

# NOTTS WOLDS WAY



**Bunny ~ Wysall ~ Willoughby-on-the-Wolds ~ Widmerpool ~ Keyworth ~  
Normanton-on-the-Wolds ~ Clipston-on-the-Wolds ~ Stanton-on-the-Wolds  
~ Cropwell Bishop ~ Cropwell Butler**

Nottinghamshire Footpaths Preservation Society

[www.nottsfps.org.uk](http://www.nottsfps.org.uk)

Supported by  
Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust



## SELECTED CHURCHES IN THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE WOLDS



**St Mary's, Bunny**

Norman/15th century. The largest church in south Nottinghamshire. The interior contains many fine monuments the most famous being that of wrestler Sir Thomas Parkyns.



**Holy Trinity, Wysall**

Late 13th early 14th century. The Tower Clock commemorates the safe return of all the village soldiers from the First World War. The interior of the church contains the Armstrong Monument, an outstanding 17th century alabaster tomb.



**St Mary and All Saints,  
Willoughby-on-the-Wolds**

14th century. The interior of the church contains some fine alabaster tombs from the 14th century and the tomb of Royalist Colonel Michael Stanhope slain in July 1648 at nearby Willoughby Field.



**St Peter, Widmerpool**

14th century. The graveyard is the final resting place of two Civil War soldiers killed at Willoughby Field. The interior contains the 19th century effigy tomb of Harriet Robertson.



**St Mary Magdalene, Keyworth**

14th century. Probably on the site of an earlier church. The octagonal lantern style tower is of particular interest, which may have originally housed a signal beacon.

## NOTTS WOLDS WAY — THE STAGES

Stage Information	Distance	Page
<b>Stage 1</b>		
Bunny to Willoughby-on-the-Wolds	6.0 miles	
Start: SK 583 296    End: SK 634 254		
OS Explorer 246		
OS Landranger 129		
Points of Interest		4
Walk Guide		6
<b>Stage 2</b>		
Willoughby-on-the-Wolds to Keyworth	5.5 miles	
Start: SK 634 254    End: SK 614 308		
OS Explorer 246 & 260		
OS Landranger 129		
Points of Interest		8
Walk Guide		10
<b>Stage 3</b>		
Keyworth to Stanton-on-the-Wolds	6.4 miles	
Start: SK 614 308    End: SK 639 306		
OS Explorer 260		
OS Landranger 129		
Points of Interest		12
Walk Guide		14
<b>Stage 4</b>		
Stanton-on-the-Wolds to Cropwell Butler	8.3 miles	
Start: SK 639 306    End: SK 685 369		
OS Explorer 260		
OS Landranger 129		
Points of Interest		16
Walk Guide		18

## ABOUT THIS BROCHURE

Our members have been walking the Nottinghamshire Wolds for many years and have exceptional knowledge of the pathways and routes described. We have chosen the routes carefully to reveal the natural beauty of the Nottinghamshire Wolds.

Most ramblers also have a keen interest in the areas in which they walk; nature, history, geology or even something topical. The NOTTS WOLDS WAY traverses an area exceptionally rich in the natural and cultural heritage of Nottinghamshire. We claim no academic expertise in these matters, but drawing upon our personal experience, written and internet sources we have attempted to draw attention to several POINTS OF INTEREST. The Walk Guide and Map for each Stage is preceded by two pages identifying selected POINTS OF INTEREST and linking them to the appropriate Walk Guide and Map with numbered references. We have included these brief notes to enhance your enjoyment of the walk and perhaps stimulate return visits. There is so much more of interest to enjoy and explore.

## PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to write this foreword to the **NOTTS WOLDS WAY**, a new linear walk. I will begin by saying that the Nottinghamshire Footpaths Preservation Society was founded in 1933 with the aim as its name suggests of helping to preserve the county's network of footpaths, something we are still doing today. With over 100 members we are continuing in that fine tradition and together with the Ramblers and Nottinghamshire County Council, we are doing all in our power to keep open the Rights of Way network through the beautiful Nottinghamshire countryside.

The Nottinghamshire Wolds straddle the border between Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire at the southern tip of the County. The word 'Wold' means an elevated tract of open country and using the available network we have created a route which we hope will give much pleasure to all who walk it. In doing so we have incorporated ancient existing rights of way together with some newly instated ones. We have also taken the opportunity following the dualling of the A46 to safely link paths to the east and west of the new road via new bridges.

The **NOTTS WOLDS WAY** has been over a year in the making and would not have been possible without the enthusiasm of Society members. Everyone involved in the project has worked tirelessly to ensure its success and without mentioning any names have displayed an amazing wealth of talent be it technology skills, map reading, or good old-fashioned foot-slogging whilst way-marking. Well done team!

We are grateful to the Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust for their financial support and encouragement. Profits made by Ramblers Worldwide Holidays not required for running the business are channelled back through Ramblers

Holidays Charitable Trust into support for conservation and environmental projects. Our thanks to the Trust and all those holidaying Ramblers!

We are also grateful for the assistance and advice of Jane Baines, Area Rights of Way Officer for Nottinghamshire County Council, whose knowledge of our local paths is unsurpassed!



*Bluebell Carpet, Bunny Old Wood*

As usual before setting out on this new route a gentle reminder regarding health and safety. Please bear in mind everyday hazards which may be encountered e.g. slippery surfaces, busy roads etc. Happy and Safe Walking!

Bernard P. Rolls  
President  
Nottinghamshire Footpaths Preservation Society  
Summer 2016  
[www.nottsfps.org.uk](http://www.nottsfps.org.uk)

## THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE WOLDS

Nottinghamshire County Council's 1997 *Countryside Appraisal* provides a detailed description and explanation of the Nottinghamshire Wolds which remains relevant today. Here are some extracts from that *Appraisal*:-

*"The Nottinghamshire Wolds region derives its name from its eastern areas, which are defined by a low boulder clay plateau. These areas have traditionally been referred to as 'Wolds', a term applied to elevated tracts of open land. The region, however, also includes a broad area of low hilly country which extends westwards from this plateau to the juncture with the Soar Valley..."*

*... The landscape of the Nottinghamshire Wolds is superficially a product of the enclosure movement, begun in the late-Middle Ages but predominantly of the 18th century, modified to meet the requirement of the post-1945 economy and modern farming techniques. Behind this, however, stands over 4,000 years of settlement and land use, the influences of which can still be read in the [early 21st] century countryside. With the exception, perhaps, of the highest wolds, this region was consistently part of the most densely settled and economically strong area of pre-industrial Nottinghamshire ...*

*... Extraction of clay and gypsum has been the principal industrial enterprise of this region. Gypsum or rather alabaster was quarried at Red Hill from the Middle Ages, when its product supplied an important school of carvers ...*

*... Most of the streams that drain the wolds flow in a westerly direction into the River Soar. The Fairham Brook, however, flows directly into the Trent. Erosion by these streams has ... cut a series of deepening valleys into the underlying clays and mudstones ... One of*

*the largest and most well-developed of these valleys is that of the Kingston Brook. This has a narrow alluvial corridor, flanked in places by steeply ascending hills. The Fairham Brook is also flanked by a thin strip of alluvium, which extends into the heart of the wolds at Widmerpool."*



**Fairham Brook, Bunny Moor**

Both Kingston and Fairham Brooks figure prominently in Stages 1 and 2 of our route.

