

Sulby

The parish of Sulby once contained the village of Sulby and Sulby Abbey.

Before being deserted in later years the village was recorded in the Domesday Book (1086 A.D.) as two manors, one with a population of 13 but even then the other was laid waste. Sulby's Parish Church was dedicated to St. Botolph and stood in a meadow known as St Botolph's Pool. It had lost its nave long before 1451 and was completely destroyed at the dissolution.

The village probably disappeared between 1377 and 1428 and was replaced by the scattered farmsteads that can be seen today.

The site is in a good state of preservation, and can be clearly identified whilst walking the footpath laying diagonally across it.

The history of Sulby Abbey began in Welford in 1155 when William de Wideville gave the Welford Church plus nine carucates of land at Sulby to a house of Premonstratensian Canons. Following the grant of a manor and church at Sulby the Abbey also moved to that parish. Edward II stayed at Sulby Abbey on a number of occasions. In 1538 the Abbey was dissolved and in 1567 the land was acquired by Sir Christopher Hatton, of Holdenby, who was Chancellor to Queen Elizabeth I.

A Civil War grave lies in Sulby Parish and is thought to be connected with the 1645 Battle of Naseby when casualties were buried on the field of battle.

## A Walkers' Code



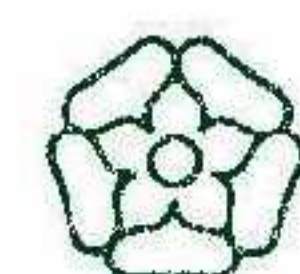
1. Always keep to the path to avoid trespass. If the path is obstructed you are allowed to seek a reasonable way round the obstruction, taking care to avoid causing damage. Please report the obstruction to the highways authority.
2. Remember to close gates behind you. Straying stock can cause damage 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. 36.



Northamptonshire  
County Council

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# Countryside and Canal Walks

## Welford



The Wharf Inn,  
Welford.



British Waterways



Northamptonshire  
Countryside Services



## Local Snippets

Welford was an established settlement well before the Domesday Book (1086 A.D.) when it was known as Wellesford. This name meaning 'Ford by the spring or stream.'

Settlement remains suggest that Welford was originally planned and consisted of three parallel streets. The present West Street with its Church and Manor House was probably the main street.

