

## Welton

The village of Welton, its name deriving from the local springs and wells, lies on a hillside. The valley below holds Daventry Reservoir and a section of the Grand Union Canal. The legendary B.B.C. 2LO Radio Station from the era of 'cats whiskers and crystal' was transmitted from radio masts at Borough Hill, Daventry.

The Manor House is a Mid-Georgian building with Venetian windows and a staircase, dating from 1769, taken from Daventry's Moot Hall. It is now a home for the elderly.

A gracious mid 18th century two storeyed family house was once situated close to the church but was demolished in 1974. Named Welton Place it was built by Joseph and Richard Clarke.

Rare trees were planted throughout the grounds in the 19th century and the garden flower Clarkia is accredited to the family. Later the house was let to the Crown Jewellers and was visited on several occasions by members of the Royal Family.

A son of Welton, John Chamberlain, was born in 1777. After reading William Carey's letters he was moved to become a missionary to India, ministering amongst massive deprivation, sickness and vice for many years. In 1821, he sought to return to England but died only 20 days into the journey and was buried at sea.



Railway Bridge crosses Grand Union Canal.

## 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 highways 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 country belongs to someone, so please treat it with respect so that other walkers will be made welcome.
7. Remember that Scheduled Ancient Monuments are protected by law in order to ensure their survival. Please respect them and other archaeological sites.
8. Take extra care near locks and don't be tempted to assist boat crews unless you are certain of what to do. Remember because boats cannot stop immediately if someone falls into the water, the risk of injury is great.

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, West Office, Arnex House, London Road, Daventry. Tel. Daventry 706081.

For information and matters relating to the Canal and Towpath: The Waterway Manager, The Stop House, Braunston, Northants. Tel. Braunston 0788 890666

Drawn and compiled by Sue Payne (1992)

