

Rutland Local History & Record Society

Registered Charity No. 700273



South Luffenham Village Walk September 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The name South Luffenham is derived from the southern part of the village (*ham*) belonging to Luffa. The parish covers an area of 1,442 acres (2.25 square miles) and the village lies mainly on the north side of the road from Uppingham to Stamford.



South Luffenham on Speed's circa 1610 map of Rutland.

The River Chater forms the boundary between the parishes of North and South Luffenham, and Morcott Brook, a tributary of the Chater known locally as The Foss, flows in a north-easterly direction through the village, dividing it into two parts. Geologically the village is situated on Lower Lincolnshire Limestone. Alongside The Foss it is Northampton Sand Ironstone and Clay, but there is also a thin deposit of Lower Estuarine Series.

The Manor of South Luffenham formed part of the King's Manor of Barrowden which was once part of a royal Mercian estate, later held by Edith, the Saxon Queen of England, as her dowry when she married King Edward the Confessor in 1045. At the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086, William the Conqueror held the manor.

In 1551, it was one of the manors granted by Elizabeth I to Sir William Cecil, who was created Baron Burghley in 1571. His son and successor, Sir Thomas Cecil, was created Earl of Exeter in 1605. After 1640 there are no records of South Luffenham as a separate manor. It was probably then attached to the manor of North Luffenham which is how it came into the possession of the Heathcote family of Normanton, later Earls of Ancaster.

THE VILLAGE MAP

The map attached to this walk is based on the 25 inches to one mile Ordnance Survey 2nd edition map of 1904. Consequently, later buildings, extensions and demolitions

are not shown. Numbers in the text, for example [12], refer to locations shown on the map.

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

The walk starts and ends at the **Village Hall [1]** in Hall Lane. The hall was originally a First World War army hut from Belton Park Army Camp near Grantham. It opened on 28th September 1922 and it has recently celebrated its centenary following extensive refurbishment.

Turn left and walk up Hall Lane. On the right is the modern studio of **Wisteria Cottage [2]**, the northernmost building of a long range of outbuildings which border Hall Lane.

Further along, on the right (opposite the entrance to Highfield Cottages) is the early 18th century Grade II listed **Stable Block [3]** to South Luffenham Hall. Although only the rear elevation can be seen from here, it has a Collyweston slate roof, and the stone mounting block with steps survives on the south-west side.

Near the top of Hall Lane, on the right, are the entrance gates to **South Luffenham Hall [4]** which was built about 1780. From here there is a glimpse of the Grade II* listed Hall through the foliage.

Described as a small country house, it is set in extensive gardens and surrounded by substantial 18th century walls.



South Luffenham Hall.

With very similar elevations on all four sides, the Hall of 2½ storeys and a basement is almost square in plan. The architect was John Sturges who was involved in the design of nearby Lyndon Hall, which is identical except that South Luffenham has five bays on each side whilst Lyndon has seven. The Hotchkin family were owners of the Hall throughout most of the 18th and 19th centuries, and after about 1820, it was let out to tenants.

Turn right into Stamford Road and walk along the footpath adjacent to the Grade II listed coursed rubble stone wall with Collyweston slate coping [5]. This is the southern boundary to the hall gardens. Further along, the

low wall with timber fencing panels is the southern boundary to The Old Rectory gardens.

Named earlier as Killarney Lodge, **The Old Rectory** [6], which is not listed, is unseen behind the fencing and trees. It is a well-proportioned period house and probably dates from the nineteenth century, although the rear is earlier. It is constructed of stone with a slate roof and dressed stone window reveals.



South Luffenham Rectory circa 1910.

On the left and partly secluded by trees is the substantial early nineteenth century Grade II listed **Fairfield House** [7] at 24 Stamford Road. It was built by and the home of Abraham Sapcote who died in 1857, the year that Sapcote's Charity was established (see later).



Fairfield House.

Walk along to the junction with Back Lane. Opposite the entrance to Barrowden Lane is **Coach House Inn** [8], known earlier as The Halfway House, possibly because of its location being halfway between Uppingham and Stamford.

Next to it is **Ostler's Cottage** [9]. Ostlers looked after the horses of people staying at an inn, presumably indicating the use of the cottage when The Halfway House was a coaching inn.

