

# Lambley Dumbles

## Historical Trail



Explore one of Nottinghamshire's hidden secrets

# The History of Lambley Village

## Prehistoric Landscapes

The landscape around Lambley that we see today was formed around 10,000 years ago, at the end of the last ice age. The large amounts of melt water released as the glaciers retreated caused streams and rivers to swell, cutting deeply into the soft local bedrock. The steep sided (and now wooded) valleys that were created are known locally as dumbles.

The inhabitants of Britain at the time the dumbles were forming lived a nomadic life, following migrating herds of animals (such as reindeer, wild horse and mammoth) across the frozen tundra, living in temporary camps.

As conditions became warmer, the tundra gave way to vast forests. Roe and red deer, elk and aurochs (a now extinct type of ox) were hunted, but large herds of animals could no longer be easily found. People soon realised that animals were easier to find when they gathered to graze on fresh shoots growing in forest clearings. Forest fires produced these natural clearings, so in an effort to control the movement of wild animals, sections of the forest were cleared. Trees were killed by removing a ring of bark from the trunk and were then burned.

Stone tools dating from the Neolithic (or New Stone Age), around 4500 BC to 2300 BC, provide the earliest evidence for people living in the Lambley area.

It was during this period that farming developed. Early farms were located in forest clearings. As there were no metal tools, stone axes were used to clear trees and for general woodworking. One was found in the village; it had been made in the Lake District and would have been brought to Nottinghamshire through trading. A flint arrowhead found nearby shows that hunting supplemented the produce of the farms. This and other flint tools from the parish help to build a more complete picture of life for people in the Lambley area around 6000 years ago.

## Lambley Village

After the Neolithic, there is no evidence for settlement in the Lambley area for many centuries. The name "Lambley" is first recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, and probably meant "Lamb's clearing". So there was certainly a settlement here in Anglo Saxon times, before the Norman conquest.

Prior to 1066 Lambley was held by the Saxon lord, Ulfketel. He was replaced by a Norman called Haldane or Alden, who held many manors around the county. Lambley (Labeleia) was recorded in the Domesday book of 1086 as having 20 villagers, three small holders and three sokeman (freemen), who had 6 ploughs between them. There were two mills in the manor, probably watermills used for grinding corn. This was a well-established agricultural community.

During the middle ages most land in Nottinghamshire was farmed as open fields, where between two and four large, undivided fields were farmed by the whole village, with each farmer having a number of strips in all of the fields. Each of the large fields would be used for one type of crop each year, or would be fallow (left without a crop, though the grass that would grow on it could be used for grazing). This system meant that everyone had to follow the rules of the manor relating to when the fields should be ploughed, sown and harvested. Traces of the ridge and furrow earthworks produced by medieval ploughing can still be seen around the village.

As the population increased more and more land was needed to grow crops, and woodland and waste were cleared for farming. Small areas of woodland did survive into modern times, especially where it was difficult to farm, often along steep river valleys like the Lambley Dumbles.



The use of unfarmed areas of woodland and wastes was as regulated as the common fields, as they too provided valuable resources. Woodlands could be protected from damage by grazing animals by a bank and ditch on their outer sides, and the use of even the smallest patch of grassland was controlled.

## Lambley Historical Trail

**Distance:** Shortest 1.6km/1m

**Duration:** Slow pace approx  
1 1/4 hrs

**Distance:** Longest 2.45km/1.5m

**Duration:** Slow pace approx  
1 1/2 hrs

**Please note:** *The Trail follows a route around the village and draws your attention to various features and buildings - for the most part numbered in the text and on the map. As these are privately owned properties please remain on the public highway when you view them and respect the privacy of the occupants. Photographs in this leaflet illustrate some of these features.*

**Route Details:** From START at the village hall/school car park with the school playground to your right, walk down to the playing field, past the tennis courts. Bear right to the field fence.

Beyond is a grazed field. You will notice that the surface is uneven, showing signs of "ridge and furrow" which was produced by medieval ploughing. The ridges probably helped with drainage, as well as being used to allocate parts of the large West Field to the different farmers in the village.

