

## The trail starts at Raitha's Restaurant...

a former coaching inn on the main road. Parking in the car park is permitted as a courtesy.

**1** Raitha's, formerly known as the Rose and Crown Hotel, is believed to have been built in the 18th century. The Inn was the most famous coaching stop in Kibworth; with up to twenty-four coaches a day stopping day and night for passengers' rest or refreshments, and to change horses.



The Rose and Crown Hotel, believed to have been built in the 18th century

**2** Main Street, formerly known as the King's Highway, Church Street or Berry's Hill, became a turnpike route from Leicester to London in 1726, with the first passenger coach travelling through the village in 1744, followed by the first mail coach in 1785. Most of the buildings date from the 18th and 19th centuries. Note the cottages on the opposite corner from Raitha's retain thatched roofs and the traces of blocked-in doorways, indicating that originally there were four separate cottages in this block. At the rear was stabling for twenty horses.

**3** The street used to have several shops. No. 10 was known as Berry's slaughterhouse and butcher's and this gave the southern end of Main Street the name 'Berry's Hill' after "Beefy" Berry, the butcher in the period between the two World Wars. The Old Bakehouse further down on the left really was a baker's complete with delivery yard at the rear of the building. The end of the 'Old Bakehouse' used to be perfectly square, but several coaching accidents occurred at this spot and in 1810 the end wall was rebuilt

at the angle you see today. At least one incident resulted in a fatality, when a coach overturned and several outside passengers were pitched through the windows of nearby houses.

**4** 15 Main Street, 'The Smithy', housed the local wheelwright, a vitally important trade in the days of horse drawn transport. The forge, which was still in service until the 1940's, was on the right hand side of the cottage, now the cottage's garage. It was here that the wheel of a wagon, belonging to the famous preacher John Wesley, was repaired when he passed through the village on one of his evangelical journeys.



Forge and Wheelwrights at 15 Main Street, circa 1900

**5** The barn, situated in the yard to the right of 25 Main Street was, in the early 19th century, the setting for the Kibworth Theatre. On the Theatre bill for the evening of 28th October 1802 was the comedy 'School for Scandal'.

**6** 20 Main Street was originally two cottages, which have been made into one. Note the date 1791 on the gable end.

**7** Main Street boasted three inns. The Fox Inn at No.16 also traded as a sweet shop in the 1930's. *The Admiral Nelson* at 31 had a skittle alley at the rear and ceased trading in the 1930's. Note the granite setts in the pavement indicating horse drawn traffic using the gateway and The Navigation Inn at 24 (Harcourt Cottage), where the original window above the arch and the shutter catches are an unusual feature.

**8** 28 Main Street is the oldest cottage of this group. Notice the attractive upstairs windows and the distinctive brickwork. Once the sweet and provision shop for Harcourt, the front room was used as a shop whilst the shop door, located just to the right of the existing door, has long been blocked up.

**9** Turn left and see Harcourt Terrace which was an unsurfaced road starting at a gate situated between Nos. 44 and 46. Note the late Victorian cottages built later than the houses at the Main Street end of the Terrace. The gate was removed in the 1930's. Now follow the narrow jitty (footpath) on the right between numbers 60 and 62. The deeds for No. 60 show it had a mortgage value of £250 in the 1930s. Passing between the houses notice the outside 'privies' in the gardens to the right. Imagine how cold it was in the winter!

**10** The footpath passes through a kissing gate and emerges into open space with a prominent mound to the right. Known as 'The Munt', it is believed to be a 12th century earthwork motte and bailey fortress sometimes known as Kibworth Harcourt Castle. Excavations have unearthed a bone bodkin and traces of a paved floor, possibly a cist. Burnt wood, iron, teeth and bones have also been traced.

FACT

### The Jarrow March

On 20th October 1936 the Jarrow Marchers stopped at 'The Munt', where they were addressed by Ellen Wilkinson, the MP for Jarrow and organiser of the March, during a 10 minute rest on their 280 mile journey to London.

Turn right where the path exits to Leicester Road, the A6, via a second kissing gate.

**11** This section of road is the new turnpike route built in 1810 bypassing Main Street at a cost of £1,500. The bypass was built following a report by the The Turnpike Trust, responsible for the improvement and development of the turnpike routes, which said of Main Street; 'The man who could gallop a four in hand through such lanes must have been hard to find'.

The main route (green) turns right into Main Street, however an optional extra route (orange) continues along Leicester Road.

## Optional Route (orange)

**12** Just beyond the junction with Main Street are Nos. 51 and 53 Leicester Road, 'The White House' was formerly known as the Old Crown Inn. Legend has it that following the mysterious death of an elderly female resident the house is haunted. In the 11th century a kiln for the communal drying of corn stood adjacent to this site.

FACT

### Non-Conformity in Kibworth

The first meetings of Protestant Dissenters were held in the loft of the stables behind the Old Crown Inn, and in 1672 William Sheffield licensed the premises for Presbyterian worship.

The Rev. John Jennings junior founded the Kibworth Dissenters Academy in 1715. The academy became a centre for theological education, with a large number of pupils including Phillip Doddridge, who took great interest in Jennings' work. In 1723 Philip Doddridge assumed pastoral duties following in his tutor's footsteps, by being both a minister and tutor in Kibworth.

