

## Ashton

Peace, grace and changelessness pervade the atmosphere of this picturesque stone built village. The thatched roofed houses surround an Olde Worlde village green with tall trees set against a background of smooth undulating grass.

The village, named after Ash Farm, was rebuilt by Lord Rothschild at about the turn of the century.

Although small, Ashton does have one claim to fame, for it is here that the world Conker Championships are held each October on the green.

Many a knuckle is bruised and many a pint is sunk at the local pub which is named the Chequered Skipper after an extinct local butterfly.

In 1900 Ashton Mill was converted by the first Lord Rothschild to provide a piped water supply to the village and the houses at Ashton Wold.



Machinery and engines were also installed to supply electricity to the main buildings and farm. When the river flow was strong enough, turbines were used to drive the generators but engines made by Blackstones of Stamford stood by for slack water conditions. This machinery stands as a monument to the inventiveness of the engineers at the turn of the century.

The Mill also houses a Fish and Bygones Museum.

## A Walkers' Code:



1. Always keep to the path to avoid trespass. If the path is obstructed you are allowed to seek a reasonable way round the obstruction, taking care to avoid causing damage. Please report the obstruction to the highway authority.
2. Remember to close gates behind you. Straying stock can cause damage or spread disease and carelessness may lead to tragedy.
3. To avoid harm or distress to farm animals and wildlife it is best to leave dogs at home. If you have to bring them they should be kept on a leash.
4. If your route takes you onto a road keep to the right, facing oncoming traffic and use the verge if one exists.
5. Always wear suitable clothing and footwear for the season and remember to allow plenty of time to complete your chosen walk.
6. Remember that every piece of land in the countryside belongs to someone, so please treat it with respect and other walkers will be made welcome.

If you experience any difficulty on your walk such as barbed wire, locked gates or damaged stiles and footbridges, please report them to the Principal Rights of Way Officer, Area 1 Office, 73 London Road, Kettering. Tel 524100.

Your general comments on this leaflet and the route will be welcomed by the County Leisure and Libraries Officer, 27 Guildhall Road, Northampton. NN1 1EF. Tel. 20262.

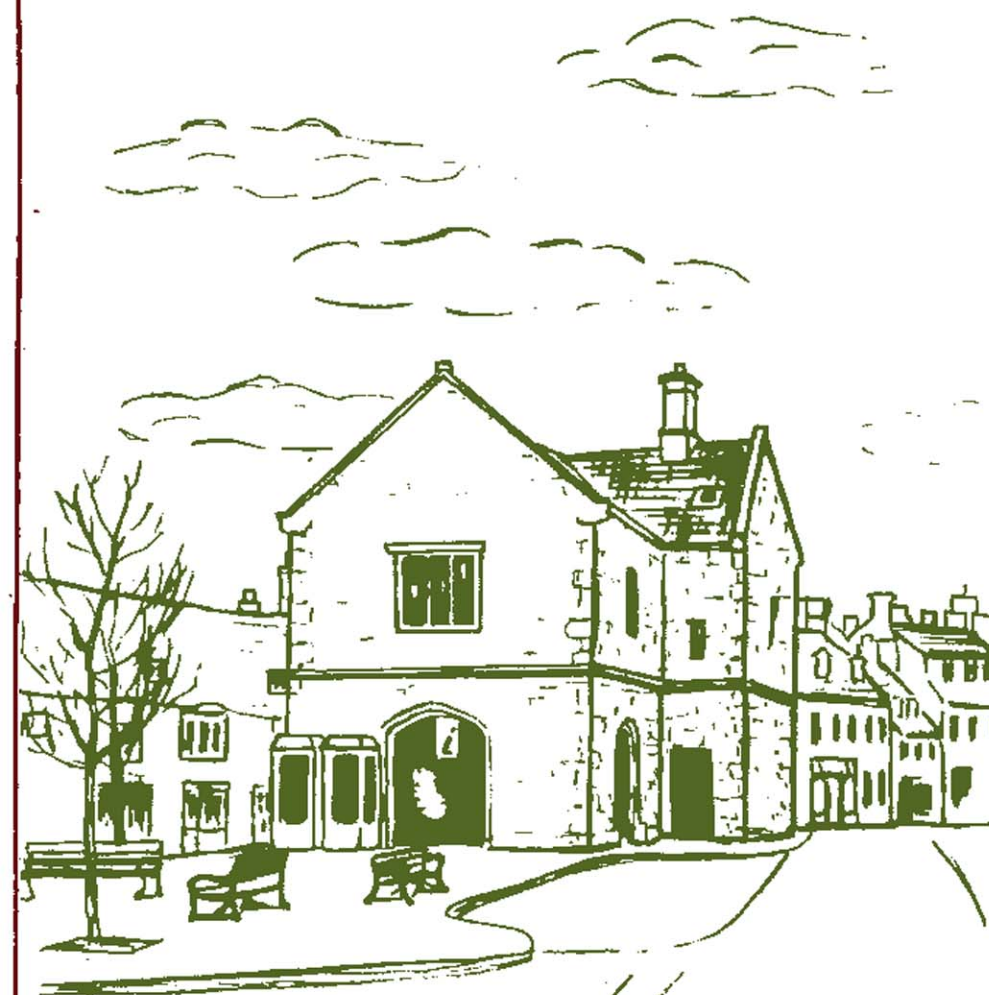
Drawn by Sue Payne.

