Hambleton (settlement on a hill) has the atmosphere of an island community, being almost surrounded today by Rutland Water. Earlier there were three separate hamlets - Upper (also Greater), Middle and Nether (also Lower) Hambleton. A separate medieval manor of Hambleton Parva (Little Hambleton) lay to the east of Upper Hambleton in the direction of Whitwell. All of Nether Hambleton and a considerable part of Middle Hambleton were lost when Rutland Water was created in the 1970s.

Upper and Middle Hambleton are now often known simply as Hambleton, although the original names are retained on recent Ordnance Survey maps.

Hambleton was formerly known as Hameldune (1086 survey), Hamilton (1576 survey) and Hamleyton (Speed, 1610). It was once the centre of a royal Mercian estate, later held by Edith, the Saxon Queen of England, as her dowry when she married King Edward the Confessor.

At the Domesday Survey of 1086 it was the richest manor of ‘Roteland’ - more important than Ridlington and even Oakham. Across the manor there were three churches served by three priests and there were seven outlying dependent places not named in Domesday Book; six are identifiable as Braunston, Normanton, Lyndon, Martinthorpe, Manton and Edith Weston, but the identity of the seventh is uncertain.

The Umfraville family and then the Badlesmeres were the early lords of the manor of Hambleton, Sir Robert de Umfraville being a ‘kinsman’ of William the Conqueror. Lord Badlesmere was responsible in 1315 for obtaining the charter for a weekly market and annual fair in the village. The annual fair was held on the ‘eve day and morrow of St Bartholomew’, then the 14th of August, but it has long been discontinued.

At this time Hambleton Parva was a separate manor, and the lords of the manor included the Flore family of Whitwell.

In 1468 Edward IV granted the manor of Hambleton to Sir Henry Ferrers whose family continued to be lords of the manor until the estate was sold in 1601 to Sir John Harington of Burley-on-the-Hill.

George Villiers, the first Duke of Buckingham purchased Burley-on-the-Hill from the Haringtons in 1615 and with it came other Rutland estates including Hambleton. The second Duke of Buckingham had all the estates taken from him during the Civil War, but they were later returned. Although he was a wealthy man as a result, he was also a spendthrift and he was obliged to sell these estates.

The new owner was Daniel Finch, the Earl of Nottingham, later the Earl of Winchelsea and Nottingham, whose descendants, the Finches of Burley on the Hill, continued to be lords of the manor of Hambleton for some 270 years. In the 1940s, following the death of Wilfrid Finch, the estate was broken up. In Hambleton some of the properties were sold to the tenants, and others were acquired by the Society of Merchant Venturers of Bristol, who also acquired much of the property in Egleton.

In 1841 the population of the three Hambletons was 325. It was 224 in 1921 and 203 in 2011.

In 1871 the village was self-sufficient with its own blacksmith, wheelwright, carpenter, undertaker, shoemaker, baker, public house, postmaster, two shops and school. Today, it is largely a commuter village with many of the inhabitants working elsewhere.

THE VILLAGE MAP

The map attached to this walk is based on the Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 25 inch to one-mile map of 1928. Consequently, later buildings, extensions and demolitions are not shown. Numbers in the text, [12] for example, refer to locations shown on the map.

Please:
Respect private property.
Use pavements and footpaths where available.
Take great care when walking alongside or crossing roads, particularly the very busy A6003.
Remember that you are responsible for your own safety.

THE WALK

The walk starts at St Andrews Church [1] which stands on the highest ground between Oakham and The Wash. It dates from the late twelfth century but much of its medieval character was lost during Victorian restorations.

The church is normally open and is well worth a visit if time allows. There is a guide available, but the following may be of interest -

- Altar frontals and sanctuary curtains embroidered by the Sisters of Bethany.

A c1839 watercolour painting of Hambleton Church (Uppingham School Archives).
- Coffin lids of a priest and a lady in the south aisle.
- Iron bound parish chest.
- Medieval holy water stoup in the porch.
- Norman capitals and arch of the south doorway.
- Reredos by the glass-painter James Egan (1847-1918).
- Impressive organ played by Sir Malcolm Sargent.
- Victorian mural paintings in the south aisle.
- Victorian stained glass by James Egan.