Countryside Walks Leaflet No. 37

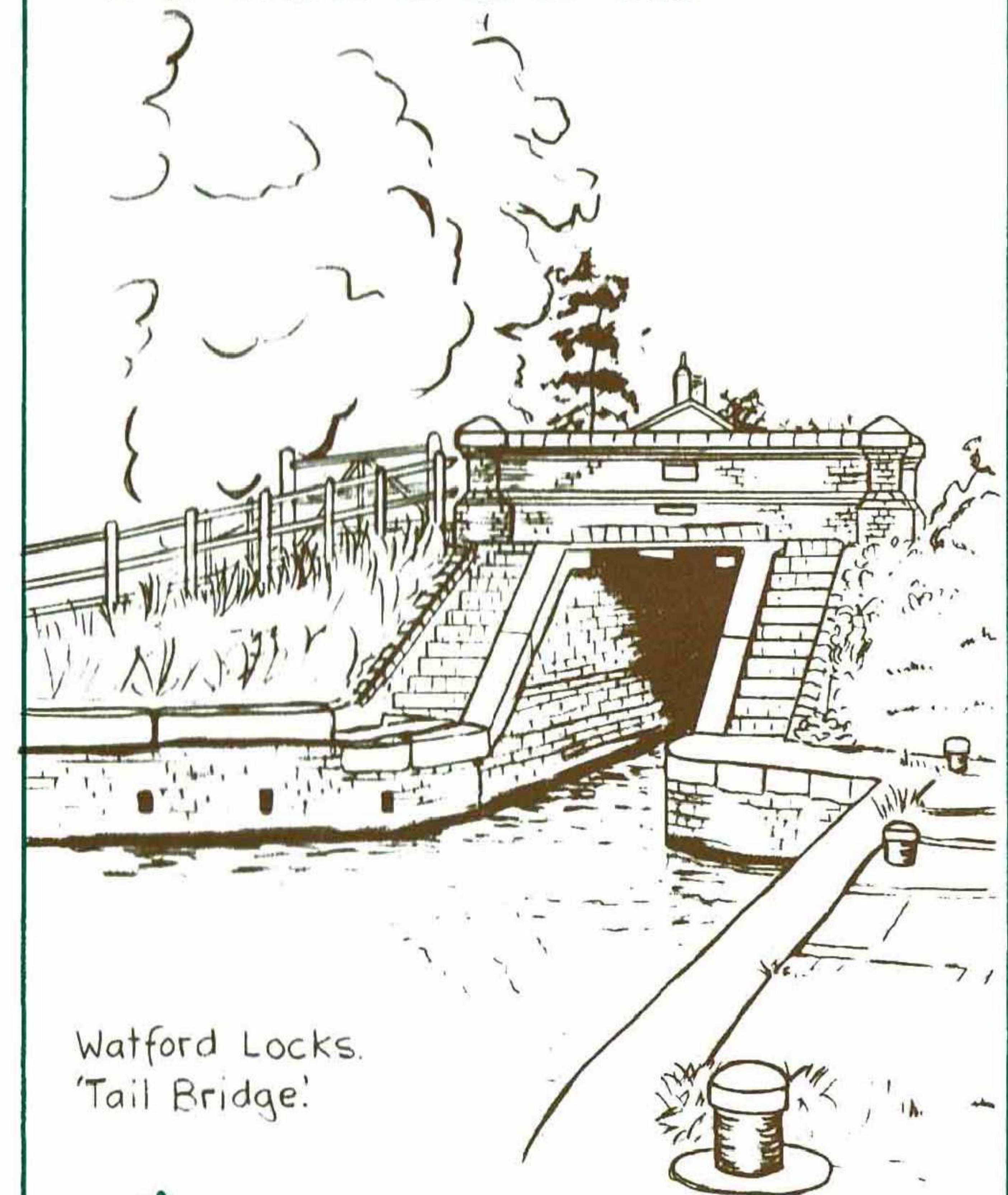


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# Countryside and Canal Walks

## Watford



Watford Locks.  
'Tail Bridge.'



British Waterways



Northamptonshire  
Countryside Services



## Watford

Watford is mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086 A.D.) and in the early 18th century Bridges, the Historian, recorded that there were 35 houses in the village. These included not only the hamlet of Murcott, the deserted village of Silsworth but also Catesby 'an enclosed manor with no houses' as well as Cumberford, 'a developed village on an enclosed manor now reduced to one house'. Watford's long history is indicated by the extensive remains of earlier settlements as well as remnants of a garden perhaps constructed in the 18th century lying close to the Watford Court site.

To the west of the village is Watford Gap which carries Central England's main road, rail and water routes. It is here that the M1, Britain's first motorway, parallels the A5, Watling Street, an old Roman Road. This area contains the Watford Gap Service Station and an Industrial Estate. The Canalside Pub and the former Welton Station with its associated houses still flank the canal.

Watford has lost its Great House, Watford Court, which was the home of the Henley family for about 100 years. It lay on the slopes of a splendid Park and was approached by a mile long avenue of trees. The unusual ornamental railway bridge within the Park's boundaries was built to Lord Henley's instructions because he didn't want an unsightly construction in the Park.

The house was built by Richard Burnaby in 1568 and greatly restored and enlarged during the Elizabethan, Jacobean and Victorian eras. Its demise began when three heads of the Henley family died in quick succession whence it fell into disrepair. Eventually, the building was demolished, in the 1970's, and modern houses were erected on the site.

## Ashby St. Ledgers

In the Domesday Book (1086 A.D.) Ashby St Ledgers was called Ascebi, Asce meaning Ash and Bi, a settlement.

