

A walk around Langham in Rutland

with
Langham Village History Group

Introduction

Langham means 'long village' and it owes its origins to the Anglo Saxons, although Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman remains have been found within the parish. As part of "Oakham soke", the village's connections with the town of Oakham are long established. The Domesday Book records Oakham as having five hamlets of which Langham was probably one.

Details of the early history of Langham are given in the Victoria County History and also on the village website at www.langhaminRutland.org.uk

Being largely Royal property, Langham was given by successive kings to various influential families, including de Newburgh, de Ferrers, Clare, Audley and de Bohun. It was granted to Thomas Cromwell by King Henry VIII and this family owned Langham until 1600 when it was sold to Sir Andrew Noel. The Manor of Langham remained in the Noel family until the sale of the Gainsborough estates in 1925.

Probably the most famous son of Langham was Simon de Langham who was born here circa 1310. He was elected Archbishop of Canterbury in 1366 having been both Prior and Abbot of Westminster Abbey and also Chancellor of England. He was created Cardinal Bishop by Pope Gregory XI in 1373. He died at Avignon in 1376. His tomb in the chapel of St. Benedict is Westminster Abbey's earliest ecclesiastical monument. An illuminated manuscript telling Simon's story can be found in Langham church.

The Village Map

The street plan shows the suggested route for the walk as a broken line of red footprints, a number within a circle refers to a similar number between [0] brackets within the text.

The Walk

The walk starts at the Village Hall [1], formerly the Village Institute, which was built in 1890 for the benefit of the parish on land given by the Earl of Gainsborough. Prior to this there had been an Institute and Reading Room in a cottage. It was for men only.



The Village Hall circa 1920

Walk in an easterly direction along Church Street and after a short distance turn right into New Lane and walk towards Burley Road. On the left, behind the high wall, is the Old Hall and its extensive gardens [2]. This will be described later in the walk when the north-west elevation can be seen. The wall¹ follows the north, west and south boundaries. It is mainly 20th century, but there are some 17th and 18th century sections.

Ruddle Way is built on the site of the former Langham brewery built in 1858 by Richard Westbrook Baker. The Ruddle connection with Langham Brewery began with George Ruddle in 1910. Kenneth Ruddle (later Sir Kenneth) succeeded him in 1924 and in 1968, Tony Ruddle, became joint managing director. The Langham Brewery, once famous for Ruddles prize winning ales closed in 1999 following successive take-overs.



Burley Road Looking West - circa 1920

From the end of New Lane, turn left into Burley Road. The wall to the Old Hall gardens continues along here, and a doorway within a stone arch, just before the end, leads to Old Hall Cottage [3]. It was formerly a row of five dwellings with a 17th century core and known as Old School Row. It was made into a guest annex to the Old Hall in the 1920s by H Goodhart Rendell, an "Arts and Crafts" architect and friend of Owen Hugh Smith, the then new owner of the Old Hall. Owen Smith was a wealthy merchant banker who purchased a large part of Langham as it was sold off by the Gainsborough estate.



The Limes

On the left, is The Limes [4], an early C19 house¹ of brick and Welsh slate construction. The windows have fine glazing bars and brick lintels. Next to it is the Grange¹ and Grange Cottage¹ [5]. A painted lead plate with the date 1798 is on the archway between the two properties. The tall gable parapets indicate a former thatched roof.

Just past the Grange, turn left on to a footpath which heads west. It eventually runs along the side of the brook. Second on the right is the thatched Brookside Cottage¹ [6] of 17/18th century style which would have been a two room cottage in about 1700.

Continue along the footpath to Church Street. Turn left and walk along to the Gate House¹ to the Old Hall [7]. This range of buildings, which also includes stables and loose boxes round a courtyard, was built in 1925 by H Goodhart Rendell as part of the extensive building works at the Hall commissioned by Owen Hugh Smith.



The Old Hall Gate House - Drawing by Anthony Wright

Note the white wooden turret over the Gate House with two clock dials, and two wind direction dials. The north facing dial faces the church and it is said that Owen Smith stipulated this feature so that he could determine the wind direction for hunting purposes on his return from church services.

The Old Hall² [2], which can be seen from the Gate House, has a core of 1665, but it was extensively added to by H Goodhart Rendell between 1925 and 1930, the main additions being the east and west wings. He was also responsible for laying out the gardens.

Retrace your steps along Church Street to its junction with Well Street. *[Note the information board near the seat].*



The Manor - circa 1920

The western parapet of the bridge [8] at this junction is dated 1847 – on the brook side! Continue along Church Street in a north-easterly direction to the Manor¹ [9]. This large 17th century symmetrical house has a Collyweston stone roof with unusual acorn decoration. The bay windows transition to a dormer with elaborate masonry at roof level. Note the sundial in the gable above the right hand bay window.



The Old Vicarage - Revd. Mandell's Housekeeper in the porch

Continue west along Church Street to the Old Vicarage [10] on the right-hand side. This ironstone house with a stone slate roof was built in 1790. Its fine frontage includes jointed stone lintels with keystone. Some old cylinder glass is visible in the box sash windows. It may have been an inn in its early days but became a vicarage in 1912 when the village was first granted its own incumbent. When a new vicarage was built nearby it reverted to being a private dwelling.

Retrace your steps along Church Street towards its junction with Well Street. Just before the bridge, turn right into Westons Lane. This is a designated footpath although you appear to be walking through private gardens at the beginning. Early maps indicate that this was once a main thoroughfare and it is reputed to be the oldest part of the village.



