

During the construction of the bypass, archaeological work was done and a bit further along the bypass from where Mill Lane is, discoveries of prehistoric and Roman features were uncovered. This included two ring ditches, pit alignments, and a series of other ditches.

- Continue along this path until you reach Mill Lane. Turn right onto Mill Lane. (Caution, narrow road, no pavement) Continue on Mill Lane, passing an Equestrian Centre and passing some disused workings for Barrow Hill Quarry. As you approach a flooded quarry, the path goes to the left.

Worth a detour

- Take this short detour to see the remains of workings of the quarry, past the flooded workings, it gives a good impression of what the whole area would have been like at its peak of quarrying. Instead of going left past the flooded quarry, turn right and follow the unmade path around the flooded area. You will eventually reach a large metal gate which has 'Earl Shilton Trials Club' marked on it. Cross the stile to the right of the gate and continue past the flooded quarry (Caution, this area is used by trials motorcycles and riders who may not see or hear you so please stay on the path) The path continues under the M69 motorway and there are more remains of quarry buildings and may be more motorcycles. Return by the same route.

- Continue past the flooded quarry on your right until you reach a drive. Turn left onto this drive which passes through a farm complex and exits onto Pingle Lane. Turn left. (Caution, narrow road, no pavement) Continue along this lane until reaching a 'T' junction. Turn right and continue on this lane until you reach a 'Ford' called Watery Gate. Take the footbridge on the right-hand side and cross the ford. Continue until you get to a right-hand bend with a house in front of you. Take the driveway on your left that goes to the left of the property and continue through what is called South Park and onto Normanton Park.

3 Normanton Turville

Normanton Turville is now just a tiny hamlet that has been absorbed into the Parish of Thurlaston. But this area was once the grounds of the old Normanton Hall, the seat of the powerful Turville family who owned much of the land here and in the surrounding areas through to Warwickshire. The Turvilles were a family of Norman nobles and it is thought that their name comes from the region in Normandy, France: Tourville-la-Champagne. It is thought that these lands were gifted to the Norman Lord William de Turville by William the Conqueror for his participation in the Battle of Hastings.

- Follow the path through parkland, passing a lake on your left before going uphill and passing through a farm complex. Continue along the path which passes a shooting ground on your right and then descend along the path until you get close to the exit onto the Earl Shilton Road.

In the reign of Edward IV, during the 'Wars of the Roses', he decreed that every man over 16 years of age should possess a bow of his own height and must practice on every holiday on penalty of paying one halfpenny and honour if not. The villagers of Thurlaston and Normanton would have used an area that was known as 'Butt Nock', which was situated in an enclosure between Thurlaston and Normanton Hall.

- Just before the road, take the footpath on your right and enter a sports ground. Although the footpath goes straight across the pitches, please walk around the edge before exiting the grounds using the stile on your left.
- Continue until you reach a gate with a sign stating 'Bull in Field' follow markers as you pass behind 'Dusty Fox' farm. Continue straight on until you reach the road. Turn right towards Thurlaston (Caution, narrow road, no pavement initially.) Continue into the village and take the path on the left between the playing fields and the Church.

As you walk along the path look out for two plaques that are on the stone wall surrounding the playing fields. One states that the field is held by National Playing Fields Association For The Benefit Of the Community. The other states 'Queen Elizabeth Field' 'Fields in Trust' and 'Diamond Jubilee 2012'.

- Continue along the path until you reach the road. Turn right and continue towards Main Street.

As you get close to Main Street, look to your left and you will see that there is a Post Office letter box wall plate dating back to the reign of George V. It has the 'G. R' embossed on it.

- When you reach Main Street, turn right and continue to where you started.

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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Let's go!
Blaby
District

4

Heritage Walks

Route Four

8.2 miles
13.2 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.

- Thurlaston
- Croft Hill
- Potters Marston
- Normanton Turville



Supported by Welcome Back Funding



Travel by bus

Route X55
arriva.co.uk



P 1 Thurlaston

➤ The walk starts on the Main Street, at the junction with Church Street. Opposite the junction is the Elephant & Castle pub. Turn right and walk along Main Street towards the Thurlaston Garden Centre & Tearoom.