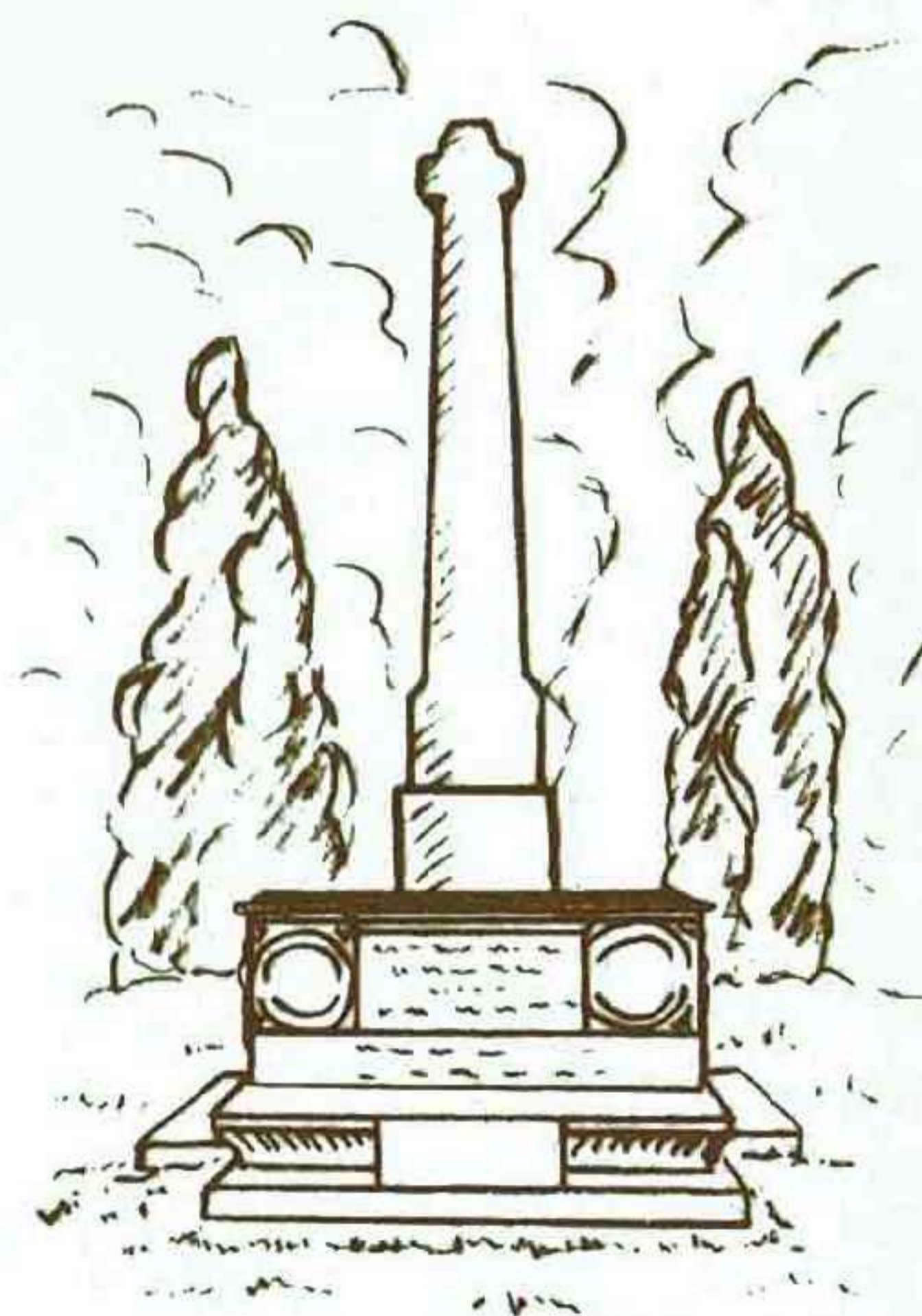
The village Church which dates back to the 14th century is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Leodegarius. It has a three decker pulpit, wall paintings and fragments of medieval glass in the windows. St. Leodegarius was a Bishop of Autun in France but suffered involvement with the politics of the day and was put to death in 679.

The Manor House was the home of the Catesby family of whom William Catesby (the Cat) was beheaded in 1485 after King Richard III lost his Kingdom to Henry Tudor at the battle of Bosworth Field.

In 1903 it was purchased by Ivor Churchill Guest, 1st Viscount Wimborne. Their family fortune dated back to Josiah Guest, born in 1785 and built his empire on iron and steel foundries in South Wales. The first man to develop rolled steel rails, he was a founder of Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds better known as G.K.N.



Gatehouse - The Manor  
Ashby St. Ledgers.



Monument to Viscount  
Wimborne - Ashby Church.

The villagers of Ashby have more reason than most to remember one of England's most celebrated historical events, The Gunpowder Plot, was said to have been planned here, possibly in the small room over the Manor's Elizabethan Gate House.

Certainly it was to his mother's house in Ashby that Robert Catesby and his co-conspirator raced on horseback after their treason was discovered on that day, the first "November 5th", in 1605. They had covered the 80 miles from London in just 7 hours. But this escape and a further desperate ride to Holbeach in Staffordshire were to no avail as they were tracked down and perished, refusing to surrender to the men of the king that they hated.



