THE DANELAW WAY

A 60 mile recreational walk from Lincoln to Stamford

Brett Collier



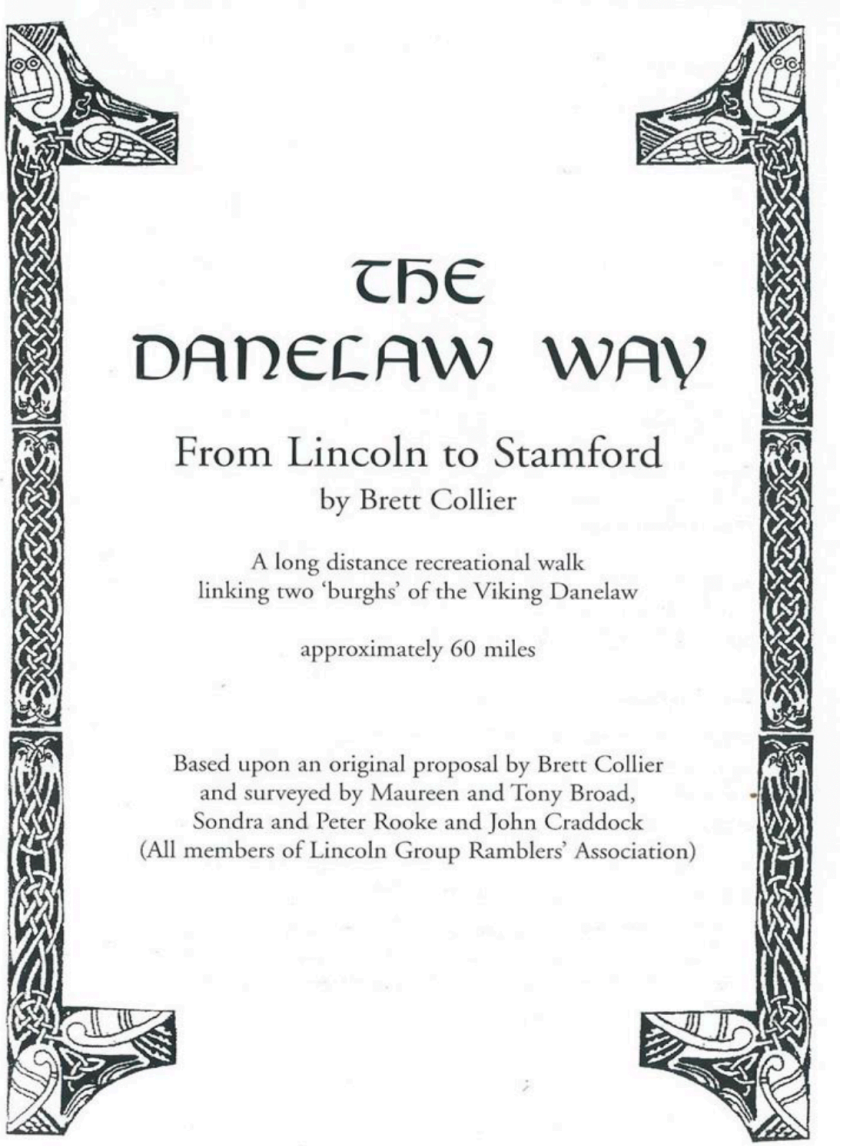
The Danelaw Way

A 60 mile walk, which begins and ends in Lincolnshire, through some of the loveliest and most peaceful countryside between Lincoln and Stamford, two "burghs" of the ancient Danelaw. It strays briefly into Rutland at a particularly attractive section, associated with John Clare the poet. It is an authoritative guide full of detail about the route with interesting comments and historical detail about each area. The walk was designed so that it can be done in five stages of between 9 and 14 miles making it possible to complete within a week.

Right: Brett Collier 2005

RAMBLERS
Lincolnshire





The Danelaw Way

From Lincoln to Stamford

Total 56½ , 58, 60 or 61½ miles

Route	Mileage	Page Nos
Lincoln – Aubourn	9 ½	10 - 14
Aubourn – Caythorpe	11 ½ or 13	16 - 27
Caythorpe – Ropsley	14	28 - 36
Ropsley – Castle Bytham	12 ½	38 - 45
Castle Bytham – Stamford (via Tolethorpe, Ryhall & Belmesthorpe)	12 ½	46 - 53
Alterative		
Castle Bytham - Stamford (direct from Tolethorpe)	9	54 - 55
Optional		
Circular walk from Ryhall	8	56 - 61

The Danelaw Way

Contents

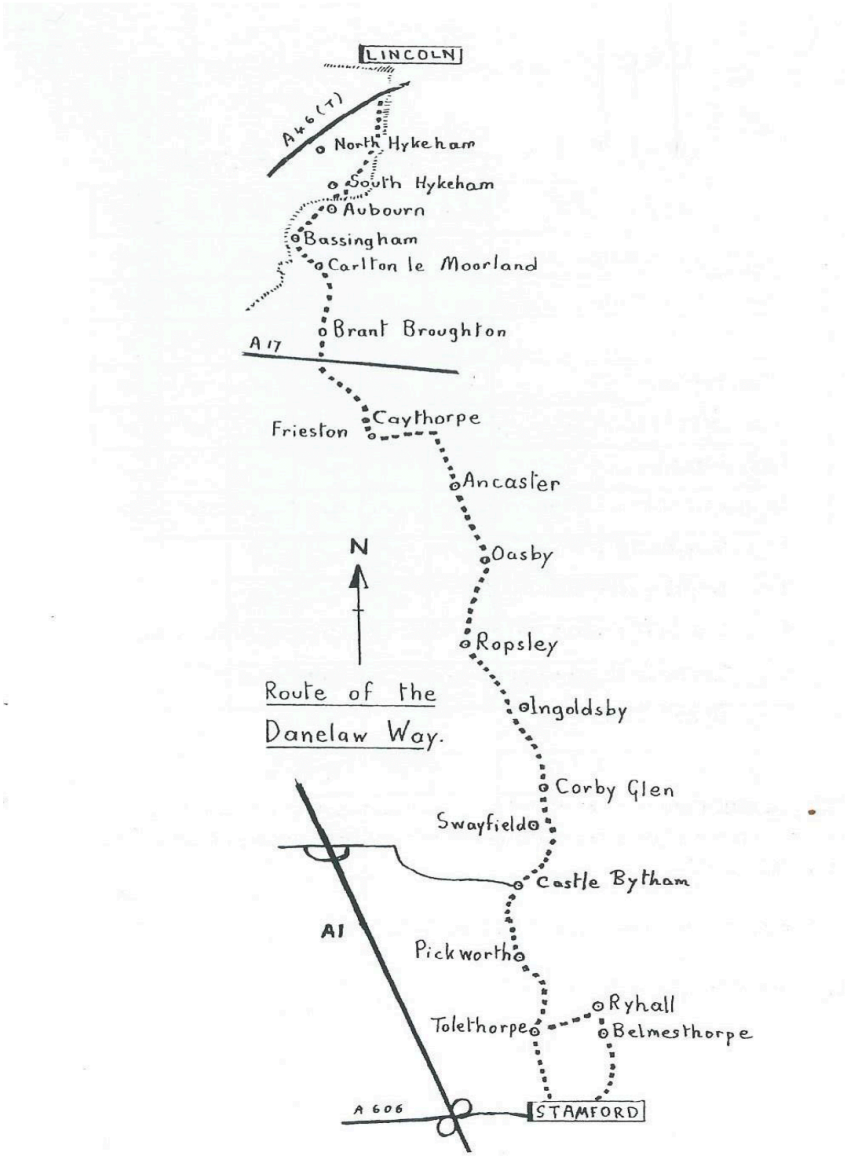
Introduction, route map and poem.

1. Lincoln to Aubourn
2. Aubourn to Caythorpe
3. Caythorpe to Ropsley
4. Ropsley to Castle Bytham
5. Castle Bytham to Stamford via Ryhall and Belmesthorpe
6. Castle Bytham to Stamford – direct route
7. Ryhall circular

With grateful thanks to all Lincoln Ramblers Association members who have reconnoitred and commented upon the route instructions and placed way markers along the route.

Cover picture the mediaeval church at Aubourn.

Maps and sketches by Brett Collier.



THE DANELAW WAY

As the path wends its way ever onwards
Many villages come into view
Each with its own special features
Perhaps ancient history or new
Their names are unique to this county
Sure proof of the Danes passing through
There's Ainsby, Oasby and Ingoldsby
Castle Bytham and Holywell too
And some have remains from the Romans
With a road that they made passing through

Adapted. Original author unknown

The Danelaw

An agreement was reached in 886 on the extent of the territory of the Viking invaders – the Danelaw. Lincoln became one and possibly the largest of the Five Boroughs of the East Midlands, together with Stamford, Derby, Nottingham and Leicester. All of them eventually became 'shires' – except Stamford, whose shire was incorporated into Lincolnshire.

Lincoln

The Celts called it Lindon from the Welsh 'Lyn' meaning a lake. The Romans latinized the early name and added Colonia and so it became Lindum Colonia.

Stamford

Poet John Betjeman described Stamford as ' England's most attractive town' and architectural historian Nikolas Pevsner agreed, declaring it 'the finest stone-built town in England' It really is a gem of a place: the first town in the country to be declared a total conversation area back in 1967

Anyone can take the road
Or path that's trodden every day
But come with me and I will show
A more interesting way

Perhaps there are no secret places in Britain today but there are certainly forgotten places. 'Dull, flat, uninteresting isn't it' people say half-incredulously on learning that you like to walk in Lincolnshire and then they admit that they have never actually set foot in the county, although they may have driven up the A1.

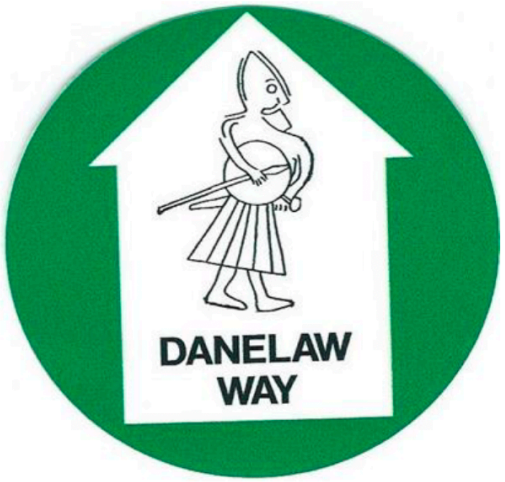
The Danelaw Way is certainly not dull, flat or uninteresting. It links Lincoln with Stamford, two of the five 'burghs' of the ancient Danelaw in a 60-mile recreational route that takes in some very special countryside. It is almost wholly within the county but strays into Rutland at a particularly attractive section. The Way is not the most direct public fieldpath route between Lincoln and Stamford, for wherever there are places of real interest en-route a possible detour has been included in the instructions. The start at Castle Square, Lincoln is one example and a minor detour at Caythorpe to view the attractive green at Frieston is another.

Countryside Officers cannot be everywhere, and it would be most useful should you discover any public right of way problems en-route if you could report it to them. The addresses are Countryside Services, Environment and Economy, Lancaster House, 36 Orchard Street, Lincoln, LN1 1XX: 01522 782070 for Lincolnshire or The Director of Environmental Services, Rutland County Council, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP for Rutland paths. Mention that you were walking The Danelaw Way. Both authorities have co-operated fully in the production of this route.

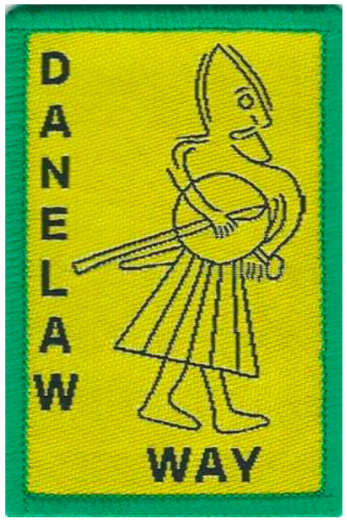
Always attempt to follow the correct line of any public right of way and please remember that you are doing nothing wrong by doing so. To forsake the correct line of a path and walk round the edge of a crop only creates confusion for later walkers and could lead to a farmer or landowner challenging you with being nowhere near a public right of way. It is also helpful to collect a piece of litter en-route and one feels righteous by doing so, but more importantly, it completely defeats a farmer's argument that more walkers mean more litter and you know that you are leaving the countryside a little better than you found it.

There are two endings to The Danelaw Way at Stamford simply because both sections were so attractive that our reconnaissance groups could not agree which was the better route! We have therefore offered both routes for you to select as a fitting ending to a splendid walk.

Brett Collier



Danelaw Way waymarker



Daneaw Way cloth badge available for £2.00 from lincolnramblers@gmail.com

About the Author

Brett Collier MBE died suddenly on 15th March 2005 aged 84. He had completed this book and arranged for a draft copy to be printed. As part of a permanent tribute to him members of Lincoln Group Ramblers' Association decided to continue with the publication, marketing and sales of this book.

