

THE GEDLING TRAIL

Introduction

A booklet called *The Gedling Village Trail* was produced by the pupils of Priory Road Junior School c.1982. It described a circular walk round the village with grainy black and white photos and gave historical detail about points of interest on the route.

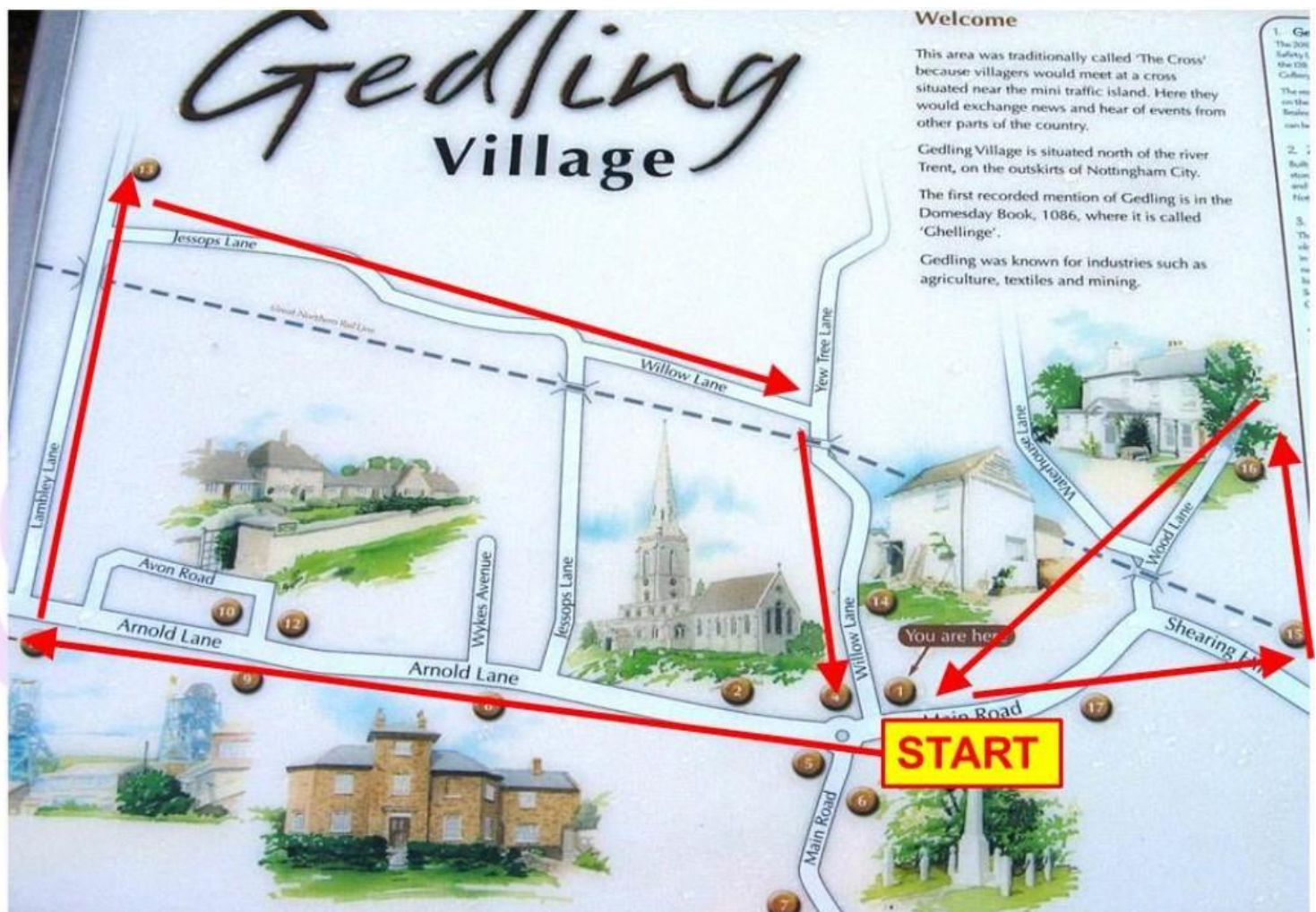
The Carlton & Gedling U3A Local History Group has re-visited the Gedling Trail and brought the original details up to date and added colour photographs. If you have any interesting facts about any of the buildings shown please contact one of the Local History Group or the Webmaster so that the page can be updated.