Return to the Main entrance of the school at Catfoot lane and bear right. At the bridge you can look down into the steep sided valley of 'Top Lambley Dumble'.

The building on the right, Brookside Cottage (**\*1 on the Trail Map**), has undergone restoration. It is the one of the oldest buildings in Lambley, from the 17th century. Grade II listed, this timber frame building has an interesting example of 'brick noggin' infill between its timber studs.



*Brookside Cottage being restored*

Backtrack towards the school slightly and cross Catfoot Lane carefully to The Lambley restaurant and pub car park. Follow Main St. into the village. For most of its existence Lambley was an agricultural settlement, reflected in the structure of the village, which evolved around the Medieval Manor and Church. In addition to the farmsteads, existing buildings reflect the increase of industry in the 1700s and various forms of trade (blacksmiths, bakehouses and shops).



Beyond The Lambley restaurant and pub to the left stands a terraced row of Stocking Frame workers cottages (23-29 Main St.) dating back to the 1700s when framework knitting had become an important industry in Lambley **(\*2)**.



*Stocking Frame Workers' Cottages*

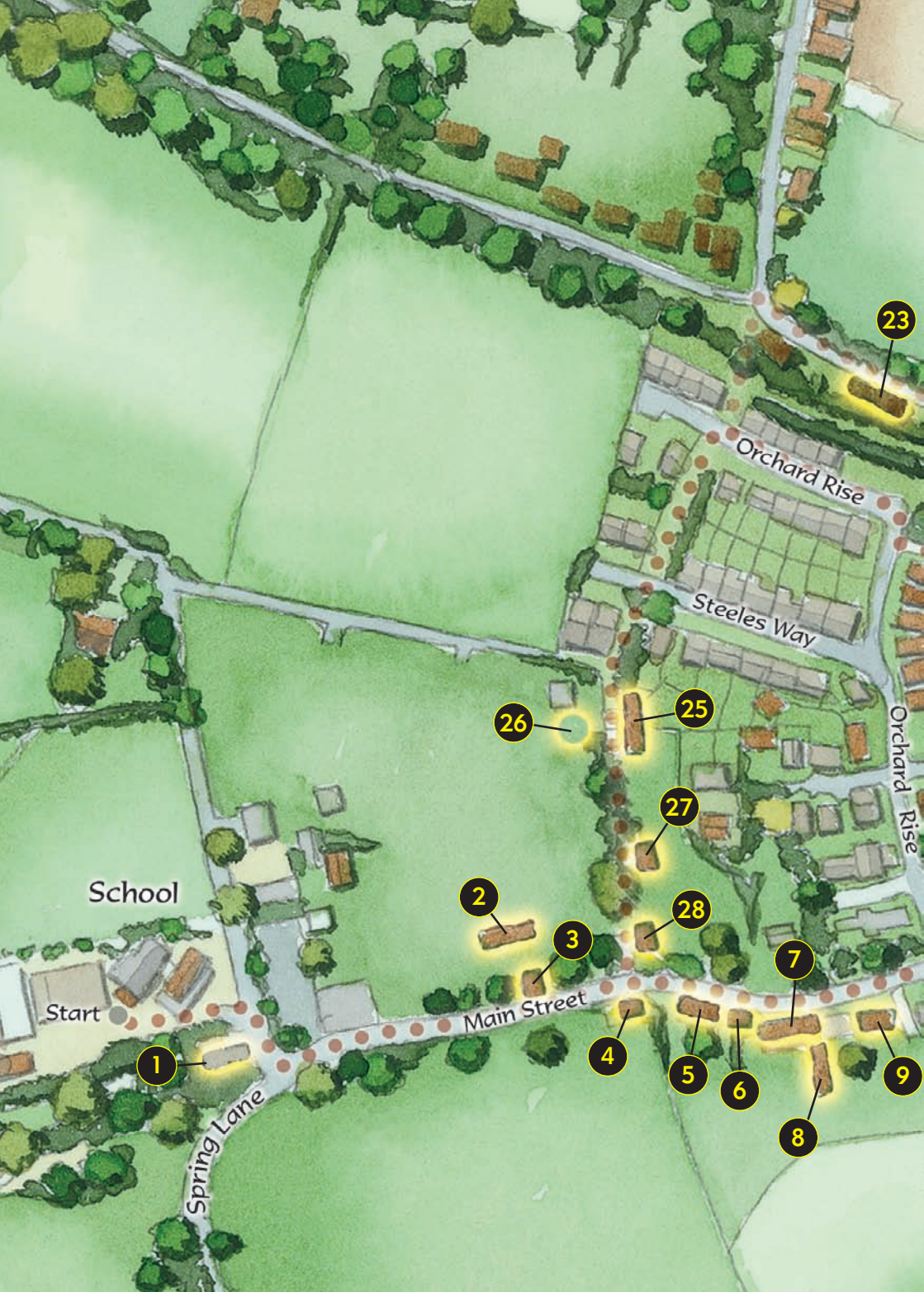
## Stocking Frame Workers' Cottages

The stocking frame - a hosiery knitting machine – was reputedly invented in 1589 by William Lee, curate of the nearby Nottinghamshire village of Calverton, and working it rapidly became one of the county's foremost industries. In 1669 there were less than one hundred frames in Lambley, but by 1844 the village had 381 frames. The industry frequently occupied the whole family, young and old alike, the men usually working the frames while women and children were mostly employed in seaming the stockings. The noisy frames were typically worked in people's own homes in front of long small paned windows, often with a candle or glass bottle hanging on them to reflect light onto the needles. Conditions in the industry were quite harsh.