Since he came to work at the teacher training college in Lincoln in 1968 he has walked on and campaigned about the footpaths of Lincolnshire. Initially he devised walk routes and wrote them up as individual walk sheets, which he photocopied. Since 1993 he has incorporated many of these routes into his nine books. Countryside Books published six of these and the Ramblers' Association Lincoln Group has published the others. The first of the Ramblers' Association books was 'Lindsey Loop', now in its third update. This is a 105 mile circular route linking six market towns in the Lincolnshire Wolds. The second was 'Plogsland Round', a 47 mile route on the plough or Plogsland that encircles Lincoln. This was produced with help from the Lincolnshire Fieldpaths Association. This final book is a linear route from Lincoln to Stamford. It had originally been intended that the Viking Way should end in Stamford (Lincolnshire) but in the process of developing it the route was changed to end in Oakham (Rutland). Now with this book the wish of Brett and others that a linear walk should end in Stamford is fore filled.

His aim in all this writing was to get people to walk the footpaths of Lincolnshire. To this end he spent the last 30 years of his life persistently and tirelessly campaigning to get the footpaths opened and waymarked. He did a phenomenal amount of work on this. For his services to the countryside he was awarded MBE in the New Years Honours List 2005.

There was another side to his life that he rarely mentioned except in special talks. Brett was a survivor! He had been taken prisoner by the Japanese at the fall of Singapore in 1942 and survived an attempt by a Japanese Officer to behead him. Later he survived all the harsh treatment and work in Japan, and because he was in a coal mine escaped death in Nagasaki when the atomic bomb was dropped.

A committed Christian he raised money for charity by talking about all these experiences.

Danelaw Way Public Transport Arrangements.

Lincoln to Aubourn

PC coaches run a limited service to and from Lincoln and Aubourn. (Monday to Saturday)

For details see www.travelineeastmidlands.co.uk or call 0871 2002233

Caythorpe

The Stagecoach number 1 service runs hourly from Lincoln to Grantham calling at Caythorpe. See www.travelineeastmidlands.co.uk or call 0871 2002233

Ropsley

There is no regular bus service to or from Ropsley but a pre-booked service can be arranged through Call Connect on 0345 2343344. See www.travelineeastmidlands.co.uk (Monday to Satuday)

Castle Bytham

There is no regular bus service between Ropsley and Castle Bytham or between Castle Bytham and Stamford but a pre-booked service can be made through Call Connect on 0345 2638153. See www.travelineeastmidlands.co.uk

Ryhall to Stamford

There is a regular bus service between Ryhall and Stamford. See details at www.travelineeastmidlands.co.uk or call 0871 2002233

Updated August 2025

LINCOLN CASTLE SQUARE to AUBOURN
(9½ miles)

Walk Outline:

A fine introduction to the Danelaw Way with an interesting departure route from the city by unfrequented byways, the openness of the West Common, waterside walking by the Foss Dyke with moored barges and houseboats, further quiet waterside walking along the River Witham bank and then on through arable fields to 'the steeple peeping in a stretching sky' of South Hykeham and finally to the beautiful chancel fragment of a mediaeval church and the 16th century red brick Tudor Hall of the Nevile family at Aubourn.

Distance: 9½ miles

Time: 4½ hours with time to 'stand and stare' and a lunch stop

OS Maps: Explorer 272 Lincoln: 25,000:1: 2½ inches to 1 mile

Starting Place: Castle Square, Lincoln. Map Ref: SK 976 718

Finishing Place: Blackmoor Road, Aubourn. Map Ref: SK 927 627

Parking: No off-road parking in Aubourn. Suggested alternative: Moor Lane, Aubourn on grass verge. From Lincoln direction: Take the one-way system (Chapel Lane), then at first right bend go straight ahead. This is Moor Lane. Park on grass verge. From Newark direction: Take the one-way system, passing Royal Oak on left, take the next right turn. This is Chapel Lane. At the first bend go straight ahead to Moor Lane. Park on grass verge.

Items of Interest:

South Hykeham

A peaceful village with some pleasant houses and a churchyard shaded by mature trees. The church spire is 14th century and is much older than the church.

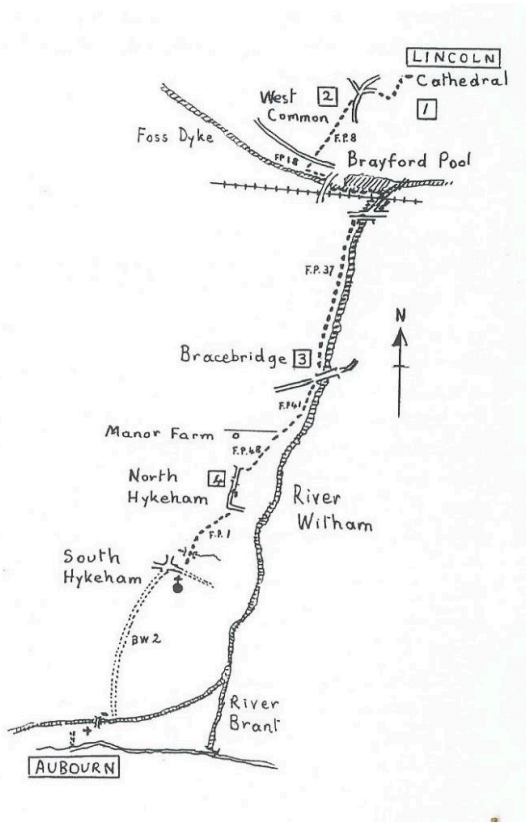
Aubourn

A quiet place in the flat lands below the cliff. An ancient place too for there was a church here at the time of the Domesday Book and a fishery mentioned as being worth a thousand eels a year. A heron may often be seen sitting on the gantry bridge watching for fish in the river below.

Route Description:

1 With Lincoln Castle main entrance behind you in Castle Square walk through Exchequergate Arch towards the West front of the cathedral. Keep the cathedral on your left, pass entrance to Medieval Bishops' Palace right and at the end of the cathedral turn LEFT to follow the paved walkway over the green to the Tennyson statue on the left. Go up the steps and walk HALF LEFT across Eastgate to the narrow lane called East Bight with the Roman East Gate in the hotel grounds on your right. Follow this interesting little lane with the wall of the Bishop's Palace on your left and later Roman remains on the right. Emerging from East Bight go STRAIGHT ACROSS Bailgate with Newport Arch on your right. Walk along Chapel Lane passing the Water Tower and upon reaching Westgate cross and turn RIGHT with the castle walls left. At the Strugglers Inn with its macabre associations cross the road at the junction with the mini-roundabout to turn RIGHT along Burton Road but only for a few yards. Turn LEFT down the tree-lined walkway by the launderette (not along Occupation Road). Upon reaching Willis Close turn LEFT along the footway with the houses on your left and continue to the end of the close to follow a narrow-hidden passageway round to your right. You will have a fine view of Ellis's windmill that may actually be working. On reaching Upper Long Leys Road, turn LEFT steeply downhill to the busy Yarborough Road. Again, turn LEFT downhill for a few yards to the light controlled pedestrian crossing, to cross the road with care to the signposted footpath on the edge of the West Common. Ignore the footpath and walk 100 yards RIGHT downhill to a gate in the common fence. Turn LEFT to follow the well-defined track aiming for a gate at the main road at the left hand edge of the
common,

2 Upon reaching the busy Saxilby Road go STRAIGHT ACROSS over the crossing onto signposted Public Footpath 18 and keep to the left edge of the common, that has become a golf course, until you reach the upgraded Sustrans track alongside the Roman Foss Dyke. Turn LEFT towards the city on this track that becomes a roadway with interesting houseboats and barges and across the water, Lincoln University buildings. Continue for 1100 yards, (2/3 mile/1000 metres), then go under the new road bridge and turn LEFT up the slope to the road and LEFT to walk over the bridge. Before the traffic lights turn LEFT down the steps and walk in front of the university accommodation buildings (Waterfront Trail). Turn RIGHT then LEFT between The Swan other university buildings with the Brayford Pool Marina on your left and a fine view of the castle and cathedral. Walking forward with the marina on your left and the railway on your right turn RIGHT upon reaching the road at the level crossing. Continue along the road to the junction ahead. Cross the footbridge on the right to pedestrian lights, go STRAIGHT ACROSS the road and onto Riverside Walk with the river Witham now on your left. Continue along this riverside path (FP37) for 1¾ miles, until you reach the A1434, the main road to Newark and the Plough Public House. Upon leaving the city the walk, almost immediately, takes on a different character with swans,



Canada geese, skylarks, wild flowers and fish in the river. It is another world in a remarkably short time.

3 Turn LEFT to the pedestrian crossing. Cross the main road and the slip road. Turn RIGHT to recross the river to a footpath beside the filling station. The river is still on your left and there are some warehouses on the right. The path is narrow and sometimes overgrown for this stretch. Continue along the raised river bank. After two gates the path is not distinct, but it crosses a damp area with bushes ahead and the inappropriately named Manor Farm on the right. Rejoin the raised river bank for about 60 yards where you leave the river and follow the drain, still on your left. Through the gate to go LEFT over the bridge and turn RIGHT along the left-hand bank. Continue forward past playing fields on the right - a good place to stop for a break.

Returning to the drain continue on the left bank. Where the drain bends to the right, go LEFT up embankment steps and follow the well-defined path across the fields. Go AHEAD past the power post and follow drain on the left and wooden horse fencing on right. Continue ahead until you come to the three way finger post. Turn RIGHT passing between houses, go STRAIGHT AHEAD at road and continue along Water Lane. At the crossroads turn LEFT into Meadow Lane, pass Meadow Close on the left. At the main road continue STRAIGHT AHEAD. Immediately before the sharp left-hand bend cross the road into Russell Avenue on your right and proceed 50 yards before turning LEFT to find a signposted footpath (FP 1) and a metal kissing gate at the end of the close.

4 The clear path crosses one field, then a tarmacked path between new houses. Go to the next gap in the hedge and through the gate, to turn RIGHT keeping the hedge on your right. At the corner of the field turn LEFT still keeping the hedge on your right. At the track walk STRAIGHT ACROSS to cross the concrete bridge. Through the gate and follow the well defined path through two fields to exit the field (through pedestrian gate) onto a lane. Turn RIGHT on the lane towards the church. At the crossroads turn LEFT down Wath Lane, pass the school on the left and ignore the footpath on your right.

Section 1 Lincoln Castle Square to Aubourn

Continue along Wath Lane for nearly a mile until you reach the river once more. Turn RIGHT keeping the river on your left, passing the gantry bridge that is supposed to be a bridleway, continue on the river bank for 300 yds to turn LEFT over the concrete bridge to a gate on the right. Continue ahead with the attractive grounds of the historic Aubourn Hall on your right to a gate leading into the churchyard with the lovely church over on the left. Do have a look in the church, if it is open. Turn RIGHT down the gravel path to the gate, cross the former crew yard, cross the drive to the Hall, pass through a metal gate on the LEFT, then ahead keeping paddocks on the LEFT to a three way finger post. If you are finishing in Aubourn, then turn LEFT here to Royal Oak Lane. Turn LEFT for Harmston Road ahead or Chapel Lane shortly on RIGHT which leads to Moor Lane, otherwise turn RIGHT and follow instructions in next section from line 2 after 3 way FP* sign.

Pleasant Places

Old stone pits all ivy overhung
Rude crooked brooks o'er which is idly flung
A rail and plank that bends beneath the tread
Old narrow lanes where trees meet overhead
And gaps through rough bramble hedges where we spy
A steeple peeping in the stretching sky.

John Clare

AUBOURN to CAYTHORPE

(11½ or 13 miles)

Walk Outline:

The second leg of the walk begins in the grounds of the 16th century residence occupied by the Nevile family and on through the grounds to the recently planted Sibsey Wood of 1800 trees and yet another 'steeple peeping in the stretching sky'.

Pass the spire without a church and after the weir on the River Witham your route will take you across the low fields not far from the twists and turns of the river to Bassingham with its multiplicity of lanes and the curiously named jetties, on through Carlton le Moorland with a favourite 16th century pub and then over the flat land to Brant Broughton. Finally, up to the key village of Caythorpe, lying just below the cliff with its choice of shops, pubs and an eccentric church with its swollen steeple looking rather like a space-ship ready for take-off. Between Brant Broughton and Caythorpe the conditions underfoot can be very difficult during the winter. (An all-weather route has been suggested which will add at least another 1½ miles to the journey. See end of this section)

Distance: 11½ or 13 miles

Time: 5½ hours or 6 hours

OS Maps: Explorer 272 Lincoln: 25,000:1: 2½ inches to 1 mile

Starting Place: Harmston Road, Aubourn. Map Ref: SK 927 627

Finishing Place: Near St Vincent's Church, Caythorpe. Map Ref: SK 939 485

Parking: No off-road parking in Aubourn. Suggested alternative: Moor Lane, Aubourn on grass verge.

At Caythorpe just beyond St Vincent's Church down Old London Road by village sports ground.

Section 2 Aubourn to Caythorpe

Items of Interest:

Aubourn

Woods on Your Doorstep Scheme. The 5-acre site called Sibsey Wood was given to the Woodland Trust by the Nevile Estate. In February 2000, volunteers at a Community Planting Event planted 1800 trees, including oak, ash, birch and field maple. Giant sequoia trees have been planted in a circle around the central glade and wide rides have been left unplanted. The Millennium Features of the wood are a yew tree that has been planted at the north eastern tip of the site, the giant sequoia and the twelve apple trees planted by the Nevile family near to the entrance on Bridge Road. With the help of some Lincoln Group Ramblers, the author of this book planted eighty oak trees for his eightieth birthday with the proviso that if Lincoln Cathedral needed any timber two hundred years hence, then they could have Brett Collier's Aubourn oaks.