On the right a little further along the main road, but not part of this walk, is the village cemetery.

Enter and walk a short distance down Back Lane. On the right is the entrance to The Old Rectory.

Turn right into The Street. Immediately on the right at a gap in the high wall, are the former **Rectory Stables**

[10], now converted to private housing. There is also a brief glimpse of The Old Rectory from here.

Next on the right is the Grade II listed late 17th century **Glebe House** [11], formerly known as Hall Cottage. The house is a composite structure now forming a substantial dwelling. Notice the unusual sash windows with side panes. The use of Welsh slate rather than Collyweston stone for the roof probably indicates an earlier thatch. As can be seen on the map, just before the house the entrance to the gardens is formed from what was once a lane to the churchyard and the Hall gardens.

Continue along The Street keeping to the left of the triangular green. On the left is the 17th century Grade II listed **Church Farmhouse** [12] at 9 The Street. Note the Collyweston slate roof with moulded stone end stacks and stone coped gables, the stone mullion windows with hood moulds and the moulded stone doorway. At the rear is a two-storey range also with a Collyweston slate roof.

Continue straight ahead and enter the footpath known as Church Walk, originally an important link between the two parts of the village. On the left are the late 18th century Grade II listed coursed rubble outbuildings [13] of Church Farm. Beyond these, the coursed rubble stone wall [14] is also listed. Continue along the footpath, crossing the bridge [15] over The Foss, a tributary of the River Chater.



The bridge over The Foss in Church Walk in 1910.

On the left near the end of Church Walk is the 18th century Grade II listed **The Grange** [16] at 4 The Square, a building with coursed rubble stone walls with quoins and stone and brick chimney stacks. Note the two firemarks. The coursed rubble stone wall with Collyweston slate coping extending from the left end of the house is also Grade II listed.

Continue into The Square. On the right is a waymarked public footpath [17] which eventually leads to the railway crossing near to the site of the former Luffenham Station. The first part of this footpath crosses a 7-acre field known as Hempyards. Presumably hemp was grown here for rope making or animal feed, but there is no evidence of the plant in the field today.

Either side of the beginning of this footpath are 5 The Square [18] on the right and 1 and 3 The Square [19] on the left.

A major fire on Saturday 19th April 1913 destroyed many thatched buildings in the village, including the cottages at 1, 3 and 5 The Square. Local newspapers reported that the fire was caused by a spark from a train conveying the Stamford Town football club players and supporters to Market Harborough. The spark ignited the thatch on a barn and a strong westerly wind scattered

burning material over a wide area so that most of the thatched houses, cottages and agricultural buildings as well as corn, hay and straw stacks within the area shown here were consumed by the fire and six families were rendered homeless.



The cottages at 1, 3 and 5 The Square which were destroyed in the fire of 19th April 1913.

Walk across The Square into Angle Lane and on to **West Farmhouse** [20] on the right at the corner. This Grade II listed two-storey house is late 17th or early 18th century. Note the stone mullion windows with hood moulds and the central doorway with a hood mould over.

Continue to the end of Angle Lane and turn right into Back Lane. Walk to the bridge [21] over the now dismantled Seaton to Luffenham railway line. Then turn right into North Luffenham Road and bear right into Cutting Lane, so named as it runs alongside the former railway cutting. **Woodbine Cottage** [22] at this junction is one of a pair of 18th century cottages which were converted in 1888 by George Brown - see the datestone with *GB 1888*. It was originally a line of five poor houses.

The railway line from Seaton junction to Luffenham junction, passing through Morcott, was opened by the London & North Western Railway on 2nd June 1851 as part of the line from Rugby to Stamford, joining the Syston & Peterborough railway at Luffenham junction to complete the route.

After the opening of the Seaton to Uppingham branch line in 1897, there was a regular service from Uppingham to Stamford but this branch closed in 1960. The Seaton to Luffenham section finally closed on 6th June 1966.



The crossing keeper's cottage about 1910.

The regular push-pull train was usually a locomotive with a single coach. This was increased to two for school pupils and people travelling to and from work in Stamford and Oakham for the early morning and late afternoon trains.