*"The settlements of the Nottinghamshire Wolds are linked by a network of narrow country lanes [which] contain many special features including species-rich verges, thick roadside hedgerows, hedgebanks and mature roadside trees. These are ... a central component of the region's rural character."*

It is worth taking time to read the full [Appraisal](#), but we hope these extracts point to some of the outstanding features of the Nottinghamshire Wolds as you experience the variety and natural beauty of the **NOTTS WOLDS WAY**.

## STAGE 1: POINTS OF INTEREST

**BUNNY 1** located 8 miles south of Nottingham, is a thriving village with a population of about 600. On the main A60 road, it has good public transport links to Nottingham and Loughborough and amenities include a garage, shop, and public house with restaurant.

The Saxons made a settlement here, and called it 'Bune'. This is an old English term for a 'reed'. It has also been named 'Bonei', 'Boneya', and even 'Boney'. The church of **St Mary the Virgin**, 14th century with several later extensions, is the largest in South Nottinghamshire and is sometimes referred to as the 'Cathedral of the Wolds'.



**Memorial to Sir Thomas Parkyns,  
St Mary the Virgin, Bunny**

Apart from the church, the most significant building in the village is the 17th century Bunny Hall, occupied by the Parkyns family for 300 years, which is situated in park-land east of the A60.

The 2nd baronet **Sir Thomas Parkyns** (1662-1741), known as 'The Wrestling Baronet', renovated the hall to his own design, including what is now the north

wing of the hall. He also provided the Alms House and old school, which are situated close to the church. The Parkyns were great benefactors to the village, and this continues to this day with a charitable foundation, supporting local deserving causes. The *Rancliffe Arms* dining-pub, a large 17th century coaching inn, is named after a descendant of the Parkyns.

Until 1993 brick making was important to the village exploiting the abundant 'keuper marl' clay of Bunny Hill. The *Marblaegis Company Limited* was formed at the beginning of the First World War to mine gypsum within the county. Extraction and manufacturing continue today at British Gypsum's East Leake plant, but with the **Silver Seal Mine** entrance located in Bunny.

**BUNNY OLD WOOD 2** one of the oldest natural features of the South Nottinghamshire landscape, with the north-facing slope likely to have been tree-covered for over 10,000 years, was probably used as a source of wood by the Saxon settlers of 'Bune'.

The Old Wood is a distinctive example of the natural landscape that formerly covered much of south Nottinghamshire. The size of the old coppice stools gives an indication of the wood's age. Today, owned and managed by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, the reserve is a haven for wildlife, woodland flowers and trees and is famed for its springtime display of bluebells.

**WYSALL 3** located some 11 miles south of Nottingham has a population of 320. *The Plough* serves good food and an excellent range of ales.

Wysall is considered an 'obscure village' as the meaning of its name is uncertain. One suggestion derives from the Old

English 'weoh' meaning 'of a heathen temple'. The Domesday Survey of 1086 ('Domesday') recorded the existence of a church at 'Wisoc', which was subsequently rebuilt in the late 11th or 12th century. Nothing remains of this, but evidence of the Norman construction can be seen with the doorway and small window above in the north wall.



***Clock Tower, Holy Trinity, Wysall***

Wysall is one of the country's 41 'thankful villages'. Twelve men from Wysall all fought and returned from the First World War. In 1920 the grateful villagers donated and installed a clock, in the tower of **Holy Trinity Church**, as a thanksgiving memorial. The church contains the **Armstrong Monument**, the alabaster tomb of Hugh Armstrong (d.1572) and his wife Mary, surrounded by other family members.

In 1623 the village gained local notoriety when '**the Stroking Boy of Wissall**' was credited with the power to effect cures by the action of stroking the affected area. The ecclesiastical courts were concerned with church discipline and a case was brought, with some twenty people presented, who admitted

the charge. Apparently, no-one was convicted and nothing more was heard of the boy.

**THORPE-IN-THE-GLEBE** <sup>4</sup> described by Pevsner as '*one of the best deserted medieval sites in the Midlands*', can now only be seen as a series of humps and hollows in the field north and west of Church Site Farm. 'Glebe' derives from the Scandinavian word for earth clods rather than its usual meaning of 'church land'. This reflects the poor quality soil at the site and the difficulty of making a living. The village was abandoned in the late 15th century when the land was enclosed for sheep grazing and villagers prevented from using the land for arable purposes



***Thorpe-in-the-Glebe Church, 1790***

A Norman church, situated adjacent to the farmhouse, lasted until 1790 when only a ruined steeple remained. The last service was held in 1817 and the last formally designated rector died in 1868, but it is said that a group of worshippers from Nottingham used to make an annual pilgrimage to the site in the 1920's where hymns were sung.

Between Thorpe-in-the-Glebe and Willoughby-on-the-Wolds there are several excellent ridge and furrow earthworks, the preserved evidence of medieval arable cultivation.

## STAGE 1: WALK GUIDE

### BUNNY TO WILLOUGHBY-ON-THE-WOLDS

**Start:** Bunny Church SK 583 296

**Distance:** 6.0 miles

From **St Mary the Virgin**, Main Street, **BUNNY 1** turn right, along the A60 to reach a minor road on the left, just past the garage. Proceed down this road, just beyond the entrance to British Gypsum's **Silver Seal Mine**, to a metal kissing gate and fingerpost on the right. Follow the access track towards the mine gates and at the mine entrance follow the path uphill to the left of the gates, as it becomes enclosed, to reach the bridleway through **BUNNY OLD WOOD NATURE RESERVE 2**.

Turn left onto the bridleway and, after about 200 yards, turn right following waymarks. This path signed to Wysall as it crosses a track, climbs through the wood to reach another track. Turn left and then right to reach a gate and fingerpost at the top of wood. The path crosses a large arable field slightly diagonally left, to reach a foot bridge and marker post. Cross the next field diagonally right to reach a track and marker post at a junction of paths. Bear slightly right across a short stretch of arable field before reaching a field-edge section with hedge left. At a foot bridge turn left and follow the track to a small stream/ditch. Continue, initially with hedge right, quickly through a gap and then hedge left and continue to reach a stile and marker post. Cross the next grassy field diagonally to reach an enclosed path to the left which emerges on Main Street, **WYSALL 3**.

Turn right onto Main Street, past **Holy Trinity Church** and the village hall to turn left, at Young's Forge, onto Wymeswold Road. Follow the road until the sign for Thorpe-in-the-Glebe is reached and at the adjacent finger post, turn left onto the access road to Brooklea Farm.