Bassingham

Behind the large Methodist Chapel along Chapel Jetty there is a Heritage Room with a fascinating display of memorabilia that is well worth a visit. Please sign the visitors book if you do so. Bassingham is a large village with innumerable footways and a general store. The street named Torgate is derived from the local word for flax – 'tor' or 'taw'. Flax was much grown around here in the 18th century. Throughout the village there are some wood sculptures and my own favourite is the bull on the green carved into a seat. A good photographic stop! There are two pubs in the village although only the one in the High Street does meals.

Carlton-le-Moorland

A red brick village with some recent additions of rather grand modern houses. The church in its quiet setting was rebuilt in Elizabethan times. If you are in the vicinity of The White Hart pub next to the church and directly on your route during opening hours, it is well worth having a break for a meal or some liquid refreshment.

Brant Broughton

The village has a broad main street lined with many attractive houses, a pub and a splendid 14th century church with a chancel glass designed and made by a former rector. There is a Friends Meeting House in the village supported by an old established Quaker community.

Caythorpe

As you approach the village there is a late Georgian hall in the park on your left. The main street has a number of attractive houses, shops and a choice of pubs. The crocketed spire of the church stands at 156 feet but the original 14th century spire was higher until struck by lightning. There is a beautiful church at one end and a manor house at the other. The church spire vaguely reminds one of a space rocket ready for take-off.

Route Description

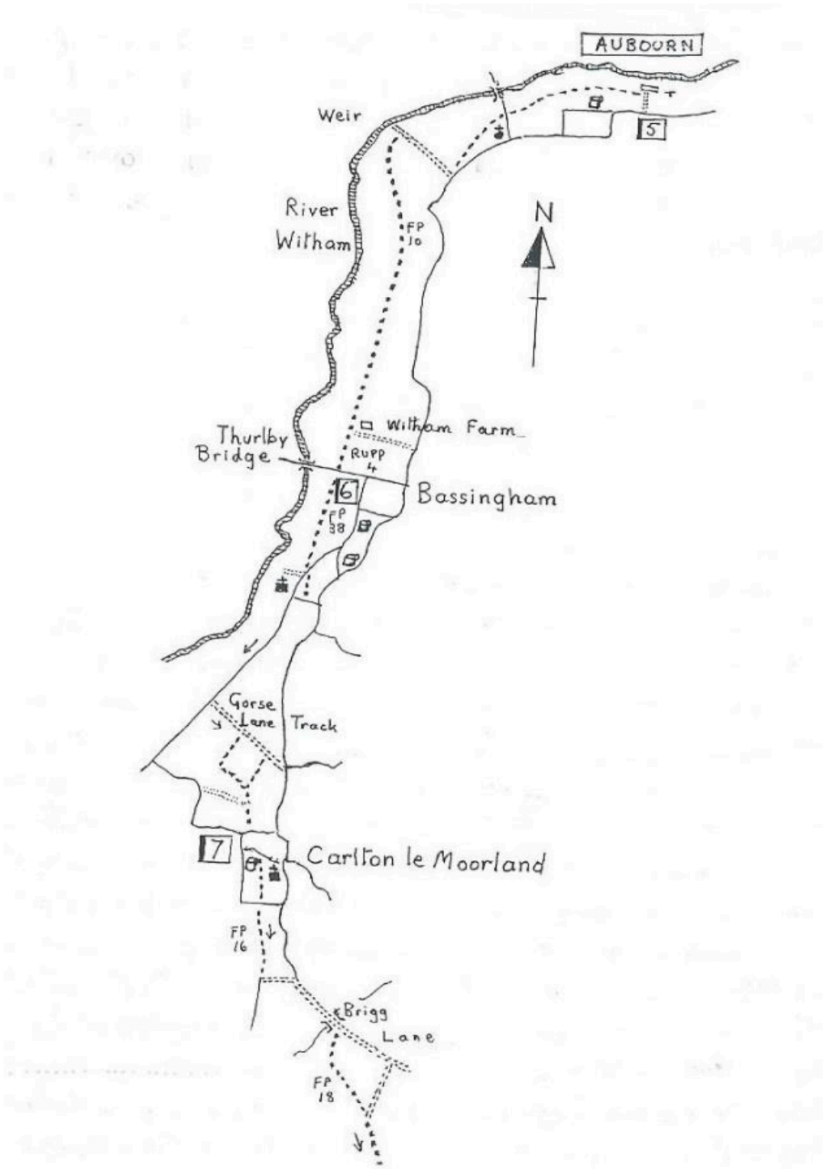
5 At junction of Chapel Lane, Harmston Road and Royal Oak Lane turn LEFT for 30 yards to FP sign and gate on right across road. Enter, pass paddock on right, 3-way FP* sign on left then CONTINUE to gate into field. Turn LEFT along field edge to gate with houses on the left. At the next gate PROCEED with hedge on the left and at gate in the hedge, enter into Sibsey Wood and turn RIGHT.

Follow the wide ride passing a bench dedicated to the book's author as well as a small commemoration plaque on the right. On reaching the entrance pass through the gate, cross the road and turn RIGHT to signposted path and gate. Aim DIAGONALLY LEFT to far field corner and gate to continue on the same line to the left corner of the next field and road. Turn IMMEDIATELY RIGHT down the Byway and proceed along this hedge-lined path as far as the River Witham and a weir. Do not use the river bank but turn LEFT on waysigned FP 10 across to a footbridge in the hedge about 160 yards from the river bank. Continue across the second field in the same direction to cross a footbridge, after a line of trees. Bear SLIGHTLY RIGHT in the third field to a footpath sign.

Continue in the same direction to reach another footpath sign and footbridge through the hedge. Cross a further 2 fields (5 and 6) through waymarked hedge gaps. Walk across field number 7 to reach gate and fence to an old 'ridge and furrow' grass field. Continue STRAIGHT ACROSS passing Witham Farm on your left, continue with hedge on your left, to a metal gate. Continue forward to footbridge (RUPP4) between fence on your right and hedge on your left, and a cottage on the right on reaching the lane.

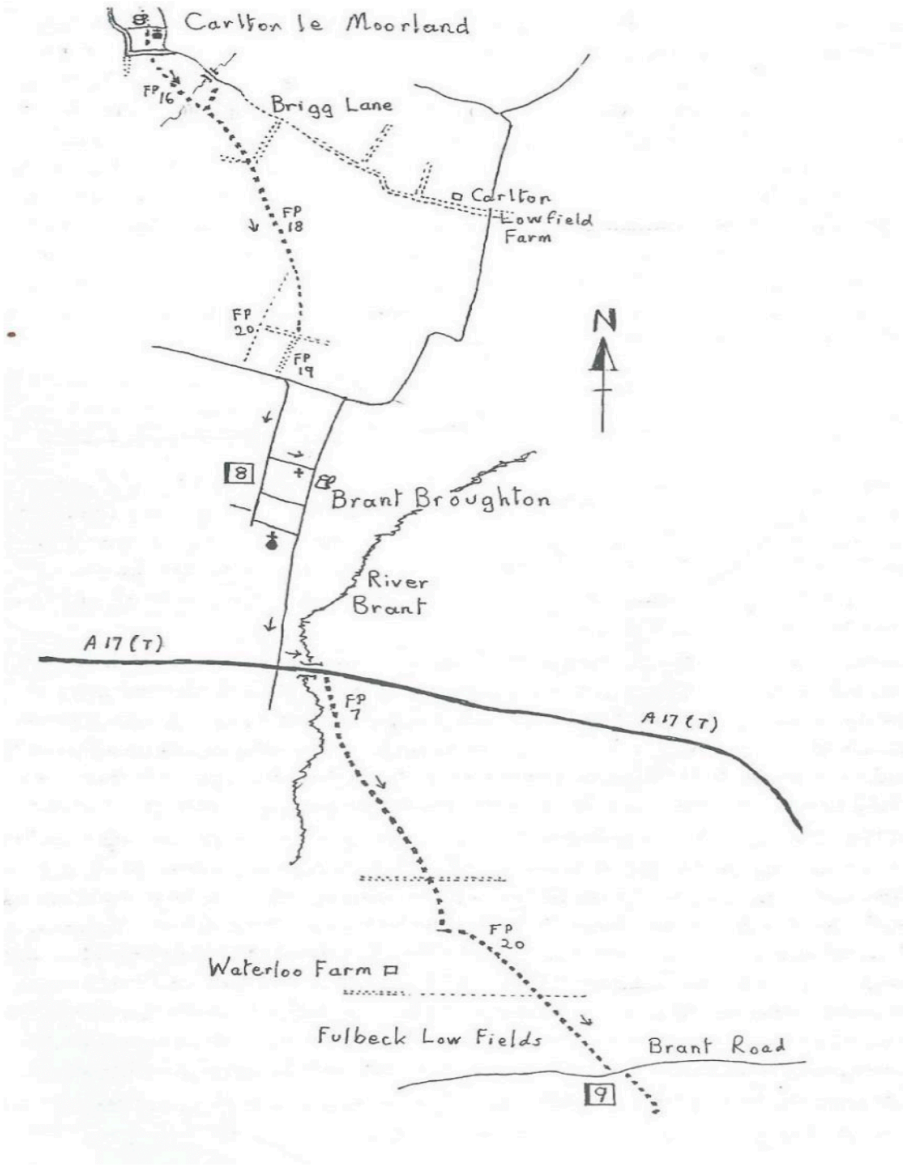
6 Go STRAIGHT ACROSS the road, through gate and proceed with hedge on your left to bridge and gate in corner. Continue to another field gate, passing Willow Tree Farm on right, and go down the drive with hedges on both sides. Turn RIGHT down Water Lane, pass Hallfield, continue in same direction, at road end follow footpath, bearing right. Walk with hedge on your right and fence on your left. Cross a gravel drive and over the footbridge directly opposite, then along the narrow path to emerge at the road. Cross over to another footpath between houses to yet another road. On the High Street, on your left, are shops and the pub that serves meals. Go STRAIGHT OVER to path opposite (Paddy's Jetty) running between walls and fences, past the cemetery on the right and a farmyard on the left. At the end of the jetty turn RIGHT down Bakers Lane and walk to the road at the end to turn LEFT at the T-junction (RIGHT if you want to visit the church).

Leaving the village, ignore left turn and later bridleway sign on the right and continue down the road. After ¼ mile take a clear track on the LEFT hand side, known as Gorse Lane with trees and hedge on the left and hedge on the right. Ignore the first finger post on the right and continue down the track. Where the track narrows turn RIGHT as indicated by the footpath signpost (FP8) with mature hedge on the left. Walk past the disguised telecoms tower on the right, keep the hedge on your left and continue along this wide grass track. After 200 yards, at finger post on the left, turn LEFT. Cross the field and exit onto Green Lane. Turn LEFT, pass the pond on your left, with picnic table on the green and the outskirts of Carlton-le-Moorland ahead. An excellent apple stop.



7 On reaching the road at the end of the track go RIGHT, past houses on the left and at the next road junction turn LEFT down Broughton Road. In 50 yards turn RIGHT onto footpath between gardens, go past a cottage named Sunnyside and continue forward. After a few twists and turns, you can see the White Hart public house ahead and the church and churchyard over on the left. Cross the road and follow Church Lane with the pub on your right and church on the left. Where the road bends to the right proceed STRAIGHT AHEAD down narrow public footpath until you reach a lane, almost opposite is a finger post. Cross the road and follow this well-defined path across the field to gap in the hedge. Brant Broughton church spire can be seen in the distance. Cross a footbridge and continue across the next field to a gap in the hedge and another footbridge to bear DIAGONALLY LEFT. Turn RIGHT along field edge, keeping hedge on the left. Continue along the next field, cross another footbridge to emerge onto the track, known as Beltham Hill Lane. Turn LEFT until you reach Brigg Lane and turn RIGHT. At the finger post (Grid Ref: SK913 569) on the right of the bridge over Little Syke dyke, if the public footpath has been defined over the field, do use it, but if it has not been reinstated, continue along the track for some 500 yards to turn RIGHT at footpath sign. Where this track bears to the right, a footpath sign indicates the line of the foot path across the field that you could have taken. Take path ahead, DIAGONALLY LEFT, following power lines through field to furthest corner of the field. Arriving at a bridleway, continue RIGHT keeping the stream on the left and following the waymarks for the bridleway. This comes to a track still with stream on your left and small plantation of trees beyond. On meeting the lane turn LEFT to walk this quiet byway into Brant Broughton.

8 On entering the village, continue STRAIGHT AHEAD along West Street, cross to the village hall on the left and take the next road LEFT, Meeting House Lane. Go past Robinson Place on the right and just before the road junction ahead, the Friends Meeting House is on the right. This is a Quaker Meeting House and another Heritage Room. The key may be collected from the house next door. There is also a small garden and cemetery in the grounds that is a peaceful spot for a break, after 7 miles walking (from Aubourn).



On leaving the Meeting House turn RIGHT to walk up to the T-junction and the Main Street. The Generous Briton public house across the road serves meals. Turn RIGHT to walk out of the village along the main street, pausing if you have time to visit the superb church of St Helen by a footpath on your right.

