

# Cranmer Walks

**Circular Walks in and around Aslockton,  
Scarrington and Whatton-in-the-Vale**

Written and Compiled by  
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additional material, photographs, maps and historical notes  
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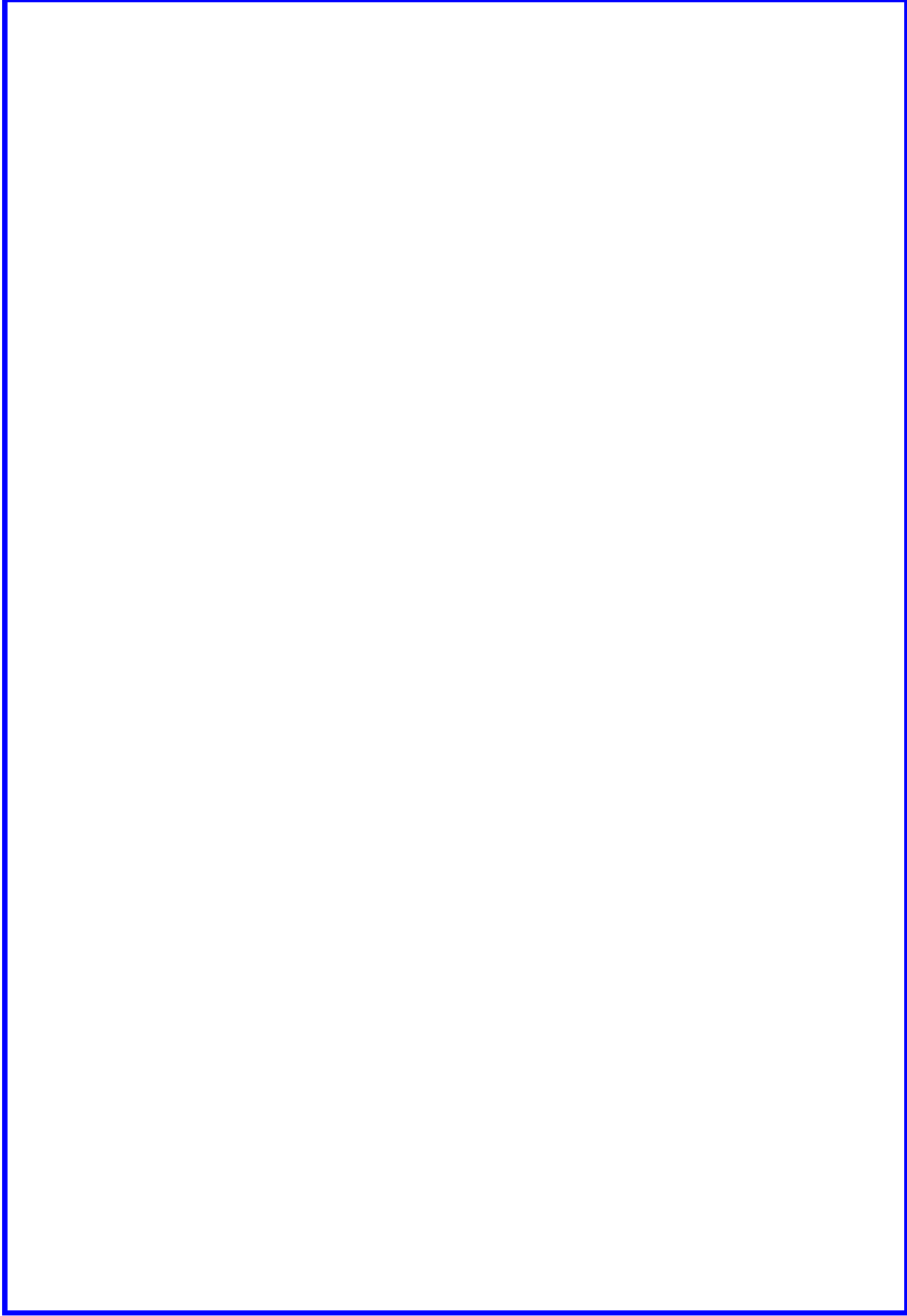


