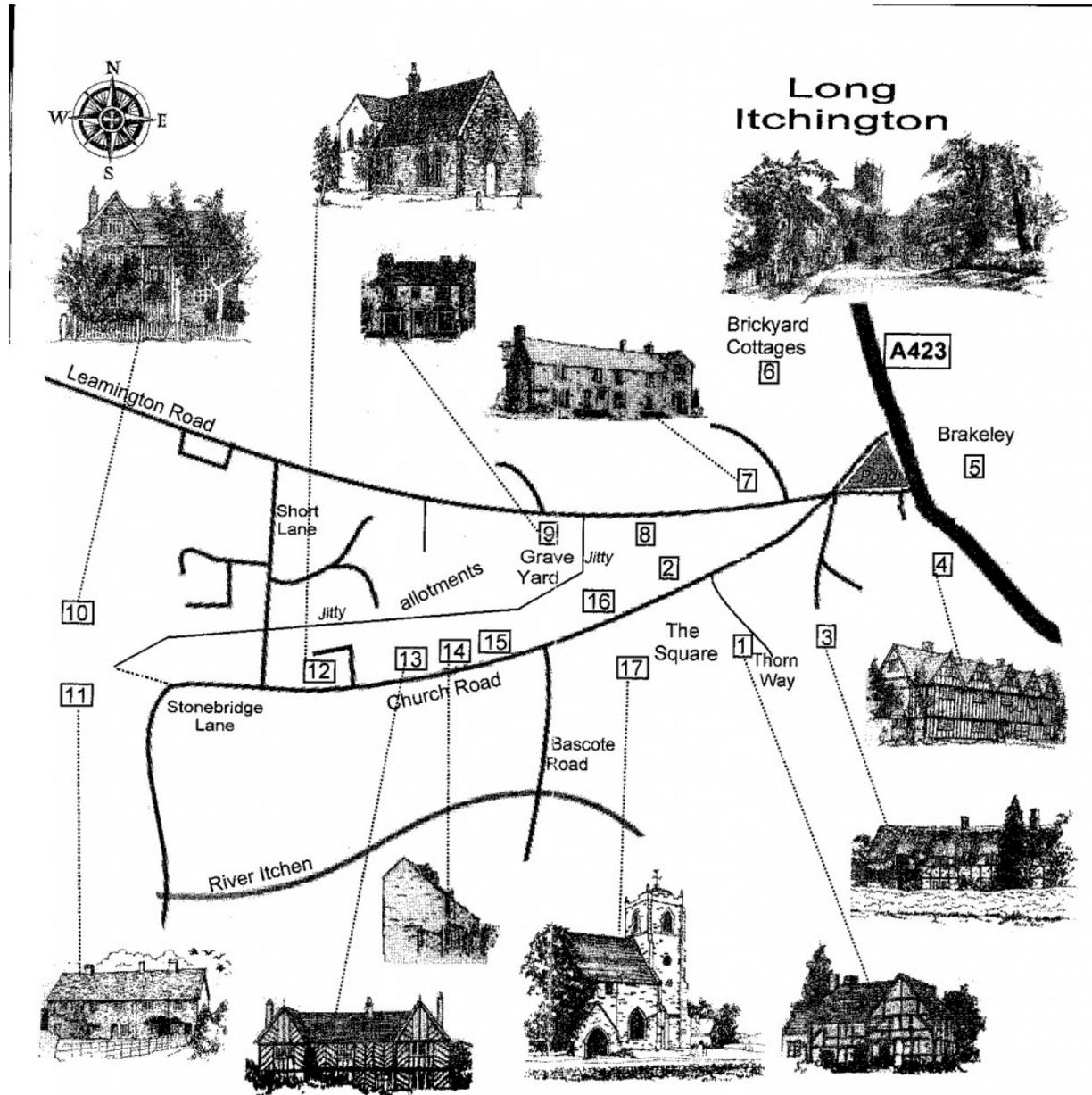


# Long Itchington Village Walk



The walk starts in the Square, the heart of the village, with the Church and many of the old tradesmen's establishments round it. The building in the South West corner was the Wheelwright's shop **1** and it was here in 1905 that a fire in their yard set fire to the house and caused considerable consternation as there was a strong wind that threatened the Post Office over the road in Thorn Way, two other cottages and the Commercial Inn (now the Harvester). Having contained this there was further alarm when the shops of the Grocer and the Builder **2** on the far side of the Square ignited and were burnt out.

Leave the Square to the East towards the pond. Past the cottages, including two present day businesses, the Green is to the right with a large thatched cottage **3** at the end. Keeping on the footpath you pass the new and old properties, the first of which was the Village Hall for many years. When the A423 is reached there is a large Tudor House **4**. This was originally a coaching Inn for the traffic between Oxford and Coventry. It later became a private dwelling and its most famous owners were the Sitwell family. This was not their primary residence but was home to two of Sir Oswald's sisters for some time. Mostly it was the home of their shepherd, who stored the fleeces on the upper floor.

