

The Belne Brook Trail

Walking through History



**A public footpath walk through Belbroughton
and beautiful north Worcestershire countryside**

Belbroughton History Society www.belbroughtonhistory.org.uk

Walking for Health and Wellbeing - Worcestershire Council

Belbroughton's History

As you walk the *Belne Brook Trail* you pass the sites of many mills. For more information about Isaac Nash and Belbroughton's world famous scythe making industry, '*The Scythemen of Belbroughton*' by Dorothy Cope is available from www.belbroughtonhistory.org.uk.

Belbroughton has several historic pubs, all marked on the Trail map.



The Bell Inn is the oldest pub in the village and appears on Saxton's map of Worcestershire in 1577.



The Holly Bush dates from the mid 19th century.



The Queens is an 18th century pub originally called The New Inn. When The Old Queen's Head was demolished in 1872 to make way for the new school, this pub was renamed The Queen's Hotel.

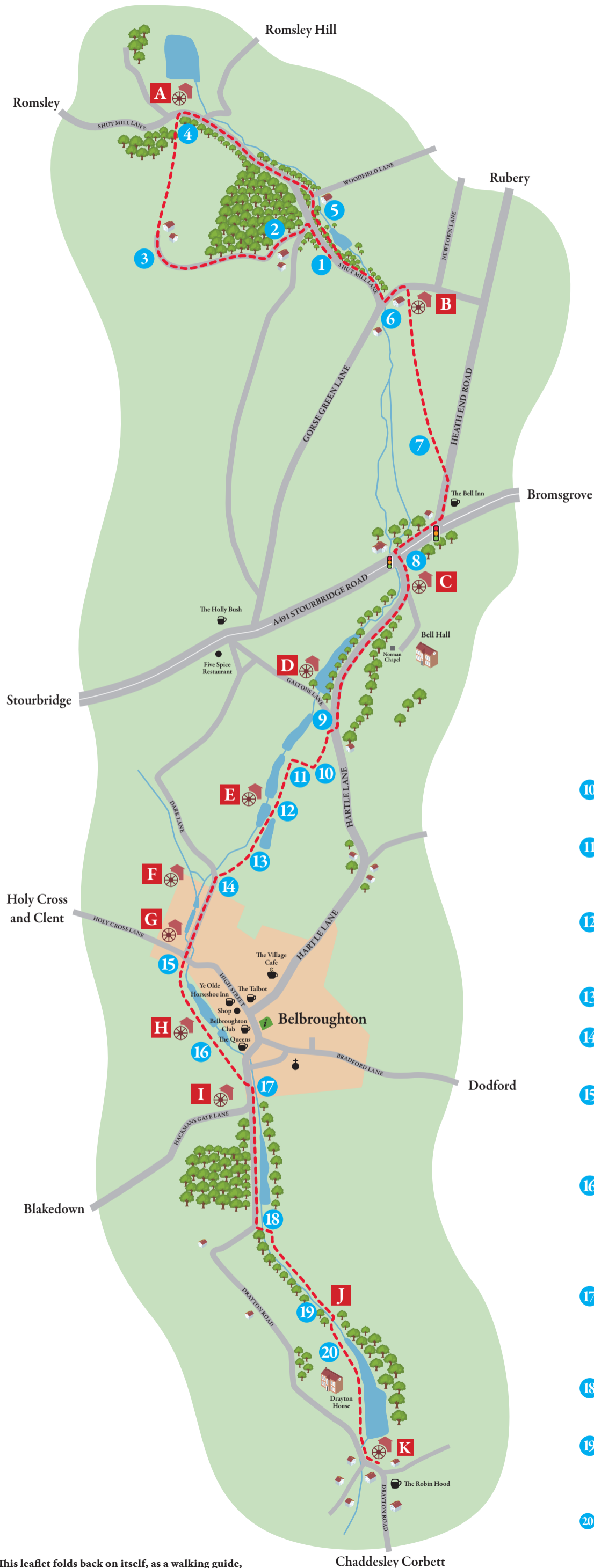
The Talbot is a 17th century pub in the centre of the village.



