

RUTLAND HERITAGE TRAIL

MILLS, QUARRIES

DISTANCE:
4 miles

START & FINISH:
The Parish Church of St John the Baptist, North Luffenham, LE15 8JR. Car parking along lane to church or in Church Street.

TERRAIN:
Mixture of field footpaths and metalled road. Some uphill stretches and busier roads.

REFRESHMENTS:
North Luffenham
The Fox Country Pub & Dining

South Luffenham
The Boot Inn

MAP DETAILS:
This route is covered by the Ordnance Survey Explorer Series Numbers 15 (234) & 224.

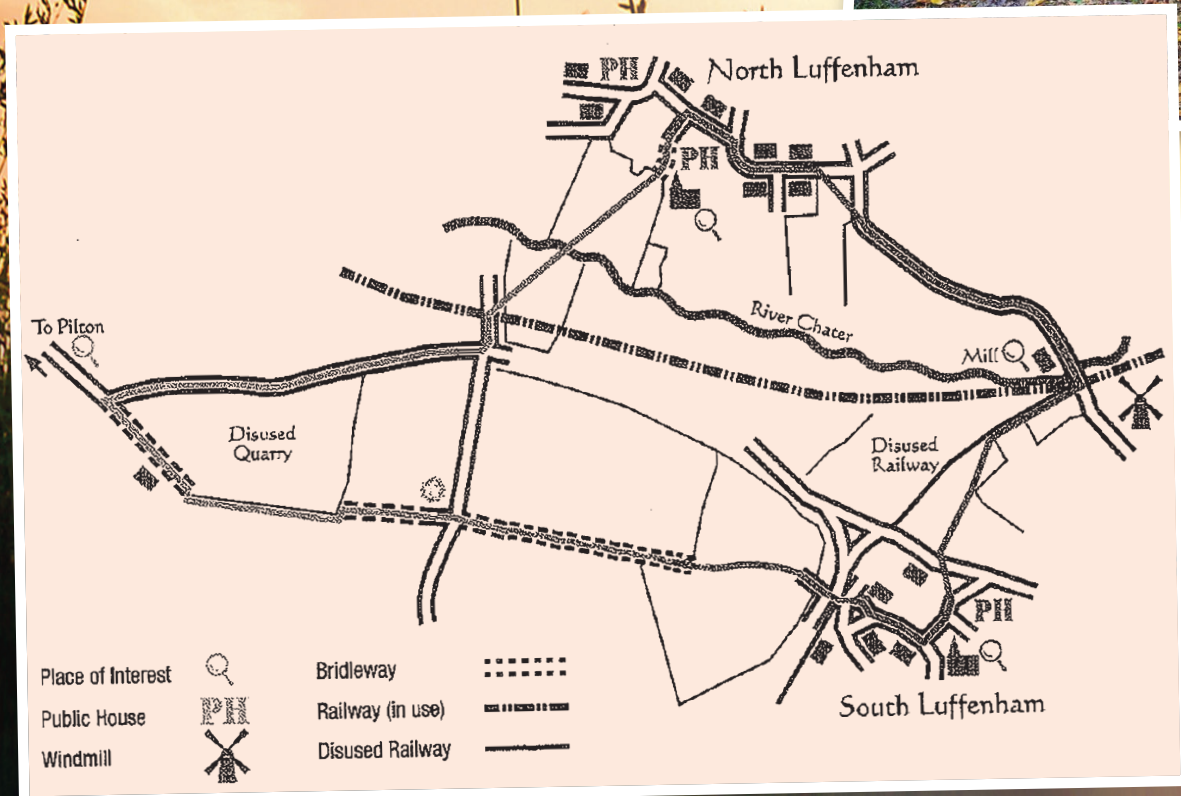
THIS CIRCULAR WALK TAKES IN THE VILLAGES OF PILTON, NORTH AND SOUTH LUFFENHAM.

South-east of Rutland Water the villages of Pilton, North and South Luffenham bear witness to the industrial past of the county – a tale of mills, quarries and railways.

Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries the south-eastern half of Rutland was excavated for its rich deposits of ironstone – the prize of a geology that gives Rutland soil its rich red colour.

Quarries were opened and narrow-gauge tramways built to link them to the great railway lines that criss-crossed the county. Alongside them, people also harnessed the power of wind and water.

One by one the quarries were closed and their tramways fell into disuse. Today, the scars of the quarries on the landscape have largely healed, but some evidence for the busy industry of these Rutland villages still remains for those who wish to find it.



AND RAILWAYS

THE WALK

Start your walk at North Luffenham parish church. Cross over the stone stile located in the right-hand churchyard wall, just past an entrance to the school playing field.

The school and adjacent fields are on the site of the original Luffenham Hall, built in around 1635. The hall was demolished at the start of the 1800s but remains of its ornamental gardens are still visible. To your right is a ha-ha – a sunken stone boundary wall designed to separate the formal gardens close to the house from the wider countryside without intruding on the view. The Hall was besieged by Parliamentary forces in 1642.

