

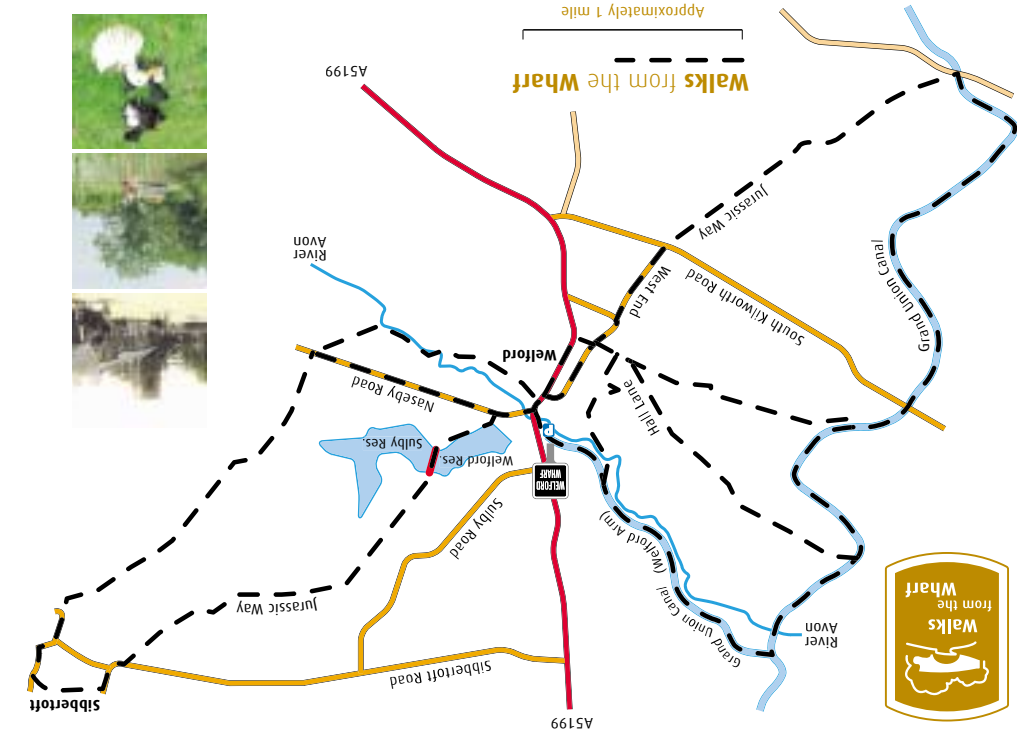
**P** Car parking: follow the British Waterways sign to Welford Wharf on the A5199. Parking is beyond the Wharf Inn car park, by the limekilns. The Wharf Inn car park, by the limekilns. Dickens in his novel *Bleak House*.

Each walk starts and ends at Welford Wharf. Be sure to look at the display panels at the wharf – they tell you much more about the history of Welford and its canal, and greater detail about interesting features to look for.

You can discover lots about the history of Welford and its canal on a pleasant stroll through rolling countryside or a meander through the village.

Some of the walks overlap each other, so you can combine them in any way that suits your pace and energy.

There are five Walks from the Wharf – this map shows all of them. The River Avon trickles through ancient pastures and has been the source of power for six watermills, one of which was owned by an abbey. Along the canal towpath you can find the site of a deserted medieval village, and see where birds were made beside the canal arm that ran up to a tumpike road. Welford has public houses that serve food and which welcome children. The village once had many more pubs and inns. Its most famous, The Tabot Inn, was immortalised by Charles Dickens in his novel *Bleak House*.



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# Walks from the Wharf

Discover **Welford** and its canal

Five historic walks in and around the picturesque village of Welford, Northamptonshire

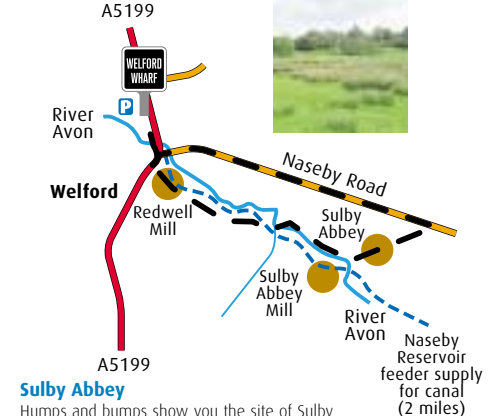


## Abbey Walk

**Approximately 3 miles starting from Welford Wharf**

A footpath marker shows the route from the A5199, where access is through a garden gate. Keep to your left, following the footpath into open fields.