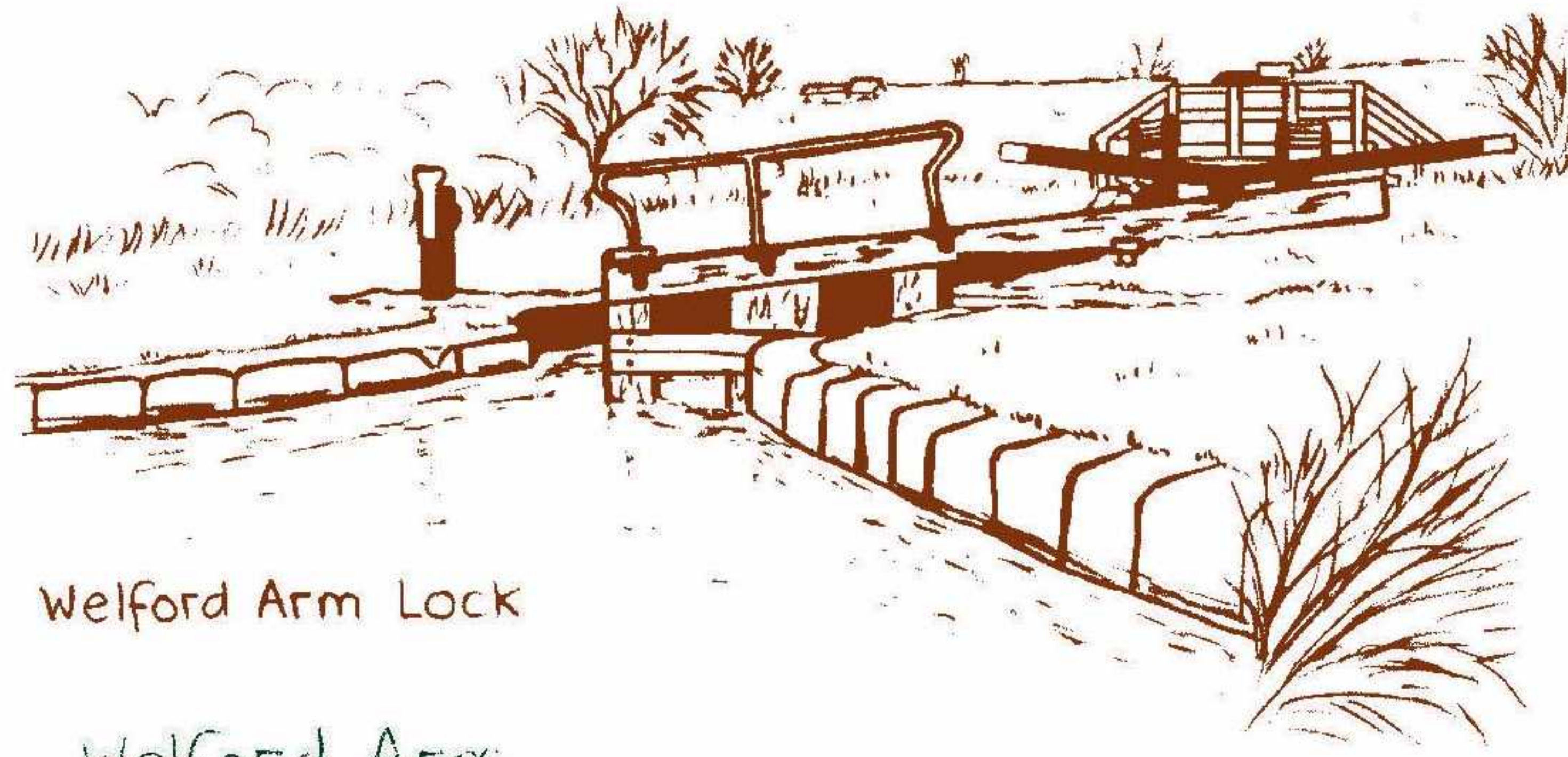
The site of a previous Manor House is believed to lie on West Street also but is now under a modern housing development. Its history lies in the mists of village folklore but, the 1848 Tithe Map does show an area on this location as Hall Field indicating its attachment to a large house.

A rectangular fishpond, with a central island, lies to the north-west of the allotment gardens. It was fed by water from the nearby stream. Its origin is unknown.

Welford Road is described as 'the London Waye' on Speeds map of 1610, an important route to London and Leicester. Lying halfway between Northampton and Leicester, Welford became an important resting place for stage coaches having seven Inns or Coaching Houses along the present High Street.

An ancient tunnel is reputed to have joined the now lost Sulby Abbey to Welford Church, its Chapel of Ease. It is said that strange sounds can be heard in the fields along its route.

A piece of 15th Century church plate was discovered in the fields at Welford in 1968. known as the Welford chalice it now resides in the British Museum.



Welford Arm Lock

### Welford Arm:

At the end of the Welford Arm of the Grand Union Canal is the Canal Wharf which adjoins the Wharf Inn. This castellated building once named The George Hotel was well known amongst Canal Folk. In the nearby Marina brightly painted narrow boats are moored in neat rows. The canal and towpath have abundant wildlife and the scene is one of peace and tranquility.

It is difficult to imagine that in 1870 this arm was so choked with weed it was unnavigable and the winding holes unusable. Although a water channel was maintained even its one lock fell derelict, but navigation was restored by British Waterways in 1969.

The Arm was built by the Canal Company in about 1815 as a navigable feeder to the main canal but traffic to the Wharf was never heavy.



Bridge -  
Welford Arm.

