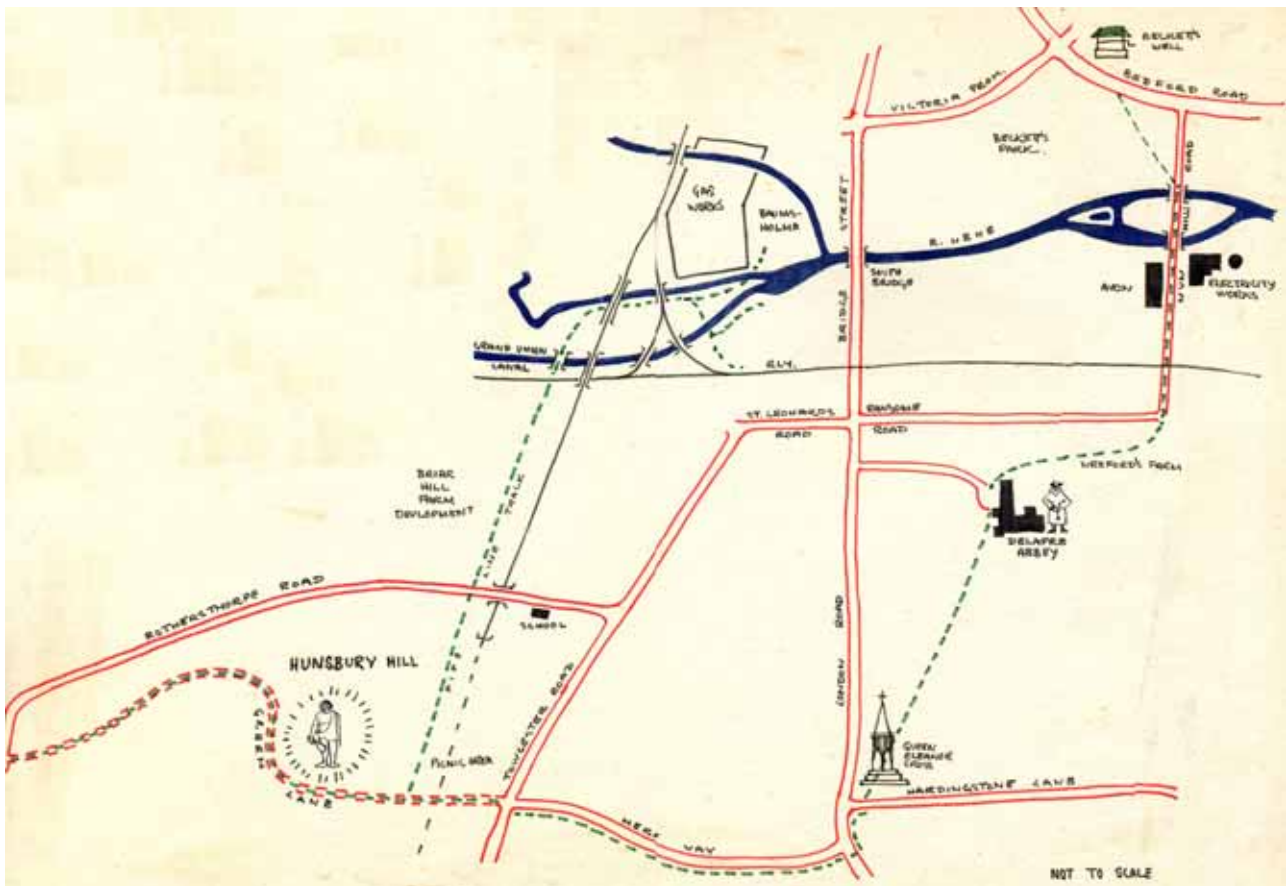


History Way by Delapre School

NORTHAMPTON TOWN EXPANSION.

This book describes a plan for a walkway between points of historical interest in the South of Northampton. The project was undertaken by a group of girls and boys in the 4th Year at Delapre School as part of their studies of the local community. These studies have had their roots firmly based in enquiry methods of learning and group work. We have asked permission to present this study to the Northampton Civic Action Group in the hope that through them it might reach the planners of the New Town and receive serious thought and finally implementation.



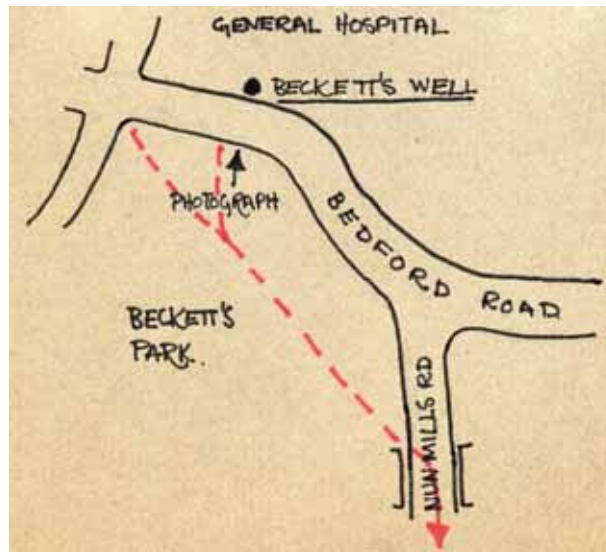
This map shows the extent of the proposed walk and you will notice that it is our intention that pedestrians should be free to walk safely and in pleasant surroundings from the site in Beckett's Park adjacent to the well through to Delapre Park, Queen Eleanor's Cross, Hunsbury Hill and then along the track of the recently laid gas pipe line down to the River Nene and ending at Baumsholme. The total distance involved would be something between 5 and 5 1/2 miles.



