

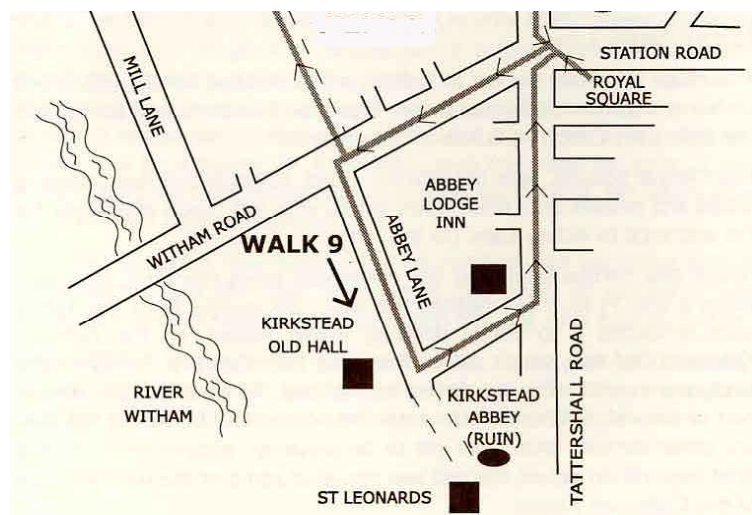
## Walk 9 - A walk to the past

Start from Royal Square - Grid Reference: TF 193631

Approx 1 hour

This route takes the walker to the ruins of Kirkstead Abbey, (dissolved by Henry VIII over 300 years before Woodhall Spa came into being) and the little 13th Century Church of St Leonards.

From Royal Square, take the Witham Road, towards the river, passing shops and houses until fields open out to your left. Soon after, look for the entrance to Abbey Lane (to the left).



Follow this narrow lane. You will eventually cross the Beck (see also walks 6 and 7) as it approaches the river; the monks from the Abbey once re-routed it to obtain drinking water. Ahead, on the right, is Kirkstead Old Hall, which dates from the 17th Century. Following the land, you cannot miss the Abbey ruin ahead. All that remains now is part of the Abbey Church, but under the humps and bumps of the field are other remains that have yet to be properly excavated, though a brief exploration before the last war revealed some of the

magnificence of the Cistercian Abbey.

Beyond is the superb little Church of St Leonards ( the patron saint of prisoners), believed to have been built as a Chantry Chapel and used by travellers and local inhabitants. The Cistercians were great agriculturalists and wool from the Abbey lands commanded a high price for its quality. A whole community of craftsmen and labourers would have grown up around the Abbey as it gained lands and power. Sadly the remains were used as a source of building stone for centuries - Abbey Farm is built from the stone.. The last abbot was executed in 1539, 400 years after the Abbey was founded.



Having savoured the ancient site, follow the Abbey Lane on round, past the Abbey Lodge Inn to join Tattershall Road. Across the fields, ahead, the outline of Ostler's Plantation can be seen, which backs Woodhall Spa's wartime airfield.

Turn left and walk straight down into the centre of the present day Spa. On the way you will pass ponds, dug in the last century to obtain clay to mix with the poor soil.