**Look out for**  
As you stroll through the fields on Abbey Walk you can see the meandering route of the River Avon and a straighter, man-made watercourse – the Naseby Reservoir ‘feeder’ – which supplies water to the canal. These waterways intersect but their waters do not mix. A siphon tube takes Naseby Reservoir feeder water under the Avon and its tributary stream. The site of Redwell Mill is marked by marshy land and the humps and hollows that are the only remains of its watercourses and buildings.

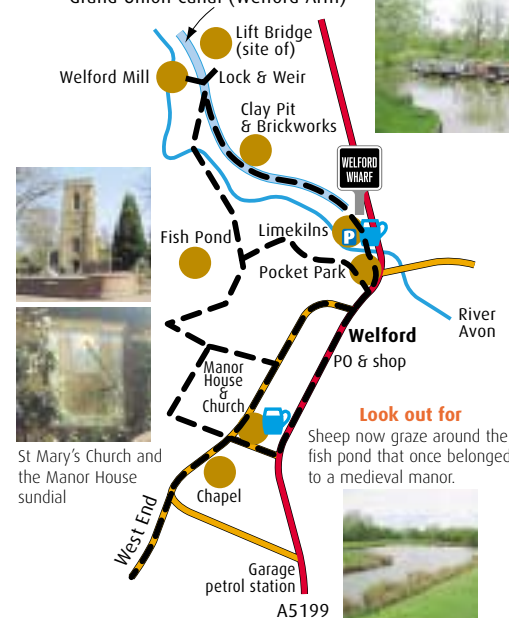


**Sulby Abbey**  
Humps and bumps show you the site of Sulby Abbey. The monastic farm would have adjoined the abbey and had fish ponds, cattle sheds, dwellings, and at least one watermill sited close to the river. The abbey estate extended from the earthworks that you see where the land rises on the opposite side of the river to a cross-shaped depression leading towards Naseby Road.

## Welford Walk

**Up to 2 miles – choose your route starting from Welford Wharf**

**Brickmaking in Welford**  
The site of the clay pit is now occupied by a marina, and the bricks were made in the area that is now the marina car park. To take a look at the marina, either cross the footbridge or take the level path around its edge.



**Family grocery**  
In 1922 George William Bird owned the grocer’s shop at the bottom of High Street. Frank Gardner bought the shop in 1924. By 1972 its appearance had changed with the times.

## Mary Gilbert Walk

**Approximately 5 miles starting from Welford Wharf**

**Countryside Stewardship Scheme**  
Access is provided, until September 2008, to the River Avon floodplain where a species-rich wildlife habitat is being encouraged to flourish. Signboards at Welford Lock and at bridge 41 give you more information, and access details. I cannot believe my eyes sometimes when I look out of the window. I wonder what they would all think if they could see the pleasure boats instead of coal boats and 1,000 tons of coal stacked in the yard. In those days men stayed in a job 45–50 years, and girls in the house until they got married. We live in a better world, now.”

Mary Gilbert ran the George Inn, now The Wharf Inn, and ferried coal, coke and other goods on her narrowboat, *Gwen Mary*. On the leaflet cover you can see a picture, taken in 1907, of Mary and her daughters. Mary’s daughter Gwen recalled “Of course we used to have a lot of boats up in those days, bringing the limestone for the kilns, and roadstone heaped down the canal-side. The Wharf Inn car park, by the limekilns. Dickens in his novel *Bleak House*.”



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## Downtown Walk

**Approximately 8 miles starting from Welford Wharf**

Travelling by boat is easy now, but it was much harder when narrowboats were pulled by horses. Look out for rope burn-marks on bridges. How do you think they were made?

**Take the short cut**  
From bridge 38 you can follow the path that joins Hall Lane and takes you back to Welford.

**Look out for**  
Mileage markers tell you how far you have travelled. The Grand Junction Canal and the [Old] Union Canal measured their distances from different points.