**Cranmer Local History Group**

*'Rediscovering the Past'*



A Cranmer Local History Group Publication



## **Preface**

This booklet is the first in a series and contains five circular walks from Aslockton through the villages of Scarrington and Whatton-in-the-Vale. ***The numbers in brackets in the text point out certain areas of interest which are described in more detail in the 'Historical Notes' section of this booklet.***

The Walks were compiled and written by Paul Brown. Additional material, historical notes, photographs and maps were provided by Gregg Redford

### ***Please follow the Countryside Code***

- **Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work.**
- **Guard against all risk of fire.**
- **Fasten all gates.**
- **Keep your dogs under close control.**
- **Keep to public paths across farmland.**
- **Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls.**
- **Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone.**
- **Take your litter home.**
- **Help keep all water clean.**
- **Protect wildlife, plants and trees.**
- **Take special care on country roads.**
- **Make no unnecessary noise.**

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## **WALK ONE - Aslockton via Orston Bridge and Whatton** (Approx. 4.5 Miles)

From the village centre, walk towards St. Thomas's Church (8) and turn right along the marked footpath at Saucer farm. Follow this footpath and after a couple of hundred yards you will see Cranmer's Mound (2) on your left hand side. You can see, quite clearly, the motte and bailey construction with its moat and fishponds. Continue forwards to the gate but follow the path that runs to the left of the hedgerow until you reach a stile. Cross the stile and turn right. You will now see a clear defined path that runs alongside the hedgerow. On your left is a bank that has been constructed to protect the villages from floods. This is known as Cranmer's Walk and, no doubt, Thomas Cranmer (12) would have walked along it to the river and to get a glimpse of Whatton Church (7) standing high over the riverbanks

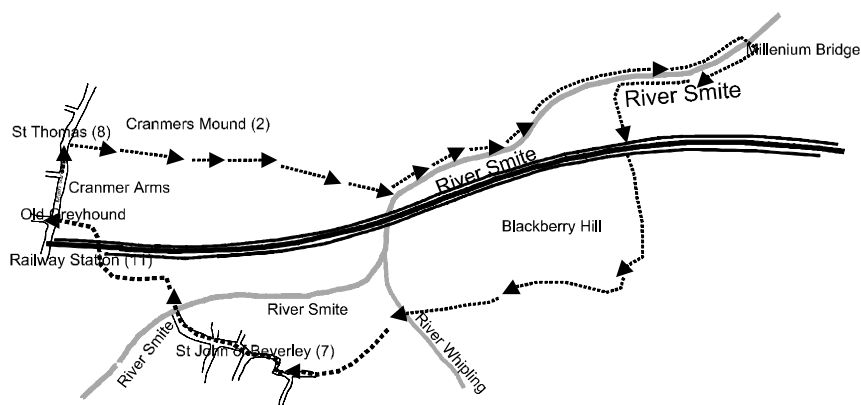
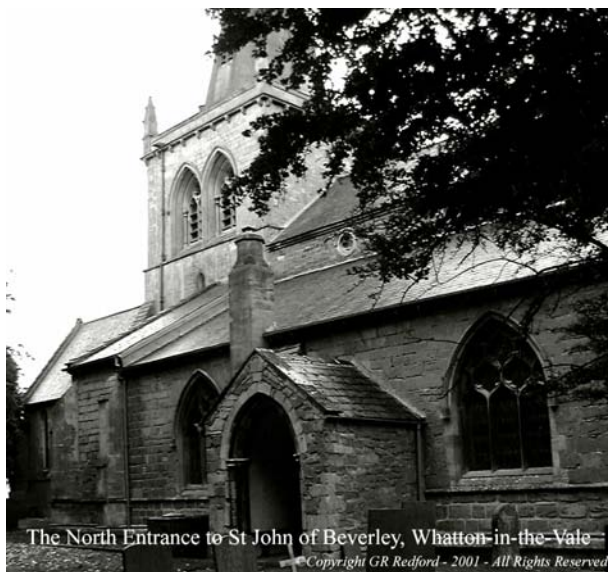
Continue along this path to the river and turn left. The River Smite is a small stream that rises in the Colston Bassett area, near to the Grantham Canal. It has been widened to cope with water that flows off the agricultural land in this area. Normally it will be running at a few inches deep but after a period of wet weather can become a raging torrent and is prone to floods.

