

Local Snippets

Irchester is known for the remains of its nearby Roman walled town although settlements dating from the Iron Age have also been found outside the walls.

The discovery of a 'strator's' gravestone suggests the town may have been an important collection post for horses reared in the area for the Roman Army. In 1878 a small rectangular temple was uncovered and the torso of a nude male figure, made from limestone, was discovered.

Ironstone quarrying, the realignment of the A45 and the building of the railway line have all revealed relics of earlier centuries. Pottery and coins, ranging in date from Claudius to Constantine, as well as, bowls and a Roman cemetery containing between 300 and 400 skeletons have been found. Like most small towns there appears to be no sign of occupation later than the 5th century. The whole site is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The tall, slender broach spire of the Church of St. Katherine dominates the Irchester skyline. The local custom of using different coloured bands of stone in building can be seen in its tower, which has alternating courses of ironstone and limestone. The Church dates mainly from the 13th Century to the early 14th Century but earlier work is present. During restoration in 1889 a mural painting of the Doom was discovered above the chancel arch. An alcove with a chimney shaft, situated in the north wall of the sanctuary, was the oven for baking communion bread.

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 highway 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 countryside belongs to someone, so please treat it with respect and other walkers will be made welcome.

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, Area 1 Office, 73 London Road, Kettering. Tel. 524100

Your general comments on this leaflet and the route will be welcomed by the Director of Planning and Transportation, Northampton House, Northampton. NN1 2HZ

Compiled and drawn by Sue Payne

An "Out and About in Northamptonshire" Publication. (1989)

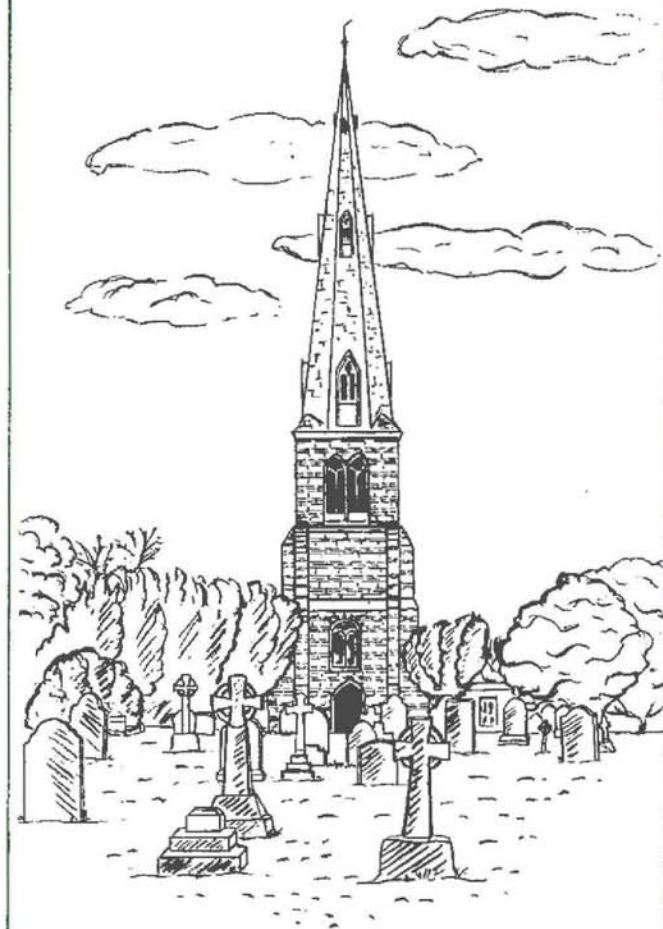
Countryside Walks Leaflet No. 24

Northamptonshire Countryside Services is a branch of Northamptonshire Planning and Transportation Department

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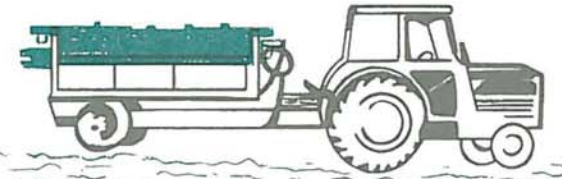
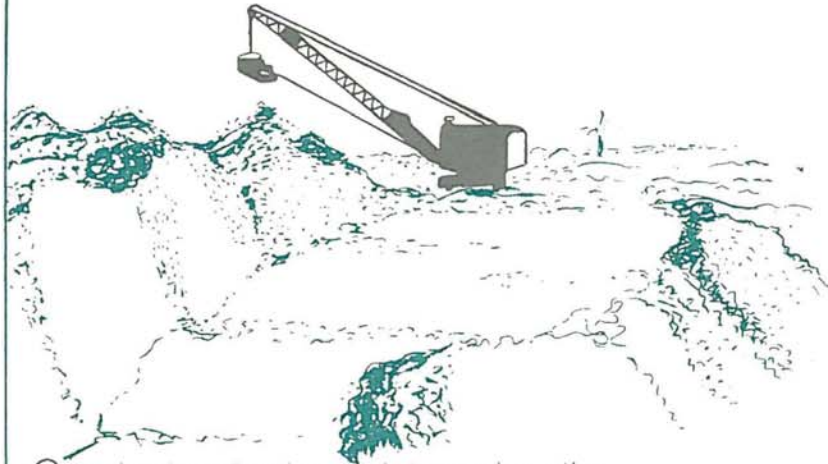
Countryside Walks