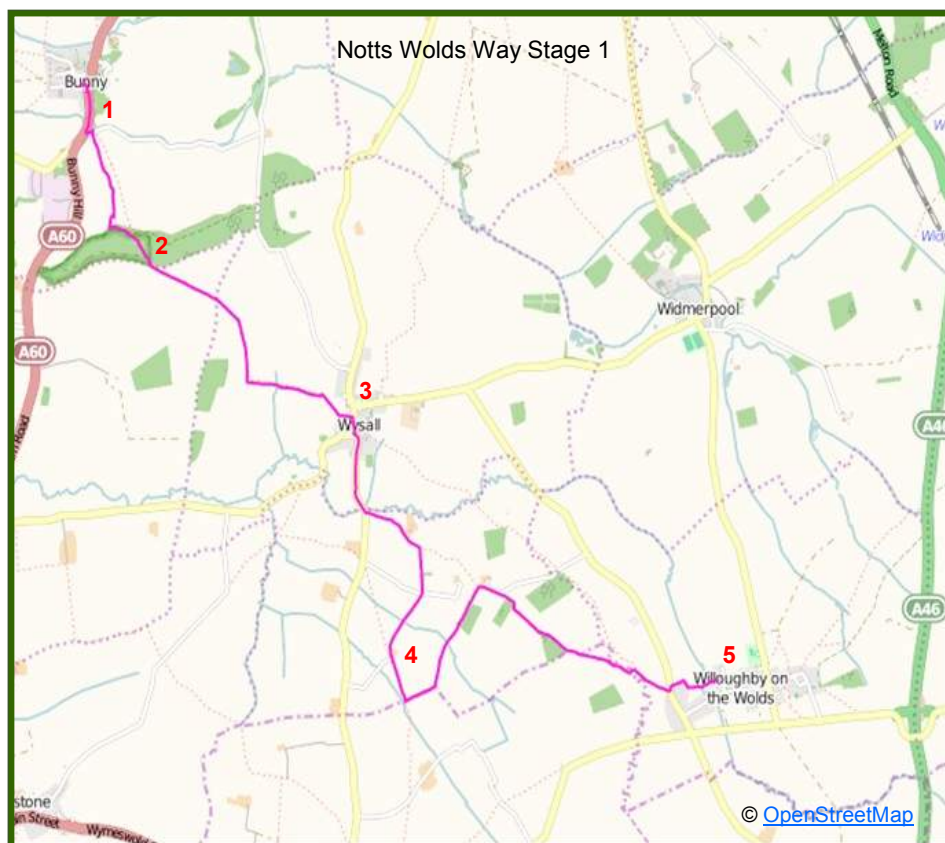
Follow this track to a pedestrian gate to the right of the farm house and continue along the path to a gated footbridge. Cross and walk straight on, slightly uphill. The path comes out at the bridleway/access road to Annabell's Farm. Cross the bridleway to a stile opposite and cross an arable field making slightly to the left of an electricity pylon to reach a kissing gate. Walk uphill in the next grassy field in a direction slightly to the right of the buildings of Church Farm. The remains of the medieval village of **THORPE-IN-THE-GLEBE 4** are to be found in the form of mounds in the grass.



*Remains of Thorpe-in-the-Glebe*

Enter the grounds of Church Farm via a kissing gate and at a yellow marker post, keep left with the farmhouse on your right to arrive at the farmyard.

Opposite the farmyard, enter a grassy field via a pedestrian gate and cross this field to a double-stile. Cross the next grassy field to a stile, near the bottom right corner, which is on the Notts/Leics border. Go over the stile and turn immediately left with the hedge left. At the top of the field is a pedestrian gate leading to arable fields. Pass through the gate and immediately through a gap, on the left, to cross two small arable fields, slightly diagonally, to reach a footbridge and beyond a broad grassy track. Follow this to a kissing gate at a junction of paths, but continue walking in the same



direction towards the farmhouse of Woodside Farm to reach a kissing gate on the left. Do not go through, but turn right to follow a line of electricity wires to the right of the farm access road. Carry on at the stile through a field with a wood on your right and cross the next stile on the right around the corner of the wood. Turn left onto a broad grassy path to reach Triangle Plantation. The path then goes through a L-R chicane and passes through two fields entered through kissing gates, with Triangle Plantation on the right. At the end of the plantation, go through a field gate and turn left to walk downhill with hedge left to reach another field gate. Cross the next field diagonally right to reach another gate. Go through this gate and follow the hedge on the left adjoining

**Kingston Brook** to the point where the stream is bridged with two field gates. Cross the stream to reach the *Midshires Way*. Turn right, cross a double stile, and walk diagonally uphill in the next field towards the houses to emerge on the road at West Thorpe. Look for a stile on the opposite side of the road, slight left, and follow the waymarks through a number of stiles to reach **ST MARY AND ALL SAINTS 5**, Willoughby-on-the-Wolds and the end of Stage 1.

## STAGE 2: POINTS OF INTEREST

**WILLOUGHBY-ON-THE-WOLDS** is another ancient village located approximately 14 miles south of Nottingham with a population of about 500. The village has a primary school, but no shops or pub. Although not on our route, a small Roman settlement/rest-station, named 'Vernemetum', was located to the east of the village, adjacent to the A46/Fosse Way (see later). The first documented reference in Domesday refers to 'Wilgebi', a Danish word meaning 'village of the willows'.

**ST MARY AND ALL SAINTS 5** is a fascinating, historic church. The earliest reference to a church is around 1120 and although the present one is largely of 14th/15th century construction, the north and south arcades of the nave date from the beginning of the 13th century. In 1240, **Ralph Bugge of Nottingham** purchased land in the village. The family name was subsequently changed to Willoughby and it was Sir Francis Willoughby who built **Wollaton Hall** between 1580 and 1588.



*St Mary & All Saints, North Chapel*

There are several outstanding sculpted tombs within the North Chapel, mainly of the Willoughby family.

In 1298/9, the rector of Willoughby was admonished for having several children with 'Agnes of Loughborough'. He was warned by Archbishop Henry of Newark that if he offended again he would lose his church and he was ordered to pay a penalty of 40 shillings (£2).

The **1648 BATTLE OF WILLOUGHBY FIELD 6** took place on July 5th 1648, ending in Eelpool Field (SK 631 259).



*Willoughby Field, 1648*

Royalist soldiers, on their way south to relieve the siege of Colchester, were overtaken and defeated by Parliamentary soldiers. Over 130 men and about 100 horses were killed. Willoughby villagers were said to have watched the battle from the church steeple and the Rector prevented Puritan soldiers from pulling down the village cross, reputedly by plying them with copious amounts of local ale. On the floor of the north aisle of the church is a brass plaque commemorating 24 year old **Col. Michael Stanhope**, slain in the battle – "a souldier for King Charles the first."

**WIDMERPOOL** is yet another ancient village, but the **CHURCH of ST PETER 7** tells a more modern tale. Located about 12 miles south of Nottingham with about 250 inhabitants, the village is home to Keyworth Rugby Football Club. It is possible that an Iron Age fort was located near Manor Farm, the site of the original Manor House. There may also have been a Roman Villa and small settlement around Fairham Brook.

After Domesday, 'Wimarspol', (wide mere pool?) was the subject of constant land disputes with one claimant from the Cromwell family. The village often displayed non-conformist leanings, both religious and secular. So unsurprisingly, Widmerpool was firmly Parliamentary.

Two unidentified soldiers buried in the church graveyard in 1648 and '*wounded in The Civil War*', have traditionally been presumed 'Roundheads'. Inter-family animosity between 'Royalist Willoughby and 'Parliamentarian Widmerpool, separated by just 1½ miles, must have been intense!

In the early nineteenth century the Robinson/Robertson family were Widmerpool's principal landowner, their fortune derived from cotton mills in Nottingham. In 1870 **Major George Coke Robertson** married American born **Harriet Anne Low** daughter of 'cotton king', Andrew Low II.



***Effigy Monument, Harriet Robertson,  
St Peter, Widmerpool***

Andrew Low was briefly imprisoned in 1863 for financing arms for the Confederate Army in the American Civil War. The Robertson's used their combined wealth to remodel the church and build the present Widmerpool Hall. Sadly, Harriet did not live to see the completion of these works and is buried in the graveyard – a Confederate sharing a resting place with Roundheads!