Mileage for Walkway.

From	To	Distance	Total
Beckett's Well	Flour Mill (near the river.)	1/4 mile	¼ mile
Flour Mill	Front of Delapre Abbey	1/4 mile	½ mile
Front of Delapre Abbey	Queen Eleanor Cross	3/4 mile	1 ¼ miles
Queen Eleanor Cross	Towcester Rd (via Mereway)	1 mile	2 ¼ miles
Towcester Rd	Hunsbury Hill	3/4 mile	3 miles
Hunsbury Hill	Bottom of Green lane	3/4 mile	3 ¾ miles
Hunsbury Hill (via Gas pipe line)	Canal & Railway (where Gas pipeline crosses canal & railway.)	3/4 mile	4 ½ miles
Canal & Railway	Baumsholme	3/4 mile	5 ¼ miles

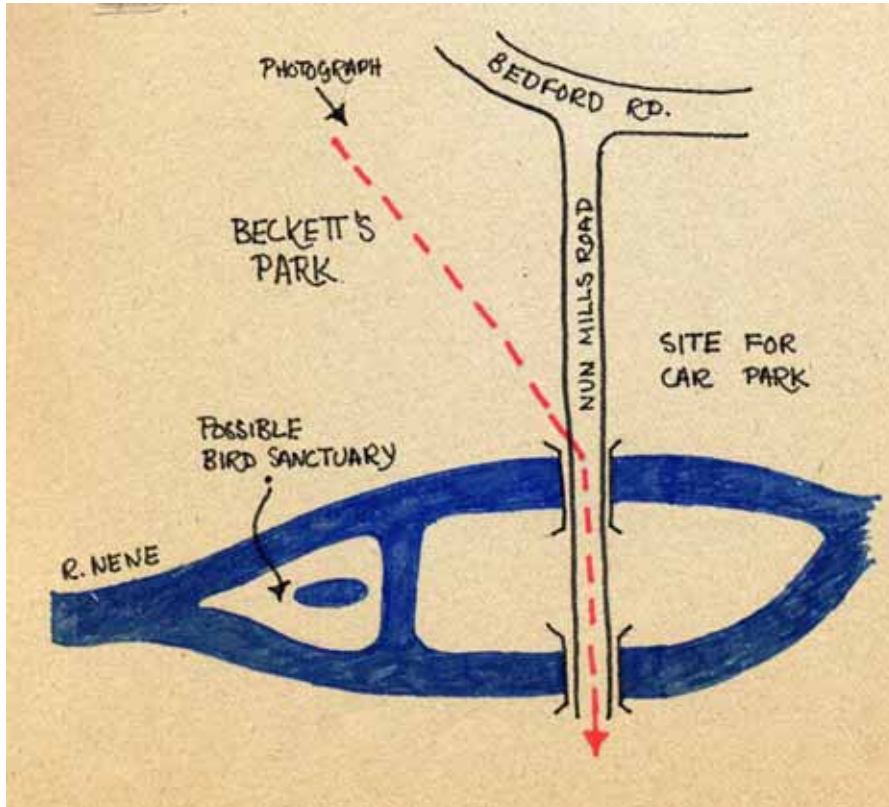
We have chosen this point for the start of our walk. The well is of historical interest and can be easily seen from the Park.



We are now looking in the direction we have to move to make a start on our walk - through Beckett's Park towards the commencement of Nunn Mills Road. Looking southwards towards the river we can appreciate the pleasant facilities of this Dark, although we would claim that there are opportunities present here which have not yet been grasped. In considering what could be done with this well-established Dart of the Dark our thoughts moved along the lines of boating and bird sanctuaries.