Irchester



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IRCHESTER COUNTRY PARK



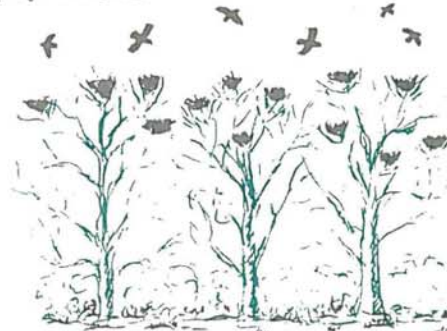
The large mechanical diggers moved vast amounts of earth and rocks to uncover the ironstone leaving behind them the 'hill and dale' landscape we see today. This was progressively planted with young trees during the quarrying operations.



Timber from the Park is now used for fencing, steps and barrier rails in the County Council's Country Parks. Other timber is sold as rustic poles, fencing materials, mining timber or firewood.



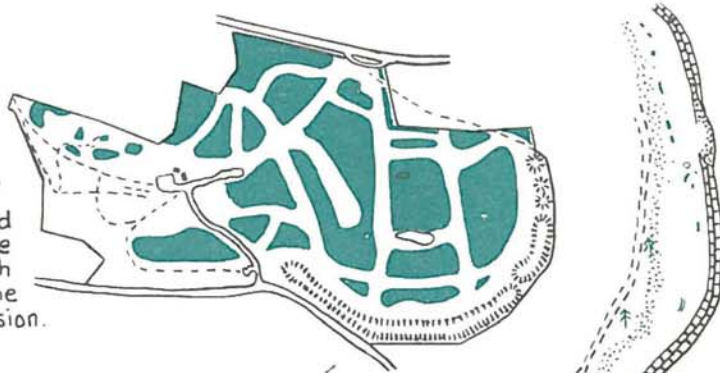
Irchester Country Park is on the site of a former ironstone quarry. It was known as Wembley Pit because the main quarrying activities began in 1924 soon after the opening of Wembley Stadium.



Rookery



The Country Park, opened in 1971, is owned and managed by Northamptonshire County Council with financial aid from the Countryside Commission.



Along the southern edge of the park the last quarry face remains and provides a splendid section through a succession of rocks.



The Country Park is rich in flora and fauna and provides picnic meadows, trails, woodlands, playlands and a Countryside Ranger Service.



Woodland Walk

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The Embankment at Wellingborough, although not far from the roar of traffic, is a delightful place to tarry, whilst seated under the swaying trees amongst the brightly coloured flower borders, one can see the lone fisherman, with swans patiently awaiting a crust of charity and the traditional canal barges chugging peacefully by.

The name 'Wellingborough' is derived from 'the fortified place of Waelder's People', although the name changed from 'Wendingburgh' to its present form in the 1600's after the town became famous for its waters which had healing and remedial properties. The town's wells are shown on the Borough's coat of arms.