Throughout its life, the railway provided the main public transport link between Uppingham and Stamford, and the villages between.

The railway cutting at the side of Cutting Lane is now occupied by modern housing. Opposite the end of Cutting Lane is **The Gatehouse** [23], formerly the crossing keeper's cottage, but now much altered.

Retrace your steps back to the railway bridge and walk along Back Lane to its junction with Frisby Lane. On the left is the Grade II listed 6 Back Lane, formerly the **Durham Ox** public house [24].



The Durham Ox in 1913.

The original building probably dates from the fifteenth century. It retains two cruck trusses, with evidence for a house of four bays. There was an open hall of two bays, with a plain, heavily sooted cruck truss at its centre. A first floor and an inglenook fireplace were inserted in the open hall in the 17th century, creating a cross-passage plan.

There was a blacksmith's, wheelwright's and saddler's workshop in the outbuildings at the rear. Later, there was a bicycle repair shop here.

Manorial records of 1762-1856 show that the manor court was held here when it was known as The Carpenters Arms. White's trade directory of 1854 records it as the Durham Ox. In 1857-58 it was the Hereford Ox and in 1861 it was the Bull. By 1862, it had reverted to the Durham Ox and remained as such until it closed in 1967 to become a private dwelling.

Continue to walk along Back Lane. On the right are the extensive former **West Farm Barns** [25], now forming a courtyard of private dwellings.

On the left is the Grade II listed **Orchard House** [26], an 18th century building of two phases with different window styles and other detail, and with Collyweston stone roofs and brick chimney stacks.

Opposite, set back from the road and behind the surviving wall from a former barn, is a **row of 8 cottages** in L plan at 7 to 15 Back Lane [27]. They are all Grade II listed and are mainly 17th and 18th century, but one has a datestone with *BB 1582*.

Continue to walk down Back Lane to the bridge over The Foss [28]. When the walk map was surveyed this crossing was a ford with a footbridge.



The ford and footbridge in Back Lane in 1904.



Just past the bridge, the lane on the right leads to the allotments [29].

The allotments from Google Earth in 2021.

Walk up Back Lane to point [30] on the map for another view of **Church Farm** buildings. Continue walking up Back Lane and turn left into The Street, then walk to near the churchyard gates.

On the triangular green is a Grade II listed **K6 type cast iron telephone kiosk** [31]. The K6 was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of the coronation of King George V in 1935. This kiosk is now used to house a defibrillator.

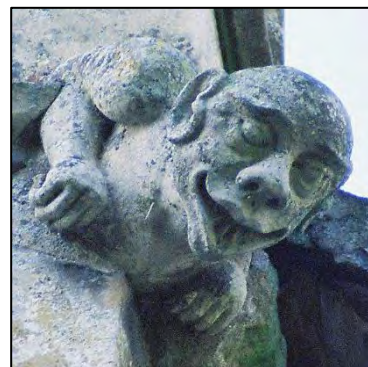
In January 1938, a Pink Chestnut tree was planted on the green to mark the coronation of George VI in May 1937.

Recently, the ailing coronation chestnut tree has been replaced by new tree with an oak seat and bulbs have been planted to make this a pleasant area to sit in the centre of the village.

To the right of the church gates is the Grade II listed **The Tithe House** [32] When it was assessed in 1955 it was described as barn adjoining Glebe House. It is an 18th century coursed rubble stone building with dressed stone quoins and a Welsh slate roof. Its conversion involved the insertion of modern doors and fittings, but it forms a sympathetic companion to the Church and to Glebe House.

The Grade II* listed **St Mary's Church** [33] is normally open during the day and is well worth exploring. It dates originally from the twelfth century and was restored by G E Street in 1852 and 1861.

Inside, the two-bay north arcade is a 12th century enlargement of an originally aisleless church. The south arcade is 13th century, but both aisles were remodelled in the 14th century and clerestories added to the nave and chancel. Furnishings of interest include the octagonal font, a 14th century chest tomb, a floor slab of 1794 to Rose, daughter of Edward Boswell, king of the Gypsies, who died at their nearby Foster's Bridge encampment, and a late 19th century window to the Wingfield family. Of particular interest is the range of carved heads and gargoyles to be seen both inside and outside the church.