Walk alongside the river for about a mile, passing through a field with a grass perimeter that was formerly used by the local stables as a training area, the field is known as 'The Gallops'. You will



then come to a new wooden bridge over the river. This is a bridge built by the residents of the village of Orston to celebrate the Millennium. The names of the contributors to the operation are carved on the supports of the rails.

Once over the bridge turn right and continue along the riverbank for about half a mile. Over a stile and after an electricity pylon, on your left, you will notice a hedgerow



going off to the left towards a tunnel under the railway line. Follow this hedgerow and go under the tunnel. The large hill in front of you is known as Blackberry Hill and is probably a deposit of clay left after the ice age. Follow the path around to the left and then around the base of Blackberry Hill.

The original footpath bridge is very narrow with only one guard rail. The 'farmer's' bridge is to the right of the footpath bridge, both pass over the areas second river, the Whipling. Follow the path to the bottom and turn right onto an agricultural roadway. This roadway will lead you to the end of Main Street, Whatton. Cross the road in front of the Whatton Manor Farm entrance and continue up a narrow path (Chapel Way) past the Wesleyan Chapel (built in 1846, now a private house) to Burton Lane.

Follow Burton Lane towards the 13th Century Church of St, John of Beverley (7) . Pass by the North Door of the Church along Church Way. Re-cross the River Smite and follow the footpath, crossing the Parish Boundary at the second 'swing' gate, through the field, over the Railway (11) crossing and back to Aslockton.

**Footpath Notes:**

*The Ordnance Survey Map shows the footpath from the stile to the railway tunnel to run from the old river bed (just to the south of the stile) diagonally across the field to the tunnel. However, this field is usually ploughed or planted with crops and the actual footpath is obscured. The landowner has left the path described in the walk. Likewise, the path from the tunnel passes diagonally, up and across Blackberry Hill. The path is not obvious and on the Whatton side of the Hill, an electric fence crosses the footpath. Again the landowner has left a path around the perimeter of the field and this is the path described in the Walk.*

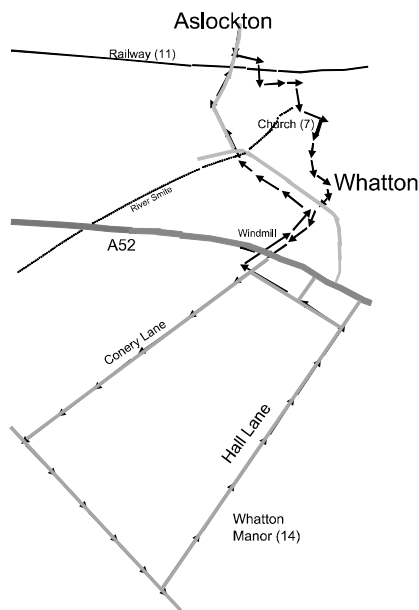
## **WALK TWO - Aslockton, Whatton via Conery & Manor Lanes**

(Approx. 3.5 Miles)

From the village centre, walk towards the railway line, and then turn left up a footpath opposite the junction with Abbey Lane. The path will take you over the railway line around a field and on to the bridge over the River Smite. At this point the new flood defence system can be seen. Continue into Whatton and walk past the church (7) turning right at the end.

Walk up this road, Church Street, past the village hall to the cross roads. You will notice the different variety of chimney stacks (9) on the houses in the village. Continue straight over and walk up Conery Lane. At the main A52 trunk road, walk across and continue along Conery Lane. This small lane will take you away from Whatton for about a mile and is a pleasing and quiet stroll. Apart from the traffic noise!

