

Rutland Local History & Record Society

Registered Charity No. 700273



Edith Weston Village Walk September 2019 (updated 2020)

INTRODUCTION

The village name of Edith Weston comes from Edith, the wife of Edward the Confessor who reigned from 1042 to 1066. Queen Edith took a valuable dowry to the king, and she received life interest in royal estates which included a large area of Rutland. At this time, Weston Manor, not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, was one of the seven hamlets belonging to Hambleton Church. Queen Edith held about 500 acres of land in the hamlet, as well as land in Oakham, Ridlington and the Luffenhams. She retained her Rutland landholdings until her death in 1075, when they passed to William the Conqueror.

Edith Weston, as it became known, has been a significant settlement for nearly a thousand years, but the pace of life has changed out of all recognition in the last ninety years. At the beginning of the Second World War, the village found itself in very close proximity to the very busy RAF North Luffenham airfield, now St George's Barracks. Then in the 1970s, the creation of Rutland Water meant that it became a south shore village with Rutland Water Sailing Club nearby.

Although many changes would have occurred without the airfield or the reservoir, Edith Weston remains a typical nucleated Rutland village, with many listed properties surrounding the church of medieval origin.

THE VILLAGE MAP

The map attached to this guided walk is based on the 25 inch to one mile Ordnance Survey 3rd edition map of 1928. Consequently, later buildings, extensions and demolitions are not shown. Numbers in the text, [9] for example, refer to locations shown on the map as 9.

The walk starts at the Village Hall. The route will then take you along Weston Road, Rectory Lane, Church Lane, Normanton Road and Manton Road, returning to the Village Hall via King Edward's Road, Well Cross and Weston Road.

Please:

Respect private property.

Use pavements and footpaths where available.

Take great care when crossing roads.

Remember that you are responsible for your own safety.

THE WALK

The **Village Hall** [1] at the junction of Rectory Lane and Weston Road was originally a timber building erected by C W Dickens, carpenters and joiners of North Luffenham, as a World War I memorial. The opening ceremony was on 15th December 1921 and the stone cladding was added in the 1970s.

Walk down Weston Road towards Rutland Water. The long building on the right [2] was originally the coach house and stables of **Edith Weston Hall**. During WWII they were used for the Women's Voluntary Services canteen. [3] is the site of the former **White Hart Inn**. It lost its licence about 1918 and had been demolished by 1928. The 1901 census return shows that the innkeeper at that time was Charles Hales, age 31.



The old White Hart public house c1905. (Jack Hart Collection)

At [4] is the site of **Edith Weston Hall**, which was demolished in the 1950s. In its day it was the largest house in the village and the Hall and its estate were significant employers for three centuries. The original **Edith Weston Hall**, adjacent to the north side of the church, was built early in the seventeenth century by the first Richard Halford who came to Edith Weston from Welham in Leicestershire. The new Hall was built in 1830 for the third Reverend Richard Lucas, Rector of Edith Weston from 1827 to 1846. It was designed in Tudor style by the eminent architect Lewis Vulliamy. The **ha-ha** on the north side of the Hall [5] can still be seen on aerial photographs.

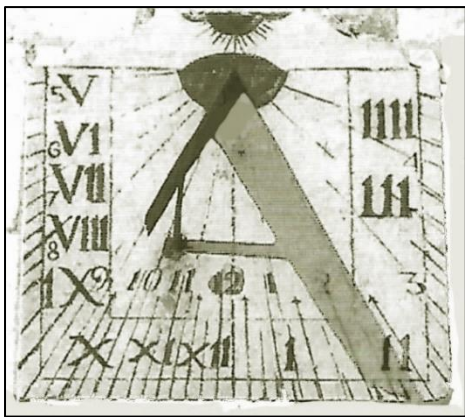


The south elevation of Edith Weston Hall c1920. (Jack Hart Collection)

The late 18th century Grade II listed **ice house** [6] within the former grounds of Edith Weston Hall was used for the storage of perishable foods for the Hall. It is a brick-built underground chamber about 20 ft in diameter with a domed roof. It is covered with about 9" of clay and 3 ft of earth with turf on top. The entrance is a tunnel on the north side. During the winter, snow, and ice from nearby frozen ponds, would be taken into the ice house and insulated against melting with straw. It would stay frozen for many months, even until the following winter. There is no public access to the ice house.