Time alters our values and tastes and St Peter's remodelled, neo-Gothic architecture may not suit everyone, but the effigy monument Giovanni Focardi created for Harriet is an astonishing work of virtuosity and realism.

After North Lodge Farm and descending down Wolds Lane you will reach Lings Lane where our route turns right. If time permits, a turn to the left will bring you to **Keyworth Meadow Nature Reserve**, two open grassy areas (the smaller one unmown for many years) retaining the characteristics of a late 19th century meadow. Although small, there is much variety of sight, sound, smell and touch with the Meadow home to some 300 species - birds, fungi, lichens, grasses, rushes, ferns, flora, butterflies, moths, fish, amphibians, reptiles and mammals.

But if 'bricks & mortar' have a little more appeal then **KEYWORTH 8** beckons. On Main Street you will pass six **Grade II Listed Buildings**. Behind Nos. 4 & 6, on the left, is a former Framework Knitters workshop. Then on the right at 15 (two buildings), 17, 19 and 31. Particularly impressive is **Martyn's Barn**, built in 1651, and originally used for grain storage, threshing and winnowing.



***Former Framework Knitters workshop,  
early 19th Century***

To end this sequence of historic buildings is **Grade 1 Listed St Mary Magdalene** which marks the end Stage 2 of the **NOTTS WOLDS WAY**

## STAGE 2: WALK GUIDE

### WILLOUGHBY-ON-THE-WOLDS TO KEYWORTH

**Start: St Mary & All Saints, Willoughby SK 634 254**

**Distance: 5.5 miles**

With your back to the porch of **ST MARY AND ALL SAINTS 5** turn right to follow the footpath out of the churchyard to a footbridge. Stop for a moment and imagine the water 'running red' with the blood of Royalists after the **1648 BATTLE 6**. Now continue and follow the waymarks to arrive at West Thorpe. Cross the road to enter the field opposite and walk diagonally right to reach a double stile. Cross the stile and continue to a marker-post at a junction of paths. Ignore the bridge across **Kingston Brook**, to the left and keep straight on with the brook on the left over several small fields with stiles and three tracks. Eventually, the path reaches another bridge and footbridge across the brook. Do not cross, but continue ahead, slightly right, with the brook on your left, through two short fields to a marker post. The path then turns sharp right, leaving the brook, to follow a hedge on your right before emerging onto Willoughby Lane.

Continue over the stile opposite, heading to the left of an electricity pylon, to reach a footbridge over a stream. Cross the bridge and pass through a small copse to proceed along a grassy track to a junction of tracks. Turn left and continue to another junction of tracks



**Widmerpool Hall, Henry Clutton, 1872**

Turn right and follow the track but look to your left where you should get a good view of the Wolds and **Widmerpool Hall**. Continue to reach a field gate. Cross this grassy field diagonally to another field gate and enter the grounds of Keyworth Rugby Football Club. Walk behind the pavilion to reach Willoughby Road in Widmerpool. Turn left along the road and continue in the same direction over the crossroads into Church Lane. Follow the lane, which becomes a footpath to the left, over **Fairham Brook** to emerge with **ST PETER'S 7** ahead.

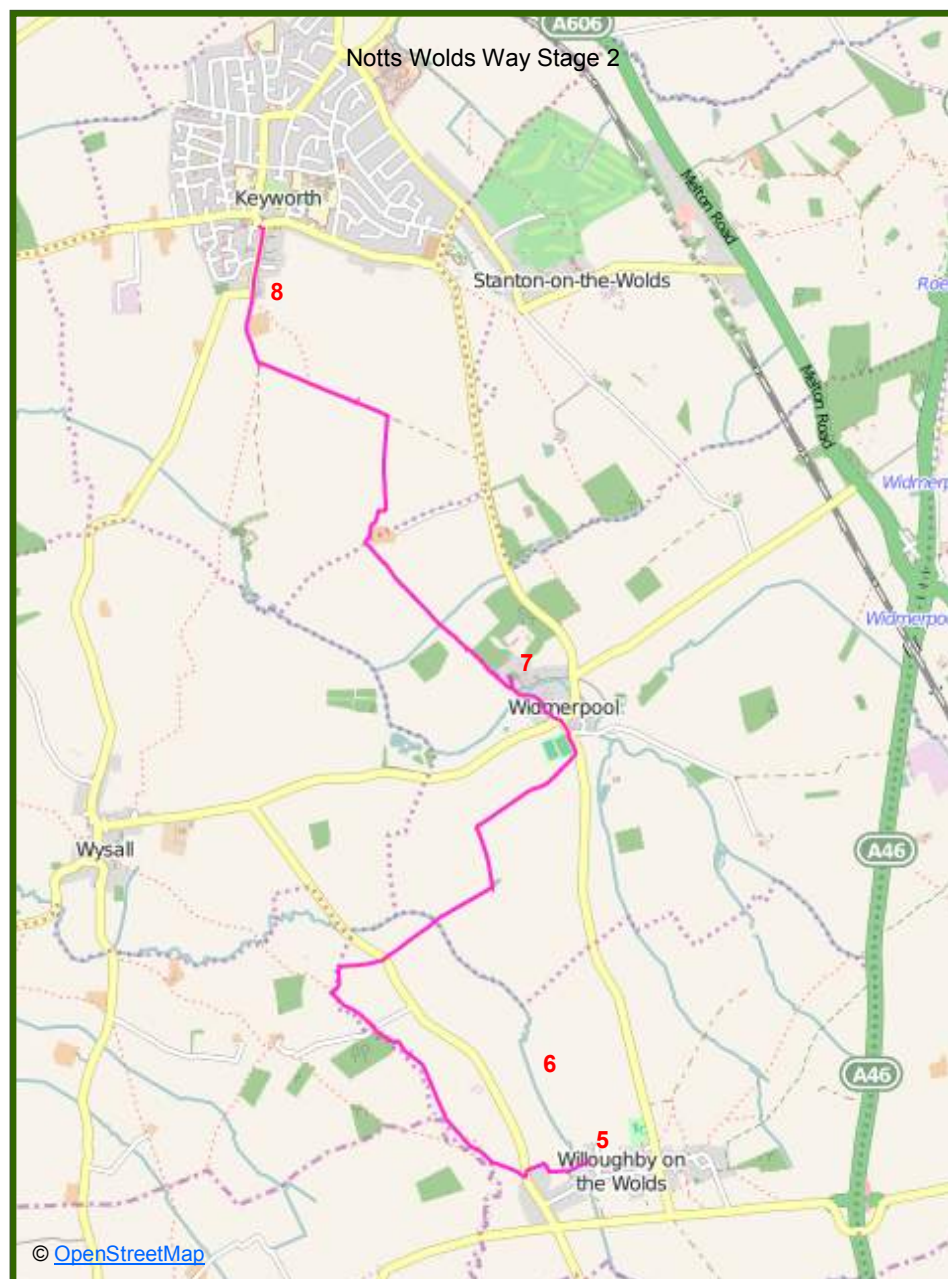
Follow the footpath left of the church until a kissing gate is reached leading to a field edge path. Proceed over fields and tracks to reach North Lodge Farm. The footpath has been diverted around the farm and eventually meets a track which goes left away from the farm. Follow this track to reach a kissing gate at Wolds Lane. Turn left and continue to a 'T' junction at Lings Lane and then turn right to walk towards

**KEYWORTH 8.**



**Martyn's Barn, 1651**

The track joins Main Street and soon *The Salutation* will be on your left to provide some welcome refreshment. After passing the post office on your left you will soon see Keyworth Square ahead. With a white-painted house dated 1784 on your right, cross Selby Lane to the church opposite to end Stage 2 of the **NOTTS WOLDS WAY**.