At the end of this lane turn left, along Granby Road and walk towards the trees about half a mile away. When you reach the trees on the corner, turn left along Manor Lane. There is a lodge (originally the Estate Gardener's Cottage) with a rather interesting twisted chimney. There is also a lodge at the far end of the lane. To your right are the grounds of what was Whatton Manor (14). The Clock Tower you can see from the lane is over the





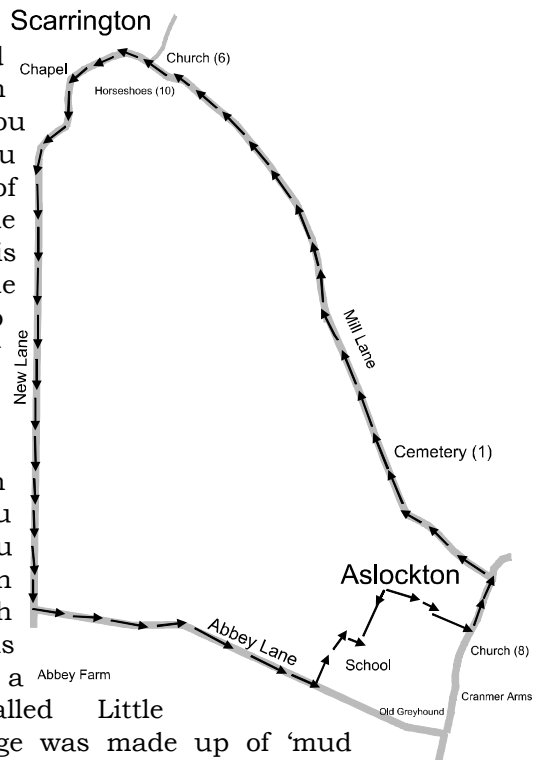
stables and is part of the original Manor buildings. Continue to walk along the lane until you reach the left turn. Turn left and carry straight on ignoring the right turn towards the A52.

At the 'T' junction turn right, back onto Conery Lane. Cross over the A52 and walk down the lane. Take the second left and walk down the old lane that used to be the Nottingham to Grantham road. It is barely a single track now (4). Continue over the old bridge (13), over the road and follow Dark Lane to the railway line. Over the railway (11) line and you are at your starting point.

### WALK THREE - Aslockton to Scarrington (Approx. 3 Miles)

Walk Three is a simple walk that follows the road from Aslockton to Scarrington. From the village centre walk towards and past the Church (8) . Turn left at the Vicarage up a narrow footpath. At the end of this path turn right onto Chapel Lane. The old Chapel is the white building around 50 yards down on the right. Continue to the end of Chapel Lane and turn left onto Mill Lane. Walk out of the village, passing on the right the Cemetery and bier house (1). As you leave Aslockton on the left is the old Bakery (now a private house). The Post Mill used to stand behind this property.

Walk along the road until you reach Scarrington. As you enter the village you will see the high pile of horseshoes (10) outside the old smithy. This was created by the blacksmith who worked in the smithy (10). On the right is the Church, St. John of Beverley (6). Continue through Scarrington and as you leave the village you will notice a track on the left hand side with a footpath marker. This is the track that led to a smaller village called Little Lunnen(3). This village was made up of 'mud huts' that were created from wattle and daub. Any trace of the village has now long gone. Continue up the lane and



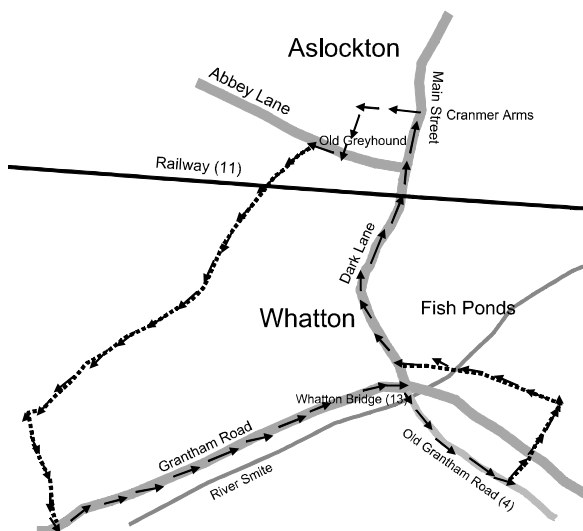
you will see the railway line in the distance. This is the Nottingham to Grantham line (11) , built in 1850 to assist with the movement of goods. After a mile you will come to a cross roads type junction, the left hand lane being sign posted to Aslockton. Turn left here and walk into Aslockton village. After the turning to the right (Fields Drive) there is a footpath marker to the left, with a path running between two hedges. Follow this path around the edge of the field to the stile. At the stile turn right, follow the path and you come to Chapel Lane once more. Turn right and then follow the path around to the left back towards the Church (8).

