

Here cut across diagonally ► to a gap in the hedge which is just to the right of Stockton Church which is now visible. Go through the gap, over the sleeper bridge and follow the same line towards a telegraph pole by a metal gate, cross the ditch and pass through a gap in the hedge. Go across this next field towards the telegraph pole, crossing a farm track and along the wide, stony track with a deep ditch on the right. At the end of this track go over one stile and then another 50 metres ahead into the playing field. Keep the hedge on your left at the end of the path bear ◀ into Beck's Lane and carry straight on into Stockton village. There is an optional inner loop (A) here that reduces the length of the walk by 1 km (see other leaflet).

POINT B - Starting from Stockton Post Office. To continue on the main walk go to the end of Beck's Lane turn ◀ and follow High Street round to the ► past the Post Office and the Crown public house. *Where the road forks you will see a stone which was carried on a glacier from Mount Sorrel in Leicestershire in the Ice Age. This was originally sited outside the Church but was moved by the Rev. Tuckwell who objected to the*

noise caused by children playing on it. Also at this junction are two buildings that were constructed by Nelson's, the cement manufacturers who once worked the Stockton site. Stockton was very much a company village at the turn of the century and the first building, which until recently was a newsagents, was built as a working men's club. A new club, The Nelson Club, was opened in Napton Road in 1914. The next building, currently a chair-makers was originally a co-operative shop. The Village Hall was also built by Nelson's about 1900. Stockton was much better served for village amenities than Southam at this time!! As agriculture lost its importance in the middle of the 19th century due to cheaper foreign imports, employment in the area turned to quarrying of lime and the manufacture of bricks and cement. The disused quarries, many now filled with water, are seen on this walk. The houses in Victoria Terrace were built by Nelson's at the end of Queen Victoria's reign and on the other side, Napton Road about 15 years later. George Street further down was named after George Blyth who owned and managed Nelson's and Elm Row was named after the large elm trees that lined one side and were taken down in 1930 when they became unsafe.

Where the road forks go ► and cross over the main road and go to the end of Elm Row. Continue straight ahead with the garages on your right and follow the path to the end of the field where you reach a T-junction. There is an optional inner loop (B) here that increases the length of the walk by 1 km (see other leaflet). To continue on the main walk turn ◀ here and head through two metal kissing gates leading up the slight rise to the Southam to Rugby road. *The old Nelson's quarries are visible.*

When the quarrying relied on hand-digging many fossils were found in the quarries in the area, including a large Ichthyosaurus in 1898 which is now in the South Kensington Natural History Museum. The workmen also found Ammonites, Mussels and Belemnites.

Cross the road with care to a sleeper bridge and stile and go straight down the field with the wire and post fence on your left. Go over a stile next to a metal gate and at the bottom of the field cross the stile and go through the gap in the fence. Follow the path through the trees and cross over the disused railway line and then the canal. *This is the foot of the very impressive Stockton Flight - seven locks in all. Behind you on the other side of the bridge are the works of Dowdeswell Engineering who were renowned for making the largest agricultural plough in the world.*

Turn ◀ when you have crossed the canal bridge, ignore the towpath and follow the bridleway which forks to the ►. This goes past High Clays Farm on the right and joins the Stockton-Long Itchington road. Turn ◀ towards the Blue Lias Inn and just before the canal bridge go through the gate on the right onto the towpath.

The Warwick to Napton Canal was opened about 1800 and was a boost to the local lime, cement and brick industries as it was used to transport coal in and the products out.

Walk along the towpath away from the bridge and pass Shop Lock and the shop on your left. *On this stretch of the canal you will regularly find as many as forty narrow boats with some fine examples of the traditional canal boat painting. You pass Keyes Arm which used to be the cement works' direct link onto the canal and is now used by the Warwickshire Flyboat Company for building and renovating narrow boats mostly for the tourist trade.*

Continue along the canal for another 450 metres to Top Lock. The renovated cottage used to be the lock-keeper's home. After another 250 metres the towpath brings you to the Two Boats and Cuttle public houses. Pass under the bridge which carries the Southam to Coventry road and immediately turn ► and go over the

stile. Cross this field diagonally to the far corner where

a waymark post is just visible. A new track which is

fenced now cuts diagonally across the field. Use the stiles to get over the fences. Cross the small brick bridge over Cuttle Brook, a small tributary of the River Itchen, and bear ◀ across the corner of this field to the stile about 25 metres to the

right of the brook. Go diagonally across the next field towards the small group of three houses to

the right of the Church and climb the stile to the right of the gate. *For better views of Holy Trinity Church go along Thorn Way, through The Square and the churchyard. This route passes the site of the old smithy and wheelwright's shop on the left and the old Post Office on the right just before The Square.*

Although most of the church dates from the 14th century it actually stands on the site of at least two earlier ones. One was a Saxon church, of which there are no remains, and the other was 12th century, of which traces are left. The tower appears somewhat stunted because until 27 February 1762 it was topped by an elegant spire which was brought down in a thunder storm, leaving only the stump and some pinnacle stones. The roofs were replaced and the vestry and north porch built in the 19th century.

If you have not diverted to see the Church continue straight ahead along the path which appears to go through someone's front garden waymarked on a telegraph pole, past the front door and around the hedge on the other side. Here it becomes a more recognisable footpath going between two fences and leading to The Green in the centre of Long Itchington. Walk across the grass with the boundary on your left past an electricity sub-station and turn ◀ onto Church Road.

POINT C - Starting from The Green, Long Itchington. Leave The Green and go along Church Road for 125 metres, turn ► into The Limes Croft. Cross the road and go up the footpath between modern houses on your right and a terrace of three small houses on your left. Continue along the footpath leaving three bungalows to the left. This brings you to the junction with another footpath. Carry on straight ahead passing the cemetery on your right through the allotments and turn ◀ down to the road again. The Green Man Inn is 50 metres to the right along Church Road but the route is to the ◀ and then immediately ► into the Bascote Road. *Brook Turn Cottage dates back to 1861 and the nearby river bridge was, until the late 1960's, a ford impassable by car for 4 months of the year and 6 feet deep on some occasions.*

Cross over the river bridge and take the second of two stiles on your right hand side - your route is waymarked. Cross over the stile and aim across the field to the stile in the hedge on the other side which is about 20 metres in from the corner of the field directly ahead. Cross the double stile set into the next field and follow the wire fence on your left for about 125 metres and come to the junction with another footpath. There is an optional inner loop (C) here that reduces the length of the walk by 2 km (see other leaflet). To continue on the main walk at the junction of the footpaths go straight ahead across this field and cross the stile to the left of the bridge out onto Stonebridge Lane.