Running along the shoreline of Rutland Water just to the north of the ice house, but not part of this walk, is the Macmillan Way, a 290-mile long-distance footpath linking Boston, Lincolnshire, to Abbotsbury, Dorset. The route follows existing footpaths, bridleways and byways along the oolitic limestone belt. The nearest access is via Normanton car park. It is promoted to raise money for the Macmillan Cancer Relief charity.

The Grade II listed **Sundial House** [7], at 37 Weston Road, was formerly Belton House. It was a Rectory for a short time from about 1860. Above the door is a date stone inscribed TMJ 1773 and a sundial.



The sundial at Sundial House. (RO)

Continue west along Weston Road. The cottage at **41 and 43 Weston Road** [8] is also Grade II listed and was originally two dwellings. It has stone mullion windows and a date stone inscribed TT 1642.

The adjacent three-storey house was the laundry to **Edith Weston Hall** and was later occupied the Tibbert family, the village butchers.

Opposite is **Halford House** [9], at 30 and 32 Weston Road, another Grade II listed property with a Collyweston slate roof, two ashlar chimney stacks, stone coped gables and one surviving stone mullion window, with inglenooks and beams inside.

Vine Cottage [10] is a late 17th / early 18th century listed property of 2½ storeys which has recently undergone an extensive restoration and extension programme.

The Firs [11] is a listed 18th century 2½ storey house of coursed rubble stone with a Collyweston slate roof and moulded stone end stacks. Note the unusual glazing of the sash windows, the glazing bars forming a large rectangular pane with small rectangular and square panes either side. To the left is a 1½ storey range with catslide

roof, and on the left end is a further coach house range with carriage doors and a bull's eye window.



The Firs c1930. (Jack Hart Collection)

Turn left into Rectory Lane, formerly known as The Bank. Immediately on the left is a **range of cottages** [12]. Compare with the c1913 photograph. On the right is **The Spinney** [13], a thatched 17th century two-storey house with some stone mullion windows. This listed property also has an inglenook fireplace and exposed beams inside.



Cottages at the west end of Rectory Lane c1913. (Jack Hart Collection)

Continue along Rectory Lane. On the right is the 18th century three-storey **Westonia House** [14], not visible from Rectory Lane. It is Grade II listed and was The Rectory until the 1960s. It has a fine front of ashlar with a plinth, sill bands, three storeys of sash windows and a hipped Welsh slate roof with moulded stone end stacks.



An early photograph of Westonia House when it was The Rectory. (Jack Hart Collection)



The date stone high on the south gable of The Old Rectory. It is listed as 1626, but should it be 1660? (RO)



A 1913 photograph of The Old Rectory when it was two dwellings. (Jack Hart Collection)

On the left, near the Village Hall, is a range of three late 17th / early 18th century coursed rubble stone cottages at 3-7 Rectory Lane [15]. Nos. 3 and 5 have a thatched roof with eyebrow dormers. No. 7 has a modern tile roof with stone coped gables.

Turn right into Weston Road and then left into Church Lane. On the corner of Weston Road and Church Lane is **The Old Rectory** [16], the earliest of the surviving rectories in the village. This Grade II listed house is early 17th century as confirmed by the date stone high on the south gable.

This 2½ storey ashlar and coursed rubble stone building has stone mullion windows with hood moulds, moulded stone chimney stacks and stone coped gables. Projecting to the east of the main range is a large two-storey wing with further stone mullion windows.

On the corner opposite is a **former woodyard** [17] which closed in the 1940s after which it was Fowler's farm.

St Mary's Church [18] has many interesting features, both outside and inside, which are well worth exploring. Some are noted here.

The **church gates** have GR 1911 within the design commemorating the coronation of George V. They were made by Arthur Day, the village blacksmith.

On the wall to the left of the church gates there is a memorial plaque to the eight crew who died when a Lancaster bomber crashed into a beech tree in Church Lane on 4th March 1945.

On the right of the footpath leading to the church porch is a group of six late 18th century listed **table tombs**, but the inscriptions are now illegible.

Note the engraved **stone clock dial** on the south face of the tower. It was made by Henry Stone in 1775 at a cost of £2 17s 8d. The minute hand was added in 1928 when a new clock was installed. The original timber-framed clock was probably made about 1690 by John Watts of Stamford. It is now displayed in Rutland County Museum.



The engraved stone clock dial by Henry Stone on the south face of the church tower. (RO)

Near the east wall of the churchyard is a **monument**, surmounted by a finely carved and moulded urn, to the memory of the Rev Richard Lucas of **Edith Weston Hall** who died in 1816.