## WALK FOUR - Aslockton via Whatton (Approx. 2 Miles)

From the centre of Aslockton, walk up the road opposite the Cranmer Arms public house (Dawns Lane). At the top turn left and walk down to Abbey Lane. Turn right and take the first left onto The Capes. In front of you there is a path leading between two houses. Walk up the path to the railway line, over the stile and cross the railway.

Follow the well-marked path on the other side to a large field. The path follows the left hand side of the field, next to what is referred to locally as the old course of the River Smite and leads towards the prison. Stay on the left hand side until you reach the prison fence and then turn left down a track. This track leads to the Old Grantham Road.

At this road, turn left and walk back towards the villages. At the junction turn right and walk over the bridge (13). This road (4) will take you up towards the village of Whatton; however, half way up there is a path off to the left across a field. Take this path, then over the road and follow the path that leads into the field opposite. Look to your left and you will see a wooden bridge over the river. Make for this bridge and cross the bridge. Immediately in front of you are the Whatton Fishponds that are worth exploring. After visiting the fish ponds, make for the gate next to the road. Turn right and follow the road back into the centre of Aslockton.



## WALK FIVE - Aslockton to Thoroton and Orston (Approx. 5.5 Miles)

This is the big one! A good walk with plenty of variation.

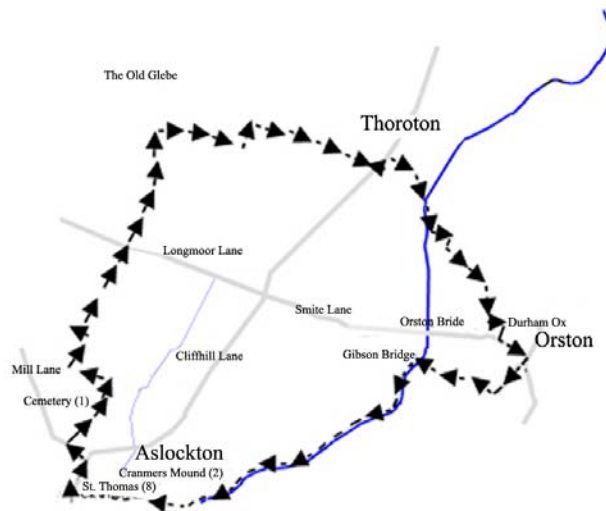
From Aslockton village centre, walk towards and pass the Church (8). At Mill Lane turn left towards Scarrington. After 150 yards turn right along a marked footpath. Follow this well-defined path along hedgerows to the country lane.

Cross the road and continue along the marked path for a mile or so. In some places the footpath may not be clear so head for the house ahead slightly to the left. The footpath eventually

meets a track, which leads away from the house into the fields. Follow the track towards a ridge in the distance. The track then turns to the left but at the next hedgerow on the right, turn right, up the hill on the marked path.

The path takes you up the ridge and down the other side into the village of Thoroton. When you reach the village, turn left along the road and at the telephone kiosk turn right along the marked footpath.

This path takes you down to the river Smite and then on to the village of Orston, again on a well-defined path. You will enter Orston



at the top of High Street. Walk down the street and take the first left and then turn right. If you require refreshments, the Durham Ox public house is situated here. Walk towards Main Street and continue straight over down Chapel Street.

At the bottom walk down the tree lined track. At the end of the track, turn right and follow the path to the river. Cross the bridge and turn left. Follow the course of the river to the bridge and turn right on the right hand side of the hedge following the path to the centre of Aslockton.