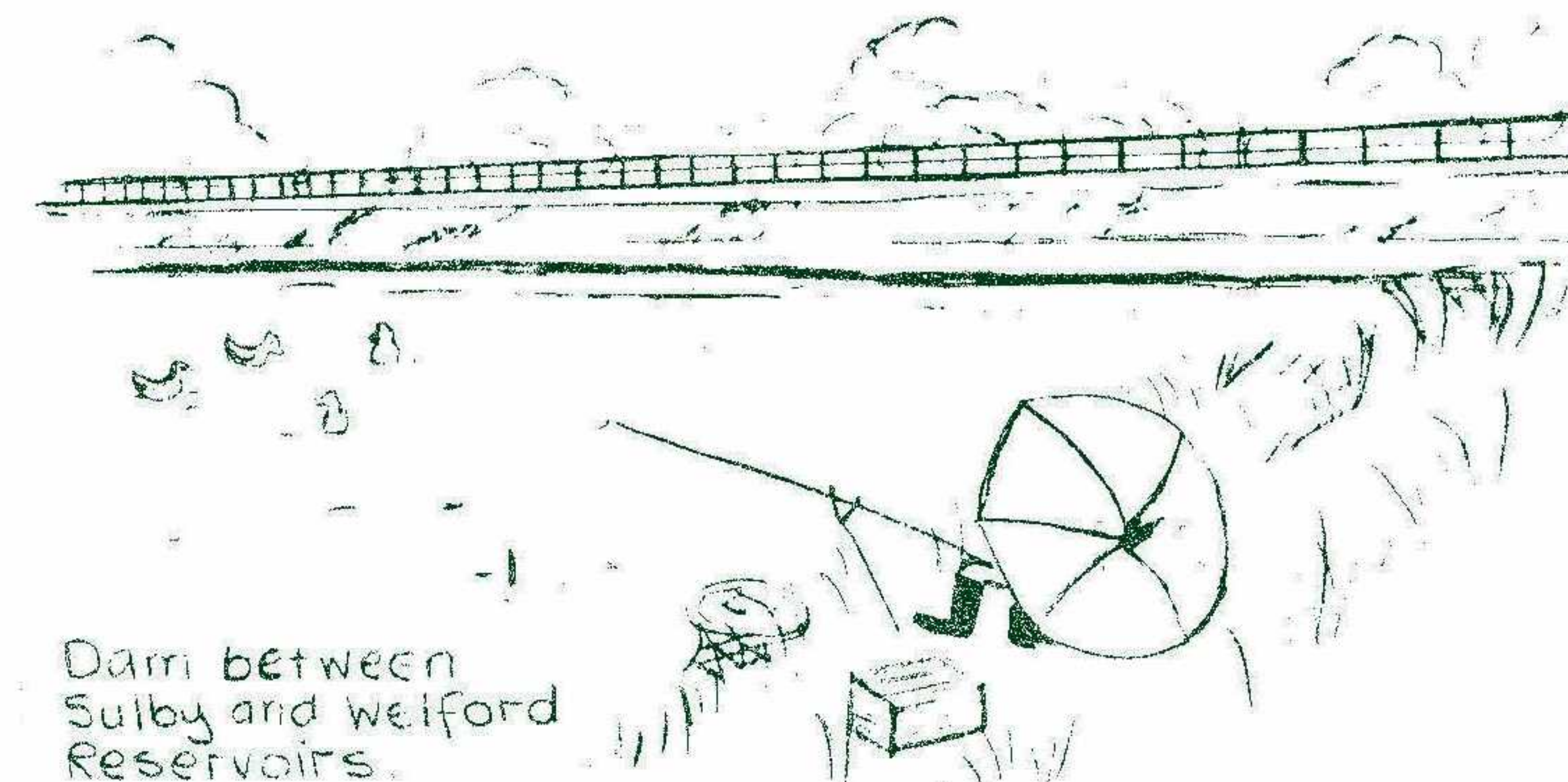
Sulby and Welford Reservoirs.

Water supplies for the canal system were always desperately needed so reservoirs at Naseby, Sulby and Welford were constructed.

When the Sulby Reservoir was nearing completion a sudden thaw burst the banks causing the River Avon to overflow and subsequently flood the Stanford area killing two people. However, the completion of the Welford Arm in early 1815 also saw the opening of Sulby Reservoir.

Another reservoir was then constructed below this in 1837 and known as New Sulby or more commonly Welford Reservoir. The Canal Company's supervisor on this project was paid £70 per annum, plus £20 for horse fodder and the use of a company house. His property, however, proved to be so damp he was permitted to live in Welford and received £20 per annum in lieu of the house.