Also ranged along this wall are the headstones removed from **St Martins churchyard in Normanton Park** when the church was de-consecrated for the construction of Rutland Water. A plaque inside the church records the names of those whose gravestones were relocated.

Inside the church, the earliest parts are the chancel arch, the columns and part of the tower arch which date from the late 12th century. The tower is late 14th century and the chancel was rebuilt in 1865 with a new south transept.

The magnificent **Samuel Green church organ** in the chancel was made in 1787 for a London house and sold in 1842 to the Rev Charles Halford Lucas who installed it in Edith Weston Hall. It was donated to the church in 1867 by Richard Lucas and fully restored in 1981.

The **gilded oak reredos** of 1896 was designed by A H Skipworth, with panels by Sir George Frampton. It is a memorial to the Rev Charles Lucas who rebuilt the chancel.

Dan Becker's memorial window in the north aisle of the church depicts Jesus and some of his disciples in a boat on Rutland Water with St Matthew's Church at Normanton.

One of the **RAF memorial windows** in the north aisle is dedicated to those who served at North Luffenham between 1940 and 1998, and the other recognises the close links with Edith Weston.



Dan Becker's memorial window in the church. (RO)

The **Halford Monument** in the south transept of the church was moved to its present position in 1865 from the north wall of the chancel when the chancel was rebuilt. It commemorates the lives of five Lords of the Manor who died between 1627 and 1789. They all lived in the original Edith Weston Hall which stood near the church.

Kelly's Post Office Directory of 1855 records that in 1848 a large, highly coloured figure of St Christopher was discovered beneath the whitewash on the wall opposite the south doorway. Unfortunately, it could not be preserved.

On leaving the church, turn left out of the churchyard then walk along Church Lane. **St Mary's Close** [19] on the left was built on the former vegetable garden area of **Edith Weston Hall**. It had a range of greenhouses as shown on the 1928 map.

Continue to walk along Church Lane to its junction with Normanton Road. On the right, just before the junction is a drive [20] leading to the **Village shop and Post Office**.

This new road [21] was created when the council houses were built in 1951/2 and the junction was altered in the 1970s when a new link road was built along the south shore of Rutland Water following the old carriage road across **Normanton Park**,

Turn right into Normanton Road and continue along the footpath to **The Grange** entrance gates [22]. The listed gates, gate piers and stable block of **The Grange** can be seen from here. Note that the date stone on the stables has WES 1815.

Walk around the corner into Pennine Drive to view the front of **The Grange**. Note the dentilled cornice and parapet, the projecting stone porch and the pediment containing a carved lion's head and a central bull's eye.

Opposite is the site of the former **Astra Cinema** [23]. This cinema served a great need for entertainment on the RAF North Luffenham camp from the 1940s right through to the 1970s and local villagers were also admitted. Originally run by a civilian manager, it came under the control of the Royal Air Force Cinema Corporation, and later under the Services Cinema Corporation.

Now walk along Manton Road towards the **Wheatsheaf** public house. Although only an occasional glimpse can be seen on this walk, on the south side of Manton Road is the former **RAF Officers' Mess** [24]. The design of the buildings shows the impact of the Royal Fine Arts Commission on the post-1934 RAF Expansion Period, especially the guiding hand of Sir Edwin Lutyens. They were planned according to the principles of dispersal, established by Hugh Montague Trenchard in the early 1920s. In these the central dining area and the recreational facilities are separated from the accommodation wings by long corridors to localise the effects of bomb damage. In 2019, the buildings were unoccupied and being considered for demolition prior to the erection of new housing, although they were also being considered for listing by Historic England.

Walk along Manton Road to **The Old School House** [25]. The Lucas family of **Edith Weston Hall** founded the first village school in 1852, the boys and girls being taught by separate teachers in two cottages. Twelve years later this purpose-built school was erected by Richard Lucas, the Lord of the Manor, on a piece of roadside garden, and it was enlarged in 1893 to accommodate 90 pupils. It has the Lucas coat of arms in a plaque over the Tudor arched moulded stone doorway. The door may be original.

In 1904, when the headmaster was a Mr Brown, there were 55 pupils in the school. The school closed in 1935 as by then the number of pupils had reduced to eight, the smallest school in Rutland. The children then attended North Luffenham school. It did reopen briefly to accommodate evacuees but closed again in 1940 as it was too near the airfield for safety. It is now a private dwelling.

