

Rutland Local History & Record Society

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Manton Village Walk September 2026

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INTRODUCTION

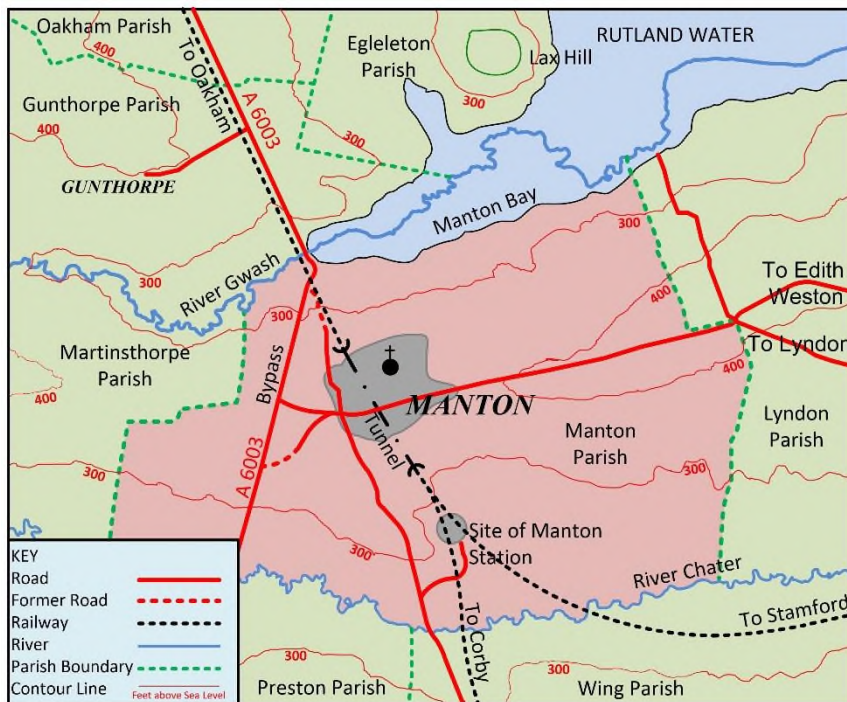
Manton, from the Old English *maen* and *tun*, meaning 'town on a rock', is not recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086, but it is probable that it was one of seven berewicks of the King's Manor of Hambleton Churchsoke.

Manton parish covers an area of 1,181 acres, and is bounded in the north by the River Gwash, and in the south by the River Chater. The parish was enclosed under an Act of 1804 and the land is almost wholly under grass except that part in the Gwash valley to the north which since 1975 has been under Rutland Water and known as Manton Bay.

The village stands in the middle of the parish on the top of a ridge between the two rivers about 400 feet above mean sea level. It is on the east side of the A6003 road from Oakham to Uppingham, where that road meets the road from Lyndon and Edith Weston. The Manton by-pass was built in 1964 at a cost of £67,000.



From Owen & Bowen's 1720 map of Rutland showing that the then main route from the south to Oakham was via Glaston, Wing and Manton (RO).



Manton parish is bounded in the north by the River Gwash, and in the south by the River Chater (RO).

The present day Birmingham to Peterborough railway line, originally opened as the Syston and Peterborough Railway in 1848, passes through a tunnel of 750 yards under the village and Manton station was near the south

end of the tunnel, but it closed in 1966. The Manton to Kettering Railway, passing over the Welland Viaduct and through Corby to Kettering, was opened in 1879 and Manton station became a junction. This was part of the Nottingham to St Pancras railway and Manton was the only stop before Kettering for 'The Robin Hood Express'. Both lines remain open to both passenger and freight traffic.

Owen & Bowen's 1720 map of Rutland shows that the main road route from London to Oakham and beyond entered the county near Harringworth, Northamptonshire, and passed through Glaston, Wing and Manton.

The constant flow of traffic, including pedestrians, those on horse-back, pack horses and horse-drawn carriages, must have been an interesting sight. The Nottingham Turnpike Act of 1754 resulted in a new route through Rutland, with new roads between Caldecott and Uppingham, and between Preston and Manton. From then on Manton would have enjoyed the added spectacle of fast stage coaches and mail coaches, all of which ended with the introduction of the railway.