1. Map of the route

The trail starts adjacent to the Fountain (near the junction of Arnold Lane and Main Road). From here it goes up Arnold Lane, Lambley Lane, Jessops Lane, through Willow Park, along Willow Lane and back to the start point. It then continues along Main Road and onto Shearing Hill, before going up Wood Lane and then doubling back and returning to the Fountain.

Our tour of Gedling begins at a place traditionally known as *The Cross*. Legend suggests that there was once a cross here and that a piece of stone now displayed in the church may have been part of it. The stone shows what appears to be The Madonna and child on one side and the Crucifixion on the other.

The roads certainly cross here and the ancient footpaths for Arnold, Nottingham, Burton Joyce and Lambley all meet at this place.



2. The Fountain

Gedling was originally supplied with drinking water via a local stream known as the Ouse Dyke. This provided the village with water that had made its way from the Mapperley Plains.

The fountain was presented by The Countess of Carnarvon in 1874 and the water was pumped from Allwell Spring further up Arnold Lane. The fountain is now waterless. In the centre was a tap, with a metal cup attached with a chain, for humans, the large basin at the bottom was for horses and the small basin in the front was for dogs

In front of the drinking fountain there was once a triangular patch of grass, in the area where the traffic bollards are now to be found. On this spot many of the village celebrations took place. National events were celebrated and local events too, and people would meet and chat on their way to and from the fountain.

At the corner where the War Memorial now stands was The Forge. On the site of the Memorial Hall was once the school. The Fountain, where the hunt used to meet, supplied water as shall be seen later in the walk.



3. The Memorial Hall

On the corner of Arnold Lane and Main Road is the Memorial Hall which was given to Gedling by Colonel and Mrs Blackburn as a permanent memorial to the men of Gedling who died in the Great War.

An inscription near the front door reads as follows:

Foundation stone laid by His Grace, The Duke of Portland K.G. 26 July 1924

This hall was given in memory of the fallen 1914 – 1918 By Lt. Colonel W.H. Blackburn.



4. All Hallows Church

Walk up Arnold Lane along the side of the Memorial Hall towards the church.

The main body of the church dates from the mid-thirteenth century, that is to say it was being built about the same time that Henry III, at the instigation of Simon de Montfort, who summoned the meeting of the first English Parliament in 1264.

The details of the church are perhaps of greater interest to the specialist than to the casual wayfarer, but no one can fail to be attracted by the beauty of the lofty spire which seems to dominate the district. It dates from about 1320.

A curious feature of the spire is the bulge which occurs half-way up. This is a well-marked example of a device called entasis by which an optical delusion was corrected. If the edges of the spire had been built perfectly straight, the result would have been that it would have appeared to have a waist. To counteract this delusion, designers generally allowed for a slight swelling half-way up. This device was invented by the Greeks, who used it so freely that there is not a single straight edge in the Parthenon at Athens, all the seemingly straight lines are in reality slightly curved. Evidently the designers of Gedling Spire allowed too much entasis, but the result is both interesting and instructive.



But Gedling attracts other pilgrims than antiquaries, for in its churchyard lie two of our greatest cricketers. Arthur Shrewsbury, who died in 1903, was born at Lenton in 1856, and of him Dr. W. G. Grace said that he was the greatest batsman of his age. In 1887 he played eight three-figure innings, scored 1,653 runs and his average was 78. He was buried in Gedling churchyard, as also was Alfred Shaw, who died in 1907, and in his day was known as "The Emperor of Bowlers".

Near the Porch, in the south-west corner, is a Swithland slate, inscribed "To the Memory of John Flinders. He died May 11th, 1798, in the 96 Year of his Age. He served his Country 62 Years as a soldier, 34 of which he was a Gunner in the Royal Artillery, 22 years in the 8th or King's Own Regiment of Foot, and 6 years in the 52nd Regiment, General Lambton's. Whilst in the 8th Regiment, he was in six Battles, and two Sieges, viz.: the Battle of Dettingen, Fontenoy, Falkirk, Culloden, Rackoo and Val, Stirling Castle, and Bergen op Zoom."

When he came home to Gedling he found living with his relatives intolerable and went to live in the Workhouse because it had the same regimentation he had been used to all his military career!