### STAGE 3: POINTS OF INTEREST

**KEYWORTH** <sup>9</sup> the largest village on the **NOTTS WOLDS WAY**, is located about 7 miles southeast of Nottingham with a population of about 8,000 and excellent amenities commensurate with a town of this size.

Domesday is the earliest document to mention Keyworth, but finds on the parish outskirts of pre-Roman coins and other artefacts suggest human occupation goes back at least another thousand years. The village has enough old and attractive buildings to have been designated a **Conservation Area** and well worth taking time to explore.

The modern history of Keyworth is perhaps representative of many similar sized towns across the UK. In 1801 the population was just 325 with the great majority dependent upon agriculture. But the 19th century saw three radical changes. First, 'enclosure' resulted in more compact land holdings and the abolition of all common land. Second, a rapid expansion of the framework-knitting industry, which became the main source of employment by the 1860's. This 'industrial expansion' gave rise to a third change - population growth, to nearly 900 in 1881.



**Framework Knitting - Domestic Business**

The rapid growth of Primitive Methodism and Congregationalism resulted in 'non-conformists' exceeding Anglicans. The construction of a non-denominational Board school in 1872 was opposed by the Anglican community and the ani-

mosity generated by the 'Battle of the Board' took decades to subside. Ironically, the Board school was demolished in 1985, but the church school still survives as the **Parochial Hall**.



**Parochial Hall formerly Keyworth 'National' School, 1862, Selby Lane**

Towards the end of the 19th century population numbers fell, following the decline in framework-knitting and agriculture and were not to reach their 1881 level again until 1931. Increasing and improving public transport and growing car ownership gradually transformed Keyworth into a commuter village. Population doubled between 1951 and 1961; and doubled again between 1961 and 1971 to bring it to over 5,000. Conversely, the coming of the British Geological Survey in 1977 brought 500 jobs and inward commuting.

**NORMANTON-ON-THE-WOLDS** is a small village six miles south east of Nottingham whose main road was once the principal route from Nottingham to Melton Mowbray. The village has no shops, school or church, but is well served by *The Plough* at Normanton. As you leave the village for Clipston look out for the impressive views over a large area of the city of Nottingham to the North West and the equally impressive Hoe Hill (see image on front cover).

**CLIPSTON-ON-THE-WOLDS** is a rural village with no facilities other than a post box. However, our route passes Blackberry Farm, which houses the locally popular *Harker's Farm Shop* selling high quality local produce. There is also a viewing area where children can 'meet' some of the farm animals.



*Male Purple Emperor*

The track out of Clipston leads over Cotgrave Wolds and into **COTGRAVE FOREST 10**. Although little used by the public Cotgrave Forest is one of the most species rich locations in the area. Butterfly sightings include Purple and White-letter Hairstreak; Dark-green Fritillary; Silver-washed Fritillaries and Purple Emperors. The main tracks are bordered by Woolly Thistle and a wide selection of wild flowers. The north-facing slopes have a variety of ferns including Borrer's Male Fern; Scaly Male Fern; Soft Shield-fern as well as the more generally common ferns. Look out for Woodcock in the winter; Marsh Tits and Crossbills, though the latter are by no means regular.

**STANTON-ON-THE-WOLDS** is another ancient village with the impressive and popular **Stanton-on-the-Wolds Golf Club**, located here since 1893 on land originally forming part of Major Coke Robertson's Widmerpool estate.

In 1938 flint artefacts and the remains of a Neolithic hut were discovered in the Rectory garden, but our principal

interest is very 21st century.

**STANTON RAILWAY TUNNEL 11** was originally part of the Midland Railway line connecting Kettering and Nottingham, which opened for passengers in 1880. Today it forms part of the **Old Dalby Railway Test Track**, a 13 mile specialised test facility for traction and rolling stock. The tunnel also allows testing of new trains for the London Underground network.



*Stanton Tunnel*

This Stage of the route ends at Browns Lane, but a short walk to the right will bring you to **All Saints Church**.



*All Saints Church, Stanton, 1815*

A brass plaque on the north wall records "This church was restored by Mrs [Harriet] Robertson, Widmerpool Hall, AD 1889"

### STAGE 3: WALK GUIDE

#### KEYWORTH to STANTON-ON-THE-WOLDS

**Start: Keyworth Square SK 614 308**

**Distance: 6.4 miles**

Continuing from the end of Stage 2 with **St Mary Magdalene** church

**KEYWORTH 9** on your right and the Co-op, across The Square, on your left, carry on down Nottingham Road, soon passing Keyworth Playing Fields on your right. Cross the road here and continue downhill to reach a fish & chip shop immediately before a sharp right-hand bend. Cross Debdale Lane and go right and then left to follow a path/jitty, left of the pub, to Crossdale Drive. Turn left and follow the Drive until you reach a school. Take the footpath to the left of the school gates. This will take you around the school to open fields and some wonderful views towards the city of Nottingham. Proceed downhill and follow the footpath which arcs gently to the right until you get to a railway bridge. After passing under the bridge and over a stile, cross the field to a stile at the road beyond.

Turn left, towards Plumtree for about 150 yards and cross the road using the central refuge. As you cross the road you should see a fingerpost and stile in front of you. Go over the stile and continue straight to the far corner of the field and over another stile. Go over another stile and follow the footpath for a short distance under the trees. Immediately after the trees, go over the stile on your right and cross over two fields to reach Melton Road (A606). Cross the road with care towards a fingerpost slightly to the right, turn left into the field, bearing approximately 45° right to reach a gap before a footbridge. Follow the footpath onto Back Lane, do not turn right, but go on to Old Melton Road then turn right and at the end of Normanton Manor front wall, turn left through a gate. Now follow the waymarked path