Ye Olde Horseshoe Inn is a late 18th/early 19th century pub in the middle of the village.

You can take a break from the trail and visit the village green to have a look at the information panel there. It will tell you more about Belbroughton's rich history as well as guide you on a short Millennium Plaque Trail around some of the most interesting and beautiful buildings.

The Belne Brook Trail



Directions

- 1 Starting from Shut Mill Lane next to Sling Pool (where there is space to park) head up the lane (Sling Pool on the right). At the junction ahead turn sharp left up towards some houses.
- 2 Take the concrete road up to the right towards Calcot Farm – fine views on the left to the Malvern Hills and Clee Hill.
- 3 At the top go through the kissing gate next to the boulder that was carried here from Wales in the Ice Age. Go ahead and around to the right, through another kissing gate. Descend through two fields to reach the road. Shut Mill **A** is to the left.
- 4 Turn right and follow the road for about 500m. Take the left, downhill fork.
- 5 At the bottom go past Woodfield Lane and then take a footpath on the left that leads through the Sling Pool area before regaining the road. Keep the pool and stream to your left.
- 6 At the junction ahead, turn left on Gorse Green Lane and look for a public footpath sign on the right, just after the houses. **B** Take the path across the fields.
- 7 Go through a kissing gate onto the road above the Bell Inn. Go down and around to the right, then cross the A491 at the traffic lights onto Hartle Lane. **C**
- 8 Follow the footpath on the left of the road until you see a side road to the right (Galtons Lane). A short distance down the side road is the site of Galton's Mill **D**.
- 9 Continue along Hartle Lane for about 100m looking out for a stile on the right. Take the footpath across the field to another stile.
- 10 Turn right to follow the path by the perimeter of the next field. Ahead are two mill pools and some houses.
- 11 Keep to the path that follows the field perimeter around to the left, with the mill pond on your right. Swans and other waterfowl here.
- 12 Leave the field at the corner. **E** Follow the path along the dyke that separates two mill ponds to emerge at an area with various items of farm machinery.
- 13 Continue ahead down to a stile. Cross the field ahead to a stile by a gate onto Dark Lane.
- 14 Turn left and walk along Dark Lane. **F** At the end of Dark Lane is a small green. **G** Across the road you can see the Belbroughton village sign.
- 15 Cross the road and go straight ahead, to enter a narrow footpath that leads up between houses, then turn left to follow the path through woodland. Pass through two gates. On your right is an entrance to stables.
- 16 Take a short walk down to your left where the Belne Brook flows under a bridge. This is the site of Nash Works **H**. Go back to the stables entrance then left along a narrow path between a wall and high hedge to reach the road where it crosses the Belne Brook. **I**
- 17 Cross the road onto the pavement and follow this to the corner. Go straight ahead along Drayton Road, past the information boards and beside Little Bell Hall Pool (now drained).
- 18 Just before the corner ahead there are some gates on the left. Go through here onto the broad road/track and follow this to the end. **J**
- 19 Follow the footpath down to the right with a wall on the left, then cross the footbridge and follow the path on the right hand side of the brook.
- 20 Cross two stiles, into the grounds of Drayton House. Keep to the footpath alongside the fence and beside the pool to a gate at the end onto the road at the hamlet of Drayton. **K**

The Mill Sites

A Shut Mill

A mill stood on this site in 1295 and it was initially used as a flour mill. It was later adapted for other purposes and was last used for bone grinding by George Dealey. It closed in 1886, the wheel was removed in 1920 and shortly afterwards the mill was demolished.

B Newtown Forge (Site of)

Shown on a map of 1800. It was Isaac Nash's first scythe making venture in the area and in 1840 he employed two men. It closed in 1926.

