INTRODUCTION
The centre of the village contains many excellent buildings constructed with the famous butter-coloured Ketton limestone which has been quarried locally since the Middle Ages. Ketton limestone is a ‘freestone’ because it can be worked in any direction. It is regarded as the perfect example of oolitic limestone.

Many of the stone buildings are roofed in Collyweston slates. These frost-split slates have been extracted from shallow mines at Collyweston and Easton on the Hill just across the Valley from Ketton.

This walk has been prepared from notes left by the late Geoff Fox and the late Jeffrey Smith, with some additions.

THE VILLAGE MAP
The map attached to this guided walk is based on the 25 inch to one mile Ordnance Survey 2nd edition map of 1899. Consequently, later buildings, extensions and demolitions are not shown. Numbers in the text, e.g. [12], refer to locations shown on the maps.

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

THE WALK
This is a circular walk which starts and finishes at the church of St Mary [1] in Church Road. Opposite the church is The Priory [2]. Despite its name, it was not a priory, but marks the site of the principal house of Ketton Manor held by the Priory of Sempringham from at least 1304 until the Dissolution in 1538. The oldest part of The Priory has been dated to the middle of the 16th century. Note the date stones of 1618 and 1682. For many years it served as the Prebendal Manor House until it was converted into a private residence in 1723. The Priory and its barns and outhouses have now been converted into flats and dwellings.

With the church porch behind you, turn right towards the lychgate and note the neat 17th century house in the churchyard. Also, near the lychgate, note the headstone of William Hibbins which includes some of the tools of his trade as a stonemason.

The lychgate, of English oak and roofed with Collyweston slates, was erected by George Hibbins, stonemason of Ketton, in 1909.

Pass through the lychgate and walk to the Railway Inn. In 1893 there were eleven licensed public houses in Ketton and in 1911 there were twelve. By 1934 this had reduced to eight and by 2020 only two had survived, the Railway Inn here and, and the Northwick Arms towards the east end of High Street. The sites of some of the lost public houses will be seen on this walk.

Opposite the Railway Inn is the early 17th century Grade II listed Emmanuel Cottage [3].

Cross the road and walk down Mill Lane to the late 18th century water mill [4], now a house called Mill Cottage, but with clear evidence of the mill pond and traces of the mill pit. On the way back, 2 Mill Lane is probably the former Millstone Inn.

Return to the Railway Inn and walk into Chapel Lane between the Inn and The Chestnuts [5], an early 19th century house with particularly fine ashlar stonework.
In Chapel Lane, the former Congregational Chapel [6] was built as an Independent Chapel in 1829, probably by voluntary labour. One of its first deacons was John Hibbins, stonemason of Ketton. The building is now called St Mary's Congregational Hall having been purchased by St Mary’s Church as a church hall in 1993, replacing the Bishop Clayton Hall in High Street seen later.

Continue along Chapel Lane, passing Foxglove Cottage on the right, then walk beyond two black metal bollards into a narrow passage known as The Bricks. On reaching Redmiles Lane, immediately opposite is Buckworth House [7] which is beautifully faced with Ketton stone and dates from 1741.

Turn left and walk to the bottom of the lane to see Redmiles Farm [8], an early 18th century building with the former House of Industry (the Parish Workhouse) [9] in the field beyond. This closed in 1836 and was later converted into three workhouse cottages after Ketton joined the Stamford Workhouse Union. Walk back along Redmiles Lane and note the Grade II listed house at the top on the left [10] which has a date stone of 1699 over the door and first-floor stone mullion windows.

Walk into High Street at Stocks Hill. The focal point of Stocks Hill [11] is the Queen Victoria Jubilee Drinking Fountain which was designed and erected by George Hibbins in 1888. It originally had an adjacent horse trough that was also used to replenish passing steam engines. The village stocks were also here until the late 19th century. This small area was then the centre of the village with a cobbler, a blacksmith, a bakery and a butcher's shop.

Cross to the north side of the High Street using the pedestrian crossing. Turn left and walk past the Old Police House [12], built in 1934 on the site of an old carpenter's shop. When you reach the house named Laikipia (one of the counties of Kenya, located on the Equator in the former Rift Valley), look back across the road and view the tiny Bier House [13], with its metal plate inscribed 'stick no bills'. The Bier, a trolley used for carrying coffins to the Church or one of the Chapels, is now in Rutland County Museum.

Continue to the crossroads to see Hibbins House [14], previously called Stoneycroft. It was built between 1885 and 1890 by George Hibbins, a master mason and quarry owner. He was born in Ketton in 1843 and was the ninth generation of the Hibbins family of stonemasons who lived in Stamford and Ketton. The house provides a unique display of masons' skills and some of the family's stonemasons' tools can be seen in Rutland County Museum.