**13** 69 & 71, Leicester Road, Paddocks Farm, was originally built as a farmhouse. The building is dated 1704 in dark bricks high up on the end gable. Of interest is the number of window changes that have taken place on this wall. It is owned by Merton College, Oxford, as is much of the surrounding farm land. Note the stone block inscribed 'MC' built into the boundary wall adjacent to the road as you walk further towards the old chapel.



Paddocks Farm circa 1880

**14** The **Congregational Chapel** was built by voluntary subscriptions and in 1761 was licensed for worship. It is now a private property. The Chapel was renovated in 1930, when the organ was rebuilt and the pews replaced. One day in 1841 the travel pioneer, Thomas Cook was walking from Market Harborough to a Temperance Meeting in Leicester. When passing the Chapel he had a brilliant idea for his first railway excursion. A plaque on the Chapel Wall commemorates this occasion.

**15** Joined to the chapel by a brick arch, the **Manse**, a three storey building, was built in 1794. The building has been used as a boarding school and the residence of the Minister. Historically the kitchens were used to prepare meals for the congregation which stayed for both morning and evening services. The house is now private residential accommodation.

Return to Main Street and continue on the main route (green).

**16** Built on the site of an older property, 'The Limes' is an extensive villa dated 1880. In amongst much older buildings, this imposing house, which had extensive stabling and paddocks at the rear, is a good example of Victorian domestic architecture.

**17** **41 Main Street, Priory Farm**, formerly known as Ivy Cottage, is a rectangular house built partly of ironstone with a timber framed upper storey, which was later faced with brick. The use of differing materials indicates that the house was built in stages over many years.



Priory Farm (Ivy Cottage) courtesy of Betty Ward

**18** **88 Main Street**, now Fratelli's Restaurant, formerly The Three Horseshoes Inn, was purchased by the Northampton Brewery Company in 1935 from Merton College

**19** **Manor Farmhouse** has medieval origins. The exterior has been faced in brick and altered at the end of the 17th century and in the 1860's. Note the unusually placed letter box in the wall of the house and the Sun Insurance Company's insurance plaque higher up. The garden wall is decorated in a distinctive pattern of bricks known as diapering, whilst to the left of the garden entrance gateway are three terracotta plaques with the dates 1475, which indicates the first stone building on the site, 1695 when the building was faced in brick and 1860 when further additions were built, together with the present garden wall.

**20** **78 Main Street**, on the other side of the road, is yet another former public house. This was originally known as the Red Lion Inn.

**21** The village pump (**Cross Pump**) is located under a substantial horse chestnut tree and supplied a never ending flow of water to the dwellings in Albert Street and Main Street, in addition to steam engines that needed to replenish their water tanks. The pump is no longer in working order since part of the mechanism was removed.



View down Main Street towards the Old House  
(June, 1897 – Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee)

**22** The **Old House**, a fine brick Grade 2\* building with stone dressings is a rare example in Leicestershire of a

17th century fully developed brick Renaissance house. Built in 1678, the house was the first brick built house in the village and was built by William Parker, who died in 1699. The central first floor window to the front of the house is flanked by pilasters and surmounted by a scrolled pediment containing a shield of arms believed to be those of William Parker. Below the pediment is the date 1678.

FACT

**Merton College** archives hold a sketch thought to have been drawn circa 1780 showing no front garden to the Old House. It is said that one of the later occupants enclosed an area at the front of the house to keep noisy children away from the front door. During part of the 20th century the Old House was occupied by a well known local personality, General Jack, a distinguished World War 1 soldier, who had a passion for horses and fox hunting.



The Old House today

FACT

### The Market

The village was never granted a royal charter for a market, but there is evidence that markets were held in front of the Old House. The sketch mentioned above shows the village pump on an isolated island and a cross in the centre of an open area much larger than today.

**23** The **village cross**, in the form of a simple pillar structure, was re-erected in 1994, in Jubilee Green, as the result of a local initiative. The original base stones were located around the village, whilst the pillar shaft was re-created in a style that matched the original.

**24** The **Old Barn**, was, until recent times the stable block belonging to the Old House and has since been converted into living accommodation. It was built in 1678 as indicated by the plaque on the wall adjacent to the gate.

**25** On the left is another attractive row of cottages, this time in Albert Street (formerly known as Hog Lane in recognition of the pig markets held there). **Number 12, Joiners Cottage**, once incorporated a sweet shop with a high counter inside the front door. It is believed to have been a joiner's workshop in earlier times. On the right is a new road, Beech Tree Close, built in the orchard and paddock of the Old House, and the probable site of Harcourt Chapel, which is mentioned as a separate place of worship in 13th century documents and on maps up to the early 16th century.

**26** The origin of The City's name is unknown, but the area built outside the village limits is believed to have housed the poorest members of the village. Described by F.P. Woodford as 'three mud thatched cottages and three small brick and thatched cottages as well as other houses'. Excavations to the north of The City have uncovered evidence that property existed in this area during and after the Roman occupation.



A 2 roomed cottage in The City believed demolished in the 1960s

**27** Look to the east along Langton Road to see the Kibworth Harcourt **Windmill**, a wooden post mill believed to have been built in the early 17th century. The mill stands on private land and access is only permitted on open days or by prior permission.