The reservoirs today are an anglers' paradise. They have many species of flora and fauna as well as giving pleasant views over the surrounding countryside from the central dam which carries the footpath.



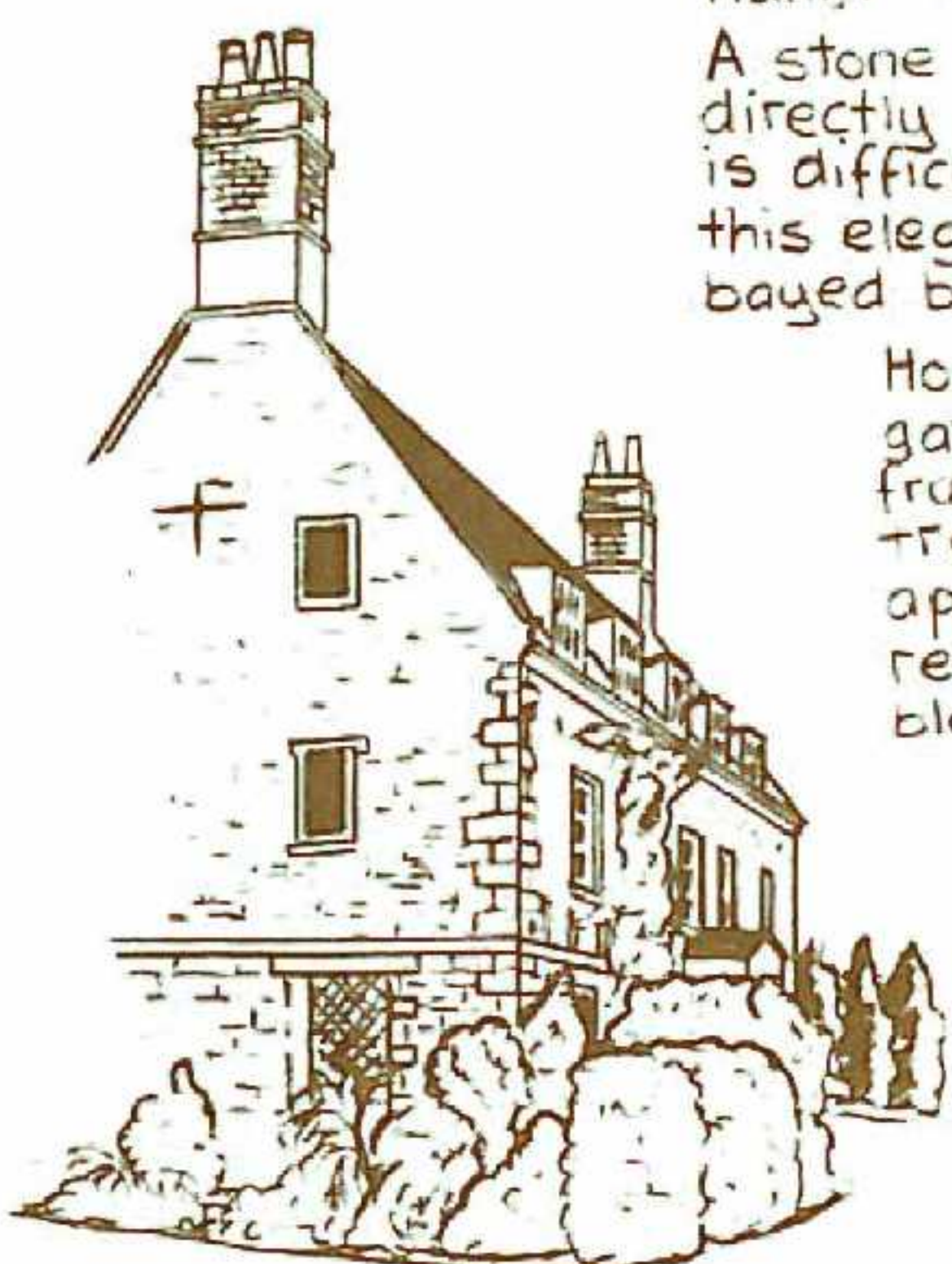
Dam between  
Sulby and Welford  
Reservoirs.