Head to your left, walking diagonally down the field towards the trees at the bottom. Cross over the River Chater by the footbridge and continue, aiming for the trees ahead which mark the route of the Oakham to Stamford railway line. As you near them, look for the metal gate in the right-hand hedgerow leading to the North Luffenham road.

Turn left and walk along the road, crossing the railway bridge, until you reach a crossroads. Take the right-hand turn (signposted Pilton 1 mile). As you walk along this road, notice to your right the earthwork remains (a series of low banks and a possible hollow way or sunken road) once thought to be the location of the deserted medieval village of Sculthorpe.

The fields on the left-hand side of the road were part of Pilton Quarries, which operated between 1919 and 1969. As you continue you will pass over the deep cutting for the quarry tramway, with its red and blue brick bridge complete with parapets and decorative ironwork.

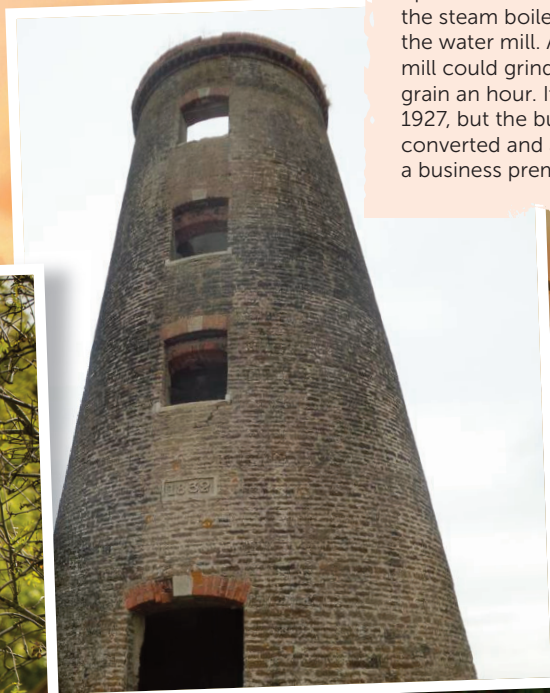
As the road veers to the right, look out for a brideway to your left. This is the route of our walk. You may wish to make a detour first, to visit Pilton village, about 600 yards further on.

THE WIND, WATER AND ELECTRIC MILLS OF SOUTH LUFFENHAM

Close to the level crossing and railway junction are the remains of three mills. The windmill, now only a shell, was built in 1832. It continued in use until 1908 even though a storm in 1895 had blown its top off.

The watermill on the opposite side of the road also dates from the 19th century. Originally it ground flour, but after 1910 when a steam-driven mill was installed, it concentrated on milling heavier grain such as split beans and maize. It was finally closed in 1948, when the water channel broke and the river's course was altered.

The steam and electric mill was opened in 1892, with water for the steam boilers pumped from the water mill. At its peak, the mill could grind 20 sacks of grain an hour. It was closed in 1927, but the buildings were converted and are still in use as a business premises today.



RUTLAND HERITAGE TRAIL



PILTON

One of Rutland's smallest villages, the mainly stone farmhouses, cottages and barns of Pilton are grouped around the small parish church of St Nicholas.

The church was probably built in the 13th century and was used as a school in the 16th century. A report into the condition of the church in 1584 states that its stained glass windows had suffered as a result. The church was restored during Victorian times and until 1900 had its own curate who lived in the rectory (now known as Willoughby Cottage).

Most of the houses are limestone but some are built of a rose-coloured brick that was manufactured locally. During the 19th century, there was a brickworks along the Pilton Road between the village and North Luffenham, which made the bricks for the building of local railway bridges.

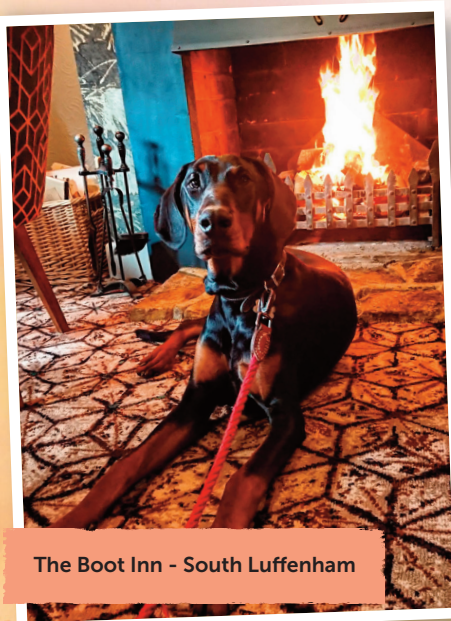
Follow the bridleway past a brick building (an electricity substation that supplied power to the quarry machines) on your right. Carry straight on through a gateway with the field boundary to your left. Pieces of ironstone are still visible in the soil.

Follow the bridleway, climbing slightly uphill and look to your left for clear views of North Luffenham and its church spire. This wide green lane leads to North Luffenham Road.

As you approach the road, the copse to the left hides an ancient earthwork. Could it be a castle mound or a Civil War gun emplacement? The most recent interpretation of the site suggests it may be an ancient garden feature.

