

➤ Walk along Halford Close until you see a public footpath sign at the end which leads onto a path crossing a grassed area. After a few yards, take the path on the right that continues onto Leveret Drive. Follow the road until it reaches Fox Covert then turn right then left into Otter Way. Continue on until the road exits onto Dog & Gun Lane.

There are numerous industrial buildings on both sides of the road. Opposite the lane is the 'Whittle Estate,' named after Sir Frank Whittle who, through his company Power Jets Ltd, developed the Jet Engine during WWII. The site hosted a massive factory, which was approved by the Air Ministry in 1941 to support the production and development of these engines. According to tradition, as a dedication to him and the workers at 8am every morning until 2002 an air raid siren was sounded.

➤ Turn right on Dog and Gun Lane, turn left at the end of the road onto Cambridge Road and continue until you pass under the motorway, before taking the footpath on your right just after the motorway.

There was another famous visitor to Whetstone. His name was George Fox, the founder of the Quaker movement. In 1654, Fox was moving around the area holding meetings which quite often resulted in him and his followers being assaulted, arrested and imprisoned. In 1654 he attended the village to hold a meeting. However, just before it started, George was arrested by seventeen soldiers from Colonel Hackers Parliamentarian regiment. On his arrest, George is stated as asking that if they let the friends go, he would answer for them all if they just took him to meet with Oliver Cromwell.

George was told not to come back to Whetstone but the next year, he again visited the village despite being warned by Colonel Hacker that if he returned he would be imprisoned. However, instead of being taken into custody, Colonel Hacker's wife and his Marshall even attended the meeting and were supposedly 'convinced'. Although George continued preaching, Colonel Hacker, a signatory to the death warrant of King Charles I, was executed for regicide at the restoration of the monarchy. However, Colonel Hacker was not Hung, Drawn and Quartered like the others who executed the King. At his trial, Hacker stated that he was proud of his service to Parliament, and he forgave the Judges, Jury, witnesses and everyone. The King allowed Hacker to be hung instead.

➤ Follow the marked path across the golf course and when you reach the raised disused railway track bear left and walk towards some houses. Take the marked path along the edge of the Golf Course until you reach the houses. Take the path with houses on your left until it exits onto the corner of Cromford Road. Turn right onto Brooklands Road and continue until you reach the Narborough Road. Continue along this road until you reach Littlethorpe.

4 Littlethorpe

➤ Continue on what is now the Cosby Road until you pass Warwick Road on your right, then look on your right for the next turn, Waudby Close. Take this turn and turn right onto a footpath that runs between two rows of back gardens. This path exits onto Haybarn Close.

Littlethorpe is still a small village, as it was a thousand years ago. The name derives its meaning from Old Norse: 'Thorpe' meaning an outlying farmstead dependant on another - Narborough.

➤ From Haybarn Close, turn left onto Riverside Way then take the footpath on the right. Follow the footpath along the edge of the field towards a wooded area. As you approach turn right and head towards an elevated section of the M1 Motorway. Go under and bear right on towards a gap in the hedge with a concrete crossing over the River Soar. Turn right and walk with the river on your right until you come to another concrete crossing over the river again. Continue along the path now with the river on your left. Continue until you come to a path running left to right and a three arch Railway bridge in front of you.

➤ Turn left onto this path and continue. When you reach a street on your right - Station Street, take this and continue until you reach the main road, Victoria Road, with The Bulls Head pub on the corner and a mini traffic Island. Turn left then take a right turn into Albert Court and continue straight on until the path enters Trinity Street Recreation Ground.

➤ Continue on this path until you reach a gate that exits onto College Road. Turn right then take the footpath off College Road, which leads to a subway under the main A426. When the path exits the subway, continue along Park Road passing a Congregational Chapel built in 1928 and straight on to the Main Road. A lot of the houses on this road are very old and they have numerous name plaques dating back to the 19th Century.

➤ When reaching the main road, turn left and make your way back.

With Thanks to...

Our thanks to Eddie Smallwood and Michael Dix for creating the walking routes and uncovering the heritage stories. And to Graham Luker for the illustrations.

This series of heritage walks have been designed to inspire walking across the District - we hope that you enjoy them. We welcome feedback and you can get in touch with us by emailing leisure@blaby.gov.uk. The walk uses footpaths, bridleways, permissive paths and some roads. Please respect the landowner's property and stay on the indicated paths. Please follow the countryside code. Take care when walking on roads and follow the Highway Code for pedestrians. You are advised to use the route in conjunction with the OS map for the area. This guide has been created with funds from the European Regional Development Fund and HM Government.