One of the gargoyles at the church.

On leaving the churchyard continue to walk along The Street in a north-easterly direction. On the left are **13 to 19 The Street** [34], a group of small cottages of much character which are Grade II listed. They were bequeathed to Sapcote's Charity when it was founded in 1857, and a stone tablet on the gable end of No 13 records that they were restored in 1901.

Sapcote's Charity originally consisted of three almshouses. They are no longer used as such but are rented out, 'the net income of which is applied for the benefit of deserving aged poor men, widows or maidens resident in the parish of South Luffenham.'

No 19 was until the 1980s the village shop. In 1904, it was also the post office. The late Victorian trade directories show that Henry Thurkettle was a boot and shoemaker here, as well as being the postmaster. The post office moved to a barn in Pinfold Lane about 1910.

Opposite is the **Boot & Shoe** public house [35]. In 1876, Daniel Fowler was the publican and one of the village bakers, his bakery being an outbuilding on the Hall Lane side of the pub.

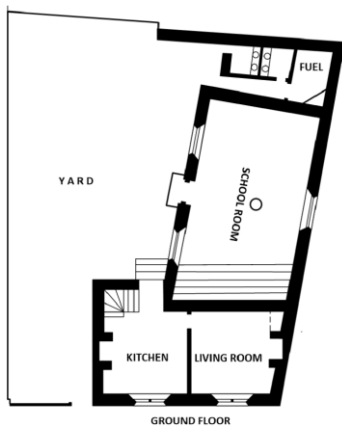


The Boot and Shoe public house, the Church and the village shop and post office in 1905.

Walk to the junction of The Street and Hall Lane. A little further along The Street, on the left, is **The Old School House [36]** which is Grade II listed. This stone cottage was the original National School, with a house for the schoolmaster attached to the rear school room. A stone tablet on left end wall is inscribed '*THIS SCHOOL WAS BUILT A.D. MDCCCXLVII [1847] BY SUBSCRIPTION AIDED BY THE NATIONAL SCHOOL SOCIETY.*' The cost was £230.



The original National School is now a private dwelling. The schoolroom was the rear part of the building as shown in the plan below. (Ian Ryder).



Opposite, on the east side of Hall Lane is the second **National School [37]** which was built at the expense of the Revd James Lonsdale (rector 1870-73) on land donated by Lord Aveland of Normanton Hall. The cost was £1,000 and it opened on 12th July 1872. The Revd Lonsdale also purchased the old National School as a

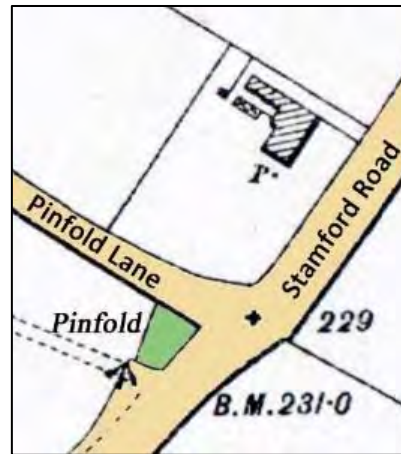
home for the schoolmaster of the new school. The school closed in 1969 and was converted to a private dwelling in the 1970s. Children from the village now attend the Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School in North Luffenham.

Continue walking along The Street. On the left, just past The Old School House is a farmyard [38] at the rear of which is a range of brick buildings. At one time, these were occupied by a butcher and a blacksmith. To the right of these, part of the stone barn may have been a dovecote.

A little further along The Street, turn left and walk along the way-marked **footpath [39]** which leads to the **village pond [40]** on the left and Pinfold Lane beyond.

Pond Close was gifted to the Parish Council in 1999 and has since been developed as a conservation area and haven for wildlife.

Walk to Pinfold Lane and turn right. The lane is named after the pinfold which once stood at the junction of Pinfold Lane and Stamford Road. It was an enclosure with 6ft high stone walls and an iron gate. It was used to house



stray animals, the owner of the animals having to pay a fee for their release. It was in use until about 1910, but there is now no trace of it.