'All Weather Route'

If you decide to take the 'All Weather Route' see Section 8a page 26

Main Route:

Continue along the main road, passing the Fire Station on the right until you reach the busy A17. Turn LEFT and just after crossing the bridge over the River Brant, cross this very busy road with care and take the signposted FP7, on the right. Continue across the field to a gap in the hedge, with the river on the right. Cross over a footbridge and then another field with another footbridge in the hedge, with Caythorpe Church spire on the distant horizon, almost exactly 3 miles away. This is the correct direction of the path over a third field to a hard-concrete standing. Follow the finger post directions DIAGONALLY across the next two fields to a footbridge. (Alternatively turn left and follow the farmers field edge track to the footbridge)

Cross the bridge and stile then follow the dyke on the left, bearing round to the left, still keeping the dyke on the left. In the corner, cross the stile and footbridge, walk DIAGONALLY RIGHT to the left hand edge of the plantation and a dyke. Cross this dyke by the footbridge, walk about 20 yards along plantation edge, then across another arable field until a finger post comes into view. At fingerpost, continue in same direction (SE) aiming for a gap in the hedge. The spire of Caythorpe Church may be seen again ahead. Go over the footbridge and continue DIAGONALLY LEFT across the field aiming for the corner of the field, initially in line with the church spire, then an oak tree in the hedge.

9 Arriving at Brant Road, cross directly over to go through BW1 gate, turn LEFT and follow field edge keeping hedge on your left and at the finger post, where the field suddenly narrows, it points RIGHT across the neck of the field and then LEFT, keeping hedge and then trees on the right. Go up the edge of the field ahead, keeping the hedge on your right. At the top corner bear RIGHT and RIGHT again, keeping the trees on your right. At the next corner, turn LEFT keeping trees and hedges on the right. At the top of the hill and at next finger post turn LEFT. Caythorpe Church spire is over on the right.

After 250 yards pass TELECOMS tower on the left and at the next fingerpost turn RIGHT onto FP2. Caythorpe church spire is over on the right, ahead and to the left is Fulbeck church tower, further left along the cliff is Leadenham church spire and behind you the spire of Brant Broughton with wonderful extensive views as far as the valley of the River Trent. Follow the footpath round to the right keeping the hedge on the left. Caythorpe Hall can be seen on the left. The track winds left and right until it meets Gorse Hill Lane. Bear LEFT into Waterloo Road, then by Waterloo Close, to bear RIGHT and then LEFT at the Grange. You are now in the village with the church and war memorial on the left ahead and on the right the playing field on the Old London Road.

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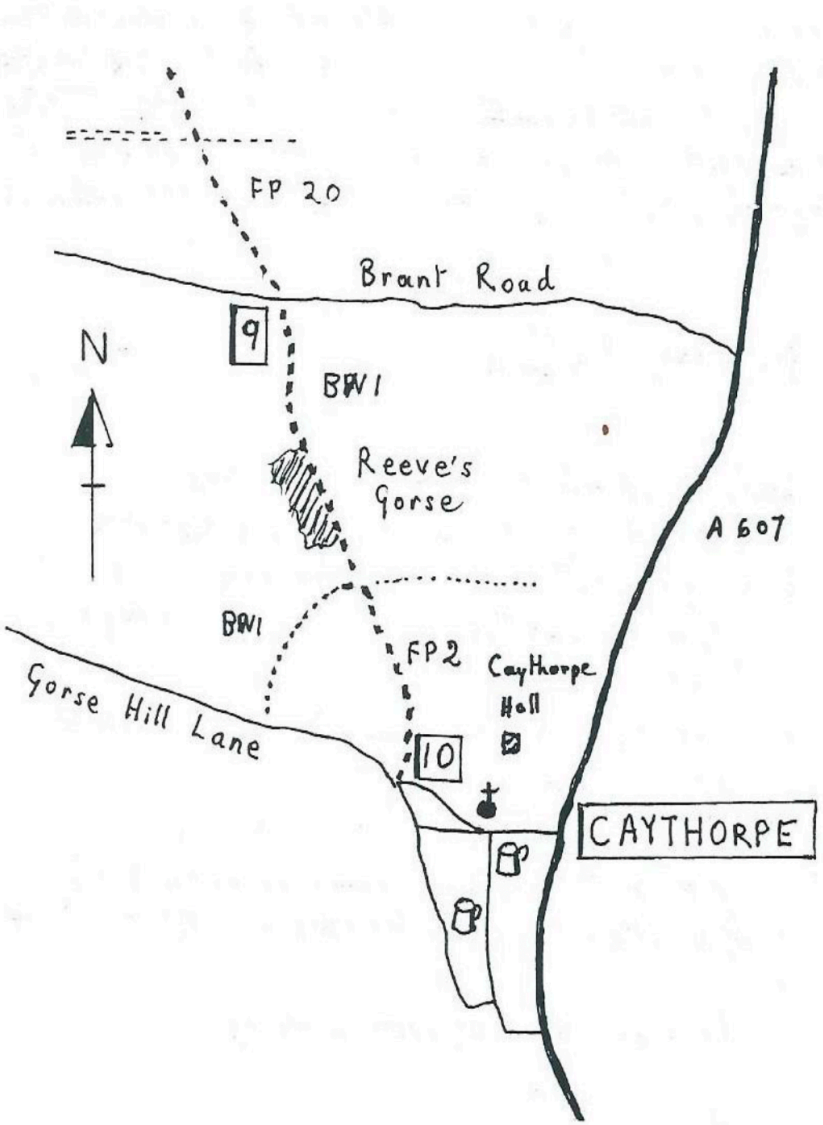


ALL WEATHER ALTENATIVE ROUTE FROM BRANT BROUGHTON TO CAYTHORPE

8a Continue along the main road, passing the Fire station on the right until you reach the busy A17. On arrival at this major trunk road cross with care at road junction to the signposted Stragglethorpe Road opposite. Walk along the road for 1000 yards. At the sharp right hand bend in the road keep STRAIGHT AHEAD on grassy bridleway with fence and grounds of Stragglethorpe Hall on your right. Enter field and turn LEFT as waymarked, keeping hedge on left. Arriving at the bank of River Brant turn RIGHT and follow meandering bridleway on the bank keeping river on left.

At cross track turn LEFT over River Brant, then AHEAD on wide grassy bridleway keeping deep dyke on left. Pass bridleway bridge on left (Grid Ref: SK 918 517) and continue with dyke on left to end (land bridge). The route bears RIGHT across the field to the corner, to a wooden way marker at the hedge. Join a track coming in from the left. Follow this with hedges on both sides.

9a At three way finger post turn LEFT on wide hard track with hedges both sides. Where track turns left to Waterloo Farm continue AHEAD on grassy bridleway.

Continue AHEAD with hedge, dyke and occasional trees on right until you arrive at a four way finger post. (This is where the shorter direct route crosses your bridleway) continue FORWARD with Fulbeck church tower appearing ahead.

At two way finger post make for the obvious hard track and continue FORWARD. Track bends right between hedges and becomes tarmac lane with house on the right. Follow lane right then left with hedges both sides, pass sewage works on left. Fulbeck church is now prominent on hill half-right. At T-junction turn RIGHT along Bulby Lane. This is Fulbeck village with many interesting stone built properties, an excellent pub, offering accommodation, tea rooms and a frequent bus service to Lincoln and Grantham.

9b Proceed STRAIGHT AHEAD at cross roads (Rectory Lane left, Ash Close right), now with houses left and right. At next T-junction turn LEFT up Scotts Hill, then shortly RIGHT down Washdyke Lane, with houses both sides.

At next cross roads (the church and pub is off to your left at the top of High Street) turn RIGHT into Sudthorpe Hill, initially down then gently rising between hedges bearing RIGHT then LEFT. At the top of the slope in the Close look for footpath waymark at the end of the conifer hedge immediately ahead (FP15). Proceed FORWARD with conifer hedge on right to emerge into a field with two-way signpost. Bear RIGHT to next waymark in hedge up slope across field. Cross dyke on footbridge then turn LEFT on fieldpath (FP2) with hedge and dyke left. (Caythorpe church spire is now visible half right). Continue FORWARD on field path, the spire now appears ahead.

9c At four-way sign post turn RIGHT onto track (BW16). Where track turns right to Victoria Farm keep AHEAD on grassy bridleway between trees and hedge. About 50 yards before prominent TELECOMS mast on right turn LEFT onto FP2. Caythorpe church spire is over on the right, ahead and to the left is Fulbeck church tower, further left along the cliff is Leadenham church spire and behind you the spire of Brant Broughton with wonderful extensive views as far as the valley of the River Trent. Follow the footpath round to the right keeping the hedge on the left. Caythorpe Hall can be seen on the left. The track winds left and right until it meets Gorse Hill Lane. Bear LEFT into Waterloo Road, then by Waterloo Close, to bear RIGHT and then LEFT at the Grange. You are now in the village with the church and war memorial on the left ahead and on the right the playing field on Old London Road.

CAYTHORPE to ROPSLEY

(14 miles)

Walk Outline:

Quiet back lanes and a footpath at Caythorpe leads you to the unexpected delight of Frieston Green. Then over the long abandoned railway line to climb up the cliff to Elms Farm. With a splendid view down to the Trent Valley and the line of power stations along the river. Follow the footsteps of Roman legions along Pottergate, a Road Used as a Public Path (RUPP) to Ancaster marching camp. Ancaster's attractive nature reserve leads you up to the heath and the village of Oasby, then past Long Nursery to reach the busy A52 Grantham Road. After crossing the road you follow an ancient track known as Long Hollow, becoming a RUPP and then King Street, yet another Roman road. Finally a footpath across fields takes you into Ropsley.

Distance: 14 miles

Time: 6 hours

OS Maps: Explorer 272 Lincoln: 1:m25,000. 2½ inches to 1 mile

Explorer 247 Grantham: 1:25,000. 2½ inches to 1 mile

Explorer 248 Bourne: 1:25,000. 2½ inches to 1 mile

Starting Place: Near St Vincent's Church, Caythorpe. Map Ref: SK 939 485

Safe parking at Caythorpe on the left-hand side of Old London Road by the playing field. The old road is directly opposite Caythorpe Hall entry gate, just beyond the church.

Finishing Place: The Church, Ropsley. Map Ref: SK 993 342. Roadside parking by Ropsley village green or small car park north of the church, but not on Sundays.

Items of Interest:

Caythorpe

On the triangular green at the end of the churchyard wall there are a number of interesting war memorial plaques, including recent ones from the Falklands and Iraq. The oak on the green was planted in 1897 to commemorate the 60th Jubilee of Queen Victoria. A couple of feet from the left of the church porch is a plaque set in the ground dedicated to Gerald Archer Goodban (1911-1989), who left money in his will to the Lincolnshire Ramblers' after considerable local publicity at the time regarding the state of public rights of way in the county. Interest from his benevolence finances the annual Goodban Trophy, a map reading exercise for all eleven ramblers groups in Lincolnshire.

Ancaster

Ana's Roman Station. A marching camp situated at the town that controlled the Ancaster Gap through the limestone edge. Iron Age tribes lived here and the Romans established a major military base on Ermine Stree. There is one pub, the Railway Inn on Ermin Street

Ropsley

Hopp's wood or glade. The largest of the villages in the stone uplands east of Grantham. An attractive place, one-timer winner of the Best Kept Village in Lincolnshire, with a rolling green. An attractive modern war memorial on Peck's Hill, with the Green Man public house in the village.

Route description:

10 There are two possible walking routes out of the village. The first and the simplest (a) is along the High Street with shops and inns but the author's preferred route (b) is along Back Lane.

(a) For the High Street route starting from the War Memorial, walk straight FORWARD up the main street with the residential home on the right and the Red Lion public house on the left. Pass the primary school to turn RIGHT off the main road at the entry to South Parade, just beyond the Spar store. Immediately LEFT there is a track (marked Frieston Path). Follow this attractive path to the road.

(b) From the War Memorial PROCEED along Church Lane. When the lane turns to the right (Waterloo Road) keep STRAIGHT ON up the narrowing Church Lane. Turn LEFT at the T-junction for 200 yards, round LEFT bend, and then RIGHT opposite The Woodyard to go along Back Lane. At the end of the road turn LEFT down South Parade, to proceed RIGHT on the clearly marked path (Frieston Path) directly on the corner junction with the High Street. Follow this attractive path to the road.

Upon reaching the lane leading to Frieston turn RIGHT with thatched cottage on the left. Follow the road round to the delightful Frieston Green. Turn DIAGONALLY LEFT across the green and continue LEFT until you reach the A607 main road.

11 Cross the road with care to walk up Frieston Heath Lane. In 140 yards turn LEFT over wooden bridge and cross field to left hand edge of tree line. Turn RIGHT in front of trees along field edge. At end of trees continue FORWARD now with hedge left. At the end of hedge cross narrow dyke and turn LEFT keeping fence on left. The huge waste recycling plant in field to left is on the site of the old railway station. At end of fence by prominent tree turn RIGHT for 300 yards to direction post beside deep dyke. Turn LEFT for 50 yards to bridge. Cross RIGHT and continue up the edge of the field with hedge on left.