Thurlaston is an ancient settlement, first recorded as 'Turchilestone' in the Domesday Book of 1086, and according to local historian Arthur Tomlin, the name is linked to Alfred the Great's grandson. This grandson held much land in the area and was known by a name with various spellings: Thorkell, Thorketill, Thurketyl, Turketyl, or Turchetil – hence 'Turchilestone.' After the Norman Conquest, the land here (and indeed much of Leicestershire) passed to one Hugh of Grandmesnil, the Viscount of Leicester. He is one of only thirteen proven companions to William the Conqueror.

As you walk along Main Street, on your left you will pass what was originally a Baptist Chapel, built in 1787 and rebuilt in 1842. There is a

small area behind the Chapel that has some of the headstones from the burial ground. They can be seen from the Car Park of the pub, but there is no access to them.

The other place of worship in the village, the Church of All Saints, dates back to the 13th Century. Much of what stands today is of newer construction as the church had to be largely rebuilt after it was heavily damaged by Parliamentary forces during the Civil War.

Sadly, as lovely as Thurlaston is, there was a terrible episode in its history.

On 6th May 1880, a man called Henry Davis, who had moved to the village, murdered his wife Elizabeth Annie by cutting her throat with a razor, before cutting his own. At the inquest, which was held in the Dog & Gun Pub (later Poachers Brasserie and now Dom - Restaurant & Bar) it transpired that Davis, who had married the widow Elizabeth Annie Woodward had become convinced that she was having an affair. Despite there being no evidence, on the evening of 5th May, he told one of his



drinking friends that "This will perhaps be the last time you will see me alive". He then went home. The following morning, Elizabeth went downstairs to light the fire and prepare her husband's breakfast. Henry confronted her, killing her and himself in front of her mother.

Due to the outrage caused by the murder, Elizabeth was buried under her maiden name of Woodward. Henry was not allowed to be buried with her. A crowd of over 2,000 people attended her funeral, whereas Henry was placed into a plain coffin and carried by some of his drinking friends at 9.00pm in the evening and quietly buried in the main churchyard. Only those who carried him and some of those from the public houses were present. The inquest ruled that Henry murdered his wife and committed suicide while in a state of temporary insanity.

Approaching the end of the houses before you reach the Garden Centre, there is a small cast iron pipe sticking out of the pavement on the right. It is capped off now, but was made by W.E. Farrer Ltd, of the Star Works, Heath Mill Lane, Birmingham and it is a Victorian sewage stench pipe. The company was well regarded for its production of stench pipes, cisterns and manhole covers. Thankfully, it is not needed today.

➤ Continue along the road and take the footpath on the left before getting to the Garden Centre. Continue on this well marked footpath across the fields towards the M69 motorway which can be seen in the distance. As you reach the motorway embankment, follow the footpath markers and cross over the motorway using a farm track. Continue along the track until you see a yellow topped post at the end of a hedge. Bear right at this post and follow the hedge line until you reach a small concrete bridge over Thurlaston Brook. Follow the markers until you exit the field onto Thurlaston lane. Turn left (Caution, narrow road, no pavement) and continue until you reach a 'T' junction. Cross the road (Caution, poor line of sight of oncoming traffic). Follow footpath up to the top of Croft hill before turning right and coming back down until you reach a path. Turn left and follow this path that runs alongside Huncote Road. Continue along this path until you get to opposite the junction of Marston Lane. Cross Huncote Road into Marston Lane. Continue down the lane and across the fields until you reach Stanton Lane. Cross the road and continue straight until you get to Dovecote Court Business Park.

2 Potters Marston

The business centre is situated in Potters Marston village, although all that remains of the 'lost' village is the hall, a tiny chapel, a dovecote and a few houses. There is evidence that the area was an important source of pottery, the medieval pottery made here turns up in archaeological finds across Leicestershire. The chapel, dating back to the 15th Century is possibly the smallest in Leicestershire as it is just 19 feet wide by 38 feet long.

➤ Walk through the courtyard and follow the marker posts across the fields and exit onto Pingle Lane. Take the footpath across fields towards the M69 motorway in the distance. Continue on the path which passes under the motorway, and then take the footpath on the left. Continue across open fields until you reach a metal gate at the end of a drive. To the right of the gate is a gap. Go through it and turn right, walking along the drive until you reach a gate. Continue along the well-marked path until you reach a bridleway that runs alongside the bottom of the embankment of the Earl Shilton bypass called 'Clickers Way'. Continue on this path. Do not pass under the bypass.