In the 19th century, a Primitive Methodist Chapel [15] stood behind Hibbins House. At that time Ketton was notable for its nonconformist chapels, including Congregational, Dissentient Methodist, Primitive Methodist, and Wesleyan Methodist. The chapel subsequently became the Salvation Army headquarters until it was sold in 1900. It is now a private dwelling known as Palm House.

The crossroads here mark the point where the ancient trackway from Collyweston to Empingham crosses the West Deeping and Morcott Turnpike which was established by Act of Parliament in 1762. Ketton residents were forbidden to hang any washing alongside the turnpike road with a penalty of 40 shillings for any transgressors, and there was a reward for those informing on their neighbours. This was presumably to prevent the spooking of passing horses.

At the crossroads, behind the wall diagonally opposite Hibbins House, is Ketton Hall [16]. The original Hall was built in 1683 and occupied by the Edwards / Noel family. It was demolished and rebuilt in 1873 by a Mr Hopwood, who was a partner in a well-known music firm. He included a large music room complete with magnificent organ in the new Hall. The organ was sold to Warrington Corporation in 1926 when the Hall was yet again demolished to be replaced by the present Hall.
Properties on the south side of High Street, opposite Hibbins House, were once part of the Towns Land Charity. Cottages on this site [17] were let rent free to elderly village residents until 1919 when they were sold off. Note the cottage with its gable end facing the road which shows evidence of having had its roof raised three times.

Retrace your steps along High Street and continue past Stocks Hill until you are opposite the Ketton library [18]. It is faced with stone from the former village National School which stood on this site.

The National School, which opened on 17th September 1857, was built by Robert Hibbins at a cost of £650, mainly funded by the gentry, landowners and residents of Ketton. It was enlarged in 1890 and 1901 then demolished in 1972. The library opened in 1974.

The National School was replaced by the much larger Ketton Church of England Primary School which was erected in an adjacent field. It was opened by the Bishop of Peterborough on 30 June 1969.

In 1791 Miss Sophia Elizabeth Edwards left money in her will to be used 'for poor female children of the parish' but it was not until 1830 that the Miss Edwards Dame School was established at what is now School House [19] (67 High Street), to the left of the library. It became the headmaster’s residence and is still a private dwelling.

Continue along High Street. The Stanyon family, noted Congregationalists, lived on the left at Tansor House, 98 High Street [20]. They were fined when they refused to pay a parish rate under the Education Act of 1902 towards the Church of England school. When an attempt was made to auction some of their furniture to pay the fine, it was abandoned in disarray after locals organised themselves in opposition.

Next on the left is a row of some of the oldest cottages in the street [21]. An indication of their age is that the ground floor level of 96 High Street (Burnham House) and 94 High Street (Merton Cottage) is well below the level of the street. These houses were originally either side of a gatehouse that led to a now demolished property at the rear. Merton Cottage was formerly a post office and later the home of schoolmaster Mr A Nunn.

Continue to Nutt's Farm [22] on the left and look across the road to 65 High Street [23], the house with its gable to the road. This was the Bluebell Inn which closed in 1945 and is now known as Old Blue Bell House. Note the blue bell over the gateway.

Near here is where the inter-village game of quoits was last played. Mr Arthur Knox of Ketton was the national champion three times between 1928 and 1931. The heavy cast iron quoit, about 9 inches in diameter, was thrown over 50 feet on to pins in a clay bed. There were several such beds in Ketton.

On the left, a short distance further along the road, is 88 High Street [24], formerly known as Ketton House. It became St Mary's House in 1892 when the Diocese of Peterborough established St Mary's Diocesan Home for the training of penitent young women in domestic service. After two or more years they were sent out 'restored in health of body and soul'. The home operated a laundry to help with the girl's re-education and offset some of the running costs of the institution. The laundry, now a pair of bungalows [26], was connected to the Home by an underground passage below Hunt's Lane. The Home closed in 1944 and the Diocese sold all the buildings. The chapel, now 90 High Street [25], was acquired by St Mary's PCC as a church hall and named Bishop Clayton Hall after the founder of the Home. It is now a private dwelling.

Over the street, the building with its end gable opposite the entrance to Hunt's Lane [27] was a barn belonging to Nutt's farm. After World War 1, it was purchased by the villagers as a Village Hall and in the 1920s it became the Ketton Village Men's Club. It was recently converted to terraced dwellings as part of the Nutt's Farm development. 61 High Street is known as Long Barn [28] and in the mid-1700s it was the home of John Stanger who organised cockfights at the house:

(Stamford Mercury Thursday 22nd March 1744)

In 1842, John Stanger, as one of the surveyors of the highways, was praised in the local paper for the prompt attention to the duties of this office in organising the repair of the roads 'that had been allowed to get into a shameful and dangerous state'.