With the building of the **airmen's married quarters** in Manton Road a new school was required. In 1950, the prefabricated mess block of the former 1940s Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) camp, on what is now Normanton car park on the south shore of Rutland Water, became the location of the new school. It was replaced by a modern, purpose-built school in Weston Road in 1964.

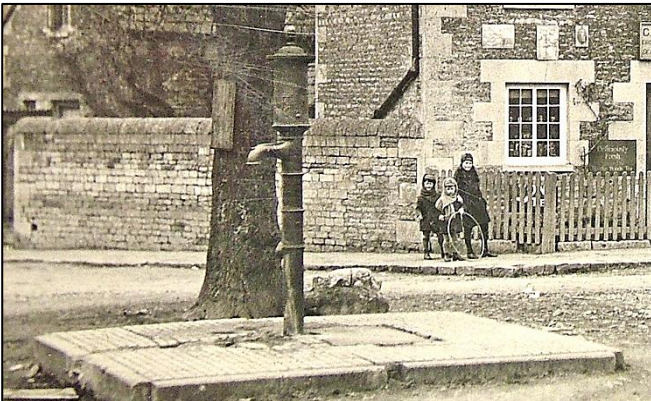
Now enter King Edward's Way. Immediately on the right is the **Wheatsheaf** [26], the only surviving public house in the village. The large car park at the front was a paddock until the 1970s when a brewhouse which also stood here was demolished.

Members of the Crowden family were the innkeepers here from 1829 until 1914. In the 1881 census the head of the household was Mary Crowden, aged 53. Also in the household was George Crowden, her brother, aged 73.



The Wheatsheaf c1970. (Jack Hart Collection)

Walk down King Edward's Way to Well Cross. The 1½ storey cottage with a Collyweston slate roof at **16 King Edward's Way [27]** is another of the listed properties in the village. Under the tree, the stump of a **medieval cross [28]** is on the site of the former village **well and pump** (marked 'P' on the 1928 map). It was originally located on the other side of King Edward's Way (marked 'Stone' on the 1928 map), but otherwise nothing is known of its history. This was also the location of the **village stocks** until they were removed in 1874. The plaques on the base of the cross mark the Silver and Golden Jubilees of Elizabeth II.



The village pump c1920. (Jack Hart Collection)

Walk along Well Cross. The thatched Grade II listed **Hurstbourne Cottage [29]**, at 1 Well Cross, was originally the **Mason's Arms** public house until 1868, and it was the village **Post Office** from 1946 until the late 1950s.

2 Well Cross [30] was the shop of John Wilson Ball, grocer and baker, who took over from John T Presgrave, grocer, baker and postmaster in 1892.

As well as **Hurstbourne Cottage**, there are 5 listed houses in Well Cross. They are **12 Well Cross [31]**, the early 19th century **Berwick House** at 16 Well Cross [32], the 18th century **The Yews** and its barns at 18 Well Cross [33], the 18th century **22 Well Cross** and its barn [34] and the late 17th century **17 Well Cross [35]**, which is a former butcher's shop.

There are also 5 **Victorian cottages** in Well Cross built by Richard Lucas (R L) with date stones of 1847, 1863, 1867, 1871 and 1874. Can you find them? In 1928,

the **Post Office** was at **Forge Cottage [36]**, now 13 Well Cross, **The Forge** was next door, now 11a.



John Wilson Ball's shop in Well Cross c1900. His bakery can just be seen to the left. (Jack Hart Collection)



The Post Office was at Forge Cottage in 1928. The original location the stump of the village cross can be seen to the right of the tree. (Jack Hart Collection)

Now leave Well Cross and turn right into King Edward's Way. The extended **Post Box Cottage [37]**, the former bakery of John Wilson Ball, has a GR post box at its front. GR (Georgius Rex) post boxes were installed during the reign of George V (1910-1936). The **K6 telephone kiosk [38]** on the west side of King Edward's Way was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and it was introduced in 1935 to celebrate the silver jubilee of King George V. It now houses the village defibrillator.

