Notes continued...

Turn left and walk up Grass Yard. On the right are the Almshouses (24) built in the 1870s to replace those that stood in the churchyard near the present graveyard. Bear right past the two brick buildings (25) and follow the path past Bell House (26), built in 1872 and retaining its bell. These buildings were all part of the elementary school.

Walk down the pathway beside the red brick wall, which used to encompass the Castle gardens. Continue until you reach Pound Lane. Turn left and continue up the lane, which turns to gravel. The last house is the Keepers Lodge (27), built in the mid 19th century as a gardener's cottage. If you wish, you can now take a 10 minute diversion continuing on another 2 mile to see the site of the Old Castle, visible to the left of the track as a mound surrounded by bushes and trees.

Retrace your steps back down Pound Lane. Continue until you reach the junction with High Street Road, and turn right. The interesting mid 19th century Baptist Chapel (28), recently used as a youth club, is on your left. On your right is Toffield, a reminder that this stretch of road was once a turnpike road.

Pass the Fire Station (29) on your right. From 1899-1950, Canon Powys Maunse was a driving force behind this voluntary brigade, which was founded in 1763 and still operates today. Continue along Manseville Hall (30), erected in 1914, which became a Red Cross hospital where many local villagers tended the wounded during the First World War.

Cross the road and turn left down Carnaby. Immediately on the right is Carnaby House (31), a house built on school land in 1776. Facing is Pentargon (32), a timber-framed cottage dating from 1650, possibly on the site of an earlier road.

Pass on the right hand side of this cottage, noting the house on the right, the garden of which is the site of Kimbolton's former Gas Works (33). Continue along the path. On the left, just before the bridge, is the Drying Ground (34) where washed laundry was spread out to dry. Beyond the bridge that spans the River Lym is the Cemetery (35) with its gates, lodge and lodge dating from 1858.

Follow your steps and bear right behind Pentargon, walking past the early 19th century built cottages that complete Carnaby. Continue down the churchward. On the left is the late 18th century Michaelmas House (36).

St Andrew's Church (37) is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086. The north and south arcades are C13 and the external appearance is mainly C14 and C15. A walk around the churchyard will reveal a fine selection of table tombs dating back to the early C18. Also notice the heraldic devices on the north side, which leads to the Montagu Vault. This area has many changes in the past 150 years including the demolition of the school buildings, which once stood between the tower and the road. The church itself is open to visitors during the daytime.

Leave the churchyard through the iron 'keeping gate' and bear left into East Street. On the left is Belle Cottage (38), so called because this was the Belle Inn until 1921. The house adjoining it, to the left, with the Victorian shop window, may have been the medieval guildhall. Access the passageway adjacent to Belle Cottage, is the early C19 Moravian Manse or vicarage. The Moravian Church (39), built in 1823, stands behind the Manse at the end of the passageway. The building to the right of the Manse, with the shop front, was previously a bakery for 150 years.

Continue past Dial House (40), a C17 timber-framed building. The sundial and plaster cornice with mottoes can be attributed to a prosperous turner who lived here in the mid C18. Behind this house and the one next door was a tannery (where leather was made), references to which go back to the Middle Ages.

Look across the road to the mid C19 Primitive Methodist Chapel (41) on the left hand side of the passageway leading to the High Street. Continue about 40 metres along the street until you see the C17 former Hall Moon Public House (42), across the road. This ceased trading in 1988. Adjacent to this is No 9 Hothorpe (43), an old timber-framed house built in around 1500, and next door to this is No 7 (44), which has a date stone in the gable wall above the roofline, reading 'H.S. 1735' - the initials of Harvey Sparks. Next door, No 5 (45), is early C18 and was considered by Persyer as having 'the prettiest doorway in Kimbolton'.