Welton Hythe

### THE TOLL OFFICE (Built 1913) - NORTON JUNCTION

The last tolls were collected in 1929. Some time thereafter the office was converted into a basic home for the use of the Salvation Army's mission to the boat people. Brigadier Fred Fielding and his wife Ivy spent most of the 1940's and 1950's travelling the canals, preaching from their narrowboat 'Salvo'. After being seconded abroad in the late 1960's they briefly had a new mission boat 'Pilgrim' before retiring at the toll office, rent-free.



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- Key.
- Footpaths- suggested walks
  - - - Bridleways- suggested walks
  - Canal towpath
  - Other footpaths
  - 🐑 Sheep! Dogs on leads
  - S Stile
  - K.G. Kissing Gate
  - L.S. Ladder Stile
  - F.B. Footbridge
  - G Gate
  - P.H. Public House
  - Ch. Church
  - S.P. Signpost
  - Ⓟ Car Park

1/4 mile



### Watford Locks.

Watford locks are a flight of seven locks on the Leicester Section of the Grand Union Canal. The top lock is a conventional lock and the section between it and Foxton in Leicestershire is known as 'Twenty mile' being free of locks and only taking from between 6 to 9 hours to complete!  
The four centre sections are staircase locks, the top gate of each forming the bottom of the next section. To facilitate the passage of craft through the locks water passes via control paddles into a series of terraced 'side corridors' which step up in the hillside alongside the canal.