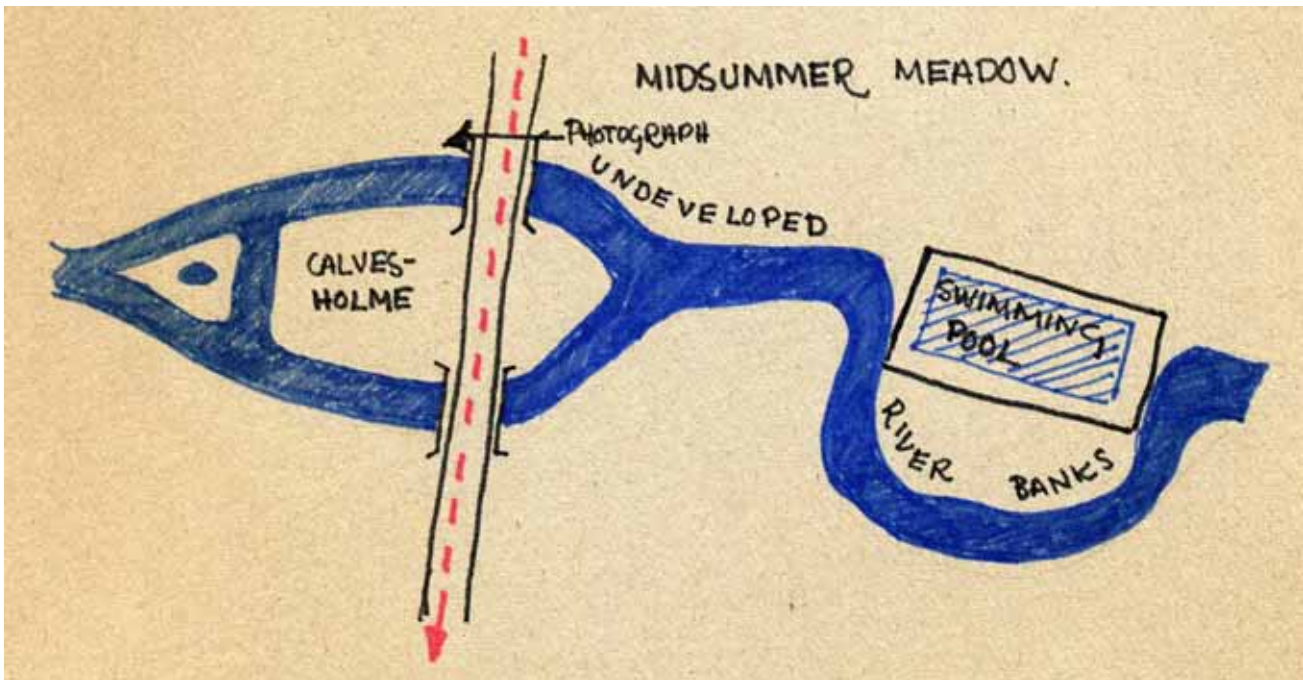
We are making enquiries into the conditions needed for waterfowl and hope to have evidence on this from the Peter Scott Wildfowl Trust at Peakirk. Our comment here is that in this motor age provision needs to be made for easy car parking and we feel that it would be desirable that a multi-storey car park should be provided alongside the river on the site now used on occasions as a fair-ground. If such a building were carefully sited, as well as being very useful it would be preferable to the rather ugly redbrick frontage of the Electricity Works which at present is the most dominant feature of this Dart. A carpark here would also accept the large number of cars which at present collect outside the Midsummer Baths in the summer months and would avoid the collection of vehicles outside the Baths where children could otherwise play freely in safety. It would no doubt prove valuable to the Town Centre shoppers as well.



This picture is taken from the river bridge on Nunn Mills Road looking in the direction of Beckett's Park,



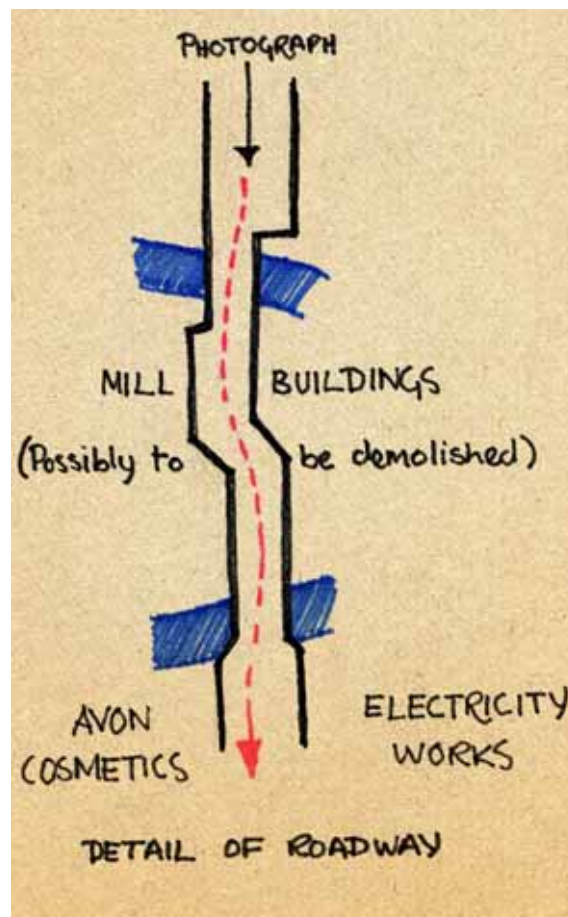
We put this forward to support our argument that the riverbank in the opposite direction deserves further development. Water areas are always attractive and with the addition of suitable trees, paths and seats the length of river available for such use could be increased fourfold.



We are now moving into one of the difficult sections of our walkway. We are not able to make any positive suggestions on how to solve the problem of pedestrians moving safely through this narrow part of Nunn Mills Road.



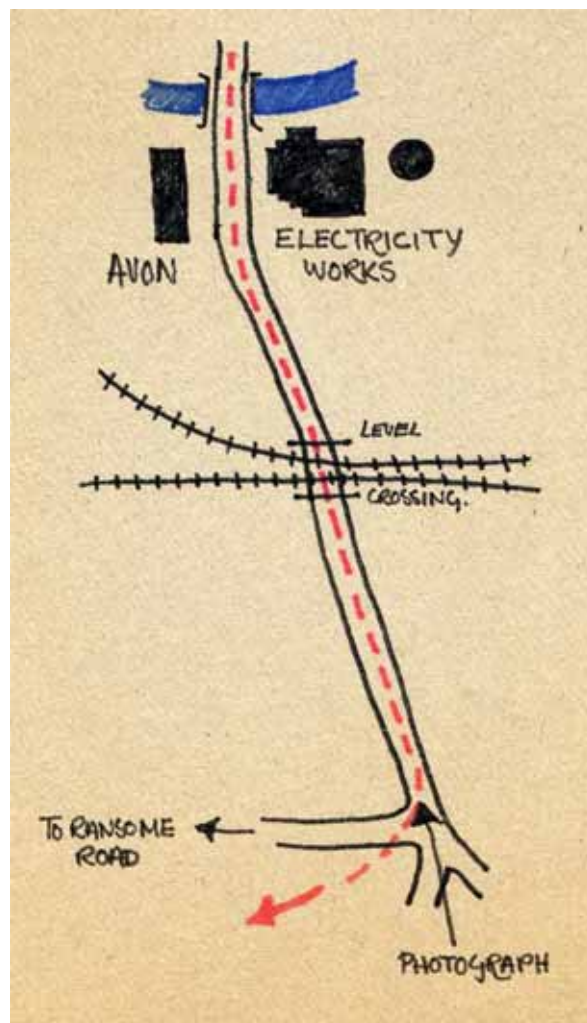
You will notice that there is no pathway. This shows the traffic hazard clearly. Most of the traffic consists of heavy vehicles moving to and from the warehouses that line this road. We can only hope that if development is considered along this road in the near future, provision should be made for pedestrians. We have also thought that it might not be impossible for free access to be made through the Vitovis warehouse on the right hand side of this picture.