5. Friday Lane

As we draw level with the church, we reach an interesting road with a rather quaint name – Friday Lane. It was once known as Priory Lane. The words Priory and Friday sound very similar and to people who could neither read nor write, one could be a corruption of the other. The question of Gedling's priory has never been answered. There is tradition that there was once a priory here and the road between Friday Lane and Westdale Lane is called Priory Road. However, no evidence has ever been found to support the suggestion.



6. Manor Farm

We walk further along Arnold Lane, past Jessops Lane, and stop at the bend in the road where we find two of Gedling's oldest buildings. On the right hand side of the road is Manor Farm, an unusually shaped building with what appears to be a tower is around 300 years old. It is quite possible that centuries ago the stage coach on its way to Mansfield would change horses here. Although the house has been added to and modernised over the years, the oldest part – built of handmade bricks, stands nearest to the road.



7. Old cottage on Arnold lane

On the left hand side of the road is a white cottage, noticeable because of the “S” shaped decoration in the plaster. The age of the building is unclear, but it is certainly very old.



8. The Alms Houses

A little further up the lane on the right is a crescent-shaped row of houses.

These 12 alms houses were built in the memory of Mrs Elizabeth Hardstaff, the daughter of a Nottinghamshire farmer. By the terms of her will, published in 1899, she founded a charity to build alms houses in Nottinghamshire. Those who lived in them were to be provided with a small weekly payment. The widows and orphans of miners were to be given preference. These magnificent alms houses were built in 1935 and have won architectural awards.

The Grade 2 listed buildings were designed by the well-known local architect T. Cecil Howitt who was also responsible for the Nottingham Council House.



9. The Stonepit

Continue up Arnold Lane as far as the junction with Lambley Lane. The new nursing home on the left is built on the former site of the Grey Goose pub.

The road ahead dips into quite a hollow. This hollow is the source of Gedling Stone which for many years provided building stone for a number of notable local buildings.

The area, known as Stonepit Close or Stonepit Coppice provided stone in 1321-2 and 1366 for the rebuilding of Nottingham Castle. Gedling stone was used for the building of St. Peter's Church in Nottingham and for our own church here in Gedling. It was also used in Hethbethe Bridge, a structure of 17 arches that was replaced by the present Trent Bridge in 1871 (part of the old bridge is preserved within the traffic island to the South of the river).



Across the road, on the corner of Arnold Lane and Lambley Lane, once stood a windmill which was used for pumping water for the inhabitants of Gedling. Out of the ground at this spot bubbled a spring which was known to provide good clear water. The water from this spring, the Allwell Spring was pumped into 2 large cisterns before being piped to the drinking fountain in the middle of Gedling. The water supply lasted from 1874 until 1924 when the water dried up and the windmill was pulled down.

Although the Allwell spring is no longer there, other springs still bubble out of the Mapperley hills and flow into the Ousedyke, the small stream which passes through Gedling on its way to the River Trent.

We shall now turn into Lambley Lane.

10. The Bell Field

The field on the left of Lambley Lane is known as Bell Field because it is said that some of the bells for Gedling Church were cast here. In the distance are the former spoil heaps from Gedling Colliery, now part of the new Gedling Country Park.

In the years before the colliery opened in 1898 the local cottage industries were dying out and the farms required fewer men. For almost a century the colliery brought prosperity to the area until it closed in 1991.

The playing fields in the mid-distance were built on top of the old council refuse tip in the 1980's and was the home of Gedling Cricket Club until it merged with Sherwood C.C. and moved away from the village in 2002. Gedling C.C. previously played on the smaller ground on the other side of Lambley lane which is now the home of Lambley C.C.



Continue along Lambley Lane over the railway bridge to a point just past Jessops Lane.

11. Glebe Farm

A careful look to the left will reveal the ridge and furrow marks left by the ploughmen of Gedling many years ago.

Gedling, like most villages in England, had a system of fields and villagers were allotted strips of land in each field. This area is part of the Burwell field. Other field names in Gedling were Westdale Field, Bleasdale Field and Mill Field. The direction that the ploughman and his horse tilled the soil can be clearly seen. Some of our ancient measurements can be traced to these farming activities. The length of a strip, a furrow long became a furlong. A plough team's work in one day would cover a piece of land, a chain or 22 yards in width. Thus, a furlong multiplied by a chain was the measurement known as an acre.