James Wright, antiquary and author, was Lord of the Manor of Manton from 1683 until about 1716. Living and working as a lawyer in London, he regularly visited his father at Oakham, as well as Manton where he acquired the manor in 1683. He enjoyed angling and probably fished the River Gwash and Burley Fishponds. He published *The History and Antiquities of the County of Rutland* in 1684.

Thomas Blore, another antiquary, resided for a time at Manton and whilst here he was persuaded by Sir Gerard Noel and others to undertake the history of Rutland, volume one of which appeared in 1811 (*Rutland Magazine* Vol 1, pp 56-7).

THE WALK MAP

The map attached to this walk is based on the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25 inch to one mile map of 1904. Consequently, later buildings, extensions and demolitions are not shown. Numbers in the text, [29] for example, refer to locations shown on the map as:



THE WALK

Please:

- Respect private property.
- Use pavements and footpaths where available.
- Take great care when walking along or crossing roads.
- Remember that you are responsible for your own safety.

The walk starts at the *Village Hall* [1], formerly Manton National School. The school opened in October 1861, having been built on land given by the Lord of the Manor. The small stone-faced building cost £400 and was designed to accommodate 60 pupils. The school closed in 1948 when Daphne Elliott resigned as teacher and pupils were sent to Oakham and Uppingham primary schools (*Stamford Mercury* 10th December 1948).



Headmistress Daphne Elliott with pupils of Manton School in 1947 (Daphne Ball, née Elliott).

Before the present village hall was established, the malthouse, part of the Old Hall Estate owned by Col Heathcote, was used as a venue for social events. The George V and Queen Mary Jubilee celebrations were held here in 1935, as were many dances, fêtes and concerts. A stage was erected for performances by the village drama group directed by Mrs Street of The Priory.

When the village school closed it was decided that it should become the new village hall. The building and the land to the rear was acquired under a trust from The Charity Commission. A large hall, two dressing rooms and a stage were added to the Victorian school building and this new village hall was officially opened on 1st November 1952 by William Melville Codrington, the Lord Lieutenant of Rutland.

To the south of the Village Hall is the former *Blue Ball Inn* at 2 Priory Road [2] which opened in 1846 and closed in 1970. It was Grade II listed in 1984 and is now a private residence named *Rutland House*. It is of coursed rubble construction with 2 storey and 1½ storey components, and probably of late 18th century origin.



The Blue Ball Inn about 1910 (Jack Hart Collection at Rutland County Museum ref 2002.6.0362).

Opposite the former *Blue Ball Inn* is the entrance to *The Priory* [3] at 1 Priory Road. Part of the house can be seen from here through the entrance drive.

The house incorporates the remains of a former priory, but is now externally largely of 19th century origin, though possibly based on the restoration of earlier features. The north part of this house is much older and contains a 3-light stone mullioned window to each floor. The King of the Belgians lived here during the Great War.

Steps in the cellar lead to a tunnel in a south-west direction and are rumoured to connect with *Old Hall Farm* at Martinsthorpe. However, a survey of the house at Martinsthorpe in 1993 did not find any evidence of this.



The Priory west elevation, about 1910 (Jack Hart Collection at Rutland County Museum ref 2002.6.0382).



The north elevation of The Priory in 2026 (Google Earth).

There are six 'Country Houses' in Manton, occupied at some time by Captain Street at *The Priory*, with Colonel Heathcote at *The Hall*, Major Atkins at

The Old Hall, Colonel Tollemache at *Manton House*, the two Miss Bankarts at *The Grange*, and Vere Finch at *The*

Croft. These houses provided work for the villagers, including cooks, domestic servants and gardeners, and coachmen, grooms and stable hands for those with horses.

The Village pump [4], shown as 'P' near the old school entrance on the walk map, was removed in 1912 due to pollution of the water supply. Mains water was not laid on until 1935.