On leaving the church, walk down the path towards the churchyard east gate. On the left is the memorial to Walter Gore Marshall (1845-1899) erected by his sister. He built Hambleton Hall in 1881 as a hunting box (see later) and lived there until his death on 21st May 1899.

Having made a fortune from his brewery business, Walter Gore Marshall came to this area to enjoy the fox hunting, and in particular the intensive social activities that went with it. At this time Melton Mowbray was the Mecca of fox hunting and Hambleton was a convenient base. He was a great benefactor of the village, having provided a new school, post office and cottages before he died. At the church he also paid for the rebuilding of the chancel and for the installation of the organ. The east window by Egan is to the memory of his parents.

On the right near the churchyard gate is the Clipsham stone War Memorial [2]. It was made by George Draycott of Oakham at a cost of £73 and was unveiled on 27th June 1920 by Major-General Lord Ranksborough. Fifty-nine men from the villages served in the Great War of whom eight did not return.

To the left, immediately outside the churchyard, is the site of the old school [3]. It was built in 1838 on land given by George Finch of Burley-on-the-Hill and demolished in 1892 when the new school was erected on School Hill.

In 1846 there were about 50 pupils and by 1877 the roll was 30 and the mistress was a Miss Mary Butcher. It was supported by public subscription and dividends from Old South Sea Annuities. The site is now part of the road.

Next to the school was the horse pond, used to soak horses’ feet as well as for drinking and washing. It was filled in when the old school was demolished.

Before Rutland Water, the road ahead went to Normanton, Edith Weston and Ketton and it is still called Ketton Road. To the right and down the hill was the road to Middle and Nether Hambleton, Egleton and Lyndon. These routes are no more. They now lead to the footpath, cycle track and anglers’ access round the Hambleton peninsula.

Now turn left and walk into Oakham Road. On the right is Was Thatched [4], a much-altered unlisted house believed to be a former toll house. Next on this side is The Finch’s Arms [5], named after the Finch family of Burley-on-the-Hill who were lords of the manor of Hambleton for over 250 years. It is said that the public house name was moved from Burley because the family did not like it there.
mid-eighteenth century Grade II listed property. It is built of well-coursed ironstone with quoins to all the angles and openings. It has ground floor bay windows and there is a sundial to the right of the upper central window which may be dated, but it is usually covered by wisteria.

Next is a barn conversion known as Wishing Well Barn and then, behind the long stone wall, is the Grade II listed Stone Cottage [13], a fine example of vernacular revival in a simple style. It was built in the early 1900s and originally included the village bakehouse. It was later the home of Sir John Codrington (1899-1991), a well-known landscape gardener. He had careers in the army and BOAC before taking up garden design professionally in 1958. He had projects in England, France, Malta, Australia, South Africa, Madagascar, Ethiopia and Papua New Guinea.

Opposite the main entrance to Hambleton Hall is a line of eighteenth century thatched cottages with late sixteenth century elements which were originally four dwellings. The extended first pair are now a single dwelling known as Mary's Cottage [14]. The second pair, adjoining on the right, are also now a single dwelling and are known as Holly Cottage [15]. All are one-and-a-half storey and Grade II listed.

Ketton Road now continues to the shore of Rutland Water at the eastern end of the Hambleton Peninsula, but it is not part of this walk.

Opposite, on the south side of Ketton Road, is the thatched Old World Cottage [16] which is Grade II listed. Although it is dated 1711 on a diamond datestone in the east gable, it appears to be of two different builds.

Walk a short distance back along Ketton Road and turn left into the private drive leading to Hambleton Hall.

On the left along this drive is the Hall Stables [17], a quadrangle built in an arts and crafts style. The west-facing main frontage has pedestrian and carriage entrances. Above is a copper and wood cupola with a hunting weathervane above four arts and crafts clock dials. The inscriptions on the dials celebrate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria:

- East and west facing dials: Anno Sexagesimo Regni Victoriae Reginae [In the sixtieth year of the reign of Queen Victoria].
- North and south facing dials: Anno Domini MDCCXCII [AD 1897].

Further along the drive is Hambleton Hall [18], a large Grade II listed house in old English style which was built in 1881 by John Thomas Lee for Walter Gore Marshall. He lived here until he died in 1899. It was then inherited by the son of his younger sister, Evangeline Astley Paston Cooper, who erected his memorial in the churchyard.

