



Ride or ramble through Daventry's history

Our history walks for the Town Centre and Borough Hill are between one and two miles long. They do however miss out many points of interest because of distance. This guide incorporates more history of the Daventry Parish but you will either need to treat it as a half day ramble or a bicycle ride as it is 8 miles long. It is a figure of eight so can easily be divided into two separate 4 mile walks/rides. To help we have created a route on GPX that can be loaded into compatible sat navs and phones and a printable map. It is mostly on cycle paths or quiet roads though there are a few sections on cycle lanes on more major roads and some across grassland.



Start at the Lodge Road Daventry Car Park NN11 4FP

Parking is free but there are different time limits on some areas.

On your left you will see the retail park. This used to be the site of "The Lodge" the home of the Burton family one of whom had the Burton Memorial erected to honour them (see the Town Walk). It later became the Working Men's Club.

Turn left and go through the underpass

The road above follows the course of the old railway line from Weedon to Leamington Spa. The Weedon to Daventry part was opened in 1888 and it was then extended to Marton from Daventry in 1895. The line closed to passenger traffic in 1958 and the remaining goods service closed in 1963. The pedestrian underpass is roughly on the site of the old railway bridge.

Cycle along the road past the entrance to Danetre Drive then **turn left** on to the cycle path.

On your left in the undergrowth you will see the old stream bed of the South Brook that used to run through and drain the medieval fish ponds, you will see more about this later.

Now go under another underpass and **turn left** then take a **right** onto the unpaved path

You are now in Daventry Country Park formed around the Daventry Reservoir which opened in 1804 as extra capacity to provide water to the Grand Junction Canal in anticipation of the branch to Northampton being opened. We will pass the original reservoir later.

Carry on over two wooden bridges These cross the North Brook. The reservoir follows the combined valley of the North and South Brooks. To the left of the bridges used to be the site of the Daventry Sewage Treatment works. Work to provide the sewers started in 1874 as a result of the Public Health Act of 1873. The streams carried the effluent away.

When you come to the scout hut on your left **carry straight on** and go through the kissing gate to the meadows. Carry on until you see the old bridge over the railway line on your left.

This is part of the 1895 extension of the line. **Turn right onto the meadow path and pass through the gap in the hedge.** As you go through you will see the land rises quite steeply to your right. This is a headland where ploughs were turned on the medieval ridge and furrow. This is the North field and it and the other open fields would have provided most of Daventry's food for 650 years. If you carry on a short way you can sometimes see the ridges and furrows running north/south and a second lesser headland where an east/ west furrowed field meets the one you are in.

Go back down the headland and you will be in what were water meadows (if it is wet when you visit this will be clear). These would either have been common grazing or used to grow hay for winter fodder.

Go through the next gate (it can be a bit tight for bikes) and **turn left** and follow the cyclepath, Take care on the board walk it can be slippery when wet.

As you go along look to your right, the reservoir originally had a higher water level and you can see the old bank in places.

Carry on round past the car park to the tarmac entrance road. Watch out for cars.

On your right you can see the reservoir cottage which is where the keeper lived. This continued to be occupied as a house until the 1960s but never had mains drainage, water, electricity or gas connected when it was occupied. This is now the Rangers Office and a visitor centre and there is a cafe if you want a drink.

Leave the country park by the **cycle way to the right** of the exit road and carry on up Welton Lane, cross the entrance to Monksmoor estate then **turn left** on the cycle way after the traffic island and cross Welton Lane. Forward on the cycle path alongside the road until you **turn left** onto the green space. Turn right through the green gated barrier and go down the slope to the canal. **Be careful** it is steep and slippery and it is best to dismount.

If you go down to the tow path to the tunnel entrance you can see the light from Braunston a mile away. On the top of the tunnel are the remains of an old farm house.

Retrace and turn right. Back on the cycle path.

The area you are riding on helps to handle surface water from the housing and is a protection area should the dam on Drayton Reservoir burst. On your right you will see a round tower. This is one of three ventilation shafts for the Braunston Canal tunnel that runs for over mile. This was dug out manually and opened in 1796.



Cross the A361 at the traffic island and then turn left on to the cycleway.

You will now be riding alongside the Drayton Reservoir, the first reservoir built for the Grand Junction and which was opened in 1796 at the same time as the new length of canal from Braunston to Blisworth. The water from it is fed underground to the canal and comes out in the trees at the Welton end of the tunnel running between Welton and Braunston. The canal building was stopped at Blisworth for some time as the tunnel there kept collapsing. There was a similar problem with the Braunston tunnel which has a slight S shape in plan as a result.

Carry on round the cycle path and go left onto the unsurfaced track then **keeping right** until you reach the road(don't go under the bridge) then **turn left and left again** You are now on the old railway track again.

If you want a rest turn right on the road and you will find the Middlemoor Pub. This is the original barn and Middlemore farmhouse built in the early 1700 and unusually well preserved. As you ride down the railway path and you will see some of the original brick bridge abutments as you go under or over the modern bridges.

Turn right at the wooden humpback bridge and carry straight on an **over the traffic island**.

On your right is the Daneholme Park once the grounds of a big house. At the top of the hill on your left is the

Old Mill House which was once the site of either Daventry's last windmill or the miller's house for a water mill now drowned in the reservoir. As you go down the hill on your right you will see a park under which runs the culverted North Brook (and was once the Grammar School's playing fields).

At the sharp left bend **turn right onto the cycle track** and through the underpass.

This is the halfway point and you can stop here and start the second half another day.

If you are continuing do a **sharp left onto the curving cycle track** that runs along **Eastern Way**.