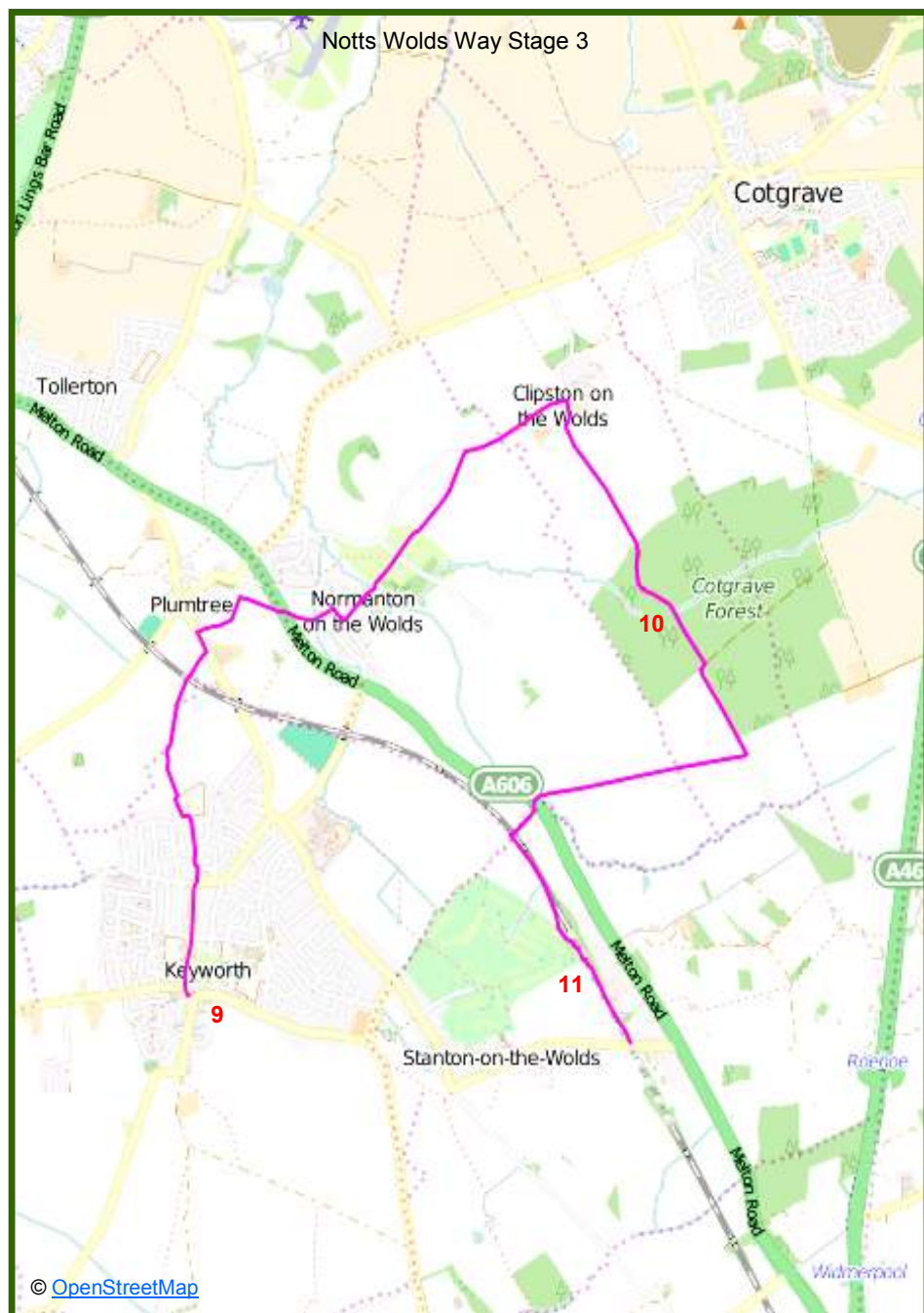
over fields, stiles and footbridges to reach a kissing gate at a road (Church Gate). Turn right and continue to Clipston-on-the-Wolds. On reaching the 'T' junction in Clipston a fingerpost opposite indicates "*Bridle Road to Laming Gap Lane*". Turn right and go along Wolds Lane and into **COTGRAVE FOREST 10**.

Continue along the track until reaching another 'T' Junction at a marker post and turn right. After 50 yards the path veers left and leaves the forest to emerge onto Laming Gap Lane. Turn right and continue until you reach Melton Road (A606) again. Cross the road with care, by the Stanton-on-the-Wolds road sign, to enter a field opposite. Follow the bridleway up to and over a railway bridge. After crossing the bridge turn immediately left and follow a footpath with the railway line on your left. Continue following this footpath over Stanton Wolds and when you reach the wooded area, with the golf course on your right, turn left. Follow the footpath until you reach a 'T' junction with another footpath. Turn left for about 20 yards and turn right up the steps bringing you directly above **STANTON RAILWAY TUNNEL 11**.



*Ventilation Shaft, Stanton Railway Tunnel*

At the second ventilation shaft go down the steps and follow the footpath to emerge on Browns Lane where Stage 3 of the **NOTTS WOLDS WAY** ends.



## STAGE 4: POINTS OF INTEREST

Soon after leaving **Stanton** you will find yourself literally in the middle/on top of the **A46/FOSSE WAY 12**. Love it or hate it, the Fosse was one of the most significant of all Roman engineering feats, which continues to shape the Nottinghamshire Wolds area today. The Fosse Way was a road built by the Romans in the 40's BCE, linking Exeter with Lincoln and passing through the local 'civic' capital of Leicester (Ratae Corieltavorum). It is remarkable for its extremely direct route with some local stretches laid directly on top of the original 100kg Swithland slate slabs. Whilst admiring Roman and 21st century civil engineering prowess, consider that those slabs may have been quarried, moved and placed by slaves taken from local Wold's farmsteads and settlements.



**Stukeley's pre-1724 drawing of 'The Wells' and Vernemetum**

**Vernemetum**, between Willoughby and the Fosse, was a Roman rest station constructed at a point one day's 'march' from Ratae. Before Roman occupation the area was dominated by the Corieltavi 'tribe'. The Fosse route appears to follow ancient tracks and one suggestion is that the name 'Vernemetum', a mix of Latin and Celtic, means "*Sacred Grove of Spring*". It has also been suggested that Vernemetum was '*Especially Sacred*' – possibly the regional cult centre for the Corieltavi. If so, it may be that Vernemetum was a

significant settlement and this area of the Notts Wolds also important to the Romans.

As you make your way north across **CROPWELL WOLDS 13** alongside the A46, it is difficult to imagine that you are traversing areas of truly ancient significance. One direct benefit of the A46 improvement was the opportunity afforded to archaeologists. Their finds point to ancient and unbroken habitation of the area: 13,000 year old flint workings at Farndon Fields; a 4,500 year old ring-ditch at Stragglethorpe and a 2,000 year old (late Iron Age) settlement on Cropwell Wolds.



**Iron Age farmer using an ard**

About 4,000 years ago farming was introduced from mainland Europe which led to a clearance of ancient forests. Iron Age and Roman farmers intensified this process and enclosed fields giving the initial shape to the Notts Wolds we see today.

**Cropwell Bishop** located 12 miles southeast of Nottingham with a population of about 2,000, has all the amenities expected of a village of this size. *The Wheatsheaf* has been serving customers since the 17th century. It is probable that a Roman settlement existed here, but what is certain is that from 956, when the Lord of the Manor was the Archbishop of York, the 'Bishop' part of the village name originated.

Cropwell' meaning 'hump', is a corruption of *Crophille*, now Hoe Hill.

Our route passes the world famous **CROPWELL BISHOP CREAMERY 14**. Both Blue and White Stilton now have 'protected designation of origin' status and just six creameries in Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire can call their cheese 'Stilton'.



*St Giles' Church, Cropwell Bishop*

Agriculture dominated the local economy until the **GRANTHAM CANAL 15** was built at the end of the 18th Century connecting Nottingham with Grantham, principally for the transportation of coal. A brickworks was established beside the canal and in the first half of the 20th century gypsum was mined. Today Cropwell Bishop may be termed a 'commuter village', yet it still retains over 100 local businesses.

**CROPWELL BUTLER 16** located 9 miles east of Nottingham with a population of 600, has a village hall, Sheldon (sports) Field and the Plough. Although also an ancient village Cropwell Butler has some interesting 'recent' history. On the night of May 8/9 1941, German bombers left a trail of devastation when they attacked the Nottingham area. Their targets included gas and electricity plants, railways, and the Royal Ordnance Factory. However, some of the Luftwaffe crews were deceived by the Cropwell Butler **STARFISH SITE 17**

(SK653 364), waste-land deliberately set alight to lure German pilots away from their targets and kill only livestock. Across the country Starfish Sites were estimated to have saved 2,500 lives. Although not on our route and with no physical remains, the site can be seen from the high ground approaching Cropwell Bishop.

