

Hallaton Parish Walks

The picturesque village of Hallaton hosted weekly markets from 1224, but its importance in this part of the County declined as that of Market Harborough grew. It held its last horse fair in 1863 and now only street names and the conical buttercross on the village green act to remind us of its busier past. Hallaton is now best known for the annual event of bottle-kicking, a competition held every Easter Monday against the neighbouring settlement of Medbourne.

Walk 1: 6 km (3 3/4 miles), allow gently undulating through countryside, some hard surface tracks

P Eastgate (or in the car park of the Bewicke Arms if intending to partake in refreshments)

Turn right and go up hill along High Street. On reaching the T-junction turn right to walk past the Fox Inn and the village pond, following the lane out of the village.

A. At the point where a lane meets from the right, take the footpath opposite into the field. Continue through the fields to the dismantled railway. Take care as you ascend and descend the bridge. Carry on in the same direction, crossing a stream and eventually arriving at a farmhouse.

B. Turn right and follow the track to Allextion Road. Cross over and follow the path through the fields to a farmyard.

C. Just beyond the barn on the right a path leads back to Hallaton.

This walk can be extended by following the lane through Horninghold, along Hallaton Road and pick up Horninghold Lane towards Blaston. Just before reaching the village take the path to the right, which leads to Medbourne Road. Turn right to return to Hallaton.

Walk 2: 8 1/2 km (5 1/4 miles), undulating countryside with fine views

P Eastgate (or Bewicke Arms)

Starting near the Bewicke Arms on Eastgate, walk past The Cross on the right, and head towards St Michael's Church and Churchgate.

St. Michael's Church dates back to the 12th century and has an attractive 13th century tower. If you have time it is well worth popping in to the church and picking up a leaflet which offers a fascinating guide to the church.

1. Follow Churchgate past the school, to the edge of the village. Go through the kissing gate on the left. Take the right hand path through two fields to Goadby Lane.

2. Go downhill and after passing the ford follow the footpath up a steep bank into the fields beyond. Once into the first field head for a lone tree. On reaching that go for the next lone big tree on the horizon. From here cross several more fields past Hallaton Wood to your right until you reach a muddy track.

3. Turn right and follow this track up the hill passed Keythorpe Lodge then down hill to Keythorpe Hall Farm. The first part of this byway has deep hollows and ruts and gives a good impression of the ruinous state of many of the country's roads in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Although little can be seen from ground level the deserted mediaeval village of Keythorpe lies in the fields to the right of the byway between Keythorpe Lodge and Keythorpe Hall Farm.

4. Turn sharp right at Keythorpe Hall Farm and follow the concrete track passed the farm buildings out in to the fields. Follow the bridleway across a couple of fields down to a bridge amongst trees.

5. After the bridge the bridleway leaves the track and heads uphill towards the woods to the right. Head for the bridlegate and then follow the bridleway along several hedgerows along a slight ridge back towards Hallaton.

6. At the end of these fields enter a pasture field full of humps and hollows. Turn right and follow the hedge on your right until you come to a bridlegate leading to a wooded path. This will take you to North End at Hallaton.

This lovely route can be adapted by horse riders and cyclists if they use Tugwell Lane and Goadby Road to join the byway leading to Keythorpe Lodge Farm. However the route can be difficult for cyclists when the ground is soft and muddy.

Walk 3: 7 1/4 km (4 1/2 miles), undulating countryside, some tracks P Eastgate (or Bewicke Arms)

Starting near the Bewicke Arms on Eastgate, walk past The Cross on the right, and head towards St. Michael's Church and Churchgate. Follow Churchgate past the school, to the edge of the village.

i. Take the path on the left, through the fields, passing Castle Hill on the right.

Castle Hill is a fine example of a Motte and bailey castle. A 'Motte' is a large flat topped conical earthen mound surrounded by a wide, deep ditch, while the 'bailey' is the attached enclosure defended by a large bank and ditch which joins with that around the Motte. The Motte would have had a wooden tower and palisade at its top, so that it could act as a lookout post and a stronghold. The bailey would have been enclosed by a palisade, containing a hall and other buildings such as kitchens, stores and stables. This type of castle was typical of the Norman period built in the late 11th or early 12th century.

Continue along this undulating path to reach Othorpe House. Once beyond the gate, continue through the yard, and take the bridleway on the right.

ii. Head for the far left-hand corner then follow the field edge. Pass through another gate and cross the field with the hedge on your right. In the next field keep the hedge on your left until you meet a track.

iii. Turn right and follow the track back towards Hallaton. Soon after the ford the track bends to the left, go straight ahead to join a path to Churchgate. This latter part of the walk offers more excellent views to the right of the Motte and Bailey.

A leaflet is also available for Medbourne Parish Walks.

Useful Information

Refreshments: Old School Centre, Medbourne on Sundays (May to Sept), Post Office in Medbourne and Tea-rooms in Hallaton

Buses: Service 176 (Wed only), Service 400 (Sat only) and the Rural Rider (Mon-Sat). Please confirm with Traveline before travelling (0870 608 2 608)

Walking - Be fit and well

Walking is a form of exercise that is suitable and enjoyable for all ages. It's a free and fun way for families and friends to get fit together. Just 30 minutes of brisk walking on a daily basis can benefit your health and quality of life.