On the left is **The Old Post Office [41]**. It opened in a former barn about 1910 and closed in the 1980s.

Further along, on the right, is **The Farm [42]**, once known as Tailby's Farm and more recently as Bellamy's Farm. The coursed rubble stone farmhouse and its barns were built in the 18th century and are Grade II listed, the barn behind the farmhouse being converted into a private dwelling in 2018.

Turn right and walk a short way into The Street to see this barn on the right and also **Adam & Eve House [43]** on the left.



Although not listed, Adam & Eve House has been converted from a substantial early 18th century barn. It is named after a carved stone tablet of Saxon origin removed from an interior wall. It depicts Adam and Eve sitting beneath the tree of life entwined by a serpent. It can usually be seen in the centre window facing the road.

Before the present village hall, the barn was often used for village dances and other social functions.

The stone in the north-east gable end of Adam & Eve House has a pink hue, suggesting that it was involved the major fire in this part of the village on 4th July 1874 which was reported by the *Grantham Journal*. It was started by a child playing with matches and '*...commenced about two o'clock in the afternoon in a straw stack on the premises of Mr. Ball, baker, and in a few seconds it and a haystack, a large heap of wood, and two cow sheds were enveloped in flames. The high wind that prevailed scattered the burning thatch and straw in all directions, and in less than twenty minutes the farmhouse and premises of Mr. Tailby, the farm premises of Mr. Pretty, four cottages, and a public house tenanted by Geo. Watson, besides eleven straw and hay stacks, and a quantity of agricultural implements and carts were in a blaze ... and the value of the buildings destroyed is roughly put at £2,000.*'

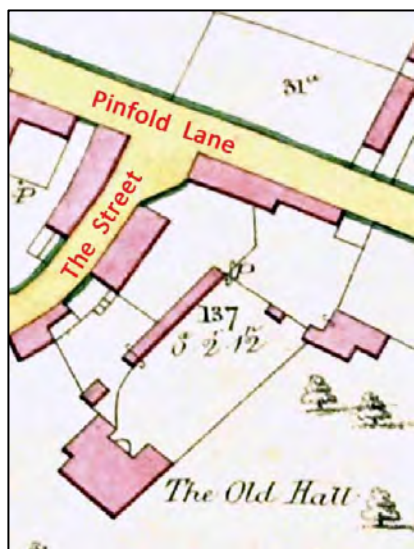
Return to Pinfold Lane, turn right and walk up to the start of the way-marked **public footpath [44]** on the right. Follow this footpath round to the mound at **[45]**.

You are now in the Parish Field which is situated behind the village hall. It has play equipment and an enclosed playground for younger children.

The Earl of Aveland's Estate Map of 1887 shows the mound as the site of the Old Hall, a substantial house equal in size to the present South Luffenham Hall. It was probably the Manor House, but it had been demolished by 1904.



The mound in the Parish Field



The Old Hall on the Earl of Aveland's Estate Map of 1887.

Walk to the end of the footpath and return to the Village Hall via The Street. This is the end of the walk which we hope you have enjoyed.

Acknowledgements and Bibliography

Rutland County Museum. Lincolnshire Archives.
Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland.
Leicestershire & Rutland Historic Environment Record.
Jill Bourne & Amanda Goode – *Rutland Hearth Tax 1665*
Robert Jarrett – *Inns of Rutland Index*
Peter Orpin – *Employment and Industry in South Luffenham*
Robert Hartley – *Medieval Earthworks of Rutland*
Maryette Hoyland – *A Rutland Settlement*
William Page – *Victoria County History – Rutland*
Tony Traylen – *Villages of Rutland, Railways of Rutland*
Colin Wright – *oral history recorded by Carolyn Welch*
Nick Hill – *Historic Building Survey - The Durham Ox*
Hillary Crowden, Ian Ryder – Archive collections
Debbie Frearson – South Luffenham archive collection
Websites accessed:

Ancestry
British Newspaper Archive
Family Search
Find My Past

This walk was researched, designed, checked, edited and risk assessed for Rutland History Society by Robert Ovens, Debbie Frearson, Sheila Sleath and Tim Clough.



Based on the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25" to 1 mile map of 1904

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