Find this walk, all 12 heritage trails and more on the **GoJauntly app**. Simple photo guides help you navigate while nifty tips point out things of interest and places to eat.



For more information on this walk and for other walks in the series visit our website:
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Heritage Walks

Route Ten

8.8 miles
14 km

This walk is one of a series of 12 heritage trails plus a long distance perimeter route around the whole District, see the website visitblaby.org.uk for more information.

- Blaby
- Countesthorpe
- Whetstone
- Cosby
- Littlethorpe



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Routes 84, 85
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1 Blaby

The name Blaby has Viking origins. The 'by' portion means farmstead and the first part of the word refers to a Viking called Blár. Blaby is therefore 'Blár's farmstead'.

➤ Start from the junction of Enderby Road and Lutterworth Road, head down Lutterworth Road for a short distance then take the footpath on your left called Church Walk which exits onto Sycamore Street. Turn left then right into Church Street.

Blaby has a long history of characterful residents, one being the 18th century Rector of Blaby, the Reverend Edward Stokes. In 1714 while at school, he was blinded when he dared his brother to shoot him with a (loaded) pistol that the schoolboys used to play around with. Though this didn't stop him from having a long life of charitable work, and even horse riding, where he had an assistant ride with him and ring a bell when it was time to jump over obstacles.

Worth a detour.

Instead of turning left, turn right, a short distance along the road is Bouskell Park. This popular park was once the pleasure grounds of the beautiful Victorian Blaby Hall next to the park. The site contains the evidence of medieval farmsteads which can be seen even today. You may notice lots of lumps and bumps in the terrain - these are the scars of this medieval settlement. Included within the park is a restored Victorian 'Ice House' which formerly served Blaby Hall.

➤ Follow the path that passes the church on your left until you reach a footpath sign on the right at the end of some houses. Take this path. Continue along this path which goes up to a cemetery. The path then passes by the edge of the cemetery until you reach another path. This path if you turn left goes to the Peace Garden. Turn right onto this path and continue until just before the path exits onto Hospital Lane, turn left

and take the bridle path that runs alongside the field hedge. Continue on this path until it exits onto the road, opposite the Oakfield car parking area.

➤ Cross the road (Caution, traffic) and enter the area. Take the path straight on towards a wooded area. Continue through the wood until the path exits it. As it does, turn left and take the path with a hedge on your right. At the next field, take the path on your right and continue straight on, this time with the hedgerow on your left.

2 Countesthorpe

➤ Continue on this path until it crosses the path of a disused railway line and cross a play area, walking towards the housing estate. Take the grassed path at the end of the play area between houses then turn right and exit onto Leicester Road. Turn right and continue along towards the village of Countesthorpe. Continue until you reach Central Street which turns into The Square.

While Countesthorpe is a thriving settlement now, in the 11th Century it was a tiny settlement, and indeed the word 'thorpe' is a Danish word meaning a small farmstead dependant on another (in this case Blaby). The 'Countes' element comes from a real Countess - the Countess Judith - niece of William the Conqueror. She owned large tracts of land in Leicestershire following the Norman Conquest.

➤ From the Square, turn into Station Road and continue straight on until you reach a path on your right after Gwendoline Drive. Follow this path until it exits onto The Plantation and turn right. At the end of The Plantation turn left onto Gwendoline Drive then take the path on your right between two houses. When the path exits onto Walnut Way take a 'No Cycling' path on your left which exits onto Cherrytree Close. Turning right into Linden Farm Drive, take the public footpath on the left a short distance along. Continue on this path as it crosses the dismantled railway and runs behind houses that are on your left

➤ The path carries on and eventually exits onto Winchester Road. Cross the road, turn right and walk towards Blaby. Just before you reach the Village sign, take the public footpath on the left. This well signposted path passes through a golf course starting at hole four. (Caution, golf balls). After crossing over a footbridge, continue to follow the path until it exits on a path that runs left to right. Turn left and continue until it exits onto Lutterworth Road.

3 Whetstone

➤ Cross the road and follow the footpath sign into Westfield Close. Walk through the small housing estate and bear left following the footpath sign that takes you towards some fenced off rugby pitches. Turn right on the path so that the houses are on your right, pitches on your left. Exit the estate into a field and continue towards a dual carriageway. When you reach the dual carriageway, take the ramp on the right and cross the road (Caution, traffic). Take the footpath opposite and continue until it exits onto Sanderson Close. Turn left and continue until you reach Burnham Drive and turn right. Continue on Burnham Drive until you reach Halford Close on the left.

Whetstone has grown a lot as a village over the years, but it has always been quite a big village. In the 1086 Domesday Book there is a recorded 43 households, putting it in the largest 20% of settlements in England.