The Eastern Way was part of the inner road system built in the 1960s as part of Daventry's expansion as an overspill town for Birmingham and intended to be dual carriageways. On your left you may be able to see parts of the Victorian Grammar School building built in brick but in the summer trees obscure this. The road to your left is North Street, originally called Dog Lane.

Go right through the underpass then left and up the cycle path across the road (watch for traffic) and onto the **right hand cycle track by the play equipment** and turn **right up the alley** to the road and **turn left**.

You have crossed the bottom of what used to be Brook Street where the old coach road descended and carried on to Coventry as what is now Braunston Road. The car park ahead/right used to be the town gasworks with a coking works and gasometers. The first gasworks on the site was built in 1833 and the gasometers continued to be used until the introduction of north sea gas.

You are now on **Jubilee Road** built in 1936 named in commemoration of the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935.

At the end of the road **turn right** onto the cycle lane then take the first left onto Williams Terrace. Follow the road round (it becomes Orchard Street) until you reach a **T junction**.

You are now in Drayton. In the middle ages this was a settlement in its own right with its own Manor. In front of you is a row of stone and brick terraced house once part of the old hamlet of Drayton. As you continue along you will see older buildings on either side of the road amongst newer houses. The first of these on your left is the old school house after which the street is named. You can see the old school bell tower on the roof. At number 9 a large window shows the space where there would have originally been a threshing barn.

As you carry on round you pass the Drayton Manor on your right. The current house dates from the 1600s though this is probably the site of previous houses of the Lords of the Manor who unlike in Daventry Manor seem to have been resident landlords. The other stone buildings along this street also belong to the 16/1700s and were part of the manor complex.

At the T junction turn right

You are now on the **Western Avenue** which was opened in 1928 as the first bypass of the A45 around the town centre - now replaced by Stefan Way!

Take the **first left turn** into **West View** then **left** into **Warwick Street** then **right** into **Kingsley Avenue** then right onto **Badby Road**.

The houses you see are the late Victorian villas that were built as “out of town” residences, lower status on Warwick Street and getting grander as you reach Badby Road.

Take the first left into the **Slade** and follow the road around to the T junction with London Road (it is quite a long way) and turn **left** onto the **London Road** towards the town centre – caution it’s a busy road.



At the junction, on your left, you will see a concrete stand on which is a reproduction of the milepost post put in when the London Road was part of Thomas Telford's improvements of the road from London to Holyhead (1810) which led to Daventry becoming important for coach travel (see our town center guide). As you continue down the road you can see the land rises on the right hand side and somewhere up behind the houses was Gallows Hill. Further down on your left is the Hospital. This was the original workhouse for Daventry and built in 1836 for the Poor Law Commissioners of 28 parishes. In 1930 the County Council began the conversion into the hospital it is today.

Further down on your left is Bulls Garage. This was one of the first garages in Daventry and was purpose build in 1908 when cars competing in the Newnham Hill Climb events are said to have used it. The front was probably altered to the white stucco when it was taken over in the 1930s

Just past the traffic island **turn right on to the track between houses (at the dropped kerb)**. **Turn left** and go across the grass to the **far right corner** of the field. Cross the road carefully and go through **the underpass**. If it is wet follow the road around to the underpass.

As you pass between the houses look up the track to your right somewhere at the top of that hill was the gallows.

The South Brook stream used to run through the meadow but is now in a culvert however the old bed can still be seen in the bushes to your left. From 1150 to the late 1500s in the meadow area were a series of four fish ponds providing food for the Priory and the Manor. These continued through to what are now the Fishponds playing fields. They were all fed by water from the South Brook. Remains of the later course of the South Brook can be seen as a dry ditch next to the road on the Inlands and to the east of the Fishponds playing field. More recently there were cottages on the field belonging to Gallows Hill Farm demolished when the houses of the inlands were built. The footpath coming down the hill to your left marks the approximate position of the first fishpond dam. The area is called Burtons Meadow after the Burton of The Lodge and Town Clerk until the 1900s
The underpass marks the track of the old railway line.



After the underpass turn left to Fishponds playing field. Follow the cycle path or walk across the grass towards the **end of the playing fields and turn left to cross the road at the pedestrian lights**.

Three more fishponds were once on the fields. Fish were moved between pond for feeding and cleaning in clearer water. Each was left dry in turn to be used for animal grazing so they could be fertilized by the dung to provide good growing conditions for the insects and weeds that fed the fish. There would have been a whole series of channels to manage the water drainage and filling this needed. On the right hand side is the now dry bed of the later course of the South Brook.

Once across the lights **turn left on the grass verge** and walk along about 80 metres.

You have just crossed the route of the railway line on the site of the Daventry Station.

Walk about 80m along the grass verge behind the buildings and hidden in the undergrowth on your right you will see the last in situ remains of the Railway Station which is the base and pivot of a goods crane which was in the goods yard.



Retrace your route along the verge and **turn left crossing Vicar Lane. Cross the main road at the traffic lights and then turn right down Lodge Road to the car park and end of the route.**

On your left is an information board for the sculpture on the traffic island.

Once across Vicar Lane stop and look back. Over the road on the sites occupied by the garage, Mc Donalds, the Post Office and under the road were once Daventry Railway Station, the Station Master's House and weighbridge. Most of the roadway area was taken up by surprisingly large goods sidings. There is a model of the station on display in the Town Museum.

We hope you enjoyed the ride or ramble and if you would like to know more about the history please call in and see us at the Museum when we are open. We have two more leaflets on the history of the town and buildings with even more information. There are also two more self-guided walks on the history of Borough Hill and the Town Centre.

The Town Council Offices
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<http://www.daventrytowncouncil.gov.uk/>

Daventry Museum Opening times.

Open Tuesday–Friday 09:30–13:30

1st Saturday of the month 10:00-16:00

Free Entry

<http://daventrymuseum.org.uk/>