Unusually, the village has no parish church – its original church had monastic ties and was destroyed in the Reformation. Without an Anglican presence and reflecting trends in other Nottinghamshire Wold's villages, Methodism took hold in Cropwell Butler and the Chapel was constructed c.1825.



*Methodist Chapel, Cropwell Butler*

Cropwell Butler is the final village on the NOTTS WOLDS WAY and our last point of interest. We hope that you have found them informative and that they have enhanced your enjoyment of your walks. Lack of space has dictated the omission of many other features of the NOTTS WOLDS WAY, but we are sure you will have identified many more on your journey.

If you enjoyed the route, come again at a different time of the year to experience the variety of seasonal colours, flora and fauna.

## STAGE 4: WALK GUIDE

### STANTON-ON-THE-WOLDS to CROPWELL BUTLER

**Start: Browns Lane, Stanton-on-the-Wolds SK 639 306**

**Distance: 8.3 miles**

From the fingerpost on Browns Lane at the end of Stage 3 (about 300 yards west of the A606) head towards the A606/Melton Road, cross carefully and continue on the bridle way to a gate. Continue, with the hedge left and soon turn left through a gate and continue with the hedge right until you reach the track to Jerico Farm. Turn right and after 100 yards turn sharp left through a pedestrian gate onto the A46 slip-road. Go over the **A46/FOSSE WAY 12** turning immediately left onto the access road. After 150 yards take the bridleway on the right, crossing three fields to reach a four-way marker post at Kinoulton Gorse. Turn left and follow the bridleway along two sides of the wood and on reaching a hedge turn left with the hedge on your right. When reaching the access road, turn right towards Owthorpe Lodge and then right again onto the bridleway. Follow the bridleway for about ½ mile passing a lake on the right.



*Lake and Owthorpe Wolds*

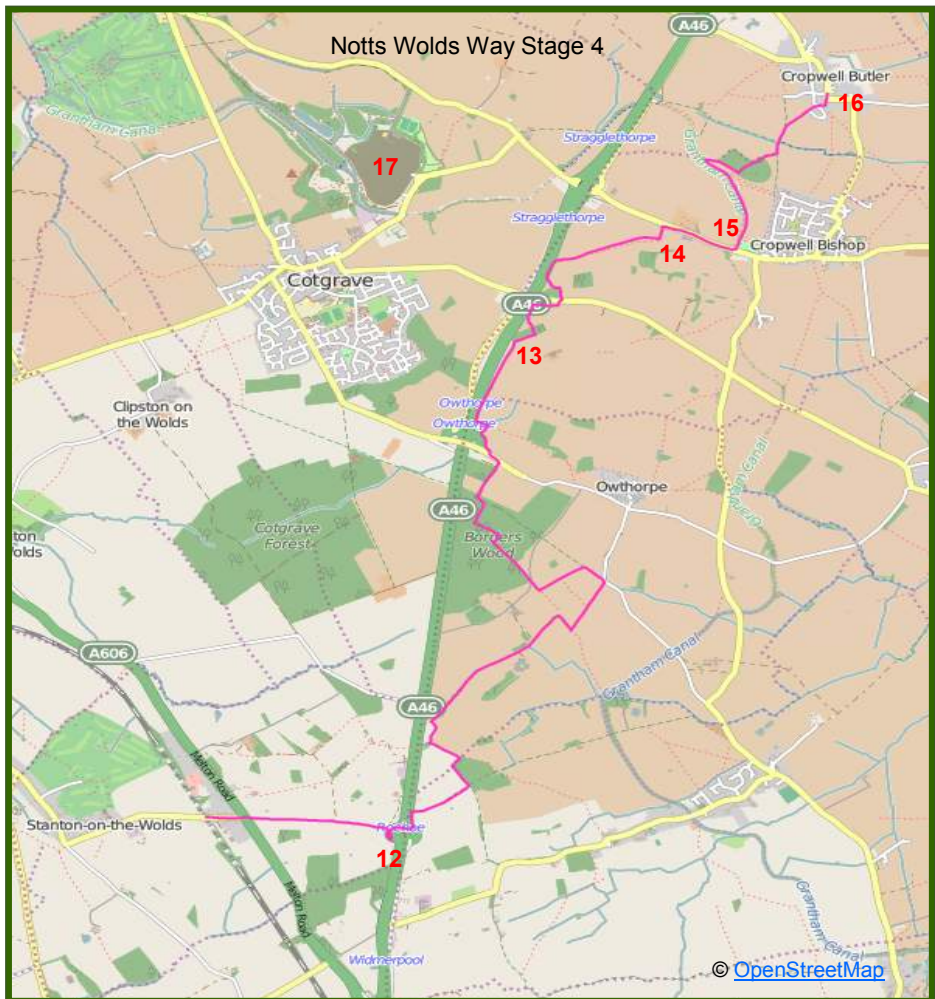
Continue past Newfield Farm on the left for about 200 yards going right and then left to reach a road. Turn left and immediately left again onto a Restricted By-way, Herrywell Lane.

After about 200 yards turn left over a footbridge and follow the path through two fields and at the 'T' junction turn right towards Borders Wood. Go straight on into the wood for about 300 yards, crossing a track then turn right and after another 100 yards turn left. After another 300 yards turn right and continue to a track (Herrywell Lane). Turn left and soon right to bring you to a road.

Turn left and after about 150 yards cross the road, opposite a finger post, and go down a flight of concrete steps. Turn left at the foot of the steps and follow the path as it curves around the A46 slip-road. Cross over the stile on your right into a field and continue with a ditch on your right before soon turning left at a short marker post, to cross the field. Turn right and follow the field boundary north alongside the A46 for about 500 yards until you reach some woodland.

Before turning right, look back over **CROPWELL WOLDS 13** where people have farmed for over 2000 years. Now look forward, slightly northwest across the A46 about 1 mile distant, to the Cropwell Butler **STARFISH SITE 17**.

Continue along the edge of the wood for about 200 yards and turn left, down through the wood and upon exiting turn left down to the field boundary. Turn right and continue along the field boundary, (adjacent to the A46), following it as it turns right. After a further 300 yards the path turns left up the bank to a road. Cross the road, go over a stile and turn left then soon right, uphill with a copse left. At the corner of the copse turn left and soon right again along the field boundary until a waymark post indicates a 45° turn, diagonally right across a field. Cross a footbridge, turn right for a few yards and continue diagonally across the next three fields before turning left towards Nottingham Road.



Follow two sides of the field to a footbridge emerging by

**CROPWELL BISHOP CREAMERY 14.**

Turn right towards Cropwell Bishop and after about 700 yards you will reach the **GRANTHAM CANAL 15.** Cross the road and into the car park and take the footpath with the canal to your left. Continue for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile until you reach 'Bridge 20' and cut back to your right. Take the left of two paths, through a kissing gate and along the bottom edge of Hoe Hill Wood. After about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile the path turns left into the wood. Continue through the wood and beyond

(in a NE direction) until you reach a bridleway. Turn left onto the bridleway and continue for about 300 yards ignoring the cross-path, until you reach a kissing gate and footpath going right at  $45^\circ$ .