Continue up gentle gradient then mount steep bank to bridge which crosses landscaped lake to left and right. Continue uphill keeping hedge on left. Where hedge ends see adventure activity centre, now owned by PGL activity holidays. (This is a large capacity centre with a huge variety of activities available). Turn RIGHT, keep farm buildings on left. At Anglian Water building ahead bear HALF LEFT then RIGHT.

About 30 yards ahead cross stile, then cross four paddocks with stiles, climbing slightly with scenic views to right.

12 Arriving at metalled road turn LEFT. Pass Elms Farm Equestrian Centre on left and right. At road junction turn RIGHT along farm track between farm buildings on left and house on right.

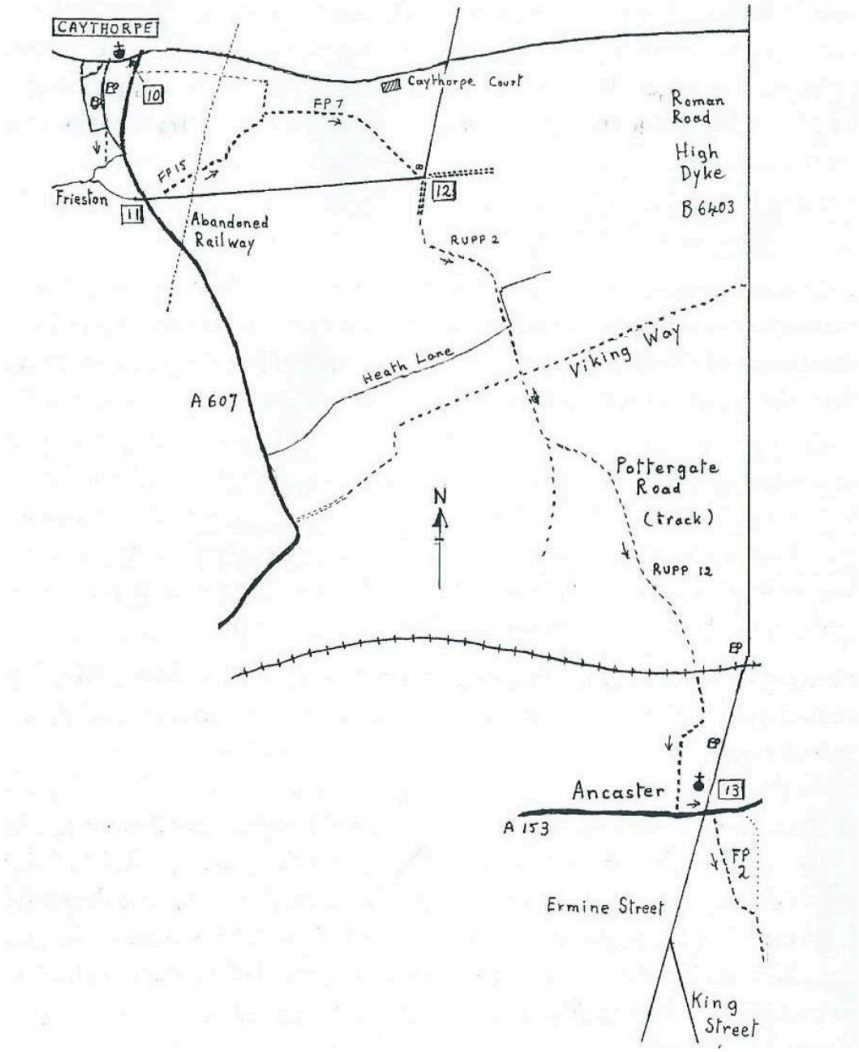
Continue on track keeping hedge on right. After 1/3rd mile, at finger post in hedge on right, bear HALF LEFT across field. At finger post bear RIGHT onto track between hedges, which eventually becomes metalled road. This is Pottergate Road. Straight on past small woodland called Gorse Wood on left. Where road turns right, continue STRAIGHT AHEAD on track keeping hedge on left. A telecoms signals mast can be seen over fields on right.

At gap in hedge, partly blocked by concrete plinth, cross the Viking Way and continue ahead to gap in next hedge. Shortly after passing pipeline gap on right, at next fingerpost, bear diagonally LEFT across field. Continue line across next field on grass track, pass through another hedge and head towards seven mature trees. Track passes to left of trees, then hedge on left to arrive at metalled road. Cross over to tarmac public byway and descend gently with views of Ancaster ahead. Hedge on right, then hedge on left and small housing development on right.

On the left we see descriptive marker post number 1V (Marching Camp). At railway cross with care and continue gently down slope on narrower metalled track. At post number III (Ancaster Gap), turn RIGHT at fingerpost, with houses on left. Where track bears right, turn LEFT with post number V (Ancaster Stone) on right. Pass nature reserve on right, then trees, hedges and fields give way to extensive gardens. On right, post number VI (Roman cemetery) where Roman bodies were exhumed in the 1960s. Ancaster cemetery is one of two remaining sites in Britain where the flower 'Tall Thrift' can still be found. This is a rare inland form of 'Sea Pink' sea thrift. On the left is the rear entrance to Ancaster church. The church is usually open and well worth a visit.

On leaving church by front entrance turn RIGHT up road and immediately

right is signpost VII (Religious Life in Ancaster). Carefully cross road to VIII (The Roman Town)



13 Continue up road and turn LEFT at traffic lights. In 50 yards carefully cross road to a waymarked track. In another 50 yards take RIGHT fork through gate into Ancaster Valley Nature Reserve. This is a delightful wide glaciated valley bounded by trees left and hedges right. In spring the grassy valley is blue with speedwell and yellow with cowslips. Legends tell of chariot races in this natural amphitheatre during Roman occupation.

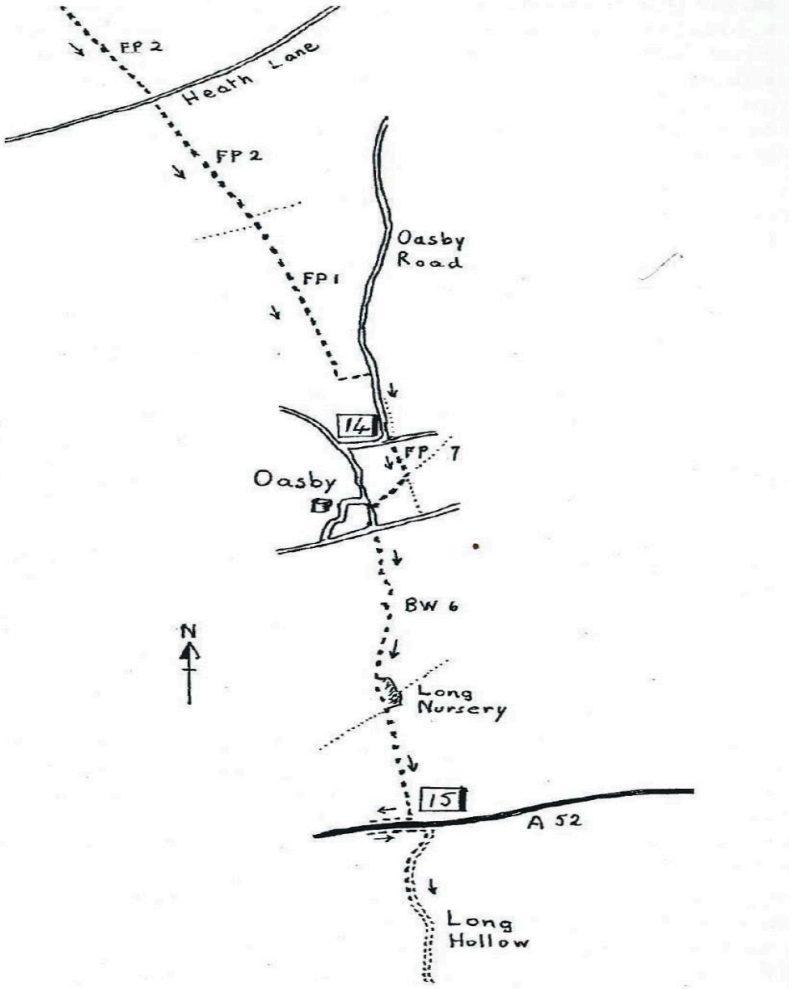
At the end of the valley turn LEFT through gate and up steps. At wire fence ahead turn RIGHT at finger post keeping hedge on left and small plantation of trees on right, which becomes a field on right, with a Telecoms Tower adjacent to path. At hedge gap in corner of field cross metalled road to track opposite. Hedge now on right, pause at trig point. On a clear day Boston Stump can be seen some 20 miles away. Nearer, on the left, is Kelby church and ahead is Heydour church.

Continuing AHEAD pass through gap in hedge and at next gap continue straight ahead between fields. At next gap path continues to left of hedge. Through next gap with hedge still on right, and hedge and trees on left, and at field corner bear LEFT, then RIGHT, on permissive bridleway, keeping hedge on left.

Where hedge crosses ahead turn LEFT up track to road, then turn RIGHT. Ignore finger post left and continue down road to T junction - A left turn here would take you to Heydour church which serves three villages – Oasby, Aisby and Culverthorpe.

14 But we cross this road and enter the field as indicated by the footpath sign (FP7). On the opposite side of the field there is a gap in the hedge, a footbridge and a stile that you cross into a grass paddock. Head DIAGONALLY RIGHT to stile in-wooden fence. Cross stile and continue walking diagonally, under power lines to a gate. Maintain line past house on left to stile on the right of stables. Cross and enter narrow track between houses which emerges onto a small green in the centre of Oasby.

Turn RIGHT along the road, pass telephone box on right and Houblon Arms public house on right. At T-junction turn LEFT and follow road through attractive village with historic houses. Oasby Manor on left has a 15th century oriel window in its south gable end.



At T-junction turn LEFT then in 50 yards turn RIGHT onto bridleway, keeping hedge on left. At gap in hedge turn LEFT and at gate turn RIGHT. At next gate (also a horse jump) continue FORWARD keeping fence/hedge on right. Continue FORWARD in this tranquil valley, which has evidence of equestrian activity – when it is probably less peaceful.

At next gate enter wooded area with dyke/hedge on right. Where hedge ends ignore footpath sign right and continue with trees left. Where trees end CONTINUE AHEAD keeping barn on left. Beyond this maintain line in valley across field with grass bank on left to arrive at embankment on A52 road.

15 At finger post follow bridleway sign to RIGHT, keeping hedge on left and fence on right. At the top of a gradual slope where road level is reached, cross road at bridleway signs – with extreme care. (It can be overgrown but is a safer place to cross this busy road).

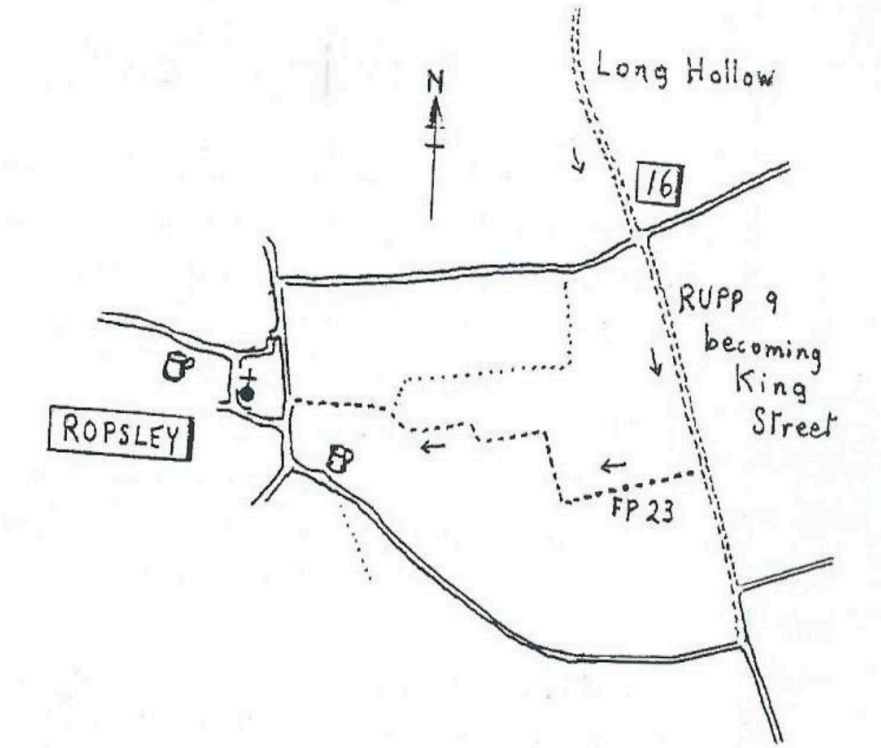
Proceed LEFT along path. After 250 yards enter metalled lane on right. This is Long Hollow, an ancient trackway where you will be unlucky to encounter even a single vehicle. Pass a large copse of mature woodland on left and extensive gravel pit on right.

16 After a mile and a quarter of this delightful country lane you arrive at a cross roads. If you were anxious to get to Ropsley you could turn right here as it is only one mile to the village.

If you want to extend the pleasure proceed ahead at the cross roads to an attractive byway. This is part of the Roman Road, later described as King Street. This continues between hedges, up a gentle incline and where it levels the tower of Sapperton church to your left comes into view.