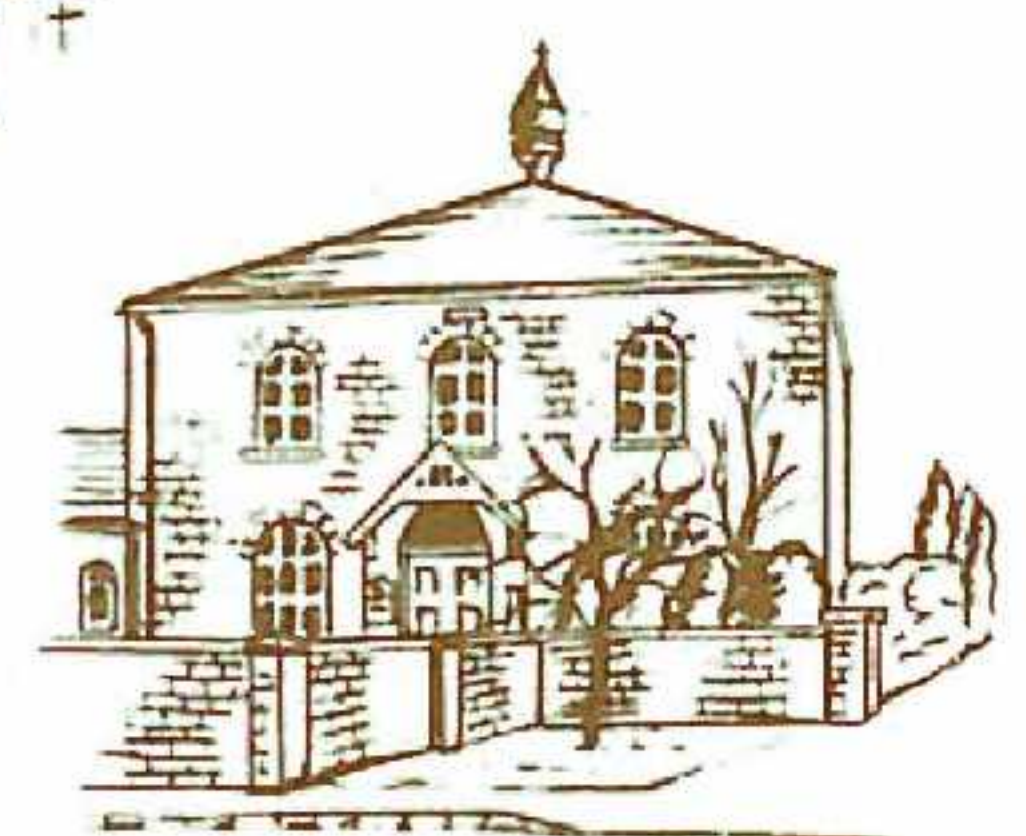
- Key**
- Footpaths - suggested walks
  - - - Bridleways - suggested walks
  - Canal towpath
  - Other footpaths
  - S Stile
  - F.B. Footbridge
  - G Gate
  - Viewpoint
  - P.H. Public House
  - Ch. Church
  - S.P. Signpost
  - Ⓟ Car Park
  - Sheep! Dogs on leads.
  - County Boundary

**Deserted Village of Downtown.**  
 The history of this village is largely unknown having been completely deserted by the early 18th century. 1963 saw its complete destruction by modern ploughing although the Grand Union Canal had already been cut across the sites north-east corner. The village is thought to have been a secondary settlement of Stanford as it was always included in their records. There was a chapel in the village dependant on Stanfords Church and pottery from the 12th to 14th century has been found.

**Manor House**  
 A stone built Manor House stands directly north of the church, but it is difficult to see and appreciate this elegant two storeyed, five bayed building.