Pay was poor, with frequent problems when trade was disrupted by war and hosiers also controlled the amount of work they could pass out to each knitter, which meant that the knitter's livelihoods were tightly controlled. To try to make enough money, the hours were long, with 17-18 hours recorded as a working day. These conditions and insecurities led to protests. Between 1811 and 1817 gangs of workers organised themselves in raids to smash frames across the county, to attempt to draw attention to their plight. Despite workers' petitions to Parliament for a Bill to regulate wages, a 'Punishment of Death' for frame-breaking was instituted by 1812 and frame workers remained among the poor. The 19th century saw the introduction of power driven frames with some villages adopting early factory systems. The firm of I & R Morley opened a power driven factory in Lambley around 1890. (Please see the point denoted **\*8 on the Trail Map**).

The stocking frame industry declined quite quickly, the last worker dying around 1920 ending this common way of life in the village. Most male workers found occupation in the new, nearby Gedling Colliery, which was sunk in 1900.

**From the Cottage, continue on until Trail Map point \*3, 'The Salt Box'** - a quaint small squarish dwelling with door opening on to the street. The Garage next door used to be a farmyard and like many properties in Lambley has its own Well for drinking water.



School

Start

1

Spring Lane

Main Street

2

3

4

5

6

8

28

27

25

26

Orchard Rise

Steeles Way

Orchard Rise

23

9

7



Mill Mound

24

# Lambley Dumbles Historical Trail



22  
21  
Church street

20

19

Reed Pond

18

Pingle Field  
Site of Manor House  
Spring

15

17

11

13

16

12

14

10

Millennium Oak

**Village Trail**

- Main Trail
- Alternative Trail

## Cross the road and follow the footway

No. 18 Main St. (**\*4**) has a grade II listing and was once a general store. No. 30 Main St. is point **\*5** on the Trail Map. Here the foundation stones of a long demolished cottage can be seen. These are reputed to have been used by young boys to step onto, hoping perhaps to distract the framework knitter in the house while he tried to thread his needles.

No. 32, (**\*6**) is the old Butchers Shop with a slaughterhouse to the rear. New Row/ New Run, (36-46 Main St. is **\*7** on the map). The houses set above the road were built for Gedling Colliery workers in the early 1900s. The pit manager's house is the detached dwelling at the end (No. 48).

