

2 Kilby

- ▶ As you enter the village, at the junction of Fleckney Road and Main Street, bear right and continue along Main Street. As you walk down the street, on the left is a village pump which has a small plaque on it that states that it was refurbished by the Parish Council in 1998.
- ▶ Continue along Main Street passing the primary school that was opened in 1873 and leave the village and head towards the A5199 Welford Road.

Worth a detour

- ▶ Where Main Street bears left, take the turn on the right called Spinney Lane and head towards the church of St Mary Magdalene, which was once at the heart of the village but now stands alone
When you reach the churchyard, there are some really old gravestones to the left of the church. The fields behind the church would have had buildings standing in them. The house that stands behind the church today is thought to be on the site of old village and there have long been stories about a series of subterranean passages including one tunnel that runs between Kilby and Foston. If these existed or not and if they did what their purpose was is not known, but it was mentioned so often that the story featured in the Illustrated Leicester Chronicle in the 1930's. A former villager even stated that while combining in the fields behind the church, the ground gave way and it fell into the hole.
- ▶ As you reach the A5199, cross the road (Caution, very fast and busy road) and take the footpath directly opposite. Cross the fields until the path exits onto the Foston Road and turn right. Continue along Foston Road (Caution, no pavement) until you reach Barley Lane on your right. Take this lane then take the footpath on the right and go across the fields in front of you towards Countesthorpe.

Worth a detour

A short distance further along is St Bartholemew's Church, which dates back to Norman times. The tower of the church was originally taller than it is today and part of it was taken down and two of the three bells it had were sold. There is a bench in front of the Church and it is a really quite pleasant to rest a while.

The church is all that remains of the village of Foston whose remains are found beneath the ground on a nearby farm. Foston as a village once dwarfed neighbouring Countesthorpe in the early Medieval period. It was big enough in 1086 to warrant a mention in the Domesday Book, unlike Countesthorpe, but now nothing remains. Lost settlements like this once dotted the Leicestershire countryside.

- ▶ Continue on the footpath to Countesthorpe which exits onto Rosebank Road. Cross the road and walk into Shetland Way and go straight on to the end then bear right and take a 'No Cycling' path which opens out onto a small recreation area. Cross this area and exit onto Dale Ave then turn left and continue until it reaches Wigston Road and turn left again.
- ▶ Continue along until you reach Central Street on your right. Take this Street and follow it round to the left and you will enter The Square.

⚠ Note – this walk can get quite muddy and slippery, we would recommend walking in good weather between May and September.

With thanks to The Greater Wigston Historical Society / Heritage Centre for images of Kilby Bridge.



Countesthorpe Fosse Fox

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

12

Heritage Walks

Route Twelve

9 miles
14.5km

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.

- Countesthorpe
- Foston
- Kilby



Supported by Welcome Back Funding





Travel by bus
Route 85
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1 Countesthorpe

- Starting from the Square in Countesthorpe walk towards St Andrews Church on Main Street. Standing on the corner of The Square and Main Street is a small building called 'The Cornerstone', which is currently used as a community asset, but the building was originally built as a school house in 1841.

At the top of the roof apex is where a bell would have been fitted. It was built on the site of land purchased originally in the 18th Century by the Rector of Blaby, The Reverend Edward Stokes.

The Reverend Edward Stokes was a great benefactor for the parishes he served.

He was born at Bradgate on Feb 18th 1706. He lost his sight on Dec 16th 1714, when at school in Sharnford, when he was shot in the face at close

range by a loaded pistol which had been used by the school boys as a plaything. Edwards older brother had the pistol in his hand, when Edward apparently playfully challenged him to shoot him, but not until he told him. Edward then instructed his brother to fire which he did, instantly blinding him.

Edward went on to lead a long life and ministered to his parishioners for fifty years and founded the Stokes Charity which provided books and bibles for children. Reverend Stokes apparently enjoyed hunting and his lack of sight did not deter him as he had a person ride alongside him who would ring a bell to warn him to jump! Edward began his service at Wymondham in 1737 but moved to Blaby in 1743 on the death of his father who was Rector at Blaby.

To the left of the 'Cornerstone' building is an area known as 'The Pound'. A 'Pound' is where animals that had strayed would be secured until the owner came forward and on payment of money could reclaim their livestock.



- Walk along Church Street, bear left into The Bank then left again onto Wigston Street. Continue along this road until you reach New Street on your right.

On the corner are a set of houses, they are called Beaconsfield Terrace and if you look up to the top of the walls, just below the start of the roof you will see some very decorative bricks that run the length of the building.

While Countesthorpe is a thriving settlement now, this wasn't always the case. 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.

- Continue on the main road until you reach Foston Road on your right. Cross this road and take the footpath to the right of the roadside hedge. The path runs alongside the main road for a short distance before taking the path around the field perimeter and towards a sewage works. The path goes around the right-hand side of the works before it goes across a field towards the River Sence. Cross over and keep on the path towards the canal in the distance.

- When you reach the canal, turn right and continue along the towpath until you get to where the A5199 Welford Road crosses over the canal. As you get towards this bridge, the path becomes a footpath which leads up to the road where if you cross the bridge there is 'The Navigation' public house. If you don't want to visit the pub, as the path goes up, you can take some steps on the left which takes you down onto the tow path and under the bridge to continue along the canal.

- Keep on the tow path until you reach a bridge called 'Turnover Bridge' and take the path up and across this bridge. Continue along the tow path which now will have the canal on your right.

As you pass under these bridges, look closely at the corners of the walls of the bridge on the tow path. You can see where several horizontal grooves have been made into the blue engineering bricks near the path surface. These grooves were made by the ropes used to pull barges along by Horses before the advent of engines.

- The next part of the walk features walking on busy roads with no pavements. If you do not feel confident, you can turn around and follow the canal back towards Countesthorpe.

- Continue along the path until you reach Bridge 81 which has a large metal pipe that crosses the canal. Take the path up from the tow path and out onto the road. Turn right and cross the bridge (Caution, very narrow lane with no pavement). Take the footpath on the right which runs alongside the canal before turning left down onto a drive and turn right.

- The footpath now runs alongside a ménage and fields with Horses in. Take this narrow path and continue along it until it opens out onto fields. Continue following the markers until you cross the River Sence and exit out onto Wistow Road and turn right. (Caution. For a short distance there is no pavement). After a short distance cross the road and walk towards the village of Kilby.