Continue to walk along Priory Road. *The Hollies* at 14 [5], with its gable end to the street, is Grade II listed. This house of coursed and banded rubble stone with big ashlar quoins is of 2 storeys and 3 sections. The datestone is now illegible, but the house is considered to be late 17th or early 18th century.

The Grade II listed coursed rubble houses at 18 and 20 Priory Road [6] were formerly part of a row of cottages with 17th century parts, but they are mainly of a later date.

In the gated private drive opposite, on the right is the thatched Grade II listed *Manor Farm House* [7] with its gable end to the street. A tablet high over the front door of this farmhouse reads '*Thomas Brown founder and builder of this house only by the help of God as saith the prophit David except the land build the house they labour in vain that build it. Anno Dom 1583*'. Beyond, but not seen from Priory Road, is the Grade II listed *Manor Barn* [8], which has a pair of cruck blades inside.

Opposite *Manor Farm House* is the Grade II listed *The Yews* [9], again with its gable end to Priory Road and with coursed rubble walls, quoins and ashlar bands. A datestone visible in the gable has 1625 and initials R S.

Continue to walk along Priory Road.

[10] is *Stonesfield Farm* which was Grade II listed in 1984. It has coursed rubble walls with ashlar bands. In the gable wall there is a datestone with 1772 and the initials S over I O. This date probably represents when the building was heightened.

At the eastern end of Priory Road, but not part of this walk, there are Public Footpaths which appear to lead to the Rutland Water perimeter track and Manton Bay, but this access is only possible from Lyndon Visitor Centre which has the story of the Rutland Ospreys.



Fryer's Cottage, formerly Thomas Fryer Almshouses, in 2006 (Sheila Sleath).

Now enter the driveway opposite *Stonesfield Farm*. Pudding Bag Cottage [11] which sits on the corner of the

driveway has a scratch sundial on one of its stones in the gable end. This is a new build, so this has clearly been imported from a demolished property elsewhere.

Just beyond, on the left, is *Fryer's Cottage* [12]. This cottage was originally the *Thomas Fryer Almshouses*, established by the 1901 will of Thomas Fryer and to be maintained as almshouses for Manton and Hambleton residents.

The Trustees eventually sold this building because of high maintenance costs, and it is now known as *Fryer's Cottage*. Some of the garden was retained and two bungalows were erected here in 1981 by the Trust. These are shown in grey on the map [13]. The Trust sold these in recent years and has now acquired six modern properties in Oakham for use as Almshouses.

Now walk back along Priory Road, follow it round the bend to the left and then turn right opposite the church into St Mary's Road, formerly known as Middle Street.

The area to the left [14], now occupied by modern houses, is almost certainly the site of the severe fire in July 1728 which swept through this part of the village and '*in a very short time it had consumed eleven dwelling houses, besides barns, stables etc*' (*Caledonian Mercury*, 13th August 1728). In spite of this disaster many of the earlier houses survived, particularly in Priory Road and Stocks Hill.

On the north side of St Mary's Road, the only listed building is *Old Cottage*, now known as *Walnut House*, at number 20 [15].

This early 17th century house was formerly at least two dwellings and was once an antique dealer's shop. The listing records that there is a date beneath the chimney stack of 1733, but this probably refers to alterations. The interior has two inglenook fireplaces and an 18th century stone fireplace in one of the inner rooms. There is also a series of fine panelled oak doors which are original to this house.

There is a scratch sundial on the right side of the east door which is unusual on a secular building. It is inverted and probably on a stone recovered from a local building following alterations.

Continue along to the far end of this part of St Mary's Road. On the left is *Vine Cottage* [16] at 7 St Mary's Road, a 17th century Grade II listed house with a Welsh slate roof and a single dormer window. There is a small fire window at the far right hand side of the house.

Next to *Vine Cottage* is *Ivy House* [17] at 5 St Mary's Road. This Grade II listed house is thought to be late 17th century, but it has later alterations.