Walk to the end of the street and look at Aibigton (46), the gentlemen's outfitters. This building was used as a warehouse for the poor until 1837. The Town Cage or lock-up once stood outside it. Turn left and walk down to the cottage (47) in front of the butcher's shop. When this was recently renovated, the timber frame revealed it to be an example of a C15 Hall House. Now carefully cross the road. Walk along the causeway until you are opposite the small bridge and look up to the small building on the hillside. This is Warden House, designed to focus the view from this side of the castle. For many years, this was a gamekeeper's cottage.

Return along London Road around George Corner and you are back at the Castle Gatehouse (1), which leads to Kimbolton Castle (48), now owned by Kimbolton School. This imposing building is one of the main features of the town and has undergone many changes over the years. The original C13 castle, on a moated site, was acquired by Sir Richard Wingfield in 1522 and rebuilt as a Tudor house. During this period, Katherine of Aragon, Henry VIII's first wife, spent the last 20 months of her life here. In 1615, the Castle was bought by Sir Henry Montagu, who later became the first Earl of Manchester. From 1669 to 1720 it was extensively remodelled, largely to designs by Sir John Vanbrugh and his assistant Nicholas Hawksmoor. It remained the Montagu family seat until 1950 when it was sold to Kimbolton School. Because of its use by the school, public visiting is restricted to two Sundays each year, usually at the beginning of May and October. However, group visits can be organised throughout the year by arrangement.

Whist every effort has been made to ensure accuracy in this publication, no liability can be accepted by the District Council for any omissions or inaccuracies.
Welcome to Kimbolton

A brief history of Kimbolton

Kimbolton is a small market town steeped in centuries of history. Originally the parish consisted of several hamlets, one of them called ‘Chenebaldon’, the origin of the modern name Kimbolton. In Saxon times, King Harold had a hunting lodge nearby and may have worshipped in the original church, which stood on the site of the present St Andrew’s. By 1086, the time of the Domesday Book, ‘Chenebaldon’ had a population of about 500. Remains of the earliest castle, a Norman motte and bailey defence, still survive on the hill, ½ mile southwest of the church.

Kimbolton probably owes its development as a market trading centre to Geoffrey FitzPiers, Lord of the Manor and chief justice to King John. In 1200 he applied to the King for the right to hold a market. He diverted the Bedford road, created a new town with a broad high street, and built himself a castle on the present site. By 1279, the basic trades for this town were shoemaker, butcher, tanner, weaver, painter, cutter and carpenter.

The population of the town has fluctuated dramatically, particularly in the C19. Until the 1700s numbers seem to have varied between 500 and 1000, but nationwide improvements in medical care and a growing demand for agricultural workers pushed the population up to its maximum of almost 1700 in 1861. In the later years of the century, the advent of farming machinery and the import of cheap grain caused widespread rural depopulation, and by 1901 the market had closed and only 915 people were living in Kimbolton.

With its wide High Street (formerly the marketplace), Kimbolton retains much of its old character and in 1974 was designated a Conservation Area. There are 8 listed buildings and structures in this Conservation Area.

Tourist Information

KIMBOLTON

Huntingdon Road, Huntingdon PE21 9PY
Tel: 01480 440152
Email: info@huntsleisure.org
Website: www.huntsleisure.org

Opening Hours:
Mon - Fri: 9.00am - 5.00pm
Sat: 9.00am - 4.00pm

ST NEOOTS
Station Approach, St Neots PE19 2AF
Tel: 01480 377778
Email: info@stneots-ta.co.uk
Website: www.stneots-ta.co.uk

Multimap (Maps/driving directions) www.multimap.com

Getting Here

Located 8 miles NW of St Neots and 14 miles SW of Huntingdon, Kimbolton can be reached by road as follows:

- From the A1, take B645 West (signposted to Higham Ferrers) to Kimbolton
- From the A14 Jct 16, take B6650 to Kimbolton

There are daily bus services from St Neots and Huntingdon. The closest railway stations are at St Neots or Huntingdon.

Traveline (bus/coach/rail enquiries) Tel: 0870 6082608

A large print version is available. Please call the Tourist Information Centre for details.