



# Rutland Discovery Trails

## 5. Victorian Miracle Trail

The Victorians were miracle workers. They fused Science and Industry together to produce architectural and engineering miracles which we still see in today's landscape – bridges, viaducts, massive railway stations, an all pervasive rail network, sewage systems, town halls full of integrity as well as dark satanic mills.

Despite Rutland being the smallest county in England, it did not escape from the Victorian advancements in transport; this little shire seems able to produce at least one of everything! In this Instance it is the Seaton – Harringworth Viaduct, in the Welland Valley, which is our Victorian miracle.

**Start your Victorian Miracle Trail in *Uppingham*** where the famous school is an outstanding example of Victorian educational achievement. **Head east to *Glaston*** to see the fine flaggy walls with their profuse vegetation everywhere in the village. Leave its raw edges along the A47 and park neat St Andrew's. Take the tiny path through the churchyard to see the unusual pyramidal spire of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the even earlier tower. The Old Rectory lies near the church.



Re-built in brick, 1861-62, it is supposed to incorporate a 17<sup>th</sup> century ironstone house within its construction.

Leave by the Lych-gate on foot, turning left onto Orchard Close, then left again on Spring Lane to see the Ancient Pond. Wander down Manor Lane where there are several remarkable old houses with mullioned windows, one dated 1696.

The village almost stands on top of the 1846 yard long tunnel of the former L.M.S Kettering to Manton Line, a major engineering feat using 16 million ordinary bricks and 4 ½ million Staffordshire Blue bricks, and built between 1875-80. Along the A47 you can see the tunnel ventilation shafts.

**Cross this busy road and make for *Seaton* just over a mile to the south.** Now you are on the flanks of the Welland Valley. Once the pastoral scene was interrupted by the volcanic chimneys of Corby on the skyline but now they are silent and invisible. You may catch your first glimpse of the Viaduct on this road.

Seaton had moved around within its local area over the centuries, west of the church, near the manor house there are also signs of a larger village. A road or track called the Drift led to the common pasture south-west of the village but now this appears as a hollow way.

All Hallow's church stands to one side of the village with its curious, unusual broach spire, dating from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. Look for the late Norman south doorway, the lofty interior with a 12<sup>th</sup> century chancel arch and the splendid carved capitals.

**Out of Seaton take a left on B672 sign posted for *Morcott*** you will drive under Seaton Viaduct, a real surprise in this rural environment. It is the same railway you noticed at Glaston tunnel. The marvel extends across the wide valley with 82 arches, each 70 feet high, the whole being three-quarters of a mile long. Built between 1876-78 it represents the peak of railway achievement in the area. In the misty morning or as the sun sets it acquires a majesty fitting to the pastoral surroundings and reminds us that man-made objects can be beautiful, even spiritual.

**Take a right for *Barrowden*,** a large and anciently-situated village may be at the extremes of Rutland but it controlled an important crossing point over the Welland and was within the orbit of Stamford. The fine 14<sup>th</sup> century spire of St Peter's is a striking landmark. There are good walks and picnic places in Wakerley Woods over the river from Barrowden, and an excellent pub in the village.

There are many attractions to look for in Barrowden, such as the beautiful duck pond complete with a duck house, but you can **move on to the remote *Tixover* church by turning left out the bottom of Barrowden and follow signs for *Tixover*,** the church can be found down a farm track, past a farm yard it is alone in the nearby fields, ideal for a quiet rest at the riverside.



The massive tower speaks of eternity and the river flows silently by. Was there once a village round the isolated church? Roman remains, crop marks and enclosures suggest there was. Indeed traces of piles in the river have shown evidence of a bridge over the Welland at this spot. St Luke's lacks buttresses but notice the beautiful bell openings, the puzzling south doorway and the impressive tower arch (key available in the village where signposted).

**Travel back to the A47 and proceed straight over to *Ketton*** via this country lane (sign posted Tixover House & Grange). St Mary's stands as an inspired memorial to the use of stone, though oddly Barnack not Ketton Stone. Its spire has been described as 'one of the finest in the East Midlands – pride of any county'. Look for the distinctive west front, the Norman door with its magnificent hinges, the dog-tooth bands, waterleaf capitals and ballflower friezes. Can you find a gravestone in the churchyard showing stonemason's tools? It is William Hibbins grave and it is a fitting tribute to this young mason.

Ketton Cement Works is just outside the village and it is one of Rutland's biggest industries. In a way it is the modern counterpart of the medieval and later interest in building stones so typical of the area though its method of operation and scale are very different.

**Continue through the village and turn left joining the A6121 then turning right for North Luffenham** and South Luffenham, these twin villages are opposite each other in the Chater Valley. Both contain many fine stone houses with Collyweston roofs. Look for the restored Ha-Ha around the old hall site in North Luffenham by the church. This hall saw action in the Civil War when it was besieged. It was pulled down in 1806.

St John's church is large with an early broach spire. It is spacious inside with a fine chancel dating from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. Look for the beautiful windows of great delicacy, the fine sedilia, Elizabethan pulpit and Archdeacon Robert Johnson's memorial describing his foundation of Uppingham and Oakham Schools in 1583.

**Carry on to *Wing via Pilton*** for a look at the rare turf maze. How strange it is to find such contrasts in the landscape side-by-side for over the road lies England's largest Treatment Works, part of Rutland Water complex. Surely one of Rutland's greatest charms is that kind of incongruity where past and present may be separated by a hedge only. This is just the spirit of the Seaton Viaduct and the Glaston Tunnels – Victorian miracles in a secret landscape.

Wing is home to an excellent Inn, The Kings Arms, who's passion for sourcing and selecting quality local produce and making most things in-house (including ketchup, bread, sorbets and more) have won them many awards.

**Travel south for Uppingham to complete your trail.**

**Useful Contact Information:**

**The Exeter Arms**, Barrowden: 01572 747247 [www.exeterarmsrutland.co.uk](http://www.exeterarmsrutland.co.uk)  
Not only a pub but also brews its own beer.

**The Kings Arms Inn**, Wing: 01572 737634

Superb eatery with 4\* accommodation.

Closed on Monday lunch and Sunday evening (April—September)

Closed all day Monday and Sunday evening (October—March)

Bank holiday weekends, only closed Monday evening.