Now walk past *Ivy House* and turn slightly left to stand in front of the *Horse & Jockey* public house [18]. The building is not listed but it has been used as a public house of this name since 1851 when Otho Wiggington and then his wife Frances were landlords until the 1870s. It is the only pub situated on the Rutland Water cycle path and is perfectly placed to explore the surrounding area.

It is one of three public houses named the *Horse & Jockey* in Rutland, the other two were in Langham and Uppingham but these have now closed.

Now walk down Cemetery Lane to see the village cemetery [19]. Before the Manton by-pass was built in 1964, this was part of the Uppingham to Oakham main road. To prove the point, opposite the cemetery gates there used to be a Grade II listed early 19th century cast iron milestone [20] with a three-sided base and a round arched capping piece to the rear. The embossed lettering recorded *To Uppingham 4 miles, To Oakham 3 miles*, and on the cap, *To London 93 miles*. Unfortunately, it is now missing.

When the railway was being built in the 1840s, the earth from the tunnel was deposited in the field opposite the cemetery and it became known as the Clay Banks. The small hills and humps became a children's playground in the winter for tobogganing.

Now return to the *Horse & Jockey* and continue to walk up St Mary's Road to its junction with Lyndon Road at the top of the hill [21].

The road to the right leads to the Lyndon Road junction with the A6003 which now by-passes Manton. Over this junction, the bridleway to the west leads to the site of the deserted medieval village of Martinthorpe and Old Hall Farm, but this is not part of the present walk.

From point [22], walk a few yards into Wing Road to see the cottages that were occupied by the brickyard workers from about 1840 [23].



Manton Hall, often referred to as New Hall, in 1910. It was built for Col Robert Heathcote at the cost of the Midland Railway Company (Jack Hart Collection at Rutland County Museum ref 2002.6.0361).

Return to Lyndon Road and walk in an easterly direction to the entrance gates of Manton Hall Residential Care Home [24], sometimes referred to as *Manton New Hall*. It was built about 1835 for Col Robert Heathcote at the cost of the Midland Railway Company because *Old Hall*, his previous residence, was directly above the route of the proposed railway tunnel. *Manton Hall* is not listed.

A little further along Lyndon Road, and on the opposite side, is *Manton Grange* [25], originally known as *Westholme*. It is another unlisted large Victorian property in Manton built for a member of the hunting fraternity.

Now walk to the triangular village green at [26], the central point of the village. The three mature lime trees were planted here to commemorate the coronation of King George V in 1911. An additional tree was planted here in 2012 to mark The Queen's Diamond Jubilee.



Manton Grange about 1910 (Jack Hart Collection at Rutland County Museum ref 2002.6.0363).

Now continue straight ahead along Lyndon Road, using the footpath on the right-hand side. Cross over the road and walk a few metres into the gravel drive on the north side which has a Public Footpath sign at point [27]. From here there is a fine view of the south arm of Rutland Water, Lax Hill, and Burley on the Hill House on the horizon.

Opposite the gravel drive is a row of semi-detached houses [28], some of which were built in 1934. These were mainly provided for the occupants of the demolished houses which had previously stood around the tunnel air shaft in the centre of the village which let smoke out of the tunnel. In later years of course, diesel trains took the place of steam trains and smoke was no longer a problem. Many of the occupants of these houses were railway workers.



The Croft in Lyndon Road about 1920 (Jack Hart Collection at Rutland County Museum ref 2002.6.0365).

Walk back along Lyndon Road. On the left at 9 Lyndon Road is a large house known as *The Croft* [29], best viewed from the gateway. It was built in 1905 on the site of the former village pinfold (a pound for stray animals) by Henry Randolph Finch, the son of George Finch, as a hunting lodge with stabling and a coach house, but it is not listed. The house was later occupied by Vere Finch, the son of Henry Finch. He was born in 1878, married Florence Mary Harbord in 1916, and died in 1933 (*Burkes Peerage*

and *Baronetage*, 73rd ed). *The Croft* was a children's hostel during World War II.

Opposite *The Croft* in Lyndon Road is Dairy Lane which leads down to *Dairy Farm*, but it is not part of this walk.

