

## LOCAL INTEREST



*Torpel Manor – only grassy banks and mounds remain*

### Bainton Conservation Area

This small area, accessible by grassy paths, includes a variety of wetland and woodland habitats, with some interesting plant, bird and animal life. Look out for the kingfishers.

### Torpel Manor

The medieval manor of Torpel was one of the most extensive in the Soke of Peterborough. Its land comprised most of Ufford, Ashton, and Bainton and extended into Maxey, Barnack, Helpston, Northborough and Southorpe. The first lord of the manor in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century was probably Roger de Torpel who was granted 6 hides of land in return for providing King Henry I with the service of 6 knights. His successors held the manor for 150 years and then it passed to the Camoys family for the next 150 years. After a succession of owners, it was bought by Sir Thomas Trollope of Casewick in 1687. Since then much of the land in the villages has belonged to his descendants.

There was probably never much of a village at Torpel, just a hamlet, which may have been the present day Ashton. There was a windmill and a water mill, probably Lolham Mill on the Welland and a fishery. There are records of a Thursday market and a 3-day fair.

### Deer park

A park was an enclosed area of land in which deer were kept as a source of fresh meat in winter. In the middle ages a park could be

created only by a very costly royal licence. In 1198 Roger de Torpel paid 100 shillings for the right to enclose some of his woods to create a deer park and Ralph de Camoys was granted 9 does and 4 bucks out of Clyve (Kings Cliffe) Forest to stock his park. It does not appear to have been very big and it had gone by the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century.

“Torpel Castle”, in Lawn Wood, though shown as remains of manor house on the OS map, was probably a hunting lodge. It was a 20 square metre stone building, with walls 1.75 metres thick, but only the limestone rubble core remains.

### Manor Court

The affairs of the manor were controlled by the manorial courts, which were held twice a year. Some tenancies known as copyholds could only be transferred by a manor court and the record for these was a copy of the court roll. The Torpel Manor Court functioned until 1925 when copyholds were converted to freeholds. In Ufford, for example, the manor court was held, in its later years, in The Stag/White Hart for the transfer of tenancies and the paying of rents and taxes.

### John Clare and Torpel

Surprisingly he doesn't refer to it by name but he mentions “several ruins of roman and saxon castles” which he had to cross on his way back to Helpston after harvesting at Ashton. Once it was nearly midnight when he started to walk the mile home. He writes in his Autobiographical Fragments:

“the tales were numberless of ghosts and goblins that were seen there... I fancied I saw something stand wavering in the path but whether of flesh and blood was a question... my astonished terrors magnified it into a horrible figure...and ran as fast as I could and on stopping at the stile to look were it was my increased terror found it close at my heels...I took to my heels and when I got home I felt nearly fit to dye...”. He discovered later that it was a foal, which had lost its mother!



## John Clare Country Torpel Manor Walk



*Bainton Buttercross and Church*

**One in a series of circular walks issued  
by Parishes in Barnack Ward**

## TORPEL MANOR WALK

Start and finish: Bainton buttercross, opposite the church. No refreshments on this walk.

Position: about 5½ miles from Stamford, 10 from Peterborough.

Parking: Roadside in Bainton or Moors Corner, off road at Conservation Area.

Bus service: hourly from Peterborough and Stamford.

Distance: 4¾ miles.

Time: about 2¼ hours.

OS maps: 234 and 235 Explorer, 1:25,000.

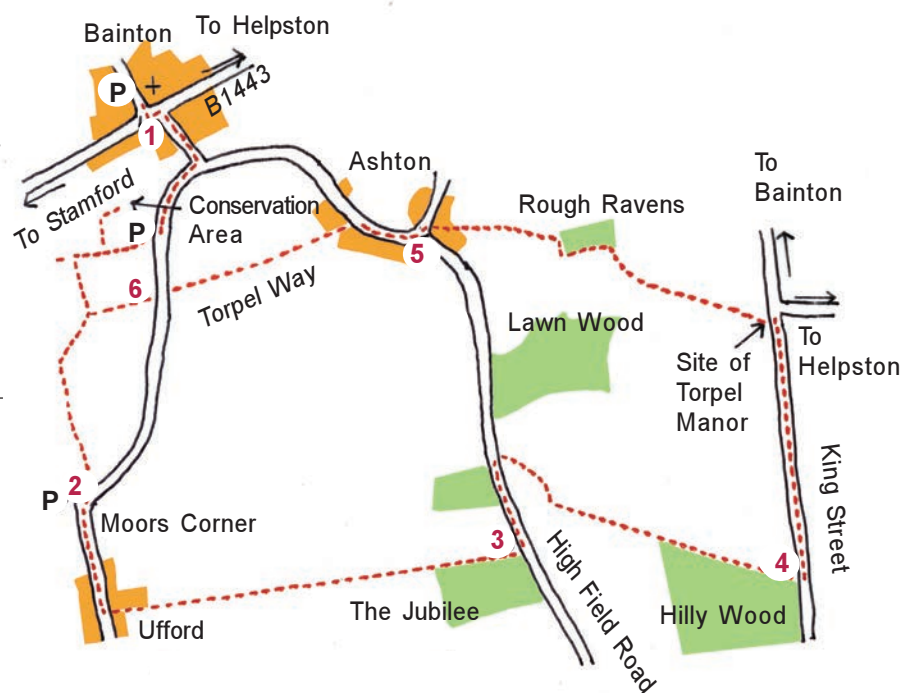
### THE WALK

**1** From the cross turn left on to the B1443 and immediately right and then right again in the direction of Ufford. Pause to look at the recently restored Wash Dyke (sheep wash).

Turn right into the off road car park, go through the kissing gate and then follow the concessionary path to the left of the wood. To explore the wetland area, turn right along the grassy path, then right again over a low bank. Retrace your steps to the concessionary path and continue to the end. Turn left and then go straight on to the marker post. Head across the field in the direction of Ufford to next marker post. The path keeps to the right of the hedge to the road at Moors Corner. (Locally a moor was an area of low, poorly drained land).

**2** Turn right and walk towards Ufford. After passing 3 houses on the left, turn left on to the track. After passing the entrance to the cow shed, walk between the hedge and the row of trees planted for the Millennium. Pass through the gap in the hedge and continue to follow the track but on the left side of the hedge. Continue on past Jubilee Wood, planted to commemorate Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in 1893.

**3** Turn left into High Field Road as far as the next footpath on the right. Follow the hard farm track, looking over to Lawn Wood on the left. This is not open to the public, but stone-work has been found which may be the remains of a hunting



**One in a series of circular walks issued by Parishes in the Barnack Ward**

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lodge, dating back to the deer park surrounding Torpel Manor. Hilly Wood on the right, an ancient woodland, is also privately owned. Note the remains of the stone wall along the northern edge of the wood, which marked the southern limit of the Torpel deer park.

**4** Turn left and walk for about half a mile along King Street, an old Roman road.

At the road junction look for the public footpath sign and the stile marked with the Torpel Way logo. Cross the stile into the grass field with numerous banks and dips, all that remains of this important manor house. It is believed that after the buildings became ruins in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the stone was carted away and used in the nearby villages. The path continues through 2 more stiles until it is confined between a wire fence and a high hedge all the way to the kissing gate at the roadside in Ashton.

**5** Pause to admire the village sign, and below it, the 3 circles coat of arms of the Camoys family, lords of Torpel Manor in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Following the Torpel Way arrow, walk for a short distance through the village along Bainton Green Road. Turn left at the stile, still on Torpel Way. After another stile, notice the "ridge and furrow" in the grass field. These were formed by the ploughs in the middle ages when the village people worked long strips of land in the open fields. The next field is arable but the route is usually visible. If not, head in the same direction as before and look for the post and stile on to the Bainton road.

**6** Cross the road and the little bridge, then keep right of the hedge to the marker post. Turn right and then keep straight on and right again to the off-road car park, retracing your route at the start of the Walk.



*Ashton Village Sign*