Countryside Walks Leaflet No. 20

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# Countryside Walks

## Oundle



Market Place  
Oundle.



**Northamptonshire**  
Leisure and Libraries

## Oundle

Oundle is an historic market town whose centre has changed little over the last 400 years. It has been occupied since the Iron Age and has always been an important and prosperous settlement. A market is held on Thursdays and the market bell is still rung at midday.

200 years ago Oundle had three breweries and these plus agriculture were its main industries. Today whilst agriculture still plays an important part in the town's prosperity, it is most famous for its Public School which is housed in impressive buildings throughout the town.

Part of the town is now a Conservation Area and many of the attractive town houses are worthy of viewing. The old Town Hall originating in 1826, has been restored and houses the local Tourist Information Centre.

The Talbot Hotel with its charming grey stone front was built from materials salvaged from the destruction of Fotheringhay Castle. Unfortunately, however, the story that the Talbot's Jacobean staircase was from the same source and that Mary Stuart walked down it to her execution is false.

The Congregational Church which was built in 1864 has been converted into the Rodolphe Stahl Theatre. Opened in 1979 it offers a varied programme of events.

## Barnwell County Park

Barnwell Country Park is worth visiting in every season of the year. It nestles in a looped backwater of the River Nene and covers 37 acres of mixed habitats ranging from meadow to woody scrublands. It has 15 acres of attractive and varied lakes whose beauty in maturity belie their humble origins as gravel pits.

From the bright colours of Spring and Summer through the russets and golds of Autumn to the black and white starkness of Winter the many paths twisting through the park offer pictures of things growing, living and dying, in the rhythm of the changing seasons.

The park has a Visitor Centre, toilet facilities and a car parking area.



## Cotterstock

Cotterstock is mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086) but the discovery of a Roman Villa in 1736 proved that the village has a much greater history.

In that year and the year following at least one mosaic pavement was found as well as coins, bones and building materials. Sixty two years later in 1798 yet another mosaic pavement plus cesspools and 4th century coins were discovered.



The Mill at Cotterstock has had times of great activity and others of idleness in its 150 year history. Lack of water or flood conditions caused the idle periods. The boom in pigs and the need for stock foods and cake meant 24 hour working.

Unfortunately a fire in 1968 destroyed much of what was an imposing structure and although what remains houses a thriving business, it bears no resemblance to the times when barges were anchored in the stream and horse drawn carts of every size and description brought the wheat and distributed the produce of the busy millers.

- Key**
- - - - Footpaths on suggested walks
  - | -| -| -| Bridleway on suggested walk
  - - - - Other footpaths
  - ..... Parish Boundary
  - S Stile
  - G Gate
  - F.B Footbridge
  - S.P. Signpost
  - ☆ Viewpoint
  - T.I. Tourist Information
  - P.H. Public House

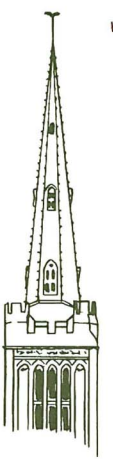
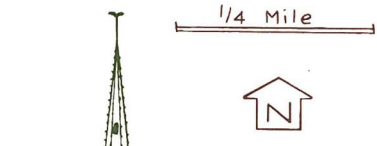
Remember these are only a few of the interesting walks around the Oundle area. If you wish to explore further please consult Ordnance Survey map 'Pathfinder 939' available from Oundle School Bookshop.