Up the Southam road are some more businesses, including one making narrow boats – many of which can be seen on the canal.

Cross the Leamington Road onto the grass around the pond, or "Pit" to give it its proper name, and admire the restoration work done in 2006. Continue round the pond anticlockwise and note the old cottages **5** the other side of the A423. These formed part of the Vicarage at one time. Further up the road to the North are the Brickyard Cottages **6** with plenty of remains which show the workings there in the past. On round the pond there are a number of old cottages which back onto the current playing fields. At the Leamington Road again cross the slip road round the pond and walk along the grass past the Old Police House and the Buck and Bell pub **7**. The road on the right leads to the playing field and at one time there was a Primitive Methodist Chapel down there. Now back on a pavement continue west. On the left, is the new Vicarage and a little further on the previous Vicarage **8**. Cross the road just before Russell Close and note the pleasant Edwardian house, the Elms **9**, built in 1916 by a local builder for Mr John Page. He was a prominent and educated member of the community and there is a window dedicated to him in the Church.

Turn back and retrace your steps to the footpath on your right just before Chaters Orchard. The Jitty, as these paths are known in the village, takes you down past the graveyard. This is where Mr Page is buried – nearest the bottom of his garden! Turn right at the junction and proceed through the allotments. Past these the path goes between various houses then on the right opens out into a new development on the site of Galanos House, the British Legion Home, which was a part of village life for many years. On between houses that on the right were, for the most part, built on another allotment. The Jitty emerges onto Short Lane, which you cross and carry on through a wilder footpath to the field beyond. At this point you could turn left and then right into Stonebridge Lane and arrive at the field that way. Across this field to the West is White Hall Farm **10**. This was the manor and was built originally in the 15th century for the Odingsel family. Through various owners, including Lord Leigh, who were often absentee landlords, the building was occupied by their stewards and it was converted gradually into a more domestic habitation and the impressive Hall has been considerably reduced.

Another about turn and head back towards the village. Croft Cottages **11** at the top end of the drive are typical accommodation provided for farm workers. Originally five dwellings they are now divided into three. Along Stonebridge Lane you pass typical 1960's houses which were built on market garden land. These private enterprises produced wonderful fruit and vegetable in their day on the fertile ground in the valley of the River Itchen which flows parallel to the

road to the south. From Stonebridge Lane the road becomes Church Road and is the main thoroughfare for the village. The first part of this was also market gardening in its hey-day and some of the houses you pass were the homes of the seven market gardeners who owned and worked the land.

On past the Congregational Chapel **12** which was built in 1827. Its stone and brick construction is typical of many of the older properties built using local materials. Clay and stone were important to this area, and with the cement works, still are.

The road now moves towards the heart of the village. On the left is Devon House **13**. Now three dwellings, this timber-framed house was built in the 16th century. The gable projections, diagonal timbers and plaster are typical of the period. Nearly opposite is another of the pubs, the Green Man which is an integral part of village life with many regular activities continuing inside and out! Its name indicates that it was the place from which the travelling herbalist dispensed his treatments. To the side of the pub are the Malt Kiln Cottages. As their name suggests this is one of the two places that made ale.

Opposite here is a business which was of considerable importance to all the villagers – the Bakery **14**. It was here that their daily loaf was produced and at special time in the year, such as Christmas, the vast ovens would be used to cook the large joints and dishes that were prepared for the festivities. People took theirs along all to be cooked together. Next door to the Old Bakery is The White House **15**. As can be seen from its garage wall, the plumber and glazier worked from here.

You are now in the heart of the village and almost every house was once the home and workplace of many of those who lived here. There was a tailor, a weaver, a butcher and two smiths. Leicester Row on the north and Brook Turn Cottages on the south side of the road are all originally one up one down dwellings which have been altered to accommodate kitchens and bathrooms. On the east side of Bascote Road was the site of the abattoir.

Past the modern Co-op is the old school **16**. This has recently been bought as a private dwelling but from 1857 it was the Village School with the Headmaster's house behind it. It was an open plan building and well into the last century the classes were taught in groups around the hall.

Last but by no means least, is the Church **17**. It is likely that there was a church on this site in Saxon times and it was large enough to have two priests by the time of the Domesday Book. There have been many changes through the centuries, many by design, but in February 1762 the spire was destroyed in a thunderstorm and there is only a tower left. Now in the diocese of Coventry it has a strong association with Worcester by the birth in Long Itchington of St. Wulfstan in 1008. He was Bishop of Worcester and made a Saint in 1203. Much more information of all this can be found in the Church.

The Manor Farm behind the church is the site of the main house in the village before the family owning it built and relocated to White Hall.

At the east end of the churchyard the walk ends back in the Square.