

# SWAD WALKS

## Ticknall Village

By Dot Morson

A short walk for you this month, most of it on surfaced paths. There is much of historical interest on this village trail. Ticknall's name is derived from its agricultural past. Goats were reared in the area, 'tic', tells us that and 'halh' is Saxon for a hollow. The village is in a shallow valley sheltered from northerly winds. Many consider it to be an estate village owned by the Harpur Crewe family of Calke Abbey but this is not the case. A number of properties were privately owned. One in particular named Sheffield House on High Street was the vet's and the family proudly added their name at the top. The top row of windows are false making it look a grander building than it is. As you wander round the streets notice how many cottages have stone at the base and then bricks at a higher level. This shows that the original cottages were of a single storey and then they had their roofs raised to improve first floor space. Tiles replaced thatch. The village has changed little in the last 170 years with limited infilling of new properties.

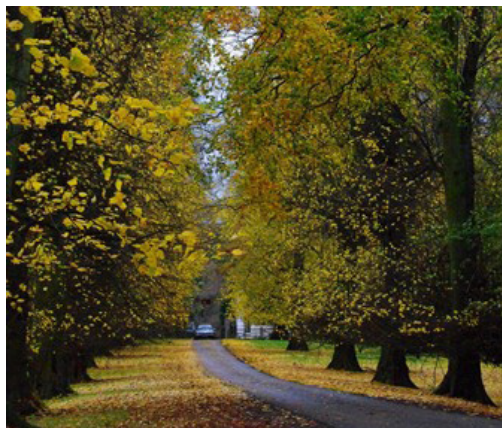
**Starting point:** Ticknall Village Hall Car park - DE73 1JW (Donations towards upkeep are welcome). There is ample street parking too.

**Distance:** 2 miles

**Stiles:** 2

**Terrain:** Field paths, surfaced paths and quiet country lanes. Dog friendly.

With your back to the Village Hall entrance pass an interpretation board alongside the surfaced path to reach a wooden gate onto Ingleby Lane. Cross over and walk along Chapel Street. Note the Methodist Chapel dating from 1815 being earlier than the Parish Church. It still has its original furniture and cast iron pillars supporting the gallery. Outside is one of the original village stand pipes. Today it is the only one linked to the mains and provides water for the chapel. The cast iron pipes installed in 1914 by the last baronet were used until the 1950s when mains came. Water was raised by a wind-pump from a well, stored in a reservoir and piped to the 'taps' as they were called. The tall Corsican pines that you will see in various locations around the village were planted when the last baronet, Sir Vauncey Harpur Crewe, married in 1876. They were in pairs on



either side of the road to represent the bride and groom on their way from St. George's Church. Most have survived.

Go through the gate onto The Green. An information board on the left tells of Ticknall's industrial heritage. Walk down to the left corner to admire the 'Arch'. It was built in 1802 to allow the horse-drawn tramway that was above to access the brickyards and limeyards. It is a horseshoe shape being built by a Canal company, pre-dating railways and listed grade 2.

Cross the road with care and use the right verge as you walk towards Ticknall Lodge, the entrance to Calke Park. Notice the small building on the right. This was Lady Crewe's Free School for Girls originally thatched and is referred to as 'ornee' style being very fashionable in the Regency period.

Continue along the drive for 100 metres turn right and follow a shallow ridge across the field towards the left of the wood. The 'cut and cover' tunnel is below you with two grills that provided day light. You can see the shallow nature of the roof of the tunnel when looking down a grill.

Continue to the end of the woodland and take the path with the pond on your left. Go through a wooden gate ahead and descend to the surfaced route of the tramway. Turn left with the tunnel entrance behind you. Continue on the track, immediately after the next tunnel turn left and take a left turn once through a wooden gate, then a stile where the path crosses a field dis-

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playing medieval ridge and furrow. The route is clear on the ground. Then over another stile. Turn right and walk along Ashby Road.

Claypits have been recorded in the village since the 13th century. By the 16th century there was a thriving pottery industry that continued for over three hundred years. The ordinary everyday crockery was made of earthenware and sometimes decorated with slip. It was an important part of



the local economy. Residents often find pot sherds when gardening.

The agricultural foundation of the village is evident in the number of gentrified farmhouses and barns. Springfield Farm being an example. On the opposite side of the road is an early well-house with a stone

trough at the side and further down the road is another with a pump. The Chequers is the oldest pub (17th century) in the village and has three small rooms, an inglenook fireplace and basic simple benches. There used to be a bakery here. Almost opposite is one of the village's two surviving smithy buildings.

Note the stone field stile on the right just before the Staff of Life. This would have been used by employees on their walk to work at Calke Abbey. The Staff of Life, originally known as The Loaf and Cheese was renamed by 1881. It still has its bread oven. When not baking bread locals used it to cook their meals. Records show that the building goes back to 1698 and was owned by the Harpur Crewe Estate. Both pubs originally brewed their own beer.

At the corner of High Street and Main Street notice the Harpur Crewe Estate Yard. Cross the road with care and walk up to the top of Church Street.

I have written about St George's and its churchyard in the past. Admire the brick built almshouses. They were built in 1772, the money having been left by Charles Harpur, a brother of the



6th baronet. They are described as a 'hospital for poor and decayed men and women of Ticknall and Calke'.

Retrace your steps to the corner. Turn left to pass the original Reading and Coffee Rooms dating from 1892. The next building by the bus shelter is the village lock up. It was used from 1809 to lock up unruly locals and other miscreants. Grannie Soar, the landlady of the Staff of Life, had a key that fitted the door and she would release drunks once they had sobered up. One story goes that a drunkard still had beer in his tankard when arrested and Grannie didn't want it to be wasted. She took the drink along with a straw, pushed the straw through the grill on the door allowing him to finish his pint.

As you continue along the pavement notice the 'Stone Fronts' on the opposite side of the road. The stone came from the old church when it was blown up in September 1841. Make use of Scoff and Shop if you are ready for refreshments. On the opposite side is another of the smithy buildings. The door, sideways to the road, is covered in horseshoes. (Please respect the privacy of the owners). Just beyond the shop is the old Baptist chapel, now a dwelling. It was converted from a barn in 1795 and cost £271. Just past The Wheel, Banton's Lane gives access to Calke Park. The long thin brick building on its corner was the maltings. Walk up Ingleby Lane to return to the car park at the Village Hall.