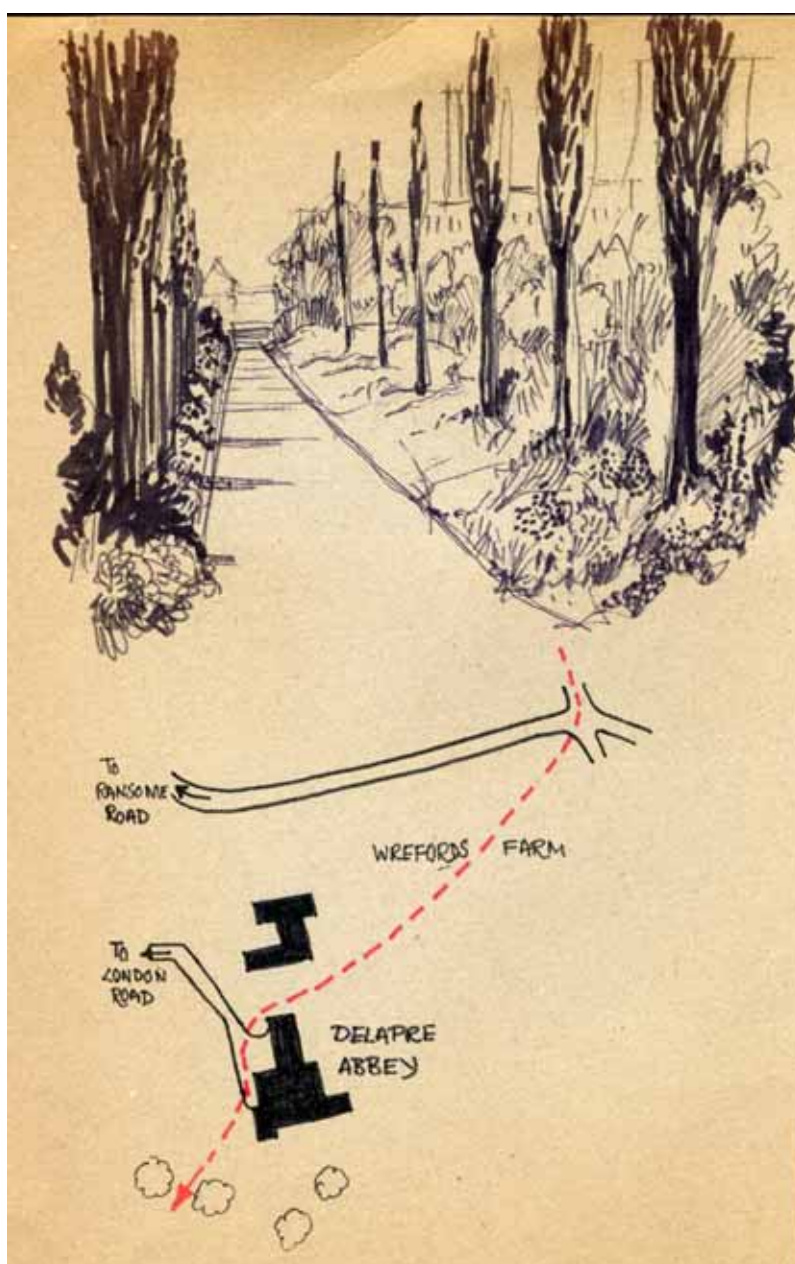
We have now crossed the railway line and are on the part of Nunn Mills Road which leads to Ransome Road.



On both sides of the road lie areas used as gravel quarries, railway yards and scrap dealers yards. No doubt this use of the ground will continue and we suggest planting trees alongside the road so as to obscure these eyesores. The photograph is taken looking back along this particularly unpromising stretch of Nunn Mills Road.