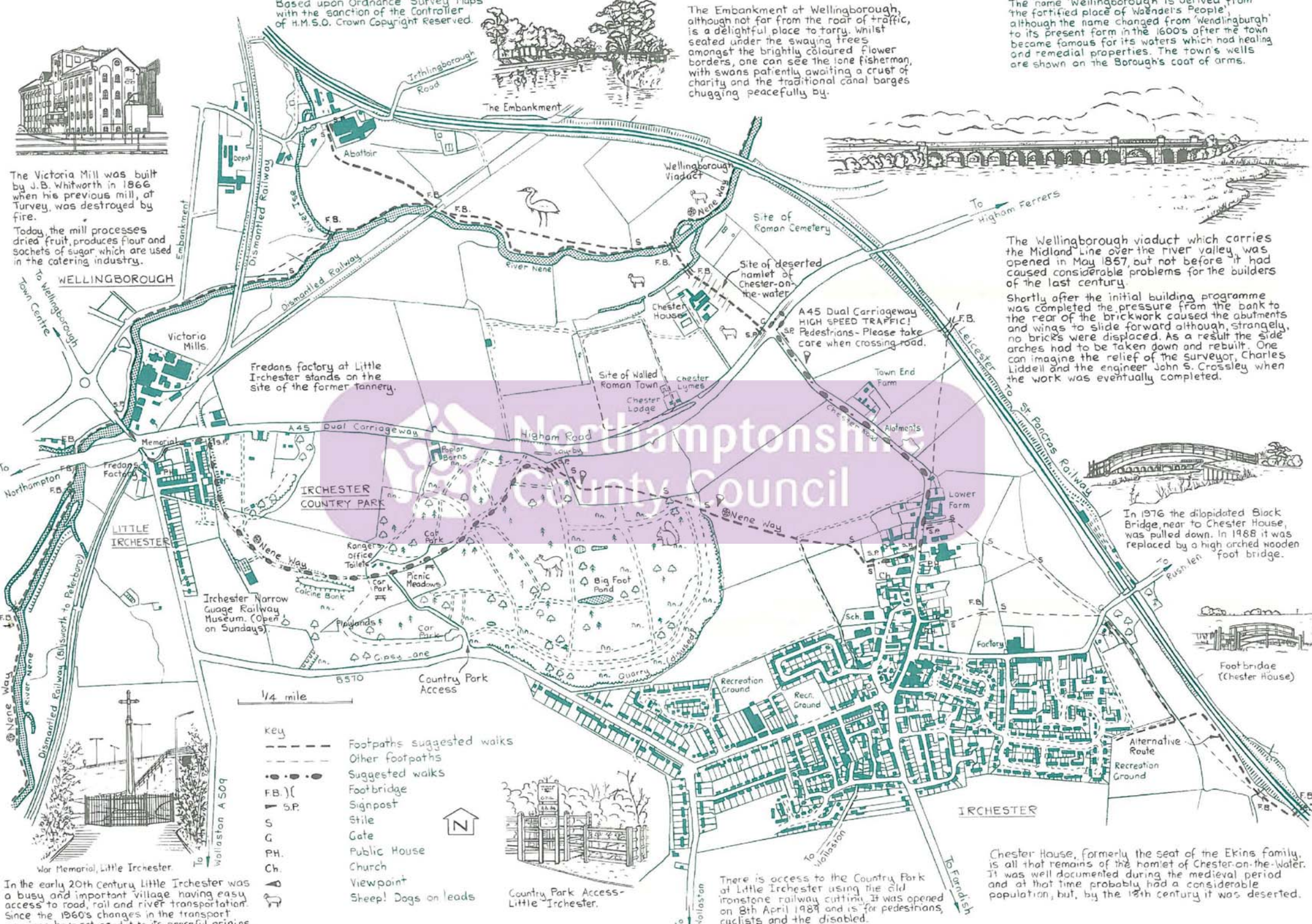
The Victoria Mill was built by J.B. Whitworth in 1866 when his previous mill, at Turvey, was destroyed by fire. Today, the mill processes dried fruit, produces flour and sachets of sugar which are used in the catering industry.

The Wellingborough viaduct which carries the Midland Line over the river valley, was opened in May 1857, but not before it had caused considerable problems for the builders of the last century.

Shortly after the initial building programme was completed the pressure from the bank to the rear of the brickwork caused the abutments and wings to slide forward although, strangely, no bricks were displaced. As a result the side arches had to be taken down and rebuilt. One can imagine the relief of the surveyor, Charles Liddell and the engineer John S. Crossley when the work was eventually completed.

In 1976 the dilapidated Black Bridge, near to Chester House, was pulled down. In 1988 it was replaced by a high arched wooden foot bridge.

Chester House, formerly the seat of the Ekins family, is all that remains of the hamlet of Chester-on-the-Water. It was well documented during the medieval period and at that time probably had a considerable population, but, by the 18th century it was deserted.



In the early 20th century Little Irchester was a busy and important village having easy access to road, rail and river transportation. Since the 1960's changes in the transport services have returned it to its peaceful origins.

There is access to the Country Park at Little Irchester using the old ironstone railway cutting. It was opened on 8th April 1989 and is for pedestrians, cyclists and the disabled.

- key
- - - Footpaths suggested walks
 - - - Other footpaths
 - Suggested walks
 - FB. () Footbridge
 - ▲ S.P. Signpost
 - Stile
 - G Gate
 - PH. Public House
 - Ch. Church
 - ▲ Viewpoint
 - 🐕 Sheep! Dogs on leads



Country Park Access - Little Irchester.

War Memorial, Little Irchester.

To Northampton
To Wellingborough

To Higham Ferrers

Leicester

St. Pancras Railway

Rushden

To Farthingish

To Wollaston

To Wollaston

To Wollaston

To Northampton

To Peterborough

To Wollaston A 509

To Wollaston

To Wollaston

To Wollaston