Next to *The Croft* is Southview Close with mainly modern housing on the west side. However, this is also a Public Footpath (but not part of this walk) which leads down to Broccoli Bottom, the site of the brick works which closed about 1890, then on to the site of the former Manton Station and Wing beyond - a route well used by railway workers and school children until the station closed.



large three storey house with an early 18th century facade built on to an even earlier building.

Looking north down Stocks Hill about 1920. On the right is the butcher's shop. Beyond is the Post Office at 5 Stocks Hill and then the forge at 7 Stocks Hill. Opposite is Old Hall coach house with Old Hall beyond (Jack Hart Collection at Rutland County Museum ref 2002.6.0386).

At the triangular village green, turn right and start to walk down Stocks Hill, so named because this was once the location of the village stocks. On the right at 3 Stocks Hill is *Three Wells* [30], a Grade II listed late 18th century south-facing house. It was built in four sections and the kitchen was originally a two up and two down cottage. Of the three wells, one is under the kitchen floor and the other two are in the garden. Note the coursed squared rubble walls, banded in the gable wall. Colonel Heathcote's sister, the Countess of Mar, came to live here in the early 1940s.

Beyond the large garage doors next to *Three Wells* is a Grade II listed building [31] which was Charlie Cramp's butcher's shop and behind was his slaughter house. He delivered meat to local villages including during World War Two when meat was rationed. Later, until 1966, it was a grocer's shop.

Across the road from *Three Wells* is *The Coach House* [32] and *Stable Cottage* [33], both originally part of the Old Hall Estate, now converted to living accommodation. Neither is listed.

On the east side of Stocks Hill, opposite *Stable Cottage* is the Grade II listed 5 Stocks Hill [34]. This coursed rubble cottage with a thatched roof is mainly 18th century, but it has a much earlier core with a visible cruck blade. Note that the windows and door have stone architraves and keystones. At one time, this was the village Post Office

before it moved down to 7 Stocks Hill to be run by the Tyler family.

The Forge, at 7 Stocks Hill [35], consisting of a 17th century house and former outbuildings to the right, are also Grade II listed. They were tenanted by the Tyler family from 1620 and the outbuildings were used as a forge with two forges until 1950.

In 1951 a fire in the old forge resulted in a new roof to replace the former thatch.

From 1721 to 1764, the Tyler family ran the Talbot alehouse here.

Opposite is the Grade II listed *Old Hall* [36]. This is a

Old Hall is dated on the rear gable with a datestone of 1688 and initials C over W B. The original house was a T-plan but there is now a late 18th and 19th century extension to the rear. The central front door is set in a Gibbs surround, with a pediment and an ornate keystone. The Gibbs surround is named after architect James Gibbs who often used and popularised it in England. Inside *Old Hall* is a fine 18th century panelled room with lugged architraves to the door and window surrounds.



Old Hall on Stocks Hill in 2026. Note the Gibbs surround to the door (Google Earth).

The *Old Hall* is one of the largest properties in the village and as well as stabling, it had a coach house, an apple store, maltings and several cottages. It was built by the Heathcote family, and all these estate buildings have become much sought after residences.

When the railway was being built, a major challenge was to excavate a tunnel under the village. This led to opposition from Col Robert Heathcote who lived at *Old Hall* which was directly above the route of the proposed tunnel. He agreed to this on condition that the railway company build him a new home to avoid disturbance from trains running under his property. *New Hall* was built as a result (see above).

Next to *The Forge* on the east side of Stocks Hill is the brick built *Six Steps Cottage* at 9 Stocks Hill [37]. The buildings shown on the map opposite this house are workers cottages which were built for railway employees and which were demolished in the 1930s. The site is now occupied by modern houses. Beyond *Six Steps Cottage* is *Corner House* at [38].

Turn right into Church Lane. On the right is 2 Church Lane [39], an early 18th century single storey Grade II listed thatched cottage. Note the fire window at the far end of the cottage.



Little Manton House about 1910 by Stocks of Uppingham (Jack Hart Collection at Rutland County Museum ref 2002.6.0371).