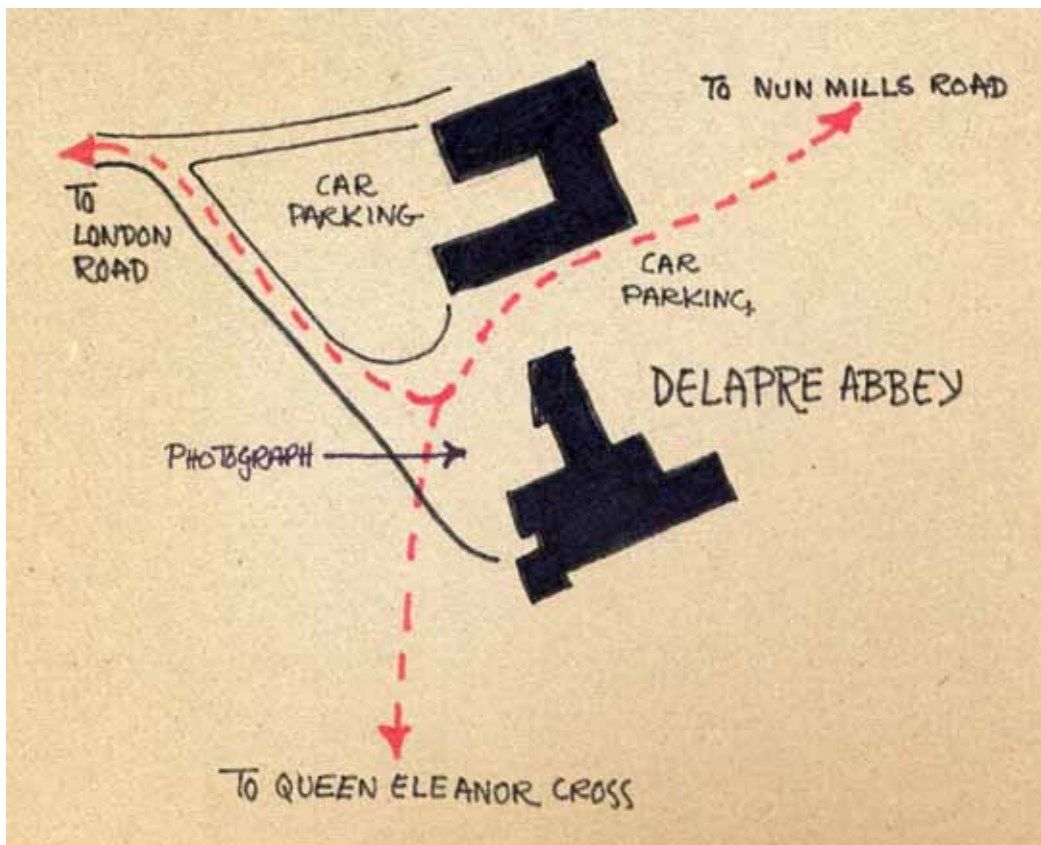
This sketch suggests the improvement which could so easily be effected along this section with trees, shrubs and for that matter Spring Bulbs. Continuing with our walk from this point at the junction of Nunn Mills Road and Ransome Road, the scene changes completely. Looking southwards towards Delapre Abbey we shall need to be free to move across this section of land, which is at present used as grazing land for cattle by Mr. Wreford. There is however a raised "roadway" which leads across to the nearest corner of the Abbey grounds. We think that this land could continue to be used by the farmer and our purposes would be served if an electric fence or hedges were provided together with a cattle grid. This would allow the farmer use of both parts of his now divided land. The Abbey is the second point in the walkway which is of particular interest historically. We have thought here that we have now reached the second main point on our suggested route and people should be able to start here if they wish. It might be of value therefore to allow free car parking in areas adjacent to the Abbey, as cars can already reach such a point along the existing Macadam Road, but then find limited parking. We are aware that many and varied propositions have been put forward about Delapre Park and we are looking into these in addition to making a study from the historical viewpoint.



This picture of trees and lawns close to the Abbey seems to us to be of sufficient beauty to be worth repeating in this form at other key points on the route. We are particularly attracted by the evergreen types.



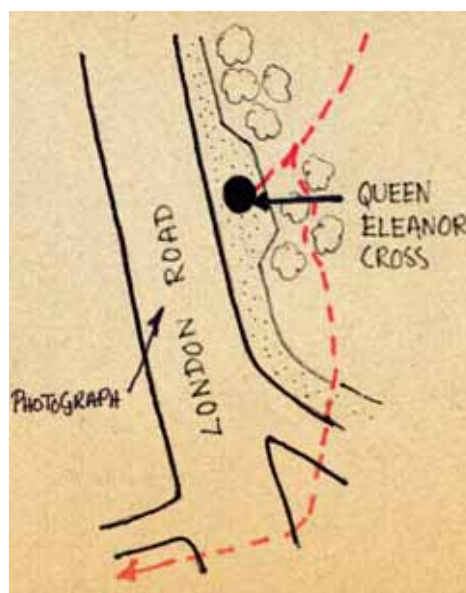
Our suggestion now is that it should be made possible for people to walk through the park to Queen Eleanor Cross. The route would pass slightly to the left of centre of this picture. We recognise an alternative possibility, namely to walk along the road to the London Road and then to Queen Eleanor Cross by way of the strip of land alongside the London Road, which is already planted with mature trees. We prefer our first suggestion as it keeps the walker away from the noise and smell of traffic on a busy route and we believe people would agree with us over this. Our earlier suggestions on fences and cattle grids would apply again.



Having arrived at Queen Eleanor Cross by way of the park we would like to have a section of wall removed to allow access to the Gross from the small spinney seen in the picture.



We like this view of the Gross and feel it would be pleasant to have as good a sight of it from inside the park where traffic is of no concern to the viewer. Also a few seats would be nice here as the view is attractive across the park in the direction we have just come. We have now reached Hardingstone Lane. We need another section of wall removed here to allow people to come out of the Dark at a point some 70 or 80 yards back from the corner of the London Road where it would be safe from traffic.



This point is the biggest trouble spot on our project route. We need now to be able to cross the London Road to a point in front of the Police Headquarters.