The Hall is now a high-class hotel and restaurant with an international reputation. Inside it is elaborately decorated in a very eclectic manner.

Apart from his good deeds in the village, Walter Marshall is best remembered for the excellence of his table and cellar, and the convivial company that he kept. The house has therefore come full circle.

Evangeline lived at Hambleton Hall with her husband Major Clement Astley Paston Cooper apart from when it was a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) hospital in World War I. She was initially a keen devotee of hunting, but later she mentored a group of bright young people including Malcolm Sargent and Charles Scott Moncrieff as well as Noel Coward who produced ‘Hay Fever’ in the village hall in 1925.

After Evangeline Astley Paston Cooper’s death, the house was owned by Lord Trent and Major Hoare.

Now follow the grass footpath through the trees back to Ketton Road (see the direction arrows on the walk map).

Immediately on the left is the Grade II listed Hambleton Manor House [19], best viewed looking towards the east elevation. This is a large early seventeenth century house with eighteenth century additions. The north end is a late nineteenth century extension in old English style. The projecting porch with balustrading and arcading is based on the loggia of Hambleton Old Hall (see below) and is also nineteenth century. Like other early properties in the village, it has a Collyweston stone tiled roof. It is thought that the earlier part of this house may have been

The front elevation of Hambleton Hall.

The arts and crafts sundial on the front (south-facing) elevation of Hambleton Hall. Its Latin inscription is translated as ‘It’s drinking time now’ and the French as ‘Time passes, friendship remains, it is time to do good’ (R O)
built on the site of a medieval manor house.

Next to Hambleton Manor House and set back is The Old Vicarage [20] with its stone mullion windows and impressive Dutch gable. This house is not listed.

The Cottage [21] is a large early eighteenth century ivy-covered house which is Grade II listed. Notice the moulded chimney stacks, and the small fire window near the entrance door.

and crafts style by Walter Gore Marshal. They replaced an earlier thatched cottage which also served as a post office, run by William and Sarah Steel. Sarah was also the village grocer.

William Steel was still the postmaster in 1925, but Mrs. Bushell, a relative of the Steels, had become the postmistress by the early 1930s, a position which she held for 50 years and for which she received the British Empire Medal.

Next on the left are Post Office Cottages including the former Post and Telegraph Office [22] which still has its arts and crafts sign and clock above the front window.

This small group of three attractive, high-quality cottages was built in 1898 in an arts and crafts style by Walter Gore Marshal. They replaced an earlier thatched cottage which also served as a post office, run by William and Sarah Steel. Sarah was also the village grocer.

William Steel was still the postmaster in 1925, but Mrs. Bushell, a relative of the Steels, had become the postmistress by the early 1930s, a position which she held for 50 years and for which she received the British Empire Medal.

Next on the left is the thatched and timber-clad Village Hall [25]. Opposite is Hambleton House [26] and just below this are Hillfields Cottages [27] - two pairs of semi-detached bungalows which were built for four families who lost their homes in the early 1970s when Rutland Water was being created.

Further down the hill on the left is Old School House [28], formerly the ‘new’ village school, built for 45 junior pupils and 15 infants in 1892 by Walter Marshall on land given by George Finch. This replaced the ‘old’ National School at the east end of the churchyard. In 1925 it was known as a Public Elementary School and Miss Dorothy Tibbit was the teacher. The teacher from 1929 was Miss Dolce Ellingworth who left in 1935 to teach at the larger school in Market Overton. The school closed in 1962.

In the 1890s Walter Marshall gave boots to the boys to enable them to walk to the school and after this red riding hood capes were given every two years to the girls by his sister, Mrs Evangeline Astley Paston Cooper. Mrs. Cooper provided the material and the ladies of the village made them up to her design. The girls then had to present themselves to Mrs Cooper in the drawing room at Hambleton Hall to receive their capes, but the tradition ended in the 1930s.

A former master at this school in the early 1900s was Mr S C Cooke. He was also a keen photographer and produced a range of picture postcards of local villages and also a series of scenes depicting rural life in the country at this time.