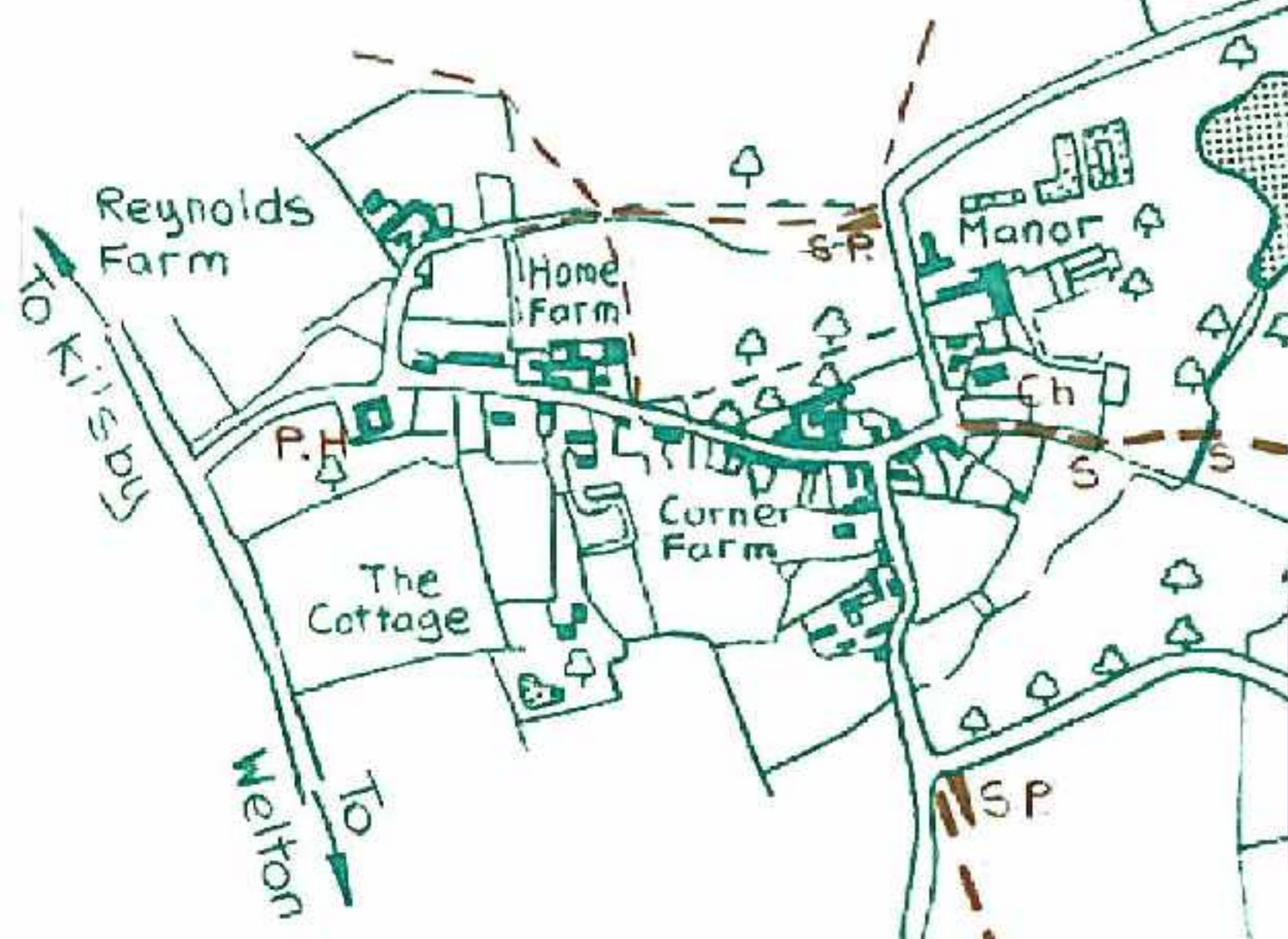


### Manor House - Ashby St Ledgers

The Manor House is the product of three Centuries of building and many styles but despite this, the architectural ensemble in orange stone is very pleasing to the eye. Originating from Elizabethan times at the behest of the Gatesby family, the house stands in well kept landscaped gardens. The Gunpowder Plot was said to have been planned in the room above the entrance gate near the church.

Sir Edwin Lutyens was the architect engaged by Lord Wimborne, in the early 20th century, to redevelop the Manor House.