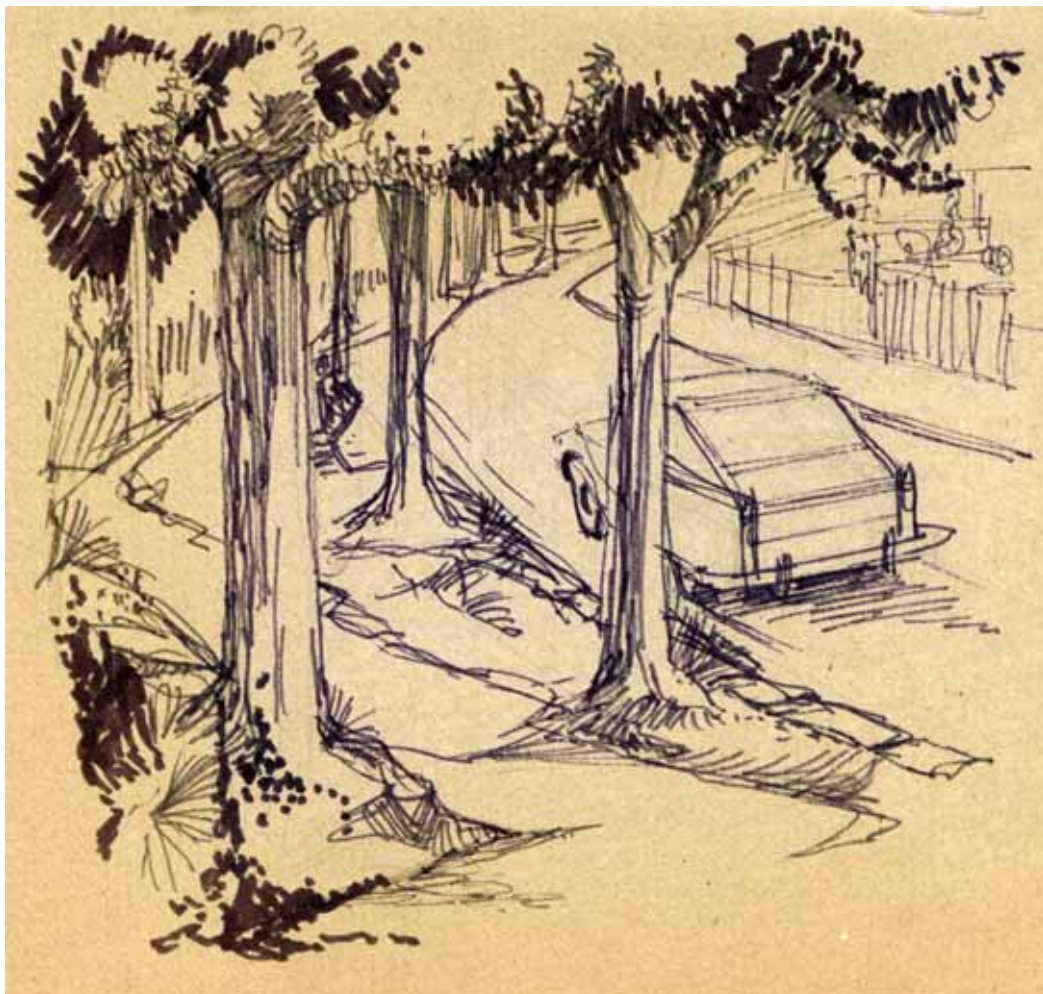
It seems that a high speed road is planned to pass here over towards Wellingborough to serve the needs of the new town. If this proves to be correct, then it would be valuable both to present and future residents of this area to be able to cross here in safety by means of either a footbridge or a subway. Surely such an amenity should be planned now to fit in with the proposed new road and implemented at the time of construction for reasons of economy. Regardless of our project it would seem a useful asset to people in this area to do this anyway. We have done a small traffic count at this point and found the following traffic volume at a relatively quiet time of the afternoon. We found that 162 vehicles per hour were using Hardingstone Land and 768 vehicles were using London Road.



Having safely crossed the London Road, we are now on the south side of Mere Way looking in the direction of Hunsbury Hill. We suggest that this spinney should be the place of entry into a strip of ground about 40 feet wide along the side of Mere Way.



Another sketch shows the appearance of this part if our suggestion of an avenue of trees is taken up. In the future there will be a large number of school children moving along this road to and from school in what will no doubt be a built-up area, and this would be better than an ordinary street footpath.