## HISTORICAL NOTES

### **1 - Aslockton Cemetery**

In the late 1860's the population of Aslockton were 'debarred the right of internment in Whatton Church', despite the fact that the two parishes had been connected since the Reformation. This was the result of 'the influence and intermeddling of the Lord of the Manor', the 'souls and bodies of the inhabitants have been coolly handed over to the distant parish of Scarrington'. Despite the assurances of the Bishop, the Lord of the Manor's view won the day and the villagers of Aslockton lost their right to burial in Whatton Church. The parishioners of Aslockton purchased a plot of land to be used as a General Cemetery (non-denominational). The land was purchased through donations. The Cemetery was opened on the 21st December 1869

### **2 - Cranmer's Mound**

Cranmer's Mound is a scheduled monument and is described as being a Motte and Bailey known as Cranmer's Mound or Mount, which was later adapted to become a prospect mound. The Mound is interpreted as a 'small medieval, motte or castle mound, which originally stood some 5 m high and was surmounted by a stone or timber tower.' *The tower could never have been substantial, since the level area at the top of the motte is only 4 m by 6m, but it is possible that an enclosure known as a bailey extended from the foot of the motte and contained additional buildings and ancillary features.*

### **3 - Little Lunnen**

Built on the outskirts of Scarrington, the enclave of cottages were built to house the poor of the area. All the cottages were pulled down during the 1920s and 1930s.

#### **4 - Roads**

The old lane (the old Nottingham to Grantham Road) in Walk Two, is described as being barely single track. It is probably now, better paved and slightly wider than it was in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In 1764 the road from Grantham to Nottingham at Whatton was described as being 'totally impassable for even a single horse in safety'. In circa 1804, Pitt wrote of the Roads of the Vale of Belvoir, 'in its' open state, were in the winter dreadful and almost impassable and are indeed at the present in wet seasons very indifferent.'

#### **5 - St. John of Beverley, Bishop of York**

The Churches at both Scarrington and Whatton are dedicated to St. John of Beverley. St. John was consecrated as Bishop in Hexham in 685 AD

St. John died in 721 AD. Recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles as 'And here passed away the Saint Bishop John; he was bishop 33 years and 8 months and 13 days; and his body rests in Beverley.'

Why the two churches were dedicated to St. John is not clear. The parishes were from the time of the Danes until 1836, in the diocese of York. It was the custom that if ecclesiastical visitations found churches without dedication, the visitor would order that the church be declared to the Saint whose day it happened to be. It is possible that this is the reason for the two churches being dedicated to St. John.

#### **6 - St. John of Beverley, Scarrington**

A Medieval Church, probably 13th Century, which was largely rebuilt in 1869. The parish registers date from 1570

#### **7 - St. John of Beverley, Whatton**

It is believed that the Church dates from the 13th Century. It was repaired and new pews installed in 1807 at a cost of £1,700 (£65, 000 at present value). The Chancel was rebuilt in 1848, at the expense of TD Hall and in 1870, the whole of the Church was restored, mainly at the expense of TD Hall. The east window of the south aisle was designed by Burne-Jones and executed by William Morris. It has figures of Our Lord, Peter and John, on heavy backgrounds of orange tree, flowering rosebush and pomegranates. The east window on the other aisle, which shows Our Lord ascending in a company of angels, with Mary and the disciples below, is in memory of Thomas Dickinson Hall. The parish registers date from 1538.



### **8 - St. Thomas, Aslockton**

The Church was erected in 1891-92, in the Early English Style and described in 1893 as consisting of nave, south aisle, chancel, organ chamber and vestries. The cost of building the church was said to be £3,000 (this would equate to about £180,000 at present value) and was paid entirely by Mrs., TD Hall of Whatton Manor. The parish registers date from 1894.