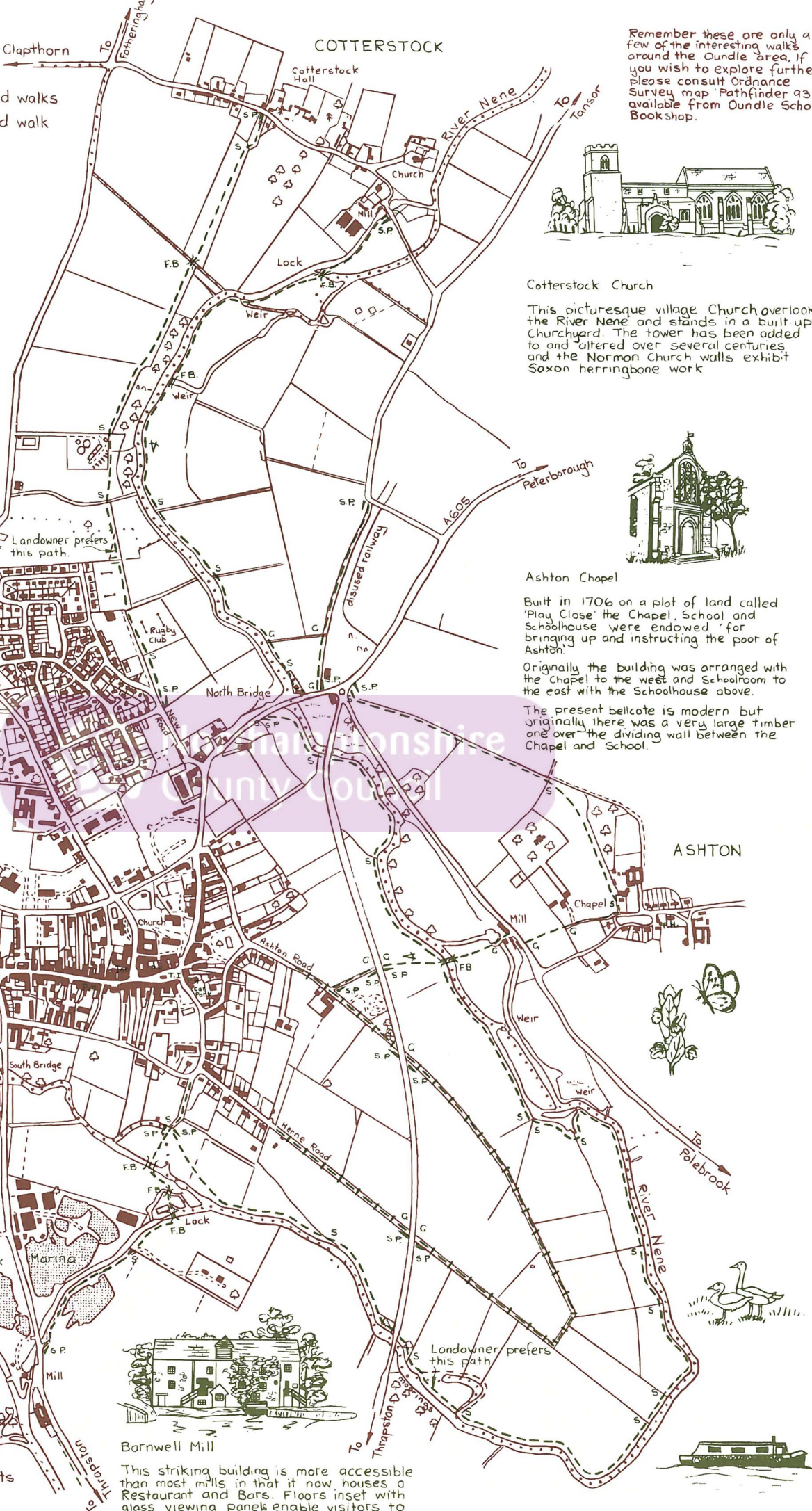
**Cotterstock Church**  
 This picturesque village Church overlooks the River Nene and stands in a built-up churchyard. The tower has been added to and altered over several centuries and the Norman Church walls exhibit Saxon herringbone work



**Ashton Chapel**  
 Built in 1706 on a plot of land called 'Play Close' the Chapel, School and Schoolhouse were endowed 'for bringing up and instructing the poor of Ashton'.  
 Originally the building was arranged with the Chapel to the west and Schoolroom to the east with the dividing wall between the Chapel and School.  
 The present bellcote is modern but originally there was a very large timber one over the dividing wall between the Chapel and School.



The Parish Church of St. Peter is an interesting combination of the Gothic styles of Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular.  
 The graceful octagonal spire is 208 feet high and is inscribed with the date 1634.



**Barnwell Mill**  
 This striking building is more accessible than most mills in that it now houses a Restaurant and Bars. Floors inset with glass viewing panels enable visitors to see the mill race passing beneath.



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A fuller description of Oundle and its fine buildings can be found in the Oundle Town Guide.