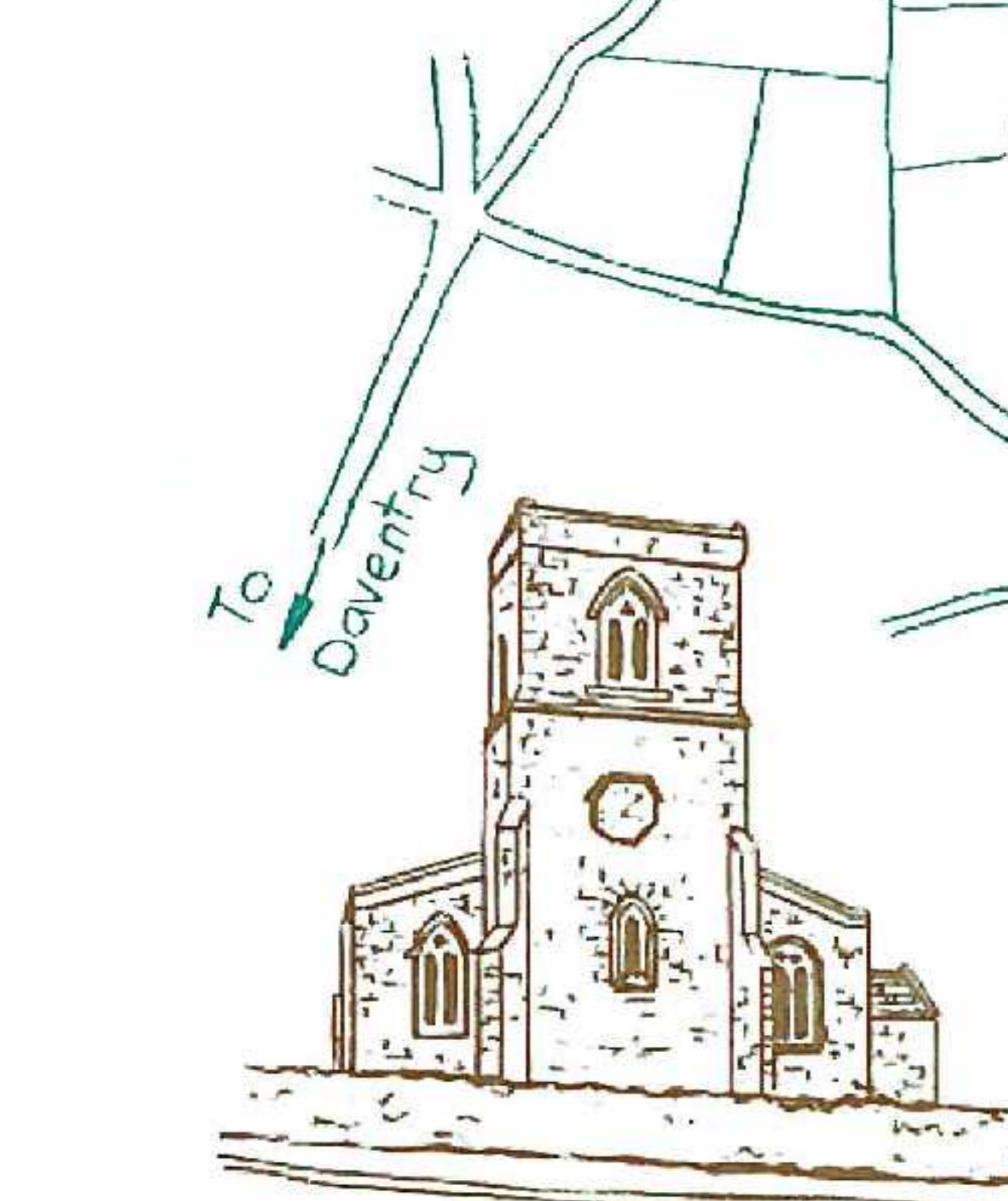
### ASHBY ST LEDGERS



### Jurassic Way

The Jurassic Way is a long distance footpath being developed by Northamptonshire County Council.

It will extend from Banbury to Stamford, approximately 83 miles in length, completion of the route is planned for 1994.



### WELTON

Welton Church is dedicated to St Martin and has a 14th century tower. Its tub-shaped font is reputed to be Saxon in origin, having been brought from East Anglia, but the pulpit and arms box, representing an open hand were carved by five Welton villagers in 1899



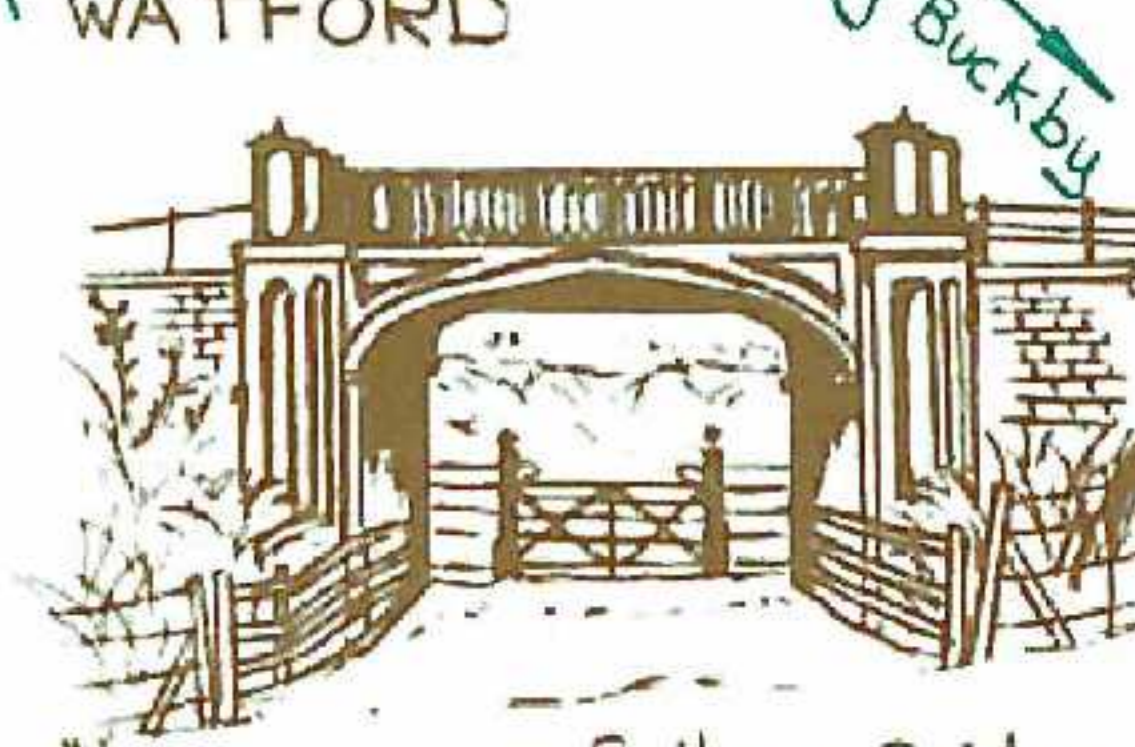
Lock Cottage Watford.



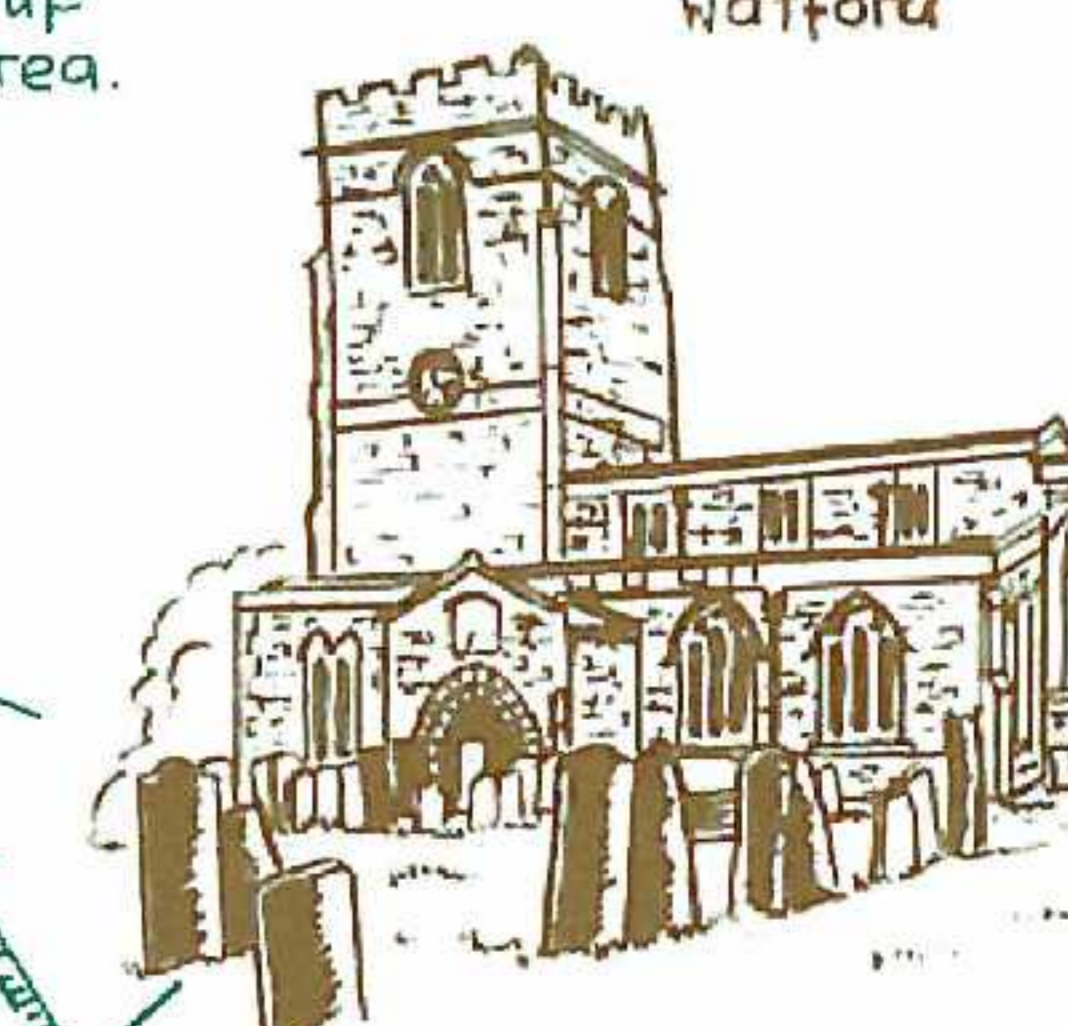
Norton Junction



Former Toll Office - Norton Junction



Railway Bridge Watford



Watford Church. The Parish Church of St. Peter and St. Paul dates from the 14th century with a 15th century tower.

Boats would be gauged by the Toll Clerk under the bridge at the former Toll Office. (Gauging was measuring the depth of a boat's hull above the water to calculate the load on board and hence to charge a toll.)

Braunston Tunnel, 20

Birmingham Grand Union Canal Walk

Lock Cottage Watford.

Norton Junction

Former Toll Office - Norton Junction