### **9 - TD Hall Esq.**

TD Hall was the son of a Nottingham Hosiery Manufacturer and was described as a barrister. TD Hall acquired the 'Whatton Manor' in 1840 and built the Whatton Manor house, in the Elizabethan style in 1841. He also rebuilt the village, building the majority of the farmhouses and cottages in the village. His hallmark was the style of the chimneys and/or a plaque bearing the initials THD and the year of building. He was certainly a benefactor of the Church in Whatton, paying for repairs and the greater part of the restoration in 1870. After his death, his wife paid for the building of the Church in Aslockton. The Halls remained in occupation of the Manor until 1919 when it was sold by Lieu. Col Montagu Haffenden Hall.

### **10 -The Horseshoes**

George Flinders, the blacksmith in Scarrington started the pile of horseshoes in 1945, intending to sell them for scrap, but changed his mind when it became a local landmark. It is said that in 1970 he sold this unique stack to a visiting American. The district council were not amused and put a preservation order on the pile - it now has a Grade II listing.

### **11 -The Railway**

The Railway was opened in 1850. It was built and operated by the Ambergate, Nottingham and Boston and Eastern Junction Railway. In 1852 the Great Northern Railway was completed and Grantham was considered an important Railway Town. The Ambergate line connected Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire with the Great Northern Station at Grantham and the directors of the GNR wanted to secure a hold on the vast Coal traffic from the pits of those two counties. In 1885 the Ambergate line was handed over to GNR to work for ten years. Eventually, in 1861 the Ambergate, Nottingham and Boston and Eastern Junction Railway and Canal Company leased itself to the GNR for 999 years.

### **12 - Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury**

It is alleged that Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury was born in Aslockton in 1489, leaving to study at Cambridge at the age of 14. He became Archbishop in 1532.. When Mary acceded to the Throne, his (Cranmer's) renunciation of the reformed religion could not save him from the stake, at which he suffered on March, 21, 1556.

Whilst there does not appear to be any positive proof that he was indeed born in Aslockton, it is well documented that Thomas's grandfather, Edmund de Cranmer acquired one of the Manors of Aslockton on his marriage to Isabelle de Aslockton in about 1480. and that it continued to be occupied by the Cranmer family until the early 17th Century (see below).

In his book, *The Vale of Belvoir*, Michael Honeybone observes, "In the early 17th Century, there is a record of an old house in Aslockton lately the inheritance of Tho. Cranmer Esq., dead without male issue'. The Thomas Cranmer referred to in the previous extract would probably be the son of the Archbishop's brother, John Cranmer.

In 1893 it was noted "The site of the Manor House is now occupied by a farm residence. Near it may still be distinctly traced several moats, islands, and other remains of the pleasure grounds, and at a short distance is a raised walk which leads to Orston, and is yet called Cranmer's walk." .

### **13 - Whatton Bridge**

The Cocker Bridge (originally the Cokerbek Brigge) upstream from Whatton Bridge, possibly suggesting an alternative name of the Smite in medieval times. The name may be derived from a combination of the Celtic 'crooked' or 'winding' and the Danish 'stream'. Whatton Bridge was rebuilt in 1986.

### **14 - Whatton Manor**

The Whatton Manor house was built by Thomas Dickinson Hall in 1841 in the Elizabethan style. The Manor was regrettably demolished in the early 1960's and replaced by a 'Modern' Georgian style house. The stables were retained, the clock tower of which can be seen from Manor Lane (Walk Two)

## **References**

The References used to compile the Historical Notes are as follows, references in brackets refer to Cranmer Local History Group Research Information Publications, where applicable.

**Nottinghamshire Churches** - Nottinghamshire Family History Society Record Series Vol. 100

**Schedule of Entry: File Reference: AA31871/01** - Entry in the Schedule of Monuments compiled and maintained by the Secretary of State under section 1 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 - as amended. (Cranmer's Mound - Cranmer Local History Group - clhgri0001grr)

**The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles** - Translated and edited by Michael Swanton

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### ***Cranmer Local History Group was formed in July, 2001 with the objects of:***

Researching and archiving the histories of Aslockton,  
Scarrington and Whatton-in-the-Vale.

To promoting interest in Local History in general and in the  
Aslockton, Scarrington and Whatton-in-the-Vale areas in  
particular.

Please visit our web site at [www.cranmerlhg.org.uk](http://www.cranmerlhg.org.uk)

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