The end house in Church Lane is *Little Manton House* [40], a mainly early 18th century Grade II listed house with a later rear wing which faces onto Church Lane as seen here with the main entry to the building. It was occupied by Lt Colonel The Hon D P Tollemache, DSO, and Lady Tollemache from 1902 to 1942. It was then a Women's Land Army hostel until 1946.

9 Church Lane [41] on the north-west side of *Little Manton House*, as shown on the map and in the photograph above, was demolished about 1914. Reputedly the house dated from the Stuarts (1603 to 1649) and may have been the home of the Burnaby family, historically well-known in Rutland. (William Burnaby was born in Manton in 1573, the son of Thomas and Mary Burnaby. He died in 1617).

Now is a good time to explore the church of St Mary [42] which stands on the site of a Saxon church. The present church is of Norman origin and has been extended over time, resulting in its rather unusual appearance. Over

the eastern end of the nave is a Sanctus bellcote, but the bell has been missing for over 200 years. The porch with the little room above it and the south doorway were added in the fourteenth century. There are two scratch dials (crude sundials) on the front face of this porch, one either side of the entrance. It appears that both originally had twenty-four radial lines.

The west front was rebuilt in the early thirteenth century. The lancet windows, the two buttresses surmounted by upright pillars and the double bellcote above give it a solid appearance. The double bellcote is one of five in Rutland and it holds two bells which were recast in 1920 by John Taylor of Loughborough retaining earlier inscriptions. They are *CUM VOCO AD ECCLESIAM VENITE 1610 T S* [When I call come to church] on the treble bell. T S may be the initials of Thomas Smythe, churchwarden at this time. The tenor bell is inscribed *ABCDEFGHII*.

The nave has late Norman pillars and the clerestory above it was added in the fourteenth century to give more light to the building. The nave has a Norman drum-shaped font and an alms box dated 1637. The archway into the chancel is thirteenth century and has the royal coat of arms of 1796 which was restored in 1975. There is a small organ in the north transept.



Manton War Memorial (RO).

The gravestones in the churchyard are mainly of limestone and Swithland slate. A small area on the west side of the churchyard has several gravestones of people who lived in the nearby hamlet of Martinthorpe. The men of Manton who gave their lives during the two World Wars are remembered on a Grade II listed memorial in the north-west area of the churchyard. It is in the form of a Celtic cross of Cornish granite with a Crusader's sword. It was dedicated by Canon Whittingham, the Archdeacon of Oakham, in 1920.