**Hemplov Hills**  
The hills support a rich and diverse habitat with abundant plant life. Look closely at the leaf shapes – you don’t need to be a specialist to enjoy them.

**Hemplov Hall**  
The Hemplov was built in 1864 and became a centre for the Pytchley Hunt and ‘The Hemplov Hills’ Club. By the 1950s it was dilapidated and became a turkey farm. It was demolished in the 1970s.



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**Welford and its canal**  
Five walks introduce you to an area teeming with history. The region has a level towpath, gentle hills and short, steeper climbs. All the walks except Mary Gilbert Walk have stiles. Each walk has its own waymarkers to guide you.

**Consider others and be safe**  
Respect the countryside: keep dogs on leads, leave gates as you find them, keep to the footpaths, be careful on roads and by water and please do not pick wild plants. Thank you.

**Welford amenities**  
The Elizabethan (High Street) and The Wharf Inn (by the wharf) provide food and drink, and both welcome children. There is a Post Office and grocery store on High Street. The village petrol station is on Northampton Road, leading out of Welford. There are bus services from Market Harborough, Leicester and Northampton. For further information contact Traveline on 0870 608 2608. Car parking: follow the British Waterways sign to Welford Wharf on the A5199. Parking is beyond The Wharf Inn car park.

**A community project**  
Many local enthusiasts have generously contributed their time, knowledge and expertise to help create the **Walks from the Wharf** leaflet and display panels. We are particularly indebted to: the Old Union Canals Society; Geoff Pitcher and other contributors to ‘Welford: Portrait of a Northamptonshire Village’; Barry Crowther, who kindly allowed us to use photographs of old Welford from his book ‘Welford: The Legacy 1856 to 1980’.

Project creation, funding and management partnership: Additional funders: Main sponsor of the ‘Welford and its Canal’ project:

Design, research and scripting: Edward Moody Design, Leicester

**Reservoir Walk**  
**Approximately 6 miles starting from Welford Wharf**

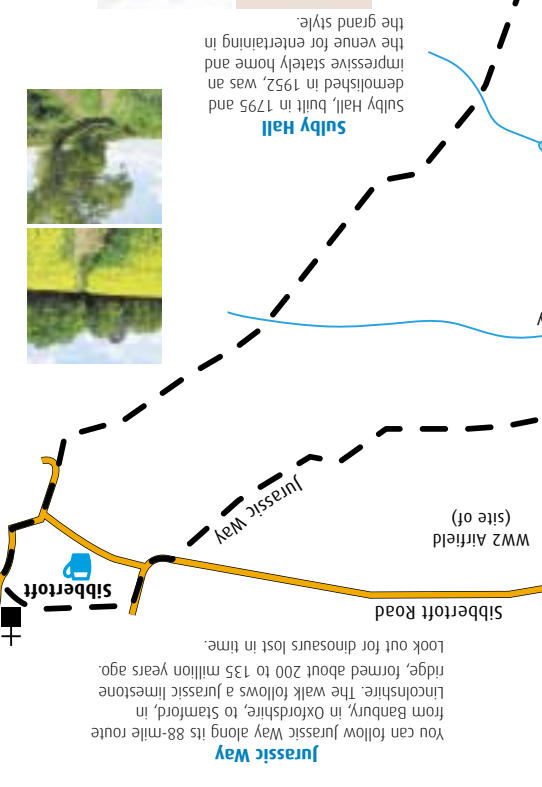
You can follow Jurassic Way along its 88-mile route from Banbury, in Oxfordshire, to Stamford, in Lincolnshire. The walk follows a Jurassic limestone ridge, formed about 200 to 135 million years ago. Look out for dinosaurs lost in time.

**Jurassic Way**  
Sibbertoft Road (site of) W2 Airfield

**Subby Hall**  
Subby Hall, built in 1795 and demolished in 1952, was an impressive stately home and the venue for entertaining in the grand style.

**Look out for**  
A tree-lined hedge follows the north side of the reservoirs. It has grown in a disused channel that by-passed the reservoirs and allowed water to flow down to the River Avon.

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