This path brings you on to Back Lane in **CROPWELL BUTLER 16.** Turn right onto the lane, following it as it curves round to the left and becomes Main Street. You will soon reach the welcome sight of *The Plough* on the left hand side and the end of the NOTTS WOLDS WAY!

## FOR DETAILED INFORMATION ON

Nottinghamshire's Anglican Churches

[http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/\\_main/hindex.php](http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/_main/hindex.php)

Nottinghamshire County Council, Countryside Appraisal: Nottinghamshire Wolds

<http://cms.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/environment/landimprovements/landscapecharacter/countrysideappraisal/countrysideappraisal-chaptereleven.htm>

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust & Bunny Old Wood

<http://www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org/nature-reserves/bunny-old-wood-west/>

Thorpe-in-the-Glebe

<http://www.keyworth-history.org.uk/histories/thorpe-in-the-glebe.htm>

Battle of Willoughby Field

<https://www.le.ac.uk/lahs/downloads/WilloughbySmPagesfromvolumeXparts1-2-3.pdf>

St Peter, Widmerpool & Giovanni Focardi

<http://www.cofesuffolk.org/assets/downloads/Tourism/SoS%20Pt1.pdf>

Keyworth Meadow Nature Reserve

<http://www.keyworth-meadow.co.uk/>

Keyworth Listed Buildings

[http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/nottinghamshire/keyworth#.Vx-PbO\\_mrrc](http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/nottinghamshire/keyworth#.Vx-PbO_mrrc)

Cotgrave Forest

<http://www.rushcliffewildlife.co.uk/sites/cotgraveforest.html>

History of Stanton-on-the-Wolds

<http://www.keyworth-history.org.uk/histories/stanton-on-the-wolds.htm>

Stanton Tunnel

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old\\_Dalby\\_Test\\_Track](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Dalby_Test_Track)

Cropwell Wolds

<http://www.hoap.co.uk/sixhills.pdf>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

[Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust](#)

© [OpenStreetMap](#) contributors.

Map data is available under the Open Database Licence at

<http://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright>

Printed by Temple Printing – Nottingham NG8 1NA.

<http://www.templeprinting.co.uk>

# Nottinghamshire Footpaths Preservation Society



Affiliated to the Ramblers, the Open Spaces Society, Notts Wildlife Trust and HF Holidays

Formed in 1933 and originally called Nottinghamshire Footpaths Association, the Society was soon in the news. *Rambling Notes* in the 28<sup>th</sup> April 1933 edition of the *Nottingham Evening Post* reported as follows:



*"The Notts Footpath Association have now made a start with the footpath survey and are appealing for new members and gifts of large scale maps, over 200 of which are required to cover the whole county ... the association are already dealing with two complaints regarding improper closures."*

Well, we continue to welcome new members, but you can hold on to your maps!

The society is still engaged in monitoring the County's much improved footpath system which is still an important part of our work. In addition, we organize a regular series of medium-length walks of around 8 miles, mainly in Nottinghamshire but also occasionally in neighboring Counties, on alternate Tuesdays throughout the year. All the walks start at 10:30am (unless otherwise stated) normally finishing at around 2:30pm. During the summer we do some additional shorter walks in the intervening Tuesdays.

Visit our Web-site at [www.nottsfps.org.uk](http://www.nottsfps.org.uk) for full details of our walks programme and information about membership.

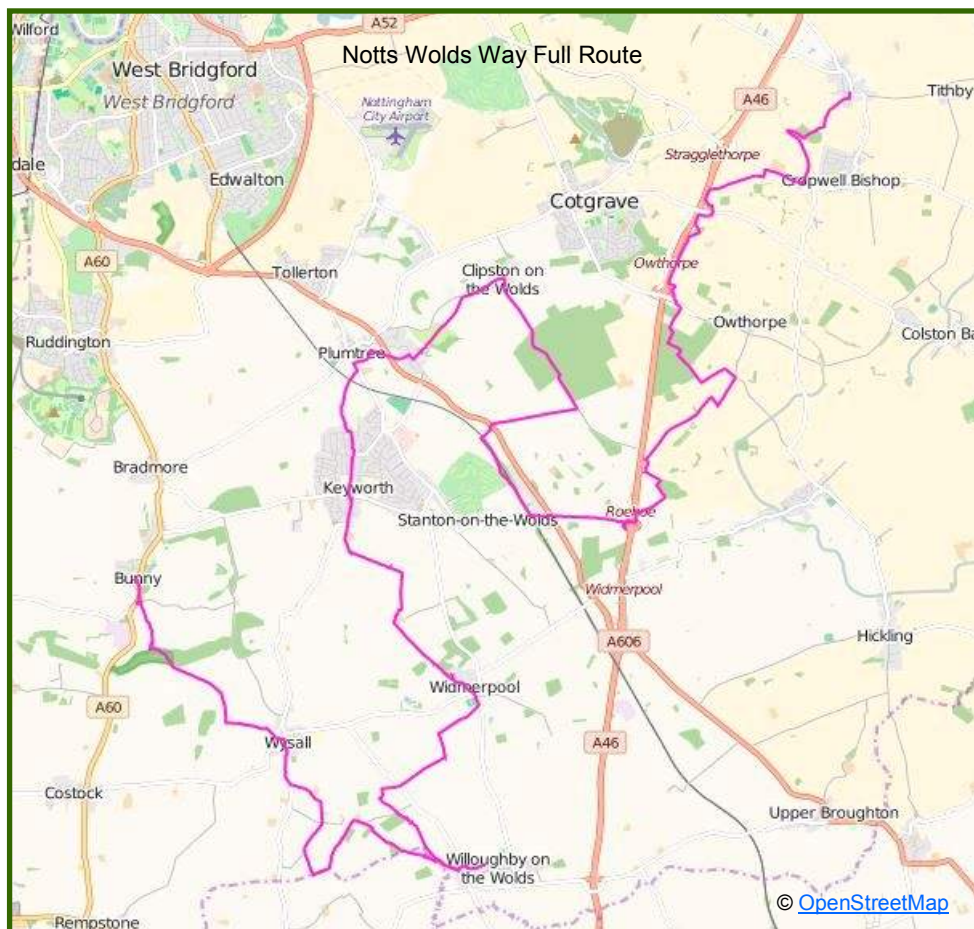
If you are interested in walking with us, simply turn up just before the advertised start time; you will be very welcome to join us. You will need appropriate clothing and footwear and usually need to take food and drink for refreshments en-route. If you prefer to contact the walk leader first for further information, a telephone number is given.



Email: [www.nottsfps.org.uk/contact-us](mailto:www.nottsfps.org.uk/contact-us)

# NOTTS WOLDS WAY

A LINEAR WALK OF APPROXIMATELY 26 MILES, IN FOUR STAGES  
THROUGH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S WOLDS



The walk connects BUNNY with CROPWELL BUTLER in a 26.2 mile walk divided into four separate stages ~ Bunny to Willoughby-on-the-Wolds (6.0 miles) ~ Willoughby-on-the-Wolds to Keyworth (5.5 miles) ~ Keyworth to Stanton-on-the-Wolds (6.4 miles) ~ Stanton-on-the-Wolds to Cropwell Butler (8.3 miles). All the stages would generally be classified as 'Leisurely/Moderate' walks and so you may wish to combine stages. Each stage is accessible by local public transport, but with infrequent services you may need to 'car share'. The route is well-waymarked and this booklet contains detailed Walk Guides, but we would always recommend taking along the appropriate Ordnance Survey map.