**\*8 illustrates the location of** I & R Morley's Stocking Factory, a tall two storey brick building on a private lane behind New Row. It was established in 1890 for the manufacture of men's stockings using Griswell machines powered by an engine run on paraffin. The building consisted of two large full-length rooms with stairs at one end. Both floors housed machines and the holes for the drive belts can be seen on the upper floor. The windows were purposefully large but candles and oil lamps had to be used to provide sufficient light. The factory employed women exclusively, who, despite a fireplace on each level, found it a cold draughty place in which to work.



*I & R Morley's Factory*

**\*9** on the Trail Map is Castle Nursery House, a white plaster clad house with pantiled roof and outbuildings. This has a grade II listing with parts of it dating to the early 17th century. The structural timber at the end of the building, (best viewed from the gate), indicates the dwelling is of timber frame construction and probably the oldest in the village.



*Castle Nursery House*

On the opposite side of the road in the vicinity of Orchard Rise stood the village Pinfold where straying farm animals were impounded. Orchard Rise refers to the large orchard that once occupied land around the centre of the village. Latterly known as Steeles Orchard this may have dated back to Medieval times.



We arrive at No. 62 Main St. - the Old Methodist Chapel (**\*10**). Other points of interest on this section of the walk include **\*11** (once the village post office), **\*12** (formerly the 'Old Chapel' of the Primitive Methodists), **\*13** (No. 74 Main St. a row of terraced cottages), **\*14** - the old Co-op Building, identified by its distinctive three gables facing the road and **\*15** (Robin Hood Public House). If you look carefully you can detect that the modern building was once three smaller dwellings.

**Carefully cross the road.** Opposite the Pub you can view **Lambley Spring**, a water spout with a stone built sump that could be stoppered to form a reservoir from which to fill water containers. This is fed from a spring issuing from the Pingle field. Pingle means a small enclosure.

This field was the site of the **medieval Manor House**. There are earthworks here which are remnants of the old moat and buildings. Although much of the field has been built over, the rest has never been farmed, being used as an orchard and later for grazing.

## The Norman Manor at Lambley

After the Norman conquest the Manor was given by the King to a man named Alden, who took the name Cromwell after his main manor in north Nottinghamshire.

The 9th son in the Cromwell lineage, Ralph (1394-1456), earned a knighthood under King Henry V fighting at Agincourt. He became Lord Treasurer to Henry VI, and was a powerful and prosperous man. He rebuilt two other splendid manorial buildings, at Tattershall Castle (Lincs) and South Wingfield (Derbys).

A rental document of 1459 describes the manor house at Lambley as having two storeys with seven rooms, standing on a mound surrounded by a moat, with a complex of buildings including a granary, brewhouse, bakehouse, malt kiln and stables. It had been demolished by 1609, when a map was drawn up which shows the moat, but with no buildings in it.



*An impression of Lambley Manor House*

**Carefully cross back over the road where \*16, \*17 and \*18 can be found**

- village terraced cottages, the latter known as Postman`s Yard.

**At this point there is a choice of routes, you may:**

**a. Continue down Park Lane** to the Village Cemetery.

At the top of the car park on the right, there is an oak tree, grown from an acorn taken from the Lambley Blasted Oak, planted to mark the millennium. There are also seats for those wishing to rest and enjoy the views over the Lambley **Reed Pond**.

**Return and cross the road** carefully to visit this Nature Reserve. Restored in 1974, the pond is of medieval date, probably associated with the Manor House or original Rectory (erected in the 1440s). It was probably a 'stew pond' providing fish, which was a traditional Catholic dish on Fridays.

**Follow the path to the gate at the corner then follow the path to the left between the houses to the road.**

**b. Cross the road** to Church St. (to the right hand footway). At the road junction, two Dumble streams join to form the Cocker Beck (crooked stream). Follow to the end of the footpath to Reed Pond that emerges on the right.

**Continue** on the footway of Church St. to **\*19** (No. 16 Church Street), another of the oldest timber framed buildings, it is grade II listed and dates to the early 17th century with small sloping dormer windows.

