox ever found in Leicestershire.



Unearthed during extension building work in the 1950s, the ox measured 96cm between the horn tips. It is now preserved in a Leicester museum.

10 24 to 34 Weir Road were known as Factory Houses as they were converted from a framework knitter's shop that failed in the mid 19th century.

11 Continue along Weir Road and you will find a gap in the house numbers between 37 and 17. The missing numbers belonged to nine cottages up the private footpath between numbers 37 and 17, in what was known as Barrack Yard, with only one cottage there now remaining. At one time the old cottages housed war pensioners (hence the name 'Barrack').

12 Further along the road is a restored thatched cottage, at a right angle to the road. This was once a part of a group of buildings and in one of these in the 19th century lived a blacksmith John Collins, whose skills ranged from furniture making to clock repairing. In addition he was an avid reader of Spurgeon's sermons (19th century).

The village stocks stood on the corner as you turn right into New Road.

13 Pass along New Road towards the railway bridge and on the left hand side lies the site of the Kibworth Gas, Light and Coke Works. The gas works was financed by the parish and opened in 1862. There is evidence of three gas holders having been on this site, but all that remains now is the old gas house and buildings converted into accommodation.



Turn back along New Road towards the village centre, passing Weir Road.

14 To the left is 4 High Street, a well-proportioned late 18th century red brick and Welsh slate house, with an impressive central Gothic window, fanlight and bell pull.

15 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 an annual statute fair was held for the hiring of servants and labourers.

16 14 High Street, Cross Bank House, is another of several fine Georgian houses in this area. This particular house was the home and surgery of a succession of village doctors.



Dropped from the sky

Across the road from Cross Bank House, to the right of HSBC bank, is a shop, formerly F.G. Hare's drapery shop. During World War II, on 10th January 1942, a barrage balloon collapsed on to it and enshrouded it for two hours before it could be removed.

17 Continue up the High Street to 30, the Manor House. It is the oldest house in the village, dating from the 16th century. Built of ironstone, it is in an 'H' shape, as a compliment to King Henry.