Westons Lane circa 1910

Continue along Westons Lane until its junction with Well Street. Here, on the right is a farm house¹ [11] originally built in 1486, the main hall was converted to two floors in 1540 and the timber frame exterior was encased in stone in 1681. The window to the east gable is said to be the oldest surviving window in the village.

[From this point you can either continue with the walk or return to the Village Hall via the churchyard, visiting the church³ of St. Peter and St. Paul on the way.]

Walk along Well Street away from the church. Immediately on the left is a small red brick cottage which is very clearly dated. Opposite is the site of the former maltings near the junction with Orchard Road. According to recent researches, Orchard Road was the original site of the medieval manor house. A 1624 map shows its location and a map of 1760 refers to the site as Manor Close.

Continue to the junction with Bridge Street. On the far corner is Ivey House [12] which consists of two former dwellings of 18th and 19th century origin. Walk along Well Street to see a range of five cottages¹ on the north side at [13]. No 22 is the Old Forge, 26 is dated 1826, and 30 has a carved stone head partly hidden by the porch roof.



The Village Green and the WWI Captured Gun

A village pump, restored in 1986, is located at the western end of Well Street [14]. Like a number of other Rutland villages, Langham was offered a captured German field gun as a trophy at the end of WWI. It was located on the village green near the pump in 1920 and remained here until 1941 when it was sold for £5 to a scrap metal merchant.

Retrace your steps along Well Street and turn right into Bridge Street. Until the end of the 19th century this was the main road through the village between Oakham and Melton Mowbray.

Just before the junction with Church Street is a bridge [15] over the brook. It was rebuilt in 1999 but was originally a medieval packhorse bridge. The original bridge structure survives beneath.

Briefly turn right into Church Street. On the corner is the Noel Arms public house [16]. When the Earl of Gainsborough owned the village, his tenants would pay their rents at this pub, and he used to treat them to an annual dinner. Later it was a Ruddles' tied public house.



Church Street - Noel Arms and Langham House behind cart



Langham House

Next to the Noel Arms is Langham House [17], recently converted into apartments after being a nursing home for many years. It is basically an 18th century building with 19th century additions, some of which are attributed to H Goodhart Rendel. It was used at one time by the agent of the Earl of Gainsborough, later becoming a hunting lodge. In 1891 the house was purchased by Lt. Colonel Sir Henry Clarke Jervoise, Bart., who was a major benefactor to Langham Church. The house is reputed to have been a meeting place of the Prince of Wales and Wallis Simpson. This was possibly the first purchase of Langham property made by Owen Hugh Smith. Return to the crossroads and turn right into the south part of Bridge Street.



Langham School and its Children before 1910 - Wheatsheaf Public House on the Right

On the right, at the junction with Burley Road is the former British School [18] which was built in 1841 by the Earl of Gainsborough, and described in White's Directory of 1846 as being of 'Swiss Style'. Turning left into Burley Road you will see the Wheatsheaf Inn [19] which dates back to the 17th century; next door is the late 17th century Yew Tree farmhouse [20] and its converted stables.



Yew Tree Farm - circa 1920

Return again to the Church Street / Bridge Street crossroads and turn right towards the Village Hall. Immediately on the left, at [21], is a pair of 18th century cottages, some parts of these cottages are probably even earlier, and other parts are obviously modern.

Continue to walk along Church Street to the Baptist Church [22], which was built during 1854 and opened on Thursday June 21st 1855 with the Hon. and Rev., Baptist W Noel as the first preacher.



Langham Baptist Church circa 1913

Number 29 Church Street was, at one time, a Primitive Methodist chapel. Continue your walk along Church Street to finish at the Village Hall. If you have not already visited our lovely church please do so before you leave the village.

The church, dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, is one of the largest in Rutland. The earliest parts of the building date back to the 13th century with additions in the 14th and 15th century and major internal restoration between 1876 and 1880. The churchyard was enlarged in 1921. This involved rerouting the brook to its present course. In 2007 the stump of a medieval churchyard cross was discovered, one of only four in Rutland. The cross may even predate the church.



The Church³ of St Peter and St Paul Circa 1910

Langham Village History Group

The history group was formed following the *Langham 2000* exhibition to develop work already completed by further investigating some of the issues that had come to light. The group has been working on a variety of projects:

In 2006 an award of £23,000 was granted by the Heritage Lottery Fund to research "The Life and Families of 17th century Langham". The project commenced in September 2006 with an anticipated completion towards the end of 2008. The research by individual members is uncovering a wealth of information about the village which will result in an end of project publication, a major exhibition and associated village events.

The group has also been working to transcribe and collate the 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891 & the 1901 census returns and analyse the data to understand the reasons for population growth in the village during the period 1841 to 1881. The returns are now freely available on the village web site in a fully searchable format.

Another project has been to collate the tithe apportionments for the village, map them electronically and make the information available on the Internet through the web site. Work is continuing to add additional information from the 1624 and 1760 estate maps and, hopefully, land usage information from a variety of aerial photographs.

Individual members continue to work on their own particular areas of interest so adding to the wealth of information that the group has in its archive.

Further information can be found on the village web site:

<http://www.LanghaminRutland.org.uk> or by writing to the secretary at LVHG@LanghamVillage.com

References:

Victoria County History, Rutland
Langham village website at <http://www.LanghaminRutland.org.uk>
Rutland County Council – Details of listed buildings
Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Records Office
Rutland Local History & Record Society
Rutland County Museum Service
White's Directory of Leicestershire & Rutland 1877
Kelly's Directory of Leicestershire & Rutland 1925
Langham Village History Group - LVHG@Langhamvillage.com
Map of Langham based on Openstreetmap image data

- ¹ Grade II listing.
- ² Grade II* listing.
- ³ Grade I listing.