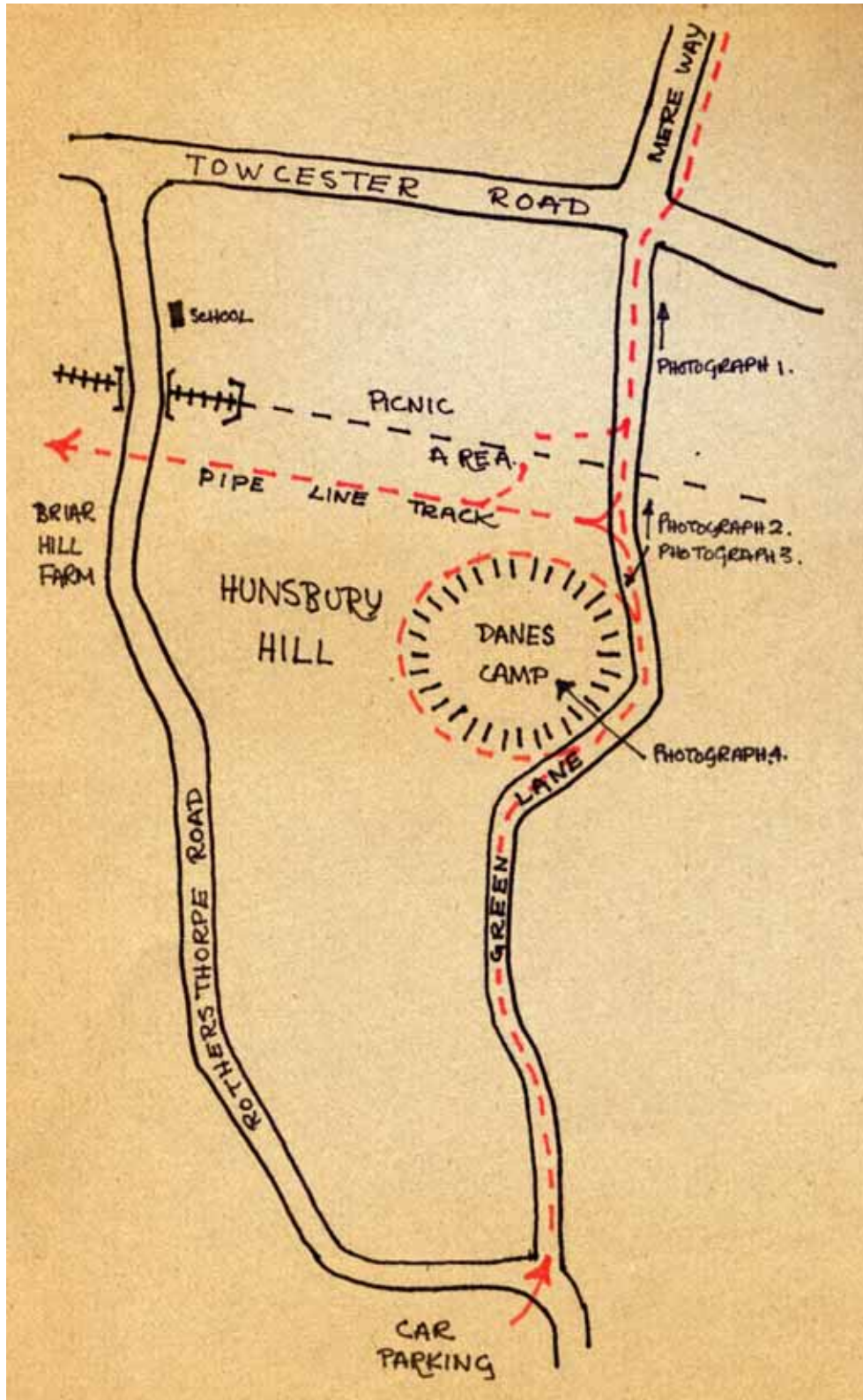
We now cross the Towcester Road into the first part of the Green Lane, We have discovered two of our big problems in this section - tinkers and rubbish. This difficulty occurs from time to time along most of the lane. The tinkers have been moved many times but still they return. The accumulated rubbish is collected now and then.



Now we are further into the lane and looking back in the direction we have come. The potential of the lane can be seen here. With tinkers and rubbish removed and provided wheeled vehicles are banned this would become a very pleasant spot. Whatever development occurs on either side of this walk a sense of being in deep country could be preserved.



Looking northwards towards the town we found an area which we consider useful to our project. The ground is fairly obviously not of much value to farming and only seems able to support scrub and thin grass at the moment. We are not certain yet but we think that this area, which is fairly bumpy, is the result of building the railway tunnel which carries the railway from Northampton to Blisworth. With the ground so poor as a result of building this tunnel and the very existence of the tunnel beneath, it would seem impossible to use this ground for either farming or building. We are attracted to this area as a picnic site as it has good views both north towards the town and south over what is at the moment open country.



This is a view of the Gamp looking westward taken from just inside the defensive wall. We can see most of the interior of the Gamp which has an area of about four acres. The part is sown with winter wheat in our picture. If this area were sown with grass and kept mown it would provide a most pleasant spot.



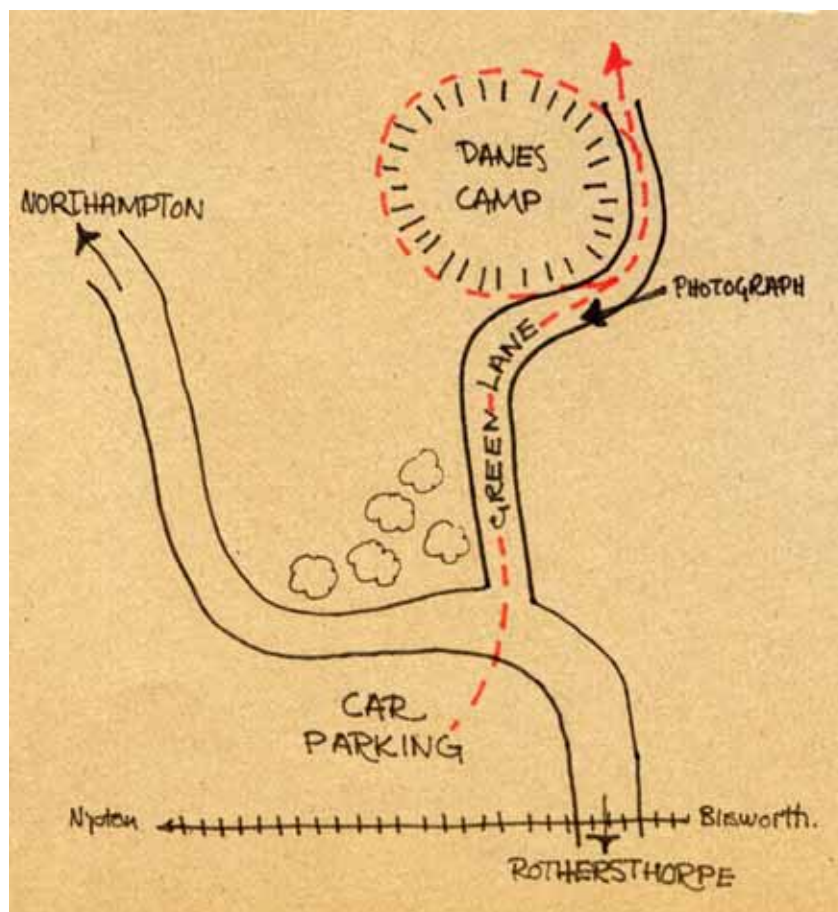
We have now walked on beyond our picnic area and have our first real sight of the Hunsbury Hill Camp. At the expense to the farmer of quite a small amount of land it would be easy to make it a possibility to walk completely around the outside of the Camp.