The name of the adjacent farm, Glebe Farm, gives a clue to its past. Before the Enclosure Act in 1792 the vicar or rector of Gedling was given tithes by his parishioners. This means they gave him a proportion, usually one tenth, of their income or produce.

The Enclosure Act allowed the rector of Gedling some 300 acres of land for glebe. This was a portion of land going with a clergyman's benefice. The rector would either rent the land to farmers or with the aid of hired labour, farm the land himself.



12. The lane to the kennels

On the other side of Lambley Lane are a collection of old buildings and a track that leads to the kennels which once housed the hounds from the South Notts Hunt. Lambley Lane was sometimes referred to as Kennel Lane.

The copse on the top of the hill, Harvey's Planation, once gave good cover for game. This area was once the edge of the great Thorneywood Chase. In the Middle Ages the area from Mapperley to Woodborough was wooded and deer were hunted here.

In one of the cottages at the bottom of the lane leading to the kennels lived Mr S Oakland, who until he retired was a maker of cricket bats. The name Oakland, Bat maker, Gedling, Notts stamped on the shoulder of each bat took the name of Gedling worldwide. The growth of the cricket bat making was due to the fact that willow trees grew abundantly in the area. Other local cottage industries that thrived in the area included straw bonnet makers, shoe makers, lace makers, basket makers and blacksmiths.



The walk continues along Jessops Lane, under the railway bridge as far as Lorimer Avenue where we stop for another look back in time.

13. "The City"

This part of Gedling is known as The City, an unlikely name and one that is difficult to explain. The original inhabitants of Gedling lived here because there was shelter from the North and East winds and a supply of water. The main part of the village was called The Towne.

When man first lived here is uncertain, but the letters “ing” indicate that it is the site of an Anglo-Saxon settlement and Gedling was probably derived from the name of its chieftain. At various times the village has been known as Ghellinge, Gedlinga, Geddlingses and Getling.

Jessops Lane is also a modern name. Previously it was known as Cottage Lane and before that, Grimm Lane. Such a title in other places meant a way to the gallows!



14. The railway

There are several railway bridges in the village giving evidence of great activities of years gone by. It is difficult to believe that at one time trains were passing by every 3 minutes. Just down the line was the great Colwick marshalling yard (Colwick Loco) and up the line was the Mapperley tunnel. The line was constructed from Colwick to Pinxton in 1875 to give the Great Northern Railway Company access to the Derbyshire coal fields.



Leaving Jessops Lane by a little footpath takes us into Willow Park. Passing by a row chestnut trees which mask another of Gedling's pleasant old farm houses which dates from about 1700.

15. Willow Park

The path through Willow Park crosses the Ouse Dyke by a quaint old bridge. The term "Ouse" is derived from Gaelic and means "Water" (so Ouse Dyke is not a very imaginative name!).

If we follow the Ouse Dyke along the field we can see a trace of what might be an ancient water mill and a sluice gate. Their age and purpose are obscure, but it reminds us of the days when the only source of power apart from the efforts of man or horse, were provide by wind or water.

The field is now the site of the annual Gedling Village Gala and before it was bought by Gedling borough Council and re-named it was the old Rectory Field. Here in summers past, a garden party was held every year.



We leave the Park and turn right onto Willow Lane which takes us back to main road again.

16. Dovecote Farm

At the junction of Willow Lane and Main Road is a D of E Building of local Interest, Dovecote Farm, another of Gedling's old farm houses now used as a private residence. The dovecote is now largely hidden from view, especially when the trees are in full leaf.

The dovecote would have provided meat and fresh eggs for the villagers. The building dates from the eighteenth century and it is believed that one of Gedling's inns previously stood on this spot.



17. The Miner's lamp

On main Road near the junction with Willow Lane is a more recent addition – a miner's lamp. Unveiled in 2010 it is a monument to remember the 128 men who lost their lives in pit accidents at Gedling Colliery.



The inscription reads:

“Dedicated to the 128 miners who lost their lives and to all those who worked at Gedling Colliery, 1899-1991.”

18. Ivy Cottages

On the other side of Main Road, opposite the Memorial Hall stand Ivy Cottages. A plaque on the wall shows that the building dates from circa 1800.



19. The War Memorial

At the rear of Ivy Cottages is the War Memorial.

The names of the fallen from World War One are displayed on the memorial. The names of the fallen from World War Two are displayed nearby in All Hallows Church.