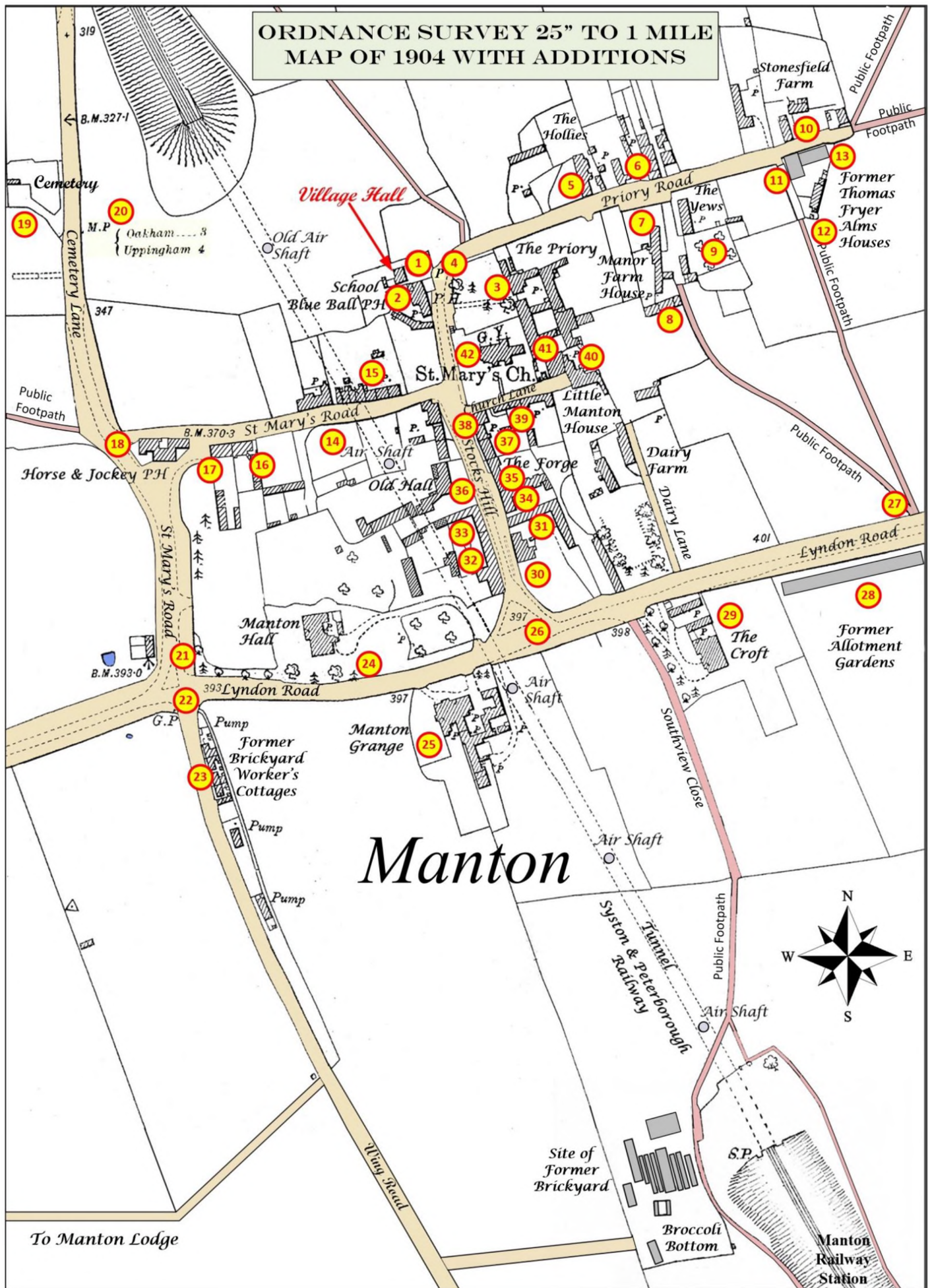
This is now the end of the Village Walk, Many thanks to those who helped to prepare it, particularly Sheila Sleath, Deborah and Tony Martin, and Tim Clough.

Robert Ovens, June 2026

Sources and References

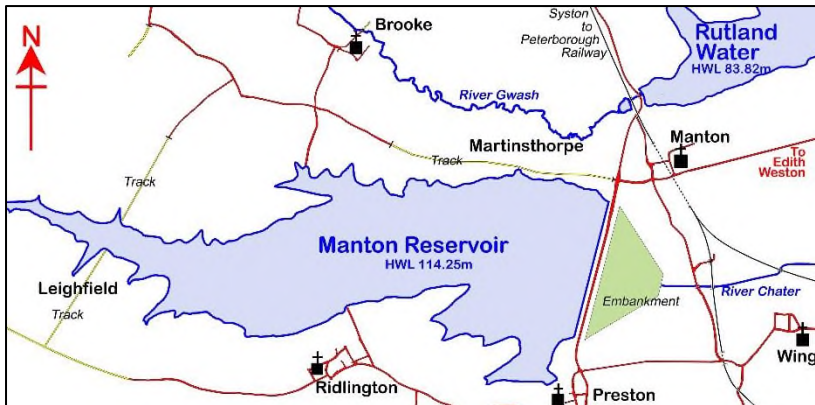
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Manton Village Walk Map