Now turn left and walk down Lyndon Road which was earlier known as School Hill. The first building on the right, to the south of the church, is the late sixteenth century Grade II listed Old Priest’s House [23]. This long low one-and-a-half storied house has been extended more than once, the earliest part being that nearest to the road. The rear wall is built into the slope and forms the boundary of the churchyard. When it was three dwellings it was occupied by a butcher and a baker as well as a chantry priest.

A photograph of circa 1910 shows that it was then thatched. Since then, the front of the house has been supported with stone buttresses.

Opposite is St Andrew’s House [24] which was originally two semi-detached cottages. Notice the original roof line on the south gable.

Opposite is the site of the former village smithy [29], although nothing remains of it now. George Tyler, the Manton blacksmith, travelled here on two afternoons a week in the late 1800s and early 1900s to shoe horses and repair agricultural machinery.

Further down School Hill, on the left, is Pinfold Cottage [30], just above the site of the former village pindolf [31]. This was a small enclosure where stray animals were kept until they were claimed by their owners.

The walk now continues down the hill to the shore of Rutland Water, but it can end here if preferred.

The next property of note, although virtually unseen behind a high hedge, is Orchard House [32], the last house on the right at the bottom of the hill. It was formerly several seventeenth century cottages of different build.
The stone mullion windows with hoodmoulds and the canted bay window are not original to the house, although they may be contemporary. One room in Orchard House had fine oak panelling which came from Loddington Hall.

This was the last property in Middle Hambleton to escape demolition when Rutland Water was created. Limes Farm, Little Cottage, Parker’s, Beech Farm, Bunkley and Old Hall Farm barns were not so fortunate.

Continue to the cattle grid which marks the end of the public highway [33]. Now walk along the access road to the ‘private access’ sign on the fence [34] to see the magnificent Hambleton Old Hall [35]. Now standing in a prominent position overlooking the south arm of Rutland Water, it was originally in Nether Hambleton.

Hambleton Old Hall from the south-east (R O).

Hambleton Old Hall was built by Christopher Loveday in 1610. Within a short time, he had sold it to Roger Quarles of Sleaford. It was again sold in 1634, this time to Abel Barker of Hambleton. The sale included ‘all dores, waynscott, locks, keys, glasse, tables, forms, bedsteads, shales, thralls, utensills etc.’ From this point on the house was let as a farmhouse and this use continued for the next 250 years.

Abel’s son, Sir Abel Barker, who later built Lyndon Hall, inherited Old Hall in 1639. Ownership passed down by inheritance and sale from the Barker family to their descendants, the Conants of Lyndon Hall who still own the property.

It is described as ‘a small but ambitious ‘H’ plan house with gabled wings and mullion windows - an excellent example of Renaissance architecture’. Although many of the original interior fittings have been removed, externally the loggias, balustrade balconies, arcaded parapets and substantial ashlar chimney stacks give the house a very pleasing appearance.

J N Brewer mentions in his The Beauties of England and Wales (1813) that ‘in an upper apartment is still preserved several suits of plate armor’, presumably left over from the Civil War as Sir Abel Barker was Cromwell’s Representative for Rutland.

Return to near the cattle grid at point [33]. Before the creation of Rutland Water, Lyndon Road continued from here to Nether Hambleton, Egleton and Lyndon. In Nether Hambleton, you would have found several small clusters of houses and cottages. Ivydene was a seventeenth century farmhouse where Methodist services were held. Red House was an inn in 1795. Woodbine Cottage included a chapel at some time. East View was a smallholding which included a butcher’s shop. The village bakehouse was once at Clarke’s and Charity’s Cottages. There was also April Cottage, Hoyle’s Cottage, Wade’s Cottage, and Beehive Cottage which was the smallest dwelling. All these properties were demolished during the creation of Rutland Water, much of the demolition material being used to create the bunds at Egleton Birdwatching Centre.

Also here until about 1830, was Weldon Cottage, the home of shepherds William and Richard Weldon and their parents. The two sons were hanged in 1789 at Mount Pleasant (near the Swooning Bridge, on the Uppingham road into Oakham) for the robbery and murder of John Freeman, a baker from Edith Weston. Richard Weldon also murdered Henry Lumley, the keeper of Oakham goal.

Retrace your steps to the top of Lyndon Road and the end of the walk.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Sheila Sleath, Uppingham School Archives, Rutland County Museum (Jack Hart Collection) and Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR).

Robert Ovens