A finger post on your right indicates the footpath you require for Ropsley. Turn RIGHT keeping hedge on right. Bear RIGHT with the track, hedge now on left. Pass a barn on left then turn LEFT by ruined building, hedge now on right. Continue on track to right, then left, keeping hedge on right.

After gradual incline, turn RIGHT with fence/hedge on left. Continue on track to right, then left, keeping hedge on right. After gradual incline, turn RIGHT with fence/hedge on left.



At 3 way finger post bear LEFT, keeping hedge on left. At crossing fence go LEFT in left corner and follow narrow path between hedges and gardens to exit in Ropsley village. The Green Man public house is 100 yards on left. Across is Church Lane which leads to magnificent church with manicured churchyard.

ROPSLEY to CASTLE BYTHAM

(12½ miles)

Walk Outline:

This section takes you along The Mereway, a very ancient trackway with prehistoric earthworks in nearby Ingoldsby Wood. There is always something rather special in following a route trod out by generations of hunter-gatherers and traders long before recorded history or Roman legions marched this way. A good deal of woodland is encountered, for the district of Kesteven includes an old British word for 'wood' or 'forest'. Deer may be seen en-route. The Drift is an old drove road and after bypassing Creeton and going under the main London railway line a Road Used as a Public Path takes you to that gem of Lincolnshire villages with large earthworks that are all that remains of Drogo's vanished castle. Drogo de Breauriere was the landowner hereabouts at the time of the Doomsday Book. A truly memorable day's walk.

Distance: 12½ miles

Time: 5½ hours

OS Maps: Explorer 247 Grantham: 1:25,000. 2½ inches to 1 mile

Explorer 248 Bourne: 1:25,000. 2½ inches to 1 mile

Starting Place: The Church, Ropsley. Map Ref: SK 993 342. Roadside parking by Ropsley village green or small car park north of the church, but not on Sundays.

Finishing Place: Near the Castle Inn, Castle Bytham. Map Ref: SK 988 184

Items of Interest:

Corby Glen

A good stone-built little market town. The name was formally adopted in 1955 to avoid confusion with the town of Corby in nearby

Northamptonshire. Servants used to be hired at the 18th century cross in the market square in May each year. A Sheep Fair is still held in October and up to 5,000 sheep have been auctioned. At one time there were nine hostelries in town and one of them, The Fighting Cocks, was said to be haunted. One tenant only spent 27 days in the pub and on the last night he slept in the car! Some remarkable wall paintings were discovered in St John's Church in 1939 during redecoration.

Castle Bytham

Peaceful slopes in a grassy pasture today are all that remain of a medieval castle that witnessed sieges and royal visits in some of the most turbulent years in our island's history. Stone built, with steep streets and sprawling cottages the village remains one of the most attractive in the county.

Route Description:

17 Approaching from the small car park north of the church enter the churchyard through the gate and bear right, then beside a wall right. Gate to exit churchyard is ahead, pass through and turn LEFT. At the road (Church Lane) turn RIGHT and walk past School Lane on the right. Go FORWARD, with trees on left and bungalows on right. Where the tarmac ends continue FORWARD to field edge path by finger post, keeping hedge and trees on left.

Follow footpath around field to left until reaching a footbridge on left. The path now crosses a miniature golf course between conifers, until you reach another footbridge at gap in the hedge where the gate opens up onto a metalled road.

Turn RIGHT and in 200 yards at field gate on left with finger post, turn LEFT into field keeping hedge on right. At the next field gate, cross bridge, bear right around pond surrounded by trees to a hedge gap.

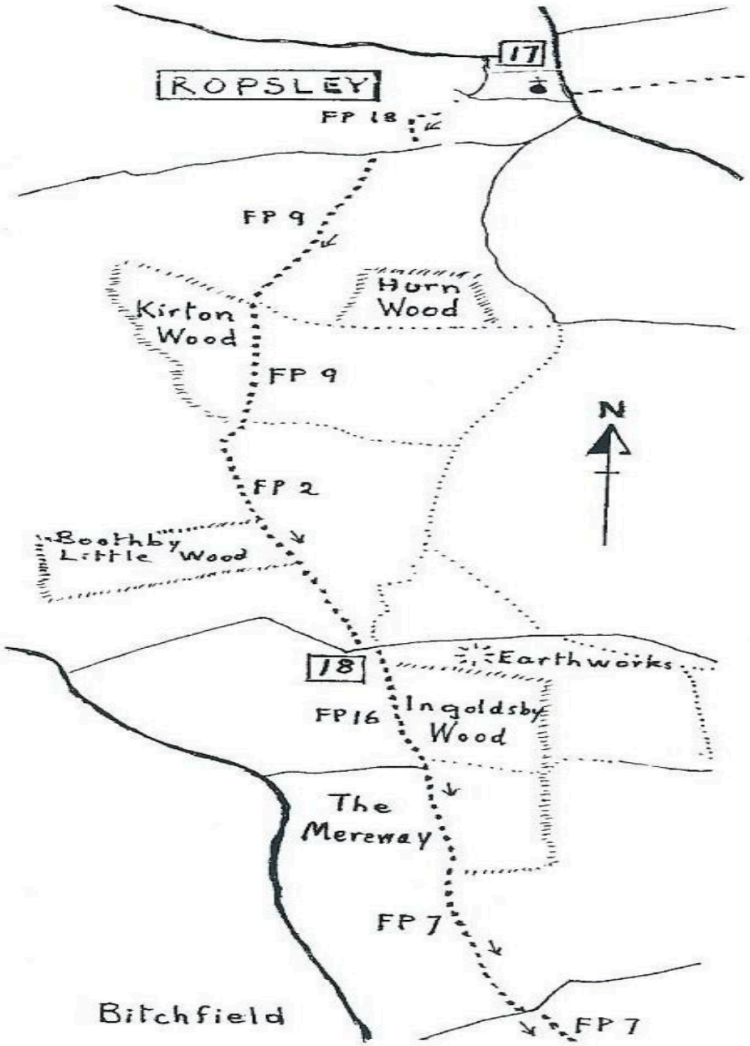
Here turn LEFT keeping hedge on left and cross plank bridge still keeping hedge on left. Pass field entrance left to maintain same general direction, keeping hedge left.

Turn LEFT over a bridge, then a four way finger post indicates entrance to Kirton Wood ahead. Go STRAIGHT AHEAD through trees on obvious bridleway, which can be wet. Where it opens out follow track keeping hedge on left. (In season orchids can be spotted along here).

Where track turns left look immediately for gap in hedge on RIGHT. Pass through gap on footbridge and follow line across field indicated by waymark. This leads to gap in opposite hedge with bridge. Cross bridge and turn immediately LEFT keeping hedge on left. At field corner FORWARD with Boothby Little Wood on right, then on obvious track with hedge right. Where track swings right continue FORWARD on waymarked path across field. Where field narrows follow dyke on right to metal gate in hedge which opens onto a metalled road. (About 400 yards down the road to the left is an ancient earthworks shown on the map as Round Hills. This is located on the right hand side of the road).

18 Our route is STRAIGHT AHEAD (cross road with care) and is known as Mereway which is an ancient boundary track with trees left and hedge right. Where track bears left into Ingoldsby Wood, continue FORWARD with hedges/trees right and woods left. At four way finger post bridleway bears right then left (ignoring permissive bridleway on right). This delightful bridleway path (muddy in parts) is spectacular in spring when the bluebells are in full bloom.

On emerging from wood into field bear LEFT and follow hedge on left, past three way sign on left, then AHEAD onto wide grass track. At wide gap in hedge CONTINUE ahead with hedge on left. This eventually emerges onto metalled lane, where you turn LEFT. After 50 yards turn RIGHT (onto another bridleway) to follow ditch and hedge on left. At hedge gap cross bridge. At next bridge cross then follow field edge FORWARD (On closer inspection it will be noted that the original path would have been on the other side of the hedge before the wood so that travellers would have been protected from both sides)



Turn LEFT then RIGHT along field edge with trees right. At corner of the field turn LEFT then RIGHT through gate. Follow path to right through trees. Where trees on right end there is a three way finger post. Cross track and go AHEAD across field on the footpath. Near the corner of the field the path emerges onto track. This is called Camp Lane. Do not be tempted to take the obvious path immediately opposite through the field. Instead turn RIGHT down the track passing another footpath sign on left. Shortly pass farm buildings on left and farm housing on right.

Continue down track, pass three mature trees on left and a further 150 yards turn LEFT at bridge over dyke, onto waymarked path across field, well left of large pylon. GO AHEAD across another field.

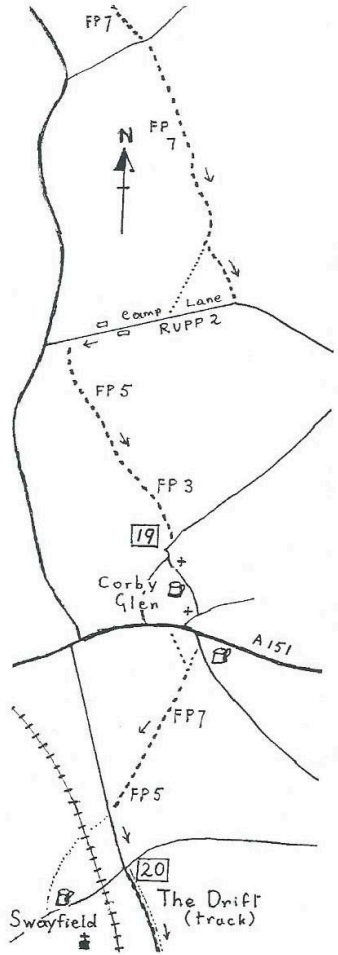
At a fence, cross stile and continue direction through grass field with hedge left. Aim for the big gap in middle of field. At top of slope head for the right hand corner of field where a gate leads to another grass field. Keeping fence left head for field gate ahead which leads into Wheatsheaf Yard, which is interesting. Beyond this is Irnham Road.

19 The path leaves the courtyard onto Irnham Road, Corby Glen. Turn RIGHT then bear LEFT into High Street, passing the entrance to Tanners Lane. Pass Pridmore Road right, Coronation Road left, Fighting Cocks right and enter the market place of Corby Glen.

Leave the market place in a south westerly direction down a gentle incline and pass the primary school right. Where houses on left end and an avenue of trees begin turn up LEFT of village green (with war memorial right). At Bourne Road cross carefully slightly LEFT to cross the stile and take signed footpath between hedges and trees. Now in a series of grass paddocks cross 3 further stiles.

Go through gap in corner of field by power post and follow overhead power lines. GO AHEAD to two power posts, the left of which has waymarks. Bear RIGHT gently down hill then bear RIGHT again.

Hear steeply downhill and at bottom of hill turn LEFT and follow undulating narrow path parallel to river on right until arriving at a high footbridge over the West Glen River, which usually appears as a gentle stream far below. (In extreme conditions the river can be flooded and the bridge inaccessible from the far side!) Having crossed the bridge turn LEFT with the river below left. Shortly before a lone tree on the bank ahead, a thin path rises diagonally RIGHT south/south west to a hedge, slightly to left of small tree on skyline. Take this path which passes through a gap in the hedge to emerge on to the Swayfield Road. Turn LEFT and walk down the road then up to the crossroads. (If you require instant refreshment, shelter or accommodation, The Royal Oak, Swayfield, is half a mile to the right).



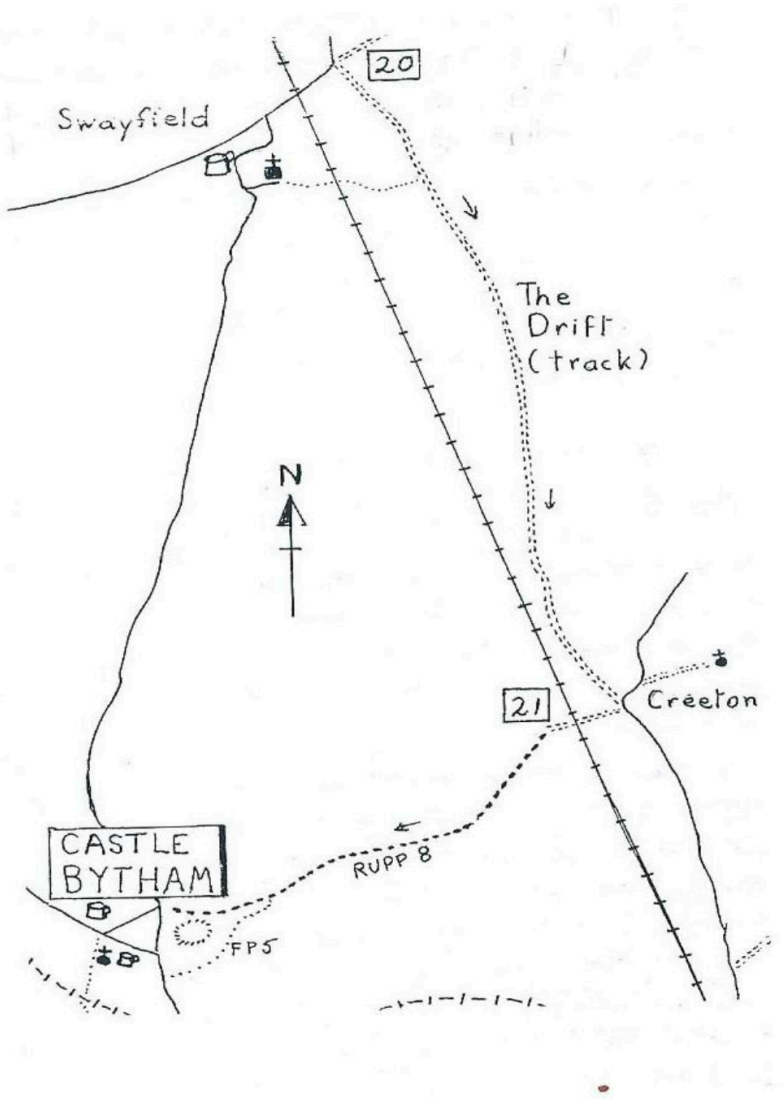
20 Our route is STRAIGHT AHEAD on a very wide track known as The Drift. This delightful two mile ancient drove road is hedged both sides with grass verges, has good views left and the sounds of the East Coast main railway line right. After a third of a mile pass footpath sign right to Swayfield. After an incline which passes plantation of trees left, a footpath leads to Swinstead. Our way stretches ahead with plantations left and cropped fields right, then fields both sides and railway high on right. Pass a footpath sign left (leads to Swinstead Road) then a transmitter on right.