20. Cottages on Main Road

Continuing down Main Road, the original Priory Road booklet stated that the cottages on the right hand side after Carnarvon Grove may have been a school in years gone by. However, a current neighbour says that the cottages used to have a market garden to the rear.

The chimney pots on the houses in this area show how heating buildings has changed over the years – all the rooms had their own fire-places and some have out buildings with their own chimney stacks – possibly these were used as wash houses or bake houses.



21. Waverley Avenue

The next road on the right is Waverley Avenue, where there once stood a hop garden – an important ingredient in the making of Gedling beer. Until recently hops could still be found growing wild about the area.

The original trail document said *“This quiet and pleasant avenue marks the line of the projected Gedling Relief Road. Perhaps another brown scar like the one created by the railway will yet afflict the village?”*



22. The old Post Office

On the opposite side of Main Road is a white building which was once the Gedling Post Office. A hundred and fifty years ago a letter could be sent to reach Nottingham the following morning if posted by 7.30pm – how times have changed!



Continue along Main Road and round the corner onto Shearing Hill as far as the old farm house on the right.

23. Duncroft Farmhouse on Shearing Hill

Duncroft farmhouse dates from the late 18th Century and is Grade 2 listed. The name of the road conjures up pictures of sheep being driven to the shearers, but the name has changed several times over the centuries. The Enclosure Award of 1792 refers to it as Sherrin Hill and a century or so before that it was the Sherwin Hill.

Look at the old brickwork, the pantiled roof and the way the building is constructed gable end onto the road. Many of the old farms were built in this manner; probably because if the farm was built on one of the ancient 'strips' enough space was left to allow access past the building for stock and equipment.



Opposite the farmhouse is the old Gedling Railway Station

24. Gedling Station

After the station closed in 1960 it served as a youth club for many years, but is now unoccupied. There has been talk of reopening the station if the proposed ram route to Gedling Country Park is built.

The station was once a busy place for both passengers and freight. Here the carriers would pick up goods and people would flock to the trains. It is remembered by some of the older Gedling residents that a trip on the train on the 'circular route' was an enjoyable day out for the youngsters of the district. It is perhaps quite apt that today's young people find enjoyment here.



Retrace your steps along Shearing Hill and turn into Wood Lane. Continue as far as the entrance to Carlton-le-Willows School and turn right onto the road just past the school entrance. At the end of the road is Gedling House.

25. Gedling House

This magnificent Grade 2 listed building was built in about 1780. It has had several owners, but now belongs to Gedling Borough Council. One of the former occupants was Nicholas Monsarrat, the best-selling author of *The Cruel Sea*.

Monsarrat's grandfather was Sir John Turney, one of the founders of Turney Bros manufacturers of fine leather at Turney's Quay, adjacent to Trent Bridge. The father of seven, twice mayor of Nottingham in the 1860's, also lived in some splendour at Gedling House. In his racy memoirs *Life Is A Four Letter Word*, Monsarrat described Gedling House as the 'handsome lair of that formidable grandfather'.

The building reminds us of the great changes in the social structure of society. The 1851 Census tells us the occupiers were William Burnside and his wife Mary. He was a barrister and employed the following servants to look after his wife and himself; a butler, a footman, a groom, a housekeeper, a ladies maid, two housemaids and a kitchen maid.

There was a similar picture at Gedling Rectory in 1871 where the Rector lived with his wife, son, daughter-in-law and four grandsons. He employed a cook, a kitchen maid, a footman, a nurse and two nursery maids. The Rectory at that time had 22 rooms and was demolished and replaced by the current building in 1967.

The elegance of these buildings reminds us of a time when labour was very cheap and very easy to find.



Returning back down Wood Lane, the white building on the left is Gedling Manor.

26. Gedling Manor

From the road the building looks rather insignificant but viewed from the other sides of the building is far more imposing.

Formerly called Gedling Lodge it was at one time a place where hunting parties stayed during the hunting season. It is recorded that King Edward VII, when he was Prince of Wales, was a visitor here. Gedling Lodge was owned by the Stanhopes and The Earls of Chesterfield who were Lords of the Manor from Henry VIII's time to the days of Victoria.

In the latter part of the last century the building was used as an old peoples home. More recently it has been converted into apartments.



Our trip around Gedling is now complete, although we have not had time to visit the sites of the old mills or the old workhouse. Return back down Wood Lane and along Main Road to the Fountain.