C Bell End Mill (Site of)

In the late 1700s the mill was leased from the Noels (of Bell Hall) by J. Spurrier. For most of the 19th century it was worked as a flour mill by the Blundell family. Later it became a gristing mill and was eventually taken over by Isaac Nash for scythe grinding. It was demolished in 1963 to make way for the A491.

Bell Hall Mill (Not shown on map)

A blade mill stood on a site about 200m from Bell End Mill in the 16th century. It was demolished in 1847 when the present road (Hartle Lane) was diverted from its initial route, which ran south of the Norman Chapel.

D Galton's Mill

A mill on this site was occupied by J. Savage in the 16th century and known as Savage's Mill. It was used for corn grinding. During the Napoleonic wars it was used for gun barrel grinding for Farmer & Galton, the Birmingham firm of gun makers, and became known as Galton's Mill. Isaac Nash took it over in 1846 and it was used for scythe grinding until it closed in 1942. The building still exists and contains a cast iron mill wheel (not accessible), possibly one of the earliest surviving iron wheels in the Midlands.

E Middle Mill (Site of)

A forge existed here in the 19th century. Water power was still being used here in the 1950s, worked by Eddie Moore, last of a long line of a forging family. The mill closed in 1953.

F Blade Mill (Site not accessible)

William Hooper inherited the mill, as part of Yew Tree House estate, from his uncle, William Clinton, in 1781. It was worked by the Waldrons, but believed to be demolished before the middle of the 19th century.

G Corn Mill (Yew Tree Mill) (Site of)

Like Blade Mill, this was inherited by William Hooper in 1781. It was used for corn milling and fell out of use in the 1920s. It was used for fire practice in the Second World War and was demolished in 1947.

H Nash Works (Site of)

This was the centre of Belbroughton's scythe industry and had originally been a water mill. Owned and worked by the Waldrons in the late 1700s, it was taken over by Isaac Nash in 1873. It closed in 1968.

I Lower Belbroughton Mill (Site of)

Used for the manufacture of coarse cloth or 'Nogs' in the 18th century, it then became a corn mill in the 19th century. In 1884 it was taken over by Isaac Nash and used for scythe and hook grinding until it was demolished in 1928. The stones from the site can be seen in the stream, near the bridge, where you can also see the remains of the sluice gate.

J Weybridge Forges (Site of)

It was developed by the gunmakers Farmer & Galton in 1751, but had been a corn grinding mill before that. It was later taken over by the Waldrons and then Isaac Nash. The site is now covered by sewage beds and a commercial property.

K Drayton Mill

It was used for spinning yarn for the Kidderminster carpet trade at the end of the 18th century. It was put to various uses before Isaac Nash took it over in 1865 for grinding and finishing. Its exceptional water power was used up to 1929, then replaced by a turbine. The building is still intact.

Walk Fact File

Start: Shut Mill Lane, next to Sling Pool (where there is space to park).
what3words ///nods.charmingly.learns
OS map reference: SO 946778

Distance: 4.5 miles (7.5km), 3 hours at a steady pace.

Note for dog walkers: There are a number of stiles on this trail that larger/less agile dogs may struggle to get over.

Walking for Health and Wellbeing

Walking is one of the simplest ways to improve health and wellbeing. It helps reduce stress, boosts mood, and supports long term physical health.

While you explore the beautiful north Worcestershire countryside and discover the history of the Belbroughton scythe industry, you will be enjoying the outdoors and keeping fit and healthy at the same time.

You will see wildlife and plants along the river side, hedgerows and fields.
In the mill ponds you can see swans, ducks and kingfishers.

With the help of a public health community grant this leaflet and the video promoting the trail are not only preserving the past but also encouraging healthier futures. One step at a time.

Funded by:



worcestershire
county council

To apply for a grant to boost wellbeing in your community please visit: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/communitygrants

Video of Belne Brook Trail: *A video of the trail*

Filmed and Produced by Susan Jones, familylegacyfilms.co.uk.

On YouTube and our Website - Belbroughtonhistory.org.uk

Cover photographs: Bell End Mill; Belbroughton Corn Mill; Weybridge Pool.