21 On reaching a metalled road continue AHEAD for half a mile with houses left and right. Creeton village and church can be glimpsed over to the left. Immediately before T-junction take track on RIGHT with railway arches ahead, which you pass under.

The track winds to the left uphill past signal transmitter to the left. The track then turns right towards pylon and woods. Passing under overhead cables turn LEFT with woods on right. In corner of field pass through gap in hedge and turn RIGHT over a dry dyke, then RIGHT keeping woods on right and fields left. After leaving trees look half right and the village and church come into view. Take the first gate on the RIGHT between two thin trees and walk diagonally down the field keeping wire fencing over to the right. The disturbances in the surrounding field are probably evidence of early occupation associated with the motte and bailey castle earthworks on the left. (There is no public access which probably explains why the contents are intact). Cattle graze contentedly on the ramparts.

Cross stile into Castle field and follow signs to next gate on right. Cross this to enter village at Castle Farm on Glen Road. Bear LEFT passing duck pond on right and continue along Castlegate. Pass St Martins on left and at road junction look half right up across the green to telephone box. This is in direct line with public house and Church Lane leading to the church. This unique village is full of interest and boasts two public houses, shop and resident wood turner.

Section 4 Ropsley to Castle Bytham



CASTLE BYTHAM to STAMFORD

(Via Tolethorpe, Ryhall and Belmesthorpe)

(12½ miles)

Walk Outline:

This final section has a dramatic walk high above the Holywell Quarry followed by a route through Pickworth Great Wood, reputed to be the quietest place in all England and then across John Clare country along The Drift, an old drove road. Our reconnaissance groups could not agree which was the best route into Stamford and therefore we decided to publish both routes, one via Ryhall and Belmsthorpe and the other direct to Stamford from Tolethorpe. Whichever route you choose it will be a fitting end to a magnificent recreational walk through some wonderful countryside.

Distance: 9 miles to Stamford direct via Tolethorpe

12½ miles via Tolethorpe, Ryhall & Belmesthorpe

Time: 4½ or 5½ hours

OS Maps: Explorer 247 Grantham: 1:25,000. 2½ inches to 1 mile

Explorer 234 Rutland Water: 1:25,000. 2½ inches to 1 mile

Starting Place: Near the Castle Inn, Castle Bytham. Map Ref: SK 988 184

Finishing Place: The Public Library. High Street, Stamford Map Ref: TF 031 072
Extensive Bath Row Car Park is just down the slope by the River Welland.

Route Description:

22 Commencing the walk from outside the Castle Inn turn LEFT up Church Lane, passing church on left. Continue ahead past old school (1907), then LEFT in front of the cemetery entrance to follow path around cemetery. At the corner pass through the kissing gate then RIGHT over disused railway bridge. The next two waymarks point in similar directions to the left. A few yards beyond the path divides. Take the LEFT fork (initially straight ahead) and maintain a southerly direction then south/south east to arrive at a finger post on the roadside at gap in hedge. Cross over the road to another finger post to continue direction down to the field bottom, then up the slope to pass dilapidated farm buildings left, shown on map as School Farm. Ahead to power post with waymark then FORWARD to cross bridge in hedge. Cross next field, passing another power post with waymark to bridge in hedge. After crossing this bridge, turn RIGHT then LEFT, keeping hedge on right. At the next hedge cross bridge in right hand corner of field, then proceed FORWARD with hedge on both sides.

The walk along the cliff edge above the quarry is one of the highlights of the walk which must be saved at all costs. There has been some encroachment even during the last two years. It is the county boundary with Rutland.

The path ahead through the trees is defined and undulating and emerges onto a track where you turn LEFT then immediately RIGHT. This is the main access road to Holywell Quarry. (About a mile along the road to the left is Holywell Hall and church with a series of delightful lakes).

23 Now cross the road to a double gate that leads to a gently rising track with fields both sides, then woods on left. At the top of the hill you enter Pickworth Great Wood (once described as 'the quietest place in England').

Follow the waymarked bridleway FORWARD, now with trees on both sides. Ignore all tracks left and right. Continue FORWARD on the

bridleway which can be seriously muddy after heavy rain but you will eventually emerge from the trees at a finger post. This points diagonally across the field half left but a good option would be to proceed FORWARD on wide headland grass margin with hedge on right, frequently used by horses.

Follow the hedge round to the left and you will arrive at the next yellow topped waymark near disused wind pump house. Turn RIGHT here past Lodge Farm on right and Manor House (complete with tennis court) on left.

At the road turn LEFT into the hamlet of Pickworth. Pass Manor Farm on left and note the stone arch near the buildings. Pass Clare Cottage left and ignore bridleway right. Pause a while at the church, especially to read the information board about the village now in its third reincarnation.

24 Continue through this peaceful hamlet to the crossroads which you cross carefully to a public Byway called The Drift. (This refers to the movement of cattle by drove road or ancient cattle track). This is hedged on both sides but through the gaps on the left extensive cultivated fields can be seen. Over to the right Turnpole Wood will be seen.

After one mile the byway narrows with trees and long neglected hedges both sides. After a further ⅔ mile you arrive at the entrance of Ryhall Heath Farm on left. (Tarmac road ahead if you want a quick and easy route to Ryhall village). On the right a newly created footpath is signed and only appears on up-to-date maps.

Turn RIGHT then follow gently undulating grass path with hedge on left. At a plantation of new trees, Continue FORWARD keeping hedge on left and trees on right to a three fingered post, where you bear LEFT, down a slope to valley bottom. Bear LEFT onto sandstone coloured track, up short steep slope.

Continue FORWARD along track, ignoring footpath going left, until reaching a cross track. Cross over and go FORWARD on grassy track with hedges both sides to reach a busy main road.

25 At road cross with care, turn LEFT and proceed down slight hill for 150 yards until reaching minor road on right, signed to Tolethorpe. Follow this peaceful lane for a third of a mile. Pass footpath sign left and cross bridge with picturesque Tolethorpe Mill right.

Possible alternative route into Tolethorpe

This short path was always one of the author's favourite walks in the county, particularly in springtime.

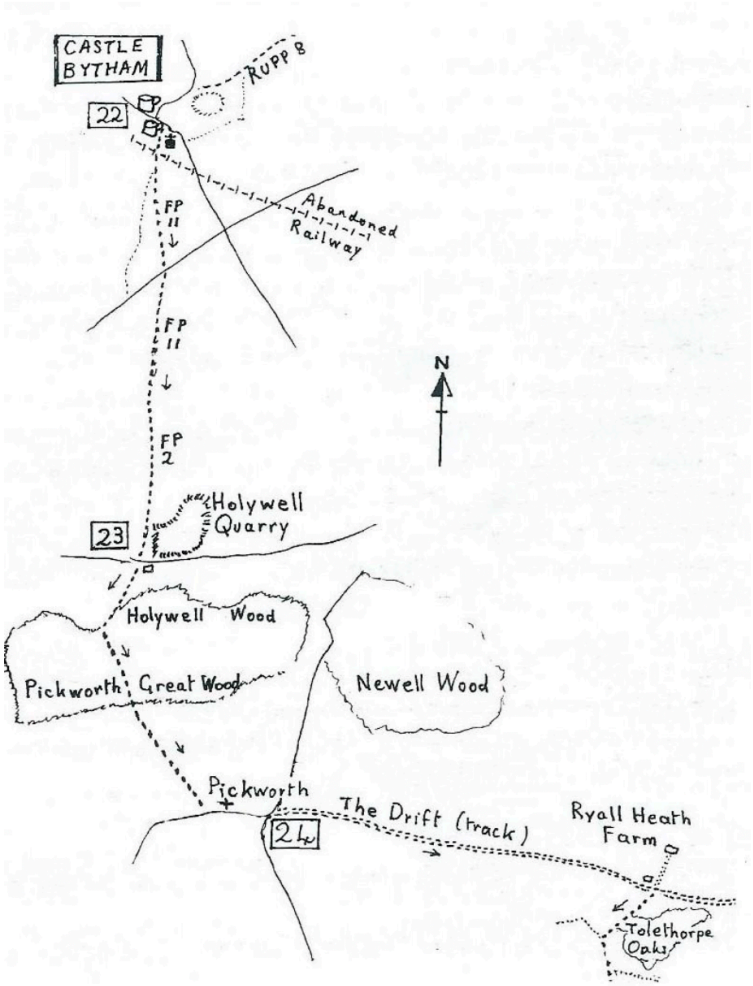
Instead of taking the minor road into Tolethorpe continue with care along the Ryhall Road for 350 yards to turn RIGHT on signposted path directly opposite the first farm track on the left. Through gate, down the field keeping hedge/fence on right, through gate on right, FORWARD to the next stile with the infant River Gwash on left. FORWARD until you join the Tolethorpe Road adjacent to the bridge with picturesque Tolethorpe Mill right. (There is a right of way down the drive to pass Mill and is well worth the diversion).

Return to the road and continue uphill past Tolethorpe Cottage on left and the grounds of Tolethorpe Hall right. (Open air productions of Shakespeare's plays are held here in summer).

AT THIS POINT THE DIRECT (AND SHORTER) ROUTE TO STAMFORD STARTS (see page 53 Para 25a)

At a bend in the road at the top of the hill, take footpath LEFT through gate. FORWARD to next stile about 10 yards from left corner of field. Through hedge turn LEFT and after 20 yards turn RIGHT by power pole onto wide footpath between cropped fields. This arrives at a farm track with river Gwash on left, then rises to a busy main road. Cross with care to unmade Balk Road opposite with houses on left and right. The road swings right between trees then emerges on to Church Street, Ryhall with library right and village hall left.

To avail yourself of village amenities continue to the LEFT on Church Street with the church on left and the village shop/post office and two excellent public houses ahead.



To continue your journey, with the library on your right, go FORWARD on Church Street and beside stone wall ahead there is a finger post. This directs you past the Vicarage right and primary school right then

FORWARD with gardens left and hedges/trees right. Pass children's swings left, through kissing gate, bearing SLIGHTLY RIGHT across the meadows. Arriving at a wire fence on the tree line, go through gate and continue with river Gwash on left. Cross river at bridge and turn RIGHT on the road to enter Belmesthorpe, passing the inviting Blue Bell Inn on the right.

26 At T junction turn RIGHT up Shepherds Walk (noting the mellow stone cottages opposite), then turn LEFT up Castle Rise. Just after left hand bend turn RIGHT up narrow footpath between two houses (The Quoins and Church View). Over bridge and follow grassy track between paddocks stretching ahead, through gate, beside wire fence on left then AHEAD with fence on both sides.

At end cross track beside yellow top post. Straight across grass field to next gate with yellow top post. Then RIGHT into grassy lane with hedges both sides. For about 130 yards you will be walking the MacMillan Way until a footpath sign LEFT (shortly before a metalled road) which directs you into a field with hedge right.

Keep AHEAD on headland path and at the corner of the field turn LEFT, still with hedge right. Immediately before end of hedge on right cross bridge over dyke, go FORWARD with hedge left.

Follow grass track between crops then at hedge ahead turn RIGHT as waymarked onto stony track with hedge left. To the south a prominent church spire can be seen. Follow the track for about ½ mile then follow track as it turns right then left with crops on both sides. The spire of Uffington church is now on the left as are the houses in the village, while on the right Stamford is prominent and half a mile right in the distance Burghley House is visible.

Pass a small plantation of trees right, then hedge right following power lines. Shortly on your left you pass a wildlife conservation area with pond which presumably was a mill pond, although the Mill Mound on OS maps is not apparent. Pass overgrown hedge left and follow path ahead to main A16 road. (The village of Uffington is to the left with amenities).

