

## LOWICK VILLAGE WALKABOUT

Lowick is a Conservation Village and is well worth exploring to see some of its older buildings.

The obvious place to start is at the CHURCH, set on a small hillock just N of the village. While the building, with its spectacular lantern tower, is almost entirely 15<sup>th</sup> century, it is certainly on an older site. Evidence has been found nearby of Bronze Age activity and also of a Roman farmstead. The original churchyard was almost circular, again suggesting an ancient site. (*See the church leaflet for more information about the building*)

Looking south on the horizon are rows of tall trees which are the boundary of the park of DRAYTON, the manor house of the village, which dates from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century and with major work of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is the home of the Stopford Sackville family. (*Visible from the drive which is a public footpath and open for groups by written appointment to the Estate Office, Drayton Road*).

The VILLAGE lays below the church with, on the right-hand side THE OLD RECTORY, a grand house built 1855-6 by the Stamford architect *Bryan Browning* in a mock Elizabethan-cum-Gothic manner. In front of the house is a large BARN, built in 1786 replacing no doubt an ancient tithe barn.

The church drive enters MAIN STREET with the cottages of CHURCH ROW. These are of uncertain origin but certainly in existence by the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They were originally lower and thatched and the line of the early roof level is clearly visible on their facades. Behind them, closer to the church is MANOR FARM, another early building, whose outbuildings closer to the road have been converted into houses.

On the corner of Drayton Road is the GERMAIN ROOMS, so called since the buildings were originally built as a charity school and master's house under the terms of the will of Sir John Germaine of Drayton, who died in 1718. Over the doorway is a large carved stone coat of arms of he and his wife Lady Betty, who herself added a further bequest in 1725. The school, under the local authority continued until 1963, and has since been used as the Village Hall. The house is still owned by the Germaine Trustees.

Continuing in Main Street we come to the SNOOTY FOX pub. This dates to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and was originally owned by the Drayton Estate and in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century was for a time used as the Dower House to Drayton, when it was known as the Great House. It became an inn around 1700 when it was called the White Horse, and it remained so called until the 1970s. On its front can be seen the turret of a small spiral staircase and inside, over the main bar, are moulded beams dating from around 1530. In the bar extension the beams are later, c.1580, and upstairs are two stone fireplaces exactly like those surviving at Drayton known to date from that time.

The house on the corner of ROBBS LANE is one of the oldest in the village. It has remains of timber openings in its walls and there is a longstanding tradition that in early times it was an inn. Robbs Lane curves round passing more old cottages, some thatched, to DRAYTON

ROAD. Just below the Germain Rooms in Drayton Road is MILL LANE, leading down to the former old Mill house (*footpath to Sudborough*), with on the corner a long row of cottages, now only two houses but in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, four. One of the garages in Mill Lane was once a blacksmith's forge and inside it still has woodwork stamped with ownership marks of the Drayton Estate.

Moving along Drayton Road on the left is YEOMANS COTTAGE, quite a distinguished Georgian house, and opposite LITTLE THATCH, dating from Elizabethan times, still with a mullioned window of that period. Just below are Nos.10-12, a pair of COTTAGES built in 1908 by *Charles Pettit* of Thrapston for the Estate to designs of *J.A. Gotch*, the Kettering architect. On their fronts are plaques with the date and the coat of arms and initials of S.G. Stopford Sackville. The cottages opposite on the corner of Robbs Lane were rebuilt at the same period. Just along ROBBS LANE is PEARTREE COTTAGE with a datestone for 1747.

A little further on the BRIDGE over the tributary of the Ise Brook, probably of medieval origin but largely now a 19<sup>th</sup> century rebuild. Just beyond on the left is LOWICK POCKET PARK, with children's playground facilities. A farm track crossroads further on marks the route of the former IRONSTONE RAILWAY, the whole area around having been mined for ironstone. The furnaces were on the Thrapston/Woodford road having been set up in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Plevins family of Woodford House. Rails of the railway still survive under the road tarmac.

Drayton Road continues past more good stone houses, several thatched, notably the Georgian ALLEY FARMHOUSE and just before Drayton Park a nice row of thatched 18<sup>th</sup> century cottages with rustic trellis porches. Just beyond a short avenue of Red Chestnuts forms the entrance to Drayton Park. (*From here it is possible to walk through the park with good views of 18<sup>th</sup> century lime AVENUES and of DRAYTON HOUSE and its gardens, thence on to the village of SLIPTON.*)