Cross the road and continue on the bridleway straight ahead. Stay on the bridleway as it goes between two hedges and then opens out onto an arable field. Carry on straight ahead across the field until the bridleway emerges in South Luffenham next to Foxfoot House.

Turn right and follow the road (over a dismantled railway line, closed in the 1960s) into the centre of the village. Once over the railway bridge, follow the road to the left



The Boot Inn - South Luffenham

THE WELLAND VIADUCT

Known as the Seaton or Harringworth Viaduct, depending on which side of the Rutland/Northamptonshire border you live, this ¾-mile viaduct carried the London, Midland and Scottish railway line across the low-lying Welland valley. Built between 1875 and 1878, over 2,000 men worked on the viaduct, using an estimated 20 million bricks to create its 82 arches.

(Angle Lane) round to the Square. Take the tarmac pathway ahead (signposted as a footpath) known as Church Lane. It leads alongside a field and over the stream to the east side of the village, emerging opposite a small green and the parish church of St Mary. Turn left and follow the road round past the **The Boot Inn**.

At a fork in the road, take the left-hand route, passing the Old School House on your right. Soon after this, take the tarmac path to the left, passing a large pond, to reach Pinfold Lane. Opposite, a metal gate leads to a footpath across the fields. This grass path is marked at several points by concrete slabs, which are still visible underneath – was this a tramline connected with the Luffenham Quarries and the nearby railway line?

Cross the field, heading to your left until you reach a wooden gate and go through this to walk along a narrow, hedged track (the line of the old disused railway) which opens out as you reach the modern line and Station Road.

To your right are the remains of a disused windmill and as you turn left to follow Station Road over the level crossing (take care!) passing the old train station to the left and Old Mill Farm, a 19th century watermill.

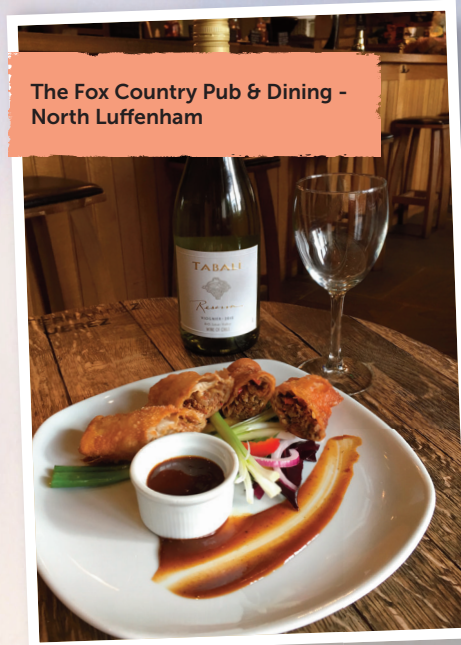
Cross the bridge and follow the road (take care as visibility is poor in some places and cars travel very quickly along this stretch) past a row of brick cottages and the sewage works. After about ½ mile you will see the village sign for North Luffenham. Close to this, a concrete World War II gun emplacement still survives in Digby Farm.

Just past the village sign, take the footpath marked to the left, over a stile into an area of conifer planting. Make your way to the right through the trees (or follow the edge of the field if you prefer) to a stile that brings you onto Digby Road. Turn left here and follow the road to return to your starting point. Look out for the 18th century farm buildings to your left and as you approach the right-hand bend the Jacobean gateway to Luffenham Hall. Pass the Wesleyan chapel on the right and turn left into Church Street.

Luffenham Hall, dating from the 16th century and known (until the demolition of Old Luffenham Hall) as the Digby Manor House, is on the left. Little can be seen of the building behind the high stone walls, but a stone octagonal tower or gazebo overlooks the road and a peep through the decorative ironwork gates will provide a glimpse of the old stone and timber framed barn built in 1555.

As you pass the gates of Luffenham Hall you come back to your starting point near the parish church.

A little further along is the **The Fox Country Pub & Dining**, a traditional village pub with a contemporary twist, offering a warm welcome, real ales and a tempting seasonal menu (which changes monthly) as well as a delicious Sunday Roast.



The Fox Country Pub & Dining - North Luffenham

CHURCH OF ST MARY, SOUTH LUFFENHAM

Dating to just after the Norman Conquest, the parish church of St Mary contains a memorial to Rose Boswell, the daughter of a 'king of the gypsies'.

She died in 1793 whilst her family were encamped just outside the village near Fosters Bridge. At first the local church wardens refused to bury her in the church but they were overruled by the curate.

A marble slab dedicated to Rose can still be seen in the church, along with a 14th century tomb with an effigy of a member of the Culpepper family.



SAFER WALKING

- Be prepared – wear suitable clothing and sturdy footwear, take refreshments and directions
- Respect the countryside – take care in crops and be considerate of livestock
- Take care when crossing or walking on roadways and walk facing oncoming traffic
- Fasten all gates, keep dogs under close control and guard against fire
- Please show consideration to village residents by parking cars responsibly and making sure all dog mess is appropriately cleared away
- Remember to take nothing but photos and leave nothing but footprints!