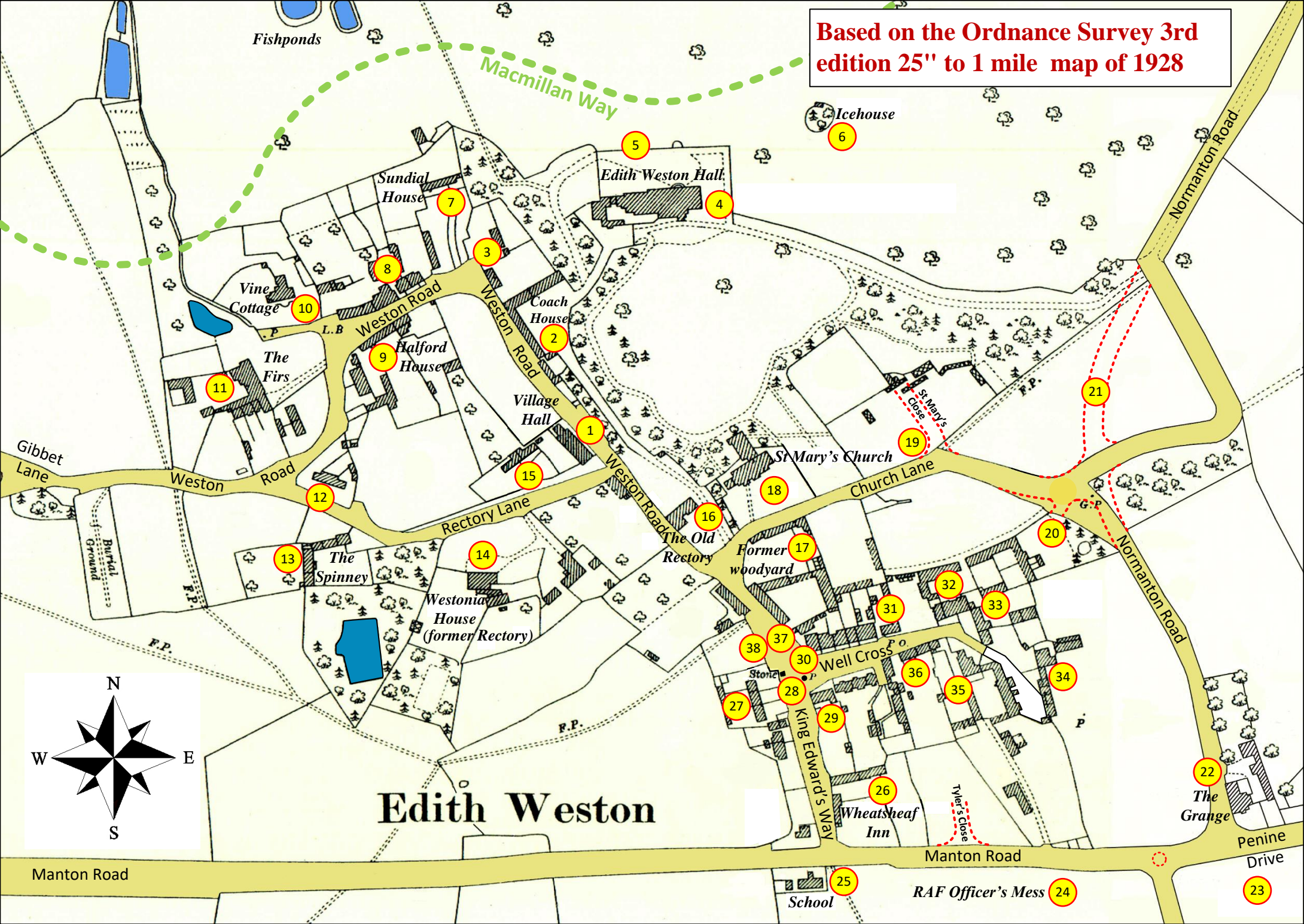
Continue along King Edward's Way and Weston Road to return to the **Village Hall [1]** and the end of this walk.

Acknowledgements:

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Robert Owens

Based on the Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 25" to 1 mile map of 1928



Fishponds

Macmillan Way

Icehouse

Sundial House

Edith Weston Hall

Vine Cottage

The Firs

Halford House

Village Hall

St. Mary's Church

Gibbet Lane

Weston Road

Rectory Lane

Church Lane

The Spinney

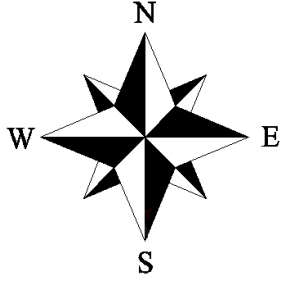
Westonia House (former Rectory)

The Old Rectory

Former woodyard

F.P.

F.P.



Edith Weston

Well Cross

King Edward's Way

Wheatsheaf Inn

Tyler's Close

Manton Road

Manton Road

RAF Officer's Mess

School

Penine Drive

The Grange