Having brought you as far as Hunsbury Hill we now interest ourselves in the problem of* how people will get to this point. We are certain that most people will not stick with the walk all the way from Beckett's Well, and we want them to be free to take parts of the walk as they wish. We show here a shot of the Green Lane beyond Hunsbury Hill. This lane moves on down the hill and joins with the road to Rothersthorpe just short of the railway.



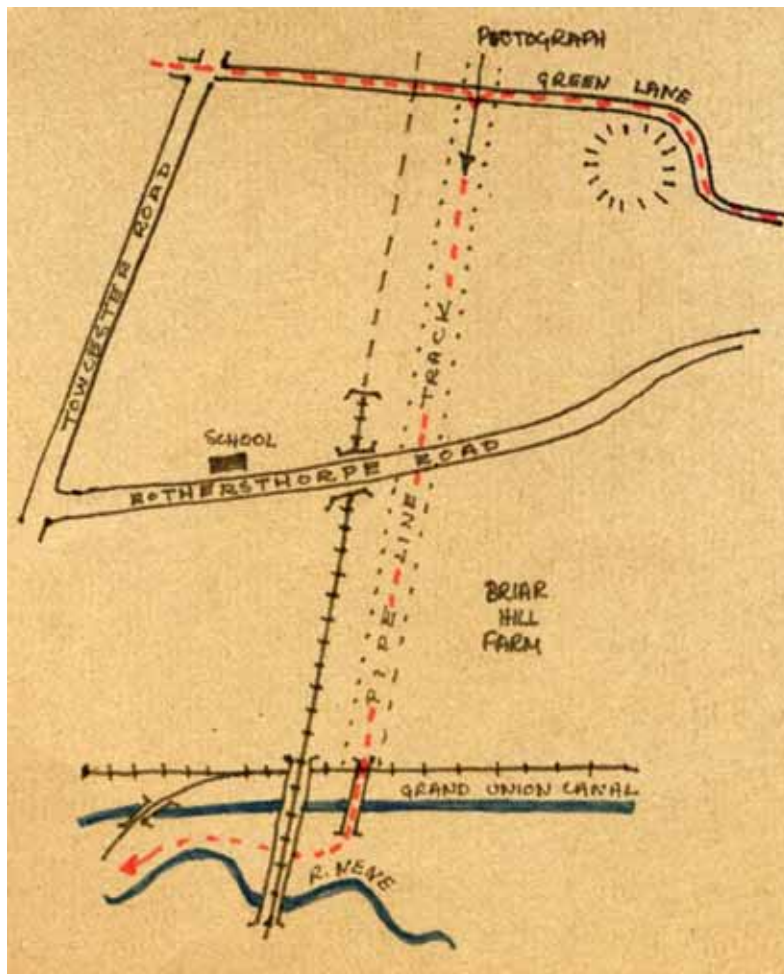
We are interested in the idea of a car park here to allow people to make this their point of entry to the walk. No doubt in the fairly near future Rothersthorpe Road will prove to be a bus route to link established areas with the new development. We should be sad to think of the Green Lane being lost under mounds of concrete and bricks as it has long historical connections.



We have now moved back to a point on Green Lane just short of Hunsbury Hill and have our first view of the track of the new Gas pipe line.



We are looking north now and we suggest that people should be free to walk along this track as we understand that it is forbidden to plant trees or do any building over the pipe. Pedestrians would do no harm here and as you will see we have a wonderful chance to extend our walk. This shows the available width which is about 60 feet. We have nearly reached the Rothersthorpe Road at a point close to where the railway goes under it.



We have now turned to take the last Dart of our walk and have reached the river again.



Passing through the fifteen arches we have a straight run back to Baumsholme alongside the river.



The ground here is undulating and appears subject to flooding. Grass is intermixed with types of rushes and in the middle of the field is an ox-bow lake. The railway to Blisworth can be seen in the background.



The walk is now nearly completed. The river here is pleasant and with the provision of some more trees the avenue which suggests itself to the eye could become a reality and diminish the impact of the Gas Works.



We have now come to the end of our walk, Baumsholme, and our final point of historical interest - a Saxon bridge.



*History Way
An original study
Produced on the
Fourth Year Course
At
Delapre School
Northampton*