Manton Reservoir

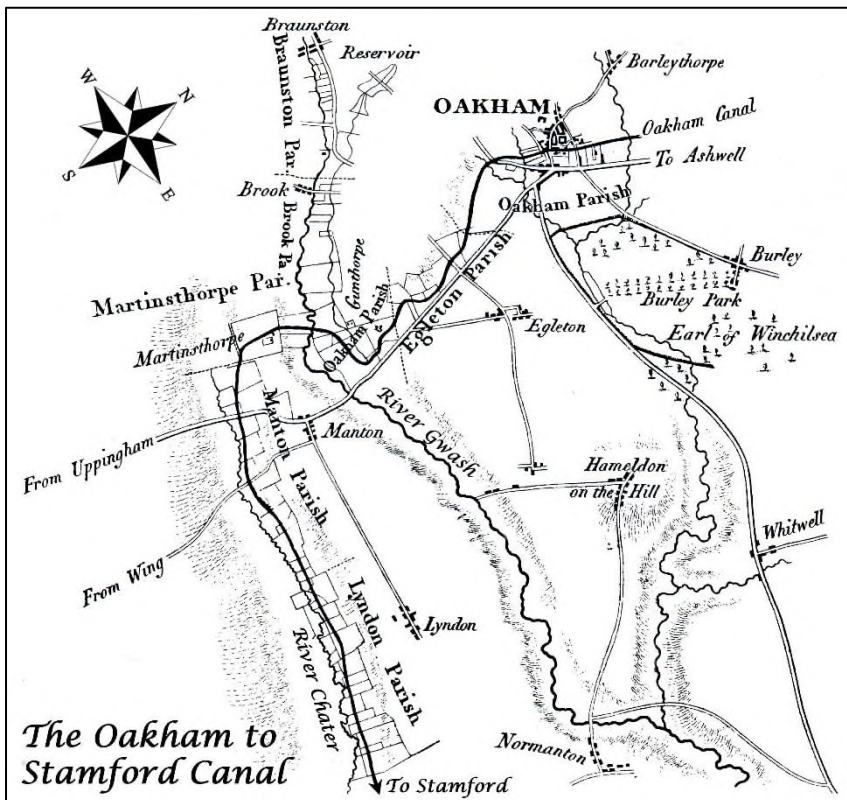
Rutland Water was originally known as Empingham Reservoir and, until being granted Parliamentary approval in 1970, it was part of a scheme which included two new pumped storage reservoirs, the other being Manton Reservoir. This was to be in the Chater valley immediately south of Manton. The dam was to be constructed along the line of the Manton to Preston road (A6003), with the reservoir to the west of this line. In the event, two reservoirs so close together in Rutland was considered to be a step too far, and the Empingham Reservoir scheme was chosen because it was more cost effective.



The proposed reservoirs were in adjacent valleys and together would have covered 4.5 per cent of the land area of Rutland (RO).

Manton Canal

One hundred and sixty years earlier, in 1810, Thomas Telford proposed a new canal to link Oakham with Stamford, which would pass through Manton parish. It was to be called the Stamford Junction Canal, and the aim was to provide a link between the Melton Mowbray to Oakham canal and the Welland and Nene navigations beyond Stamford. The new canal was to follow a southerly route from Oakham to Martinsthorpe and then turn eastwards through Manton parish to follow the Chater valley to Stamford. The scheme was considered again in 1815 and 1828 but never adopted.



Detail from Thomas Telford's plan for the proposed Stamford Junction Canal passing through Manton Parish. It was to connect Oakham with Stamford, then branch in one direction to Peterborough and in the other to Boston (ROLLR DE 470/106).

Manton Windmill

The earliest record of a windmill in Manton is when one was granted in 1548 to Gregory, Lord Cromwell and by 1566 it had been conveyed to Elizabeth I. In 1611, Thomas Lightfoot sold a windmill, with some land, to Robert Burnaby. After this the windmill changed hands many times. The *Leicester Chronicle* and the *Grantham Journal* both reported that a post windmill which stood a little distance from the village on the road to Lyndon was burnt down on 17th April 1891. It appears that the fire originated in the timber supports and was the work of boys who dropped lighted matches into the crevices and other open parts. The mill was the property of Mr Smith, baker, of Oakham and had been disused for some time.



Manton windmill on the Ordnance Survey Series 1 25" map of 1886 (Rutland County Museum).