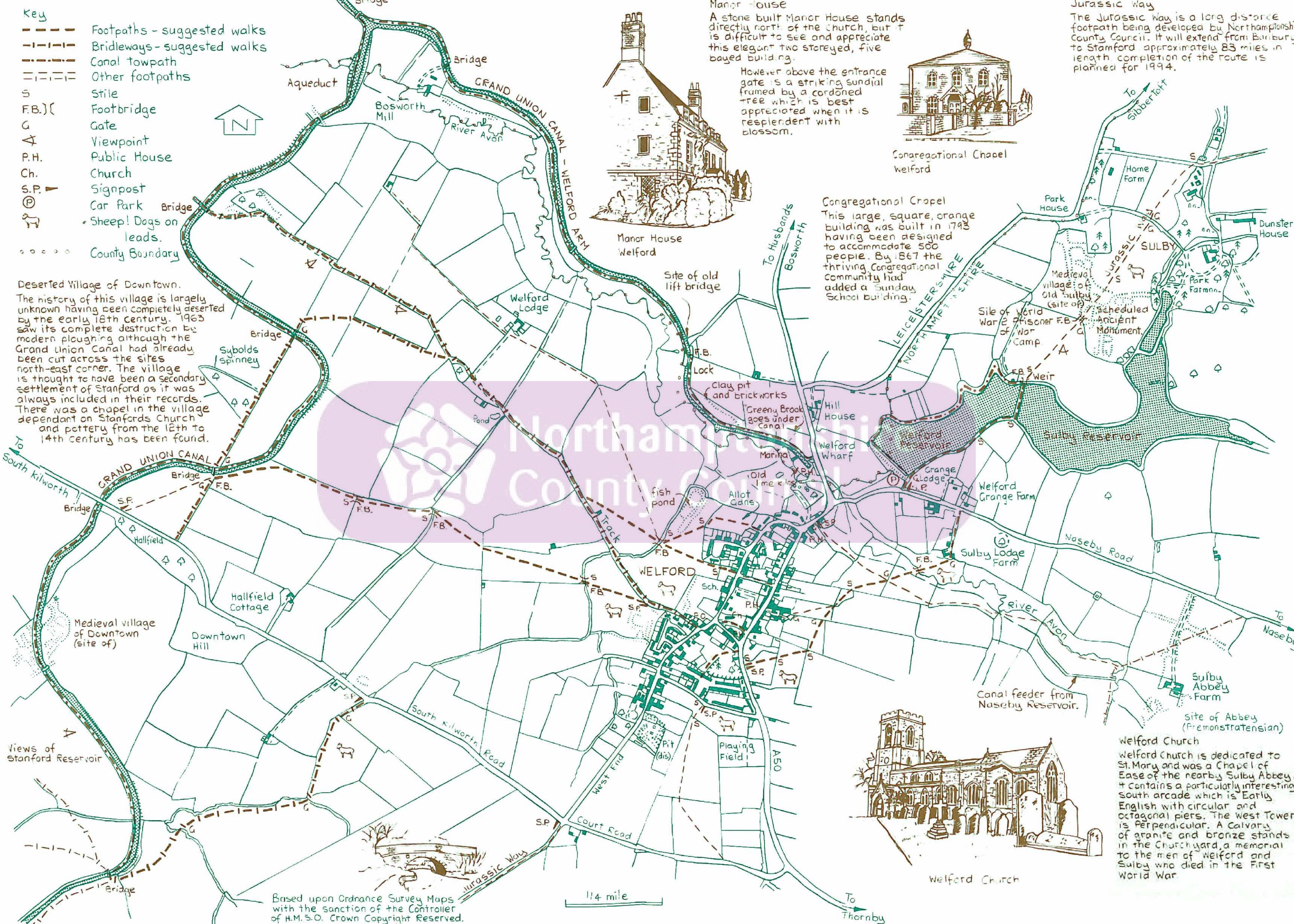
However above the entrance gate is a striking sundial framed by a cordoned tree which is best appreciated when it is resplendent with blossom.