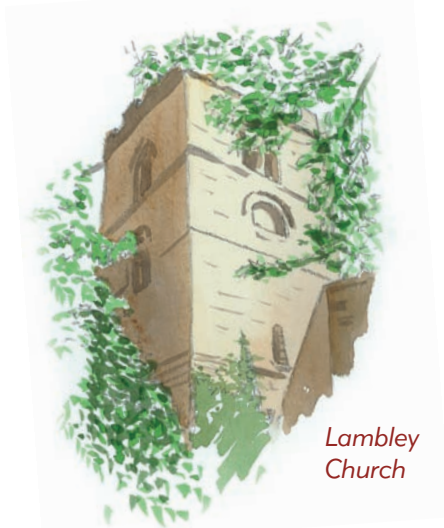
On the opposite side of the road stood an old Blacksmiths, one of two in the village at one time. A little further on is No. 24 Church St. (**\*20**) - Church Farm is a fine three storey brick farmhouse with pantiled roof.

**Cross the road to \*21, LAMBLEY CHURCH** (See Box)

**Lambley Church** - dates back to the 11th century and was described by Pevsner as 'one of the few almost entirely perpendicular village churches in Nottinghamshire, all of a piece and felicitous proportions, tall and upright, without being narrow, all the windows high and spacious'. Ralph Cromwell left a legacy in his will financing the rebuilding of the Church, which was rededicated as the church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity in 1480. His badge - a bulging purse - can be seen on stone panels either side of the window in the east wall (opposite the tower). It has a grade 1 listing by English Heritage; the lower storey of the Tower is 13th century and the upper third from the late 14th. It contains a very early bell frame, which once bore two bells. The single steel bell installed today was cast in Sheffield in 1867.

**From here there is a choice of route;-**

**a. Return to Church St.** and continue left passing The Old School House (**\*23**) that has retained its bell tower.



*Lambley Church*

Opened in 1852 it provided schooling for boys only at 2 or 3 pennies a week, although many had to seam stockings or work on the land instead of receiving schooling.

Follow until the bend in the road just past The Woodlark Inn and take the public footpath to the left over the Dumble stream to Orchard Rise.

**6. Continue on the footpath through the churchyard passing the end of the long brick terraced cottages (\*22), to Orchard Rise. Follow to the right, round the bend and then follow to the footpath that crosses before the end of the housing.**

**Continue** – Take the footpath up the hill, crossing Steeles Way, to the top. The modern housing (1970s) in this area occupies the site of the old village orchard and views over the village from here (to the north – over the hedge, from just past the bungalow on the right),

reveal how the gardens of the old village were long narrow closes or crofts. These were used for domestic cultivation, the keeping of animals and fruit growing. Many still retain their orchard trees.

To the northeast in the field on top of the hill beyond the village, stood a windmill (\*24). This was a post mill, where the whole structure rotated on a vertical post. The post was set into a mound, which is what remains today. The mound was excavated in 1949 and the pottery found in it showed that it was probably constructed in the 15th century.



*Post Mill*

**Go through gate, heading down Mill Lane. Just beyond the gate, the buildings associated with a more recent windmill can be seen to your left (\*25) including a former bakehouse. The mill itself (\*26) was also a post mill, and is shown on a map of 1835. It stood on the lawned mound to the right.**



The cottages, No. 4 Mill Lane, (\*27) still show the insurance plate on the wall (at one time this had to be present before the fire brigade companies would attend to tackle a building fire!). At the bottom of Mill Lane the house to the left, No. 45 Main St (\*28) was another village bakehouse having a hoist frame for lifting flour to the upper storey.

**Turn right and return to START**



### Lambley Cowslips

Cowslips have long been associated with Lambley, growing in profusion in the fields around the village and along the Dumbles.



The plant has been adopted as the emblem for the village and by tradition there was an annual Cowslip Sunday Celebration on the first Sunday in May, when people visited to collect cowslips for posies and wine making. Attracting increasing crowds and encouraging rowdiness, the celebration was abandoned in the Victorian period, although in recent times it has been occasionally re-held as a village Event.

If you visit during spring or early summer, look out for this delightful plant growing in grassy spaces around Lambley Village

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of information by Lambley Historical Society towards production of this publication.