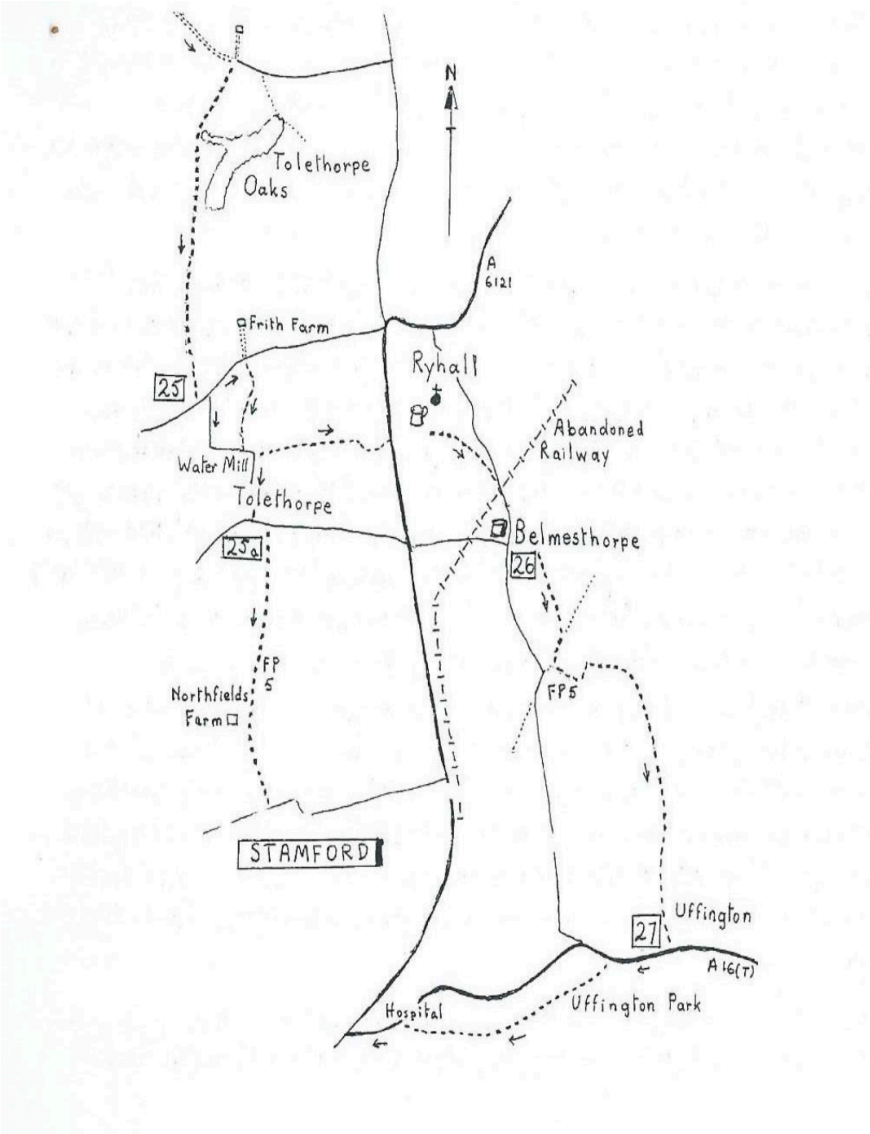
27 Now turn RIGHT and follow the pavement past 5 houses right, farm access track right then village name board (Uffington) left. Halfway round the bend, just past two five barred field gates on left hand side of road note footpath sign. CROSS busy main road with care and take footpath as indicated. Cross over two stiles, pass interesting information board (well worth reading).

Follow wire fence left and waymarked poles right across Uffington Park to the dry Welland Navigation Canal (1673-1863) which you cross. Continue AHEAD with wire fence left and posts right to gate and bridge which you cross. (This is the river Gwash which you have crossed before).

A well trodden path now continues across meadows (with prominent spire in the far distance ahead) to the banks of the River Welland. Bear RIGHT on a raised grass track. With embankment then fence right, then wire fence right, to kissing gate beside field gate. Follow track with fence left, and new housing development right, pass willow tree with tempting footbridge left, then pass former mill pond left and converted mill property. Follow track to the right up gentle gradient. At junction with main road (A16) turn LEFT shortly passing supermarket fuel station on right. At roundabout take SECOND EXIT (signed town centre). The pavement is on opposite side of road – cross with care.

Pass hospital on right then at next roundabout keep RIGHT to pass gateway on right. This was the house of the Whitefriars (1285-1539) visited by Richard II in 1392. Queen Elizabeth was entertained here in 1565 by the Lord Treasurer Burghley. Cross A6121 (signed Sleaford/Bourne), head LEFT up St Paul's Street (signed Town Centre) to traffic lights with Brazenose Lane left and East Street right. Cross and continue ahead, pass Stamford school right, Star Lane right, St Georges Street left and enter the shopping precinct and High Street. In 100 yards Stamford public library on right, Maiden Lane left and information finger post indicating the many attractions and amenities of Stamford, including the Tourist Information Offices. Your journey has ended at the second Danelaw town in Lincolnshire. The Jurassic Way and the MacMillan Way will extend your journey westwards.

Section 5 Castle Bytham to Stamford



CASTLE BYTHAM to STAMFORD

Direct route from Tolethorpe

(Total 9 miles)

25a At the top of the hill bear RIGHT ignoring footpath sign and gate left (which would take you to Ryhall and Belmesthorpe), pass Tolethorpe Lodge right then the entrance to Tolethorpe Hall (Stamford Shakespeare Company – Rutland Open Air Theatre)

At T-junction turn LEFT up hill and after 150 yards turn RIGHT over stile (complete with tap!) at footpath sign. Go FORWARD with hedge on right and views over Little Casterton and extensive views of Rutland landscape. Pass through large gap in cross hedge to maintain direction, under powerlines between crops.

At next cross hedge continue FORWARD now with hedge on right. At Northfield Farm ahead turn LEFT by power post as directed by waymarks then turn RIGHT after 40 yards keeping buildings right. The way ahead is a clearly defined grass track. At bottom of field pass through gap in hedge, turn LEFT with hedge left, then immediately RIGHT, up the field on grass track between crops. At the next hedge you enter the residential suburbs of Stamford. Keep ahead across road then on wide grass space between houses.

Join tarmac footpath to pass between fence left and hedge right then wall right, then follow path between fences both sides. At Edinburgh Road ahead aim for gap across road and continue on footpath between gardens. At children's play area and school sports field ahead turn RIGHT with wire mesh fence left and follow this round to LEFT, then LEFT again with hedge right. After three lamp standards find gap at end of wooden fence on right, turn RIGHT and pass between gardens. Cross another road to gap, now with fence left and hedge right between gardens arriving at road with house ahead called Montaigne. Cross road, turn LEFT then immediately RIGHT to go FORWARD with wall right and trees and bushes left. You are passing a very pleasant public park complete with bandstand, tennis courts, bowling green and welcoming seats.

Bear RIGHT at tennis courts, then LEFT at Constable Mews. Bear LEFT beyond tennis courts, pass through line of mature trees, then car park to road ahead. Turn LEFT then RIGHT at pedestrian crossing. Ahead is a narrow path, Nags Head Passage, passing under Pear Tree sign to Broad Street (Browns Hospital is to the right). Cross at crossing into Ironmongers Street. At bottom, facing redundant church, now converted to commercial uses, you enter the pedestrianised main shopping centre (High Street)

Turn LEFT for 50 yards and on the corner of Maiden Lane an information finger post directs you to the highlights of Stamford including the Tourist Information Office.

Leisure

What is this life, if full of care
We have no time to stand and stare?

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No tome to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see in broad daylight
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance
And watch her feet how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if full of care
We have no time to stand and stare.

W.H. Davies

CIRCULAR WALK FROM RYHALL

(8 miles)

Our initial reconnaissance groups could not agree which was the best route into Stamford and the most suitable ending to The Danelaw Way and therefore we agreed to put in both. Then, this separate walk was proposed as taking in the attractive highlights of both endings and it certainly does offer a delightful and interesting short walk that we are sure that all walkers will enjoy.

Distance: 8 miles

Time: A leisurely 4 hours with time to stand and 'stare' and explore or photograph, i.e. Tolethorpe Mill or the Photographic watermill on the Welland at Stamford.

Ordnance Survey Map: Explorer 234 Rutland Water. 1:25,000

Starting Place: Ryhall village hall and parking place.
Map Reference: TF 036 107

Walk Outline

An 8 mile circular walk from Ryhall can be enjoyed as an appetizer before attempting the 60 mile linear walk or as a reminder and celebration at the end of a challenging but not arduous linear walk.

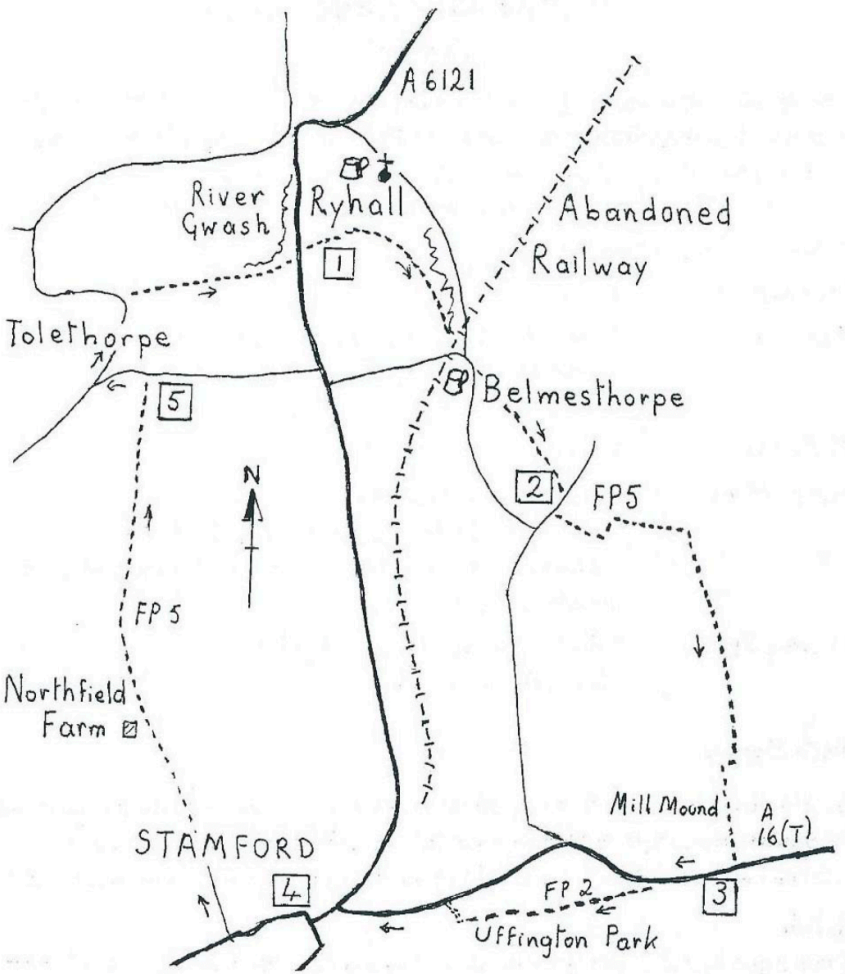
Ryhall

Picturesque Ryhall enjoys the amenities of two pubs which serve food, post office, shop, church and regular bus service.

Route Description

1 To commence your journey, with the library on your right, go FORWARD on Church Street and beside stone wall ahead there is a finger post. This directs you past the Vicarage right and primary school right then FORWARD with gardens left and hedges/trees right.

Pass children's swings left, through kissing gate, bearing SLIGHTLY RIGHT across the meadows. Arriving at a wire fence on the tree line pass through gate and continue with river Gwash on left.



2 Cross river at bridge and turn RIGHT on the road to enter Belmesthorpe, passing the inviting Blue Bell Inn on the right. At the T-junction turn RIGHT up Shepherds Walk (noting the mellow stone cottages opposite), then turn LEFT up Castle Rise. Just after left hand bend turn RIGHT up narrow footpath between two houses (The Quoins and Church View). Over bridge and follow grassy track between paddocks stretching ahead, through gate, beside wire fence on left then AHEAD with fence on both sides.

At end cross track waymark post. Straight across grass field to next gate with yellow top post. Then turn RIGHT into grassy lane with hedges both sides. For about 130 yards you will be walking the MacMillan Way until a footpath sign LEFT (shortly before a metalled road) which directs you into a field with hedge right.

Keep AHEAD on headland path and at the corner of the field turn LEFT, still with hedge right. Immediately before end of hedge on right cross bridge over dyke go FORWARD with hedge left.

Follow grass track between crops then at hedge ahead turn RIGHT as waymarked onto stony track with hedge left. To the south a prominent church spire can be seen. Follow track for about ½ mile then follow track as it turns right then left with crops on both sides. The spire of Uffington church is now on the left as are houses in the village, while on the right Stamford is prominent and half right in the distance Burghley House is visible.

Pass a small plantation of trees right, then hedge right following power lines. Shortly on your left you pass a wildlife conservation area with pond which presumably was a mill pond, although the Mill Mound on O.S. maps is not apparent. Pass overgrown hedge left and follow path ahead to main A16 road. (The village of Uffington is to the left with amenities).

3 Now turn RIGHT and follow the pavement past 5 houses right, farm access track right then village name board (Uffington) left. Halfway round the bend, just past two five barred field gates on left hand side of road note footpath sign. CROSS busy main road with care and take footpath as indicated. Cross over two stiles, pass interesting information board (well worth reading).

Follow wire fence left and waymarked poles right across Uffