

Welbourn

Heritage

Trail

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 Village Hall (parking)

 Joiners Arms


 Post Office and Shop

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Located on the Ridges & Furrows arts and heritage trail, Welbourn is one of the 'Cliff Villages' - a line of small settlements along the Lincoln Edge. The parish reaches from the River Brant in the west to the Roman Ermine Street in the east, and the steep wooded slope of the Lincoln Edge is the dominant landscape feature.

Archaeological evidence suggests that the present settlement form was well established in Anglo-Saxon times (between 410-1066). Many of the surviving cottages and farmsteads, which date from the 17th to the 19th century, are built in the mellow Lincolnshire limestone with clay pantile roofs. The bulbous medieval spire of St. Chad's Church is a striking feature within the village street scene, while the grassy earthworks and moats of Castle Hill Field with adjacent Beck are welcome open spaces.

The village has retained the important focal points of rural social life - church, school, public house, village hall and playing field, shop and post office. Much of the village is a conservation area.



Boys on The Green (Joiners Arms collection)



Village Hall

(limited car parking – can be extended with permission.)

Secretary Pauline Dales:

01400 272696



Joiners Arms

High Street, Welbourn

Telephone 01400 279356

Ring for opening times for food and drink.



Post Office and Shop

Telephone 01400 272242

Open Mon – Sat 7.30am – 8.00pm

Sun 9.00am – 6.00pm

For more photographs and information about Welbourn's history please visit:
www.ridgesandfurrowstrail.org



1 The Beck

This spring-fed pond is the likely reason for the original location of Welbourn as a settlement, the place name suggests a spring-fed stream. In the medieval period this permanent water source provided power to two water mills and maintained the moat and fishponds of the neighbouring Norman castle. By Victorian times a pump had also been installed nearby for domestic use with livestock using the pond water, as did steam powered threshing engines. Today this is a quiet oasis for moorhens, mallards and water voles.



2 Castle Hill

(Scheduled Ancient Monument)

The Domesday Book records Welbourn Manor being held in 1086 by Norman land owners, William and Robert Malet, who had been granted the Honour of Eye in Suffolk, including eight manors in Lincolnshire — no doubt for their services in disposing of the body of the defeated King Harold. What remains is a good example of a large Norman ringwork castle, with circular defensive earthworks



Village shop, High Street, 1920s. Mrs Gertie Howard on left (Joiners Arms collection)

and a moat fed by the Beck. A stone wall was added to the original timber castle in 1158. By 1370, the castle site was deserted and the stone walls 'robbed out', probably to enlarge St. Chad's Church. For more information, see interpretation boards on site.



3 The Bell Green

The Bell Green was the site of a week-long annual fair in early March to celebrate Welbourn's Patron Saint, St. Chad, granted by Royal Charter in 1272. It was also the likely site of a weekly market. The sculpture here, by Lincoln-based artist Richard Bett (one of four pieces in the village), represents a bell that once hung on the green. Note also the two commemorative trees planted by the villagers.



4 North End House

Formerly The Shoulder of Mutton ale house, but since 1806 the home of the Burt family, prominent Quakers and residents of Welbourn since 1692 (when Quakers – the Religious Society of Friends – were a persecuted minority).

The Burtts were notable innovators, for example in possessing the first tea kettle in Welbourn in 1704 — although criticised for this modest indulgence by fellow Quakers! In the 19th century Joseph Burt (1766-1840) was renowned locally as an agricultural pioneer, creating a prime herd of short horn cattle known as Welbourn Reds and introducing the latest agricultural machinery. The family are still prominent farmers in the parish.



5 **St. Chad's Church**

A fine medieval 'wool' church built in local Lincolnshire limestone with a 12th century tower and crocketed spire. The lofty nave and aisles are 14th century in the decorated style, commissioned by John of Welbourn, Chancellor of Lincoln Cathedral (d.1380). The chancel is 19th century in the Gothic Revival style. The south porch with a headless Holy Trinity suggests that Welbourn was a strong Protestant community at the time of the Reformation. There is a fine array of gargoyles around the aisles and tower, together with a gabled cross and a sanctus bell turret. Note the

graffiti in the south porch, especially the Tudor warship. The peal of eight bells installed in 1978 came from Holy Trinity Church, Hagworthingham, and are said to have inspired the line 'Ring out wild bells' in Tennyson's poem 'In Memoriam'. The east gate forms a pattern inspired by early ploughing tools and the ridges and furrows of a farmed field. The Revd. Francis Trigge (1547 – 1606) lived in the old Tudor Rectory, now demolished, opposite the present churchyard. Trigge was concerned for the people of the countryside, where common land was being enclosed by rich land owners. Known nationally as a 'good and godly preacher', among his achievements was the establishment of England's first public library in 1598, still housed in St. Wulfrum's Church, Grantham.



6 **The Nookin**

Here the village street follows the Pilgrims' Way towards Lincoln. A little beyond the turning onto the public footpath is a stone-capped beehive well, probably Norman French in origin, once a welcome sight for weary travellers on a dusty road.



John Burt on the family farm in the 1940s (collection of John Lucas)



7 High Street

Once the commercial and social heart of Welbourn with the village school (1865; rebuilt 1968), the Methodist Chapel (1839), Providence Store (grocer), the White Horse ale house and butchers, Crosby's Bakery and Hodson's Joinery together with the parish sheepwash fed by the Beck. An important feature of village life, the White Horse (c.1840 – 1964) was early Victorian with a coaching entrance and a ballroom above. A butcher's premises was attached and the seasonal arrival of drovers with their flocks at the sheepwash helped to support the business. World War II was probably the golden period for the White Horse under the management of the Harmston family, sustained by armed forces personnel from RAF Wellingore. The ballroom housed numerous evacuees during WWII, and the cellars were designated as the air raid shelter for the village school children. The pub's closure in the 1960s was a bitter disappointment for many!



8 Methodist Chapel

In 1826 a visiting Methodist preacher to Welbourn, John Hallsworth, recorded that



Inside The White Horse (Joiners Arms collection, from the late Jack Harmston)

as a result of conflict between church and chapel, 'a mob was raised, eggs were flying together with stones and dirt, men were drinking and smoking and holding up their arms and hallooing', and he felt 'fortunate to come out of the fire unhurt'. In 1837 the Countess of Buckinghamshire warned a tenant he could lose his tenancy if he continued to allow his barn to be used for Methodist gatherings. Nonetheless a Methodist chapel was built here in 1839 and thrived until 1973.



9 Crosby's Bakery / Virginia Cottage

In the 18th century this was the home of Robert Challen, a weaver, although the property was owned by the Welby family formerly of Welbourn Hall. Curiously by the mid-19th century the Welbourn property had passed to a distant under-aged descendant living on the Old Welbourne plantation in Middleburg, Virginia. As a consequence of the American Civil War, the cottage was auctioned and 'Virginia Cottage' was purchased by George Crosby for the astonishing sum of £425. He established a successful business as a grocer, baker

and confectioner and soon became known locally as 'Gingerbread' Crosby. However his most popular sales line was in Blankney Hunt Pork Pies, which were small enough to fit into a huntsman's pocket and be eaten on the hoof. The former bakery still has an owl hole on the northern gable end - rodents were not compatible with a successful bakery.



10 Welbourn School

Established in 1865 as an Elementary School for the labouring classes, it was also significant as a centre for village meetings and social life. Some villagers can still remember Mr. Thomas Taylor as headmaster, 1903 – 1941, both for his scholarship and where necessary his strong right arm. The present school was rebuilt in 1968.



11 Welbourn Manor

A mainly 16th and 17th century listed building, now a residential care home, set within walled gardens and grounds with various outbuildings including a Georgian stable block. Originally it served as the home of Welbourn's



The Lincoln Co-operative, Welbourn
(collection of Bill Goodhand courtesy of Miss Bertha Picker)

leading tenant farmer within the large estate of the Buckinghamshire family. In 1871, Joseph Rinder farmed the Manor holding of over 700 acres employing 18 men and 8 – 10 boys. The domestic establishment consisted of a governess for the five children, a cook, housemaid, parlour maid and a sewing maid. Typical of this time, as many as 70% of males were employed in farming in the village, mainly as agricultural labourers.



12 The Forge

Welbourn forge and farriers' workshop dates from 1864 and still provides a fine example of a Victorian workshop. It was built at the behest of The Marquis of Ripon, owner of the 2,000 acre Welbourn estate, to serve his tenant farmers and local tradesmen. The Marquis was a radical political figure and a benevolent landlord who may well have also inspired the foundation of the nearby Co-operative Store. The last blacksmith and farrier, Mr. Edwin Wilkinson, started work here as an apprentice in 1909 aged 13 years. He recalled that his working hours were from 6.00am to 6.45pm,

and that making and fitting a set of shoes for a large shire horse cost 7 shillings. With over 100 working horses in the parish, the shop was rarely free of the acrid smell of red hot metal on the hoof. There were also regular visits to be made on foot to outlying farms for shoeing and forge work. Today the forge, worked in the traditional manner by volunteers, opens to the public on the first Saturday of every month.



13 Former Lincoln Co-operative Store

In 1878 a small group of agricultural labourers, railway workers and Methodists met on the Village Green with the aspiration to establish a rural Co-operative Store, the first in Lincolnshire. This successful venture opened in 1883 with a shop, bakehouse, stables and cartshed attached. Deliveries of groceries, paraffin, poultry, pigmeal and coal were made by horse drawn tilt carts in Welbourn and to surrounding villages and farms. The Society also leased out allotments, provided a sports field, organised a produce show, concerts and lectures, set up a library and built the first social



Sir William Robertson inspecting returning WWI soldiers. Standing far right is Mr Don Curley, manager of Welbourn Co-op (collection of Bill Goodhand)

houses in the village. Annual dividends for members markedly raised living standards for the poorest labourers' families. Unsurprisingly the manager of the Co-operative Stores was a leading figure in the village. The Co-op store closed in 1981 due to the changing retail landscape.



14 The Village Green

The historic heart of Welbourn with the commemorative Victorian Jubilee tree and the 'kissing seat', the Village Green is surrounded by cottages and farmhouses in both the vernacular (traditional) and polite (decorative/non-local) architectural styles. All the nearby properties are listed buildings, including the telephone box. The Barc Well which once stood at the centre of the Village Green would have been a popular place to pause and gossip while collecting the daily household pail of drinking water.

The former tailor's shop and post office (part of the Co-operative cottages, c.1750) was the birthplace of Field Marshal Sir William Robertson, 1st Baronet (1860 – 1933). Robertson was the first and only

British Army soldier to rise from private soldier to field marshal, an exceptional achievement.

One of nine children of Thomas and Ann Robertson, William Robertson was a bright and determined scholar who left the village school aged 12, whereas most local boys became farm labourers by the age of 10. He 'took the Queen's Shilling' (enlisted) as a Trooper in the Sixteenth Queen's Lancers in 1877 much to the horror of his devout Anglican mother. His first officer's uniform was made by his father, a tailor, at a time when almost all British Army officers would have had a private income. He served on the North West Frontier of India and in 1894 was awarded the DSO. Prior to WWI he worked at the War Office and his wide military experience led to rapid promotion at the outbreak of war. From 1916 to 1918 he was a member of the war cabinet. Regarded by many as 'the brains of the British Army' he retired in 1920 as Field Marshall. His memorial plaque in St. Chad's Church records his epitaph as 'In all things to all men a high example'.



15 Sapperton deserted medieval village

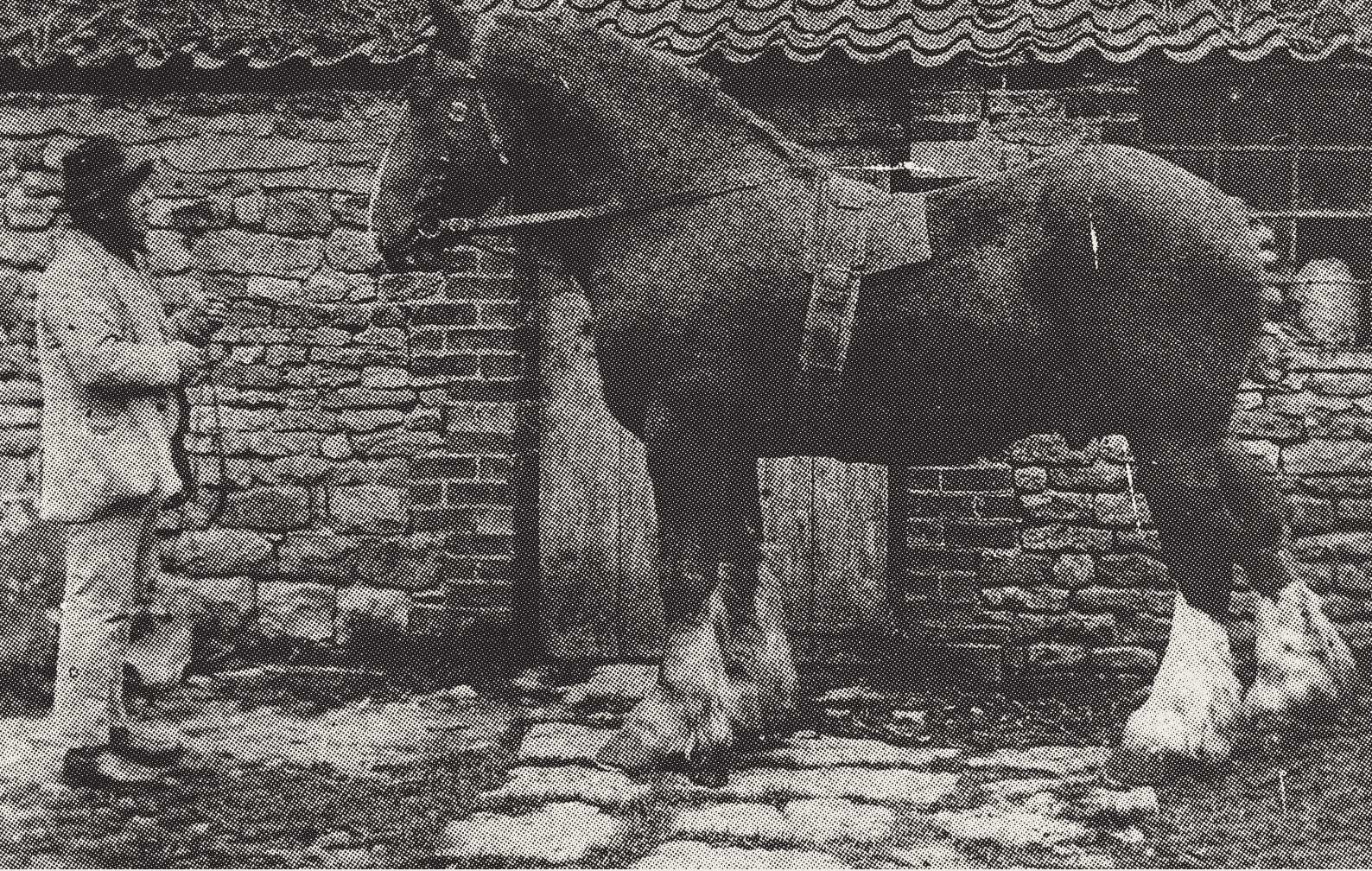
Accessed via The Green

These grassy earthworks, house platforms and sunken ways are the remains of the hamlet of Sapperton, probably depopulated after enclosure for sheep pasture early in the 17th century. St. Chad's Well lay within the site and was a notable feature along the Pilgrims' Way to St. Hugh's Shrine at Lincoln Cathedral. It was claimed that the well's waters would heal diseases of the eye.



16 Burt's Cottage

In the 19th century Welbourn was famous for its breeders of Lincolnshire Black shire horses, renowned for their strength and reliability and for achieving top prices at the annual horse fairs. Thomas Shepherd of Burt's Cottage, smallholder of 27 acres, had 15 registered stallions, while William Lamb of Hunt House on The Green and farmer of 400 acres kept a stud of pedigree mares. Thomas walked his prize stallions around the country lanes and farms of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire to service the mares when in season. Magnificent animals, 18 hands and 8 feet



Thomas Shepherd on the Village Green with shire horse
(Collection of Bill Goodhand, courtesy of Mrs June Sampson, née Shepherd)

round the girth, they had evocative names such as Welbourn Sweep, Farmers' Delight, Old England, Field Marshal and Hydraulic. Sadly, Shepherd died in 1886 and Lamb in 1887 and so ended Welbourn's fame within the Shire Horse Society.



17 **Manor Cottage, Little Lane**

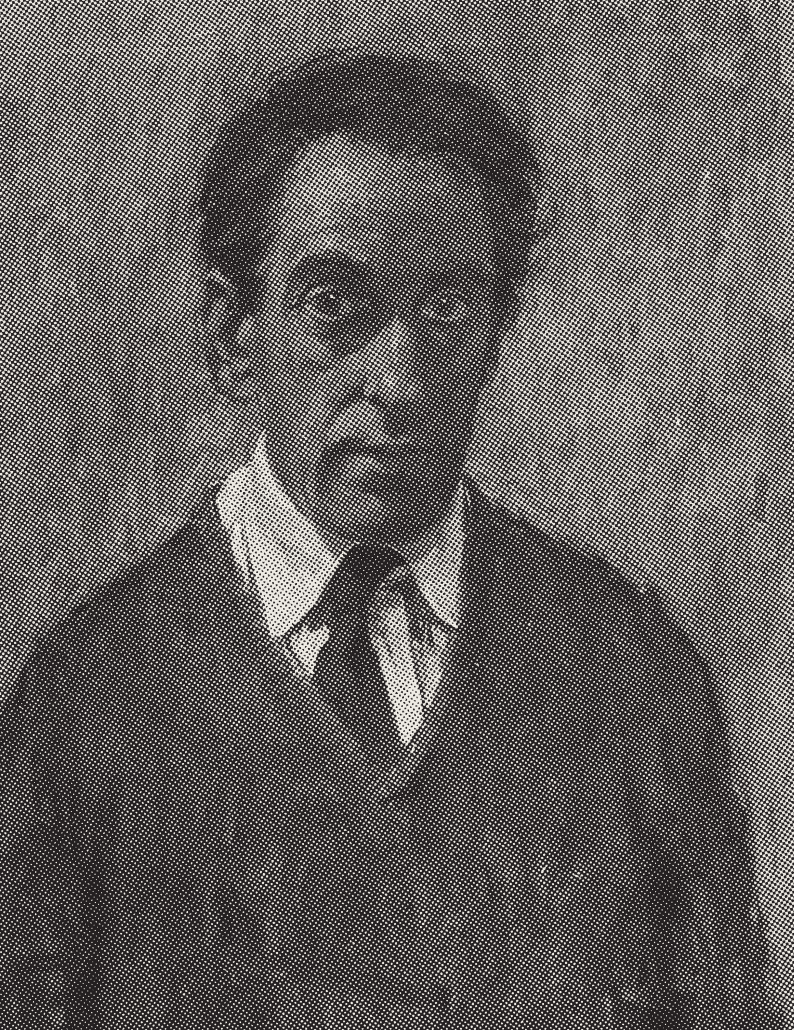
Former home of artist Peter Brannan (1926-94)

Son of an artist father, Peter Brannan studied at Grimsby and Leicester Schools of Art followed by a period of National Service as a Bevin Boy at Nunnery Colliery, Sheffield. He much admired the French Impressionists which influenced many of his Lincolnshire paintings of coast, town and countryside. Brannan exhibited at the RCA, the Royal Academy and the Usher Art Gallery, Lincoln, and later taught art at the Magnus School, Newark. On retirement he returned to his parents' home in Welbourn where he was inspired by the local landscapes and village scenes. The artist was an astute collector of historic memorabilia and a wonderful cottage gardener.



18 **Wheelwright Cottage, Beck Street**

A fine example of a husbandman's farmhouse dating from 17/18th century. In more recent times the house and property was used as a traditional wheelwright's workshop by the Musson family, producing farm carts and wagons, but also using their skills as carpenters and joiners, furniture makers, painters and decorators and lastly as the village undertakers. At the rear of the premises there was a traditional sawpit — the apprentice was usually placed in the pit when sawing planks — and a hooping platform on which to fit a red hot metal hoop to a finished wheel. The Mussons were also the guardians of the village barrels and poles to be used at the sheepwash. The flocks were usually penned on Castle Hill.



Peter Brannan Early Self Portrait (reproduced with kind permission of Noel Brannan)

Historical Notes

Norman Invasion of 1066

Post the Norman Invasion of 1066, William Malet & son Robert were granted the Manor of Welbourn and constructed the moated castle (probably with forced labour) at the heart of the existing community which Domesday Book of 1086 recorded as 35 sokemen, 12 villeins, 8 bordars and a priest, a church and a mill.

The Black Death of 1349

This virulent plague decimated the population and in 1370 it was reported that 'the site of the Manor is wasted and without buildings. The land on the Heath is of no value and untilled for many years and the water mill is of no value'.

The Enclosure Act

In 1606 the enclosure of the four open fields by Lord of the Manor Sir John Popham, Lord Chief Justice of England, depopulated Welbourn and its neighbouring hamlet of Sapperton despite the spirited opposition of the Rector, the Revd. Francis Trigge. Fortunately Welbourn's population did recover.

The English Civil War

In the English Civil War the siege of the Royalists in

Newark by Parliamentary Forces (1645-6) was also a distressful time for the villagers of Welbourn with the constant sound of cannon fire, losses from theft by foraging cavalry troops on both sides, the care of wounded soldiers and fear of a plague outbreak.

13th October, 1666

On 13 October 1666 'the strongest whirlwind in Lincolnshire that ever was known' nearly destroyed the village: 'of 80 stone houses only 3 were left standing'. Folk history records that the Hodson family sheltered under their kitchen table and prayed mightily. Their house was spared.

The Napoleonic Wars 1803-5

During the Napoleonic Wars, there were fears of a French invasion along the Lincolnshire coast and villages were asked to enrol infantry volunteers. Welbourn was held up as 'a shining example where men stepped forward with an alertness and eagerness worthy of the name of Britain'. 83 men and youths volunteered — almost all the able bodied men in the village.

April 1867

The GNR Lincoln to Honington Junction railway line opened with a station at Leadenham and a goods yard in Welbourn. London could be reached with a

good connection at Grantham in around three hours. The former railway embankment survives to the west of the village.

WWI

Over 90 men from Welbourn volunteered to serve in the Armed Forces, of whom 11 lost their lives. On 31 January 1916 German Zeppelins dropped bombs close by the village. The village school children used the shrapnel for a drawing lesson! Later an airfield was constructed at Welbourn Heath/Leadenham to intercept these silent raiders.

WWII

RAF base constructed at Wellingore and part of Welbourn parish. Ft. Lt. Guy Gibson served here (who led the 'Dam Busters' raid), as did Pilot Officer John Magee of 'High Flight' fame. The Welbourn Home Guard paraded and drilled on The Green each Sunday morning, led by Capt. Austin Pick, with an ammunition store on the old cricket field.



Welbourn High Street (Joiners Arms collection)



This village trail was produced for the Ridges & Furrows arts and heritage project, which worked with artists, historians, schools and communities in Sleaford, Welbourn, Waddington and North Hykeham during 2015-2017, celebrating local heritage through workshops, events and artworks.

Ridges & Furrows was delivered by artsNK, Design Factory, The National Centre for Craft & Design and Terry O'Toole Theatre.

Many thanks to the people of Welbourn for their involvement in the Ridges & Furrows project.

A special thank you to Bill and Marion Goodhand, the Lucas family and to the Joiners Arms for giving permission to reproduce photographs and providing vital local context.

Welbourn Blacksmiths. Fountain-Wells (master blacksmith) on left, with Edwin 'Ted' Wilkinson (collection of Bill Goodhand from Mr Peter Wilkinson, son of Edwin Wilkinson)



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This village guide forms part of the Ridges & Furrows arts and heritage trail, which extends from The National Centre for Craft & Design in Sleaford to Whisby Nature Park, travelling along the Lincoln Edge, visiting numerous villages and places of interest including:

South Rauceby

North Rauceby & Cranwell Aviation Heritage Museum

Temple Bruer and the Knight's Templar Preceptory

Welbourn

Wellingore

Navenby and Mrs Smith's Cottage

Boothby Graffoe

Coleby

Harmston

Waddington

North Hykeham and the Terry O'Toole Theatre.

Please look out for the other guides available in this series for Waddington and North Hykeham.

www.ridgesandfurrowstrail.org