Continue to walk along High Street. Aylestone, at 76 High Street [29], is a Grade II listed house of 17th century origin. It was altered with new windows in the 19th century. It is a former post office with the entrance through a doorway in right hand end wall which is now blocked.

A little further on, Nos 72 and 74 High Street show Ketton stone at its best. No 72 [30], dated T N S 1851 in the south gable, was a doctor's surgery before later becoming headquarters of the local Home Guard during the Second World War.

Continue to the post office and grocery shop [31], a Grade II listed 18th century cottage. This has been a post office from before 1900. In 1912, the postmaster was David Lacey, His son James had taken over by 1926 (Kelly's Directory - Leicestershire & Rutland).
Next on this side of High Street is No 58, the Belgian Cottage [32], which bears a plaque recording the appreciation of the hospitality shown to Belgian refugees during the First World War.

At 19 Bull Lane is the Grade II listed former Barley Mow Inn which closed in 1918. It is now a private dwelling named The Old Barley Mow [37]. The building is believed to date from circa 1780. A barley mow was a stack of barley, from the Old English 'muga', 'a heap, a stack'.

At the corner on the left was the blacksmiths forge [38]. This attractive Grade II listed cottage with the stone mullion windows facing up Bull Lane [39] was a dairy until the early 1980s.

Continue along High Street and cross over the road using the pedestrian crossing. Turn right into Bull Lane, named after the Pied Bull Inn, which was on the left-hand corner [33] until it was closed and demolished following a serious thatch fire in 1935.

The Aveland Arms public house, named after Lord Aveland of Normanton, the Lord of the Manor, was at what is now 2 Bull Lane. It closed in 1934 and is now a private dwelling known as The Old Aveland Arms [34]. There was a quoits bed in the garden, now remembered in the name Quoits Cottage at 4 Bull Lane.

A little further down Bull Lane, on the left, is the site of the original Methodist Chapel (The Old Chapel) [35]. The first mention of Methodism in Ketton is in 1834 when Joseph Cragg, a miller from Empingham, bought 'a house and a spot of ground built on certain waste land in Ketton'. It was a two-room cottage which he converted, mostly at his own expense, into a Wesleyan Methodist chapel. It closed in 1864.

Next on the left is The Old Bakery [36], with its outside steps leading to an upstairs granary. This was one of three bakeries in the village.

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Walk around the corner with its high stone wall, and then downhill to arrive at the Methodist Chapel [40] which was built in 1864 to replace Joseph Cragg's original chapel higher up Bull Lane.

Continue down the footpath by the side of the stream. This stream, which used to have watercress beds, is fed by a spring, and once formed one of the main sources of water for the village. There was also an osier bed here, the willow from which was used to make baskets. Water from a slaughterhouse and from St Mary's laundry also flowed into the stream, but fortunately well below the point where water was taken for domestic use. You are now in Sinc Lane with the River Chater at the bottom. From the footpath there are good views of the church beyond the Recreation Ground which was formerly Hall Close. Continue to the river and cross over the footbridge [41] into Aldgate.
From here, you can explore the back lanes and alleys of Aldgate and view some of the interesting old buildings. Can you find the three-storey stone house built on a T-junction by Noggy Naylor in 1867? It was built using stone from the demolished Old Hall and carries two date stones with 1867 and 1686 near a first-floor window, the latter probably from the original Hall building.

From the River Chater footbridge, continue past the recently restored Burghley Cottage [42] to the junction and turn right. Continue round past entrance to Edmunds Drive to near the bridge over the river [44]. On the right is the entrance to The Cottage [43], an interesting house in a beautiful setting.

The Cottage was formerly occupied by the Burroughes family, who at the beginning of the 20th century laid out parkland on each side of Station Road from the river towards the station. The parkland contained some beautiful gardens including a notable Davidia (handkerchief) tree. The Cottage has been very much altered and has changed out of all recognition from the original building.

The 17th century three-arch bridge over the River Chater [44] is a picturesque foreground to the church and has featured in many photographs and postcards. The bridge was widened in 1849 with a ford at the side. It originally had six arches and it is possible that three of these are under the causeway leading to the bridge.

Cross the river via the footbridge. The first house on the right in Church Road is Garden Cottage [45] which is dated 1629. This was the original vicarage, with ‘Stamford’ bay windows to the front and a thatched tithe barn adjoining the rear.

Note the stone dovecote [46] on the opposite side of the road, on the left-hand side of the drive to Priory Cottages.

Next on the right-hand side of Church Road, the house just before the church [47] was built in 1822 to replace the earlier vicarage and remained as such until 1974 when it was sold off.

This is the end of the walk. Although it has encompassed most of the centre part of Ketton village, there are many other interesting properties to see, especially in High Street beyond Bull Lane.

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Rutland County Museum (Jack Hart Collection).

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Updated by Robert Ovens

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