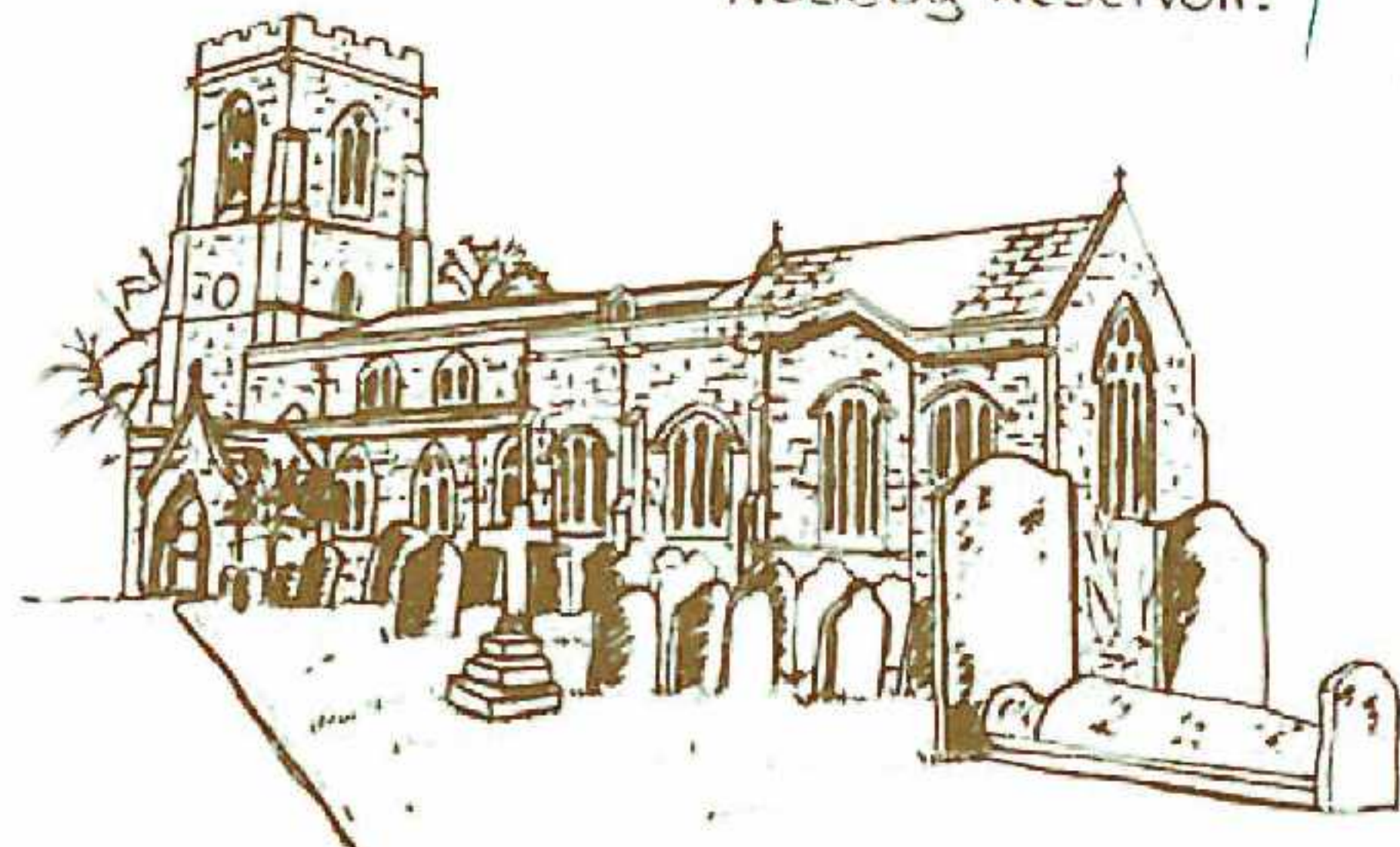
Congregational Chapel Welford

**Congregational Chapel**  
 This large, square, orange building was built in 1793 having been designed to accommodate 500 people. By 1867 the thriving Congregational community had added a Sunday School building.

**Jurassic Way**  
 The Jurassic Way is a long distance footpath being developed by Northamptonshire County Council. It will extend from Barbury to Stamford approximately 83 miles in length, completion of the route is planned for 1994.



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Welford Church

**Welford Church**  
 Welford Church is dedicated to St. Mary and was a Chapel of Ease of the nearby Sulby Abbey. It contains a particularly interesting south arcade which is Early English with circular and octagonal piers. The west tower is Perpendicular. A Calvary of granite and bronze stands in the Churchyard, a memorial to the men of Welford and Sulby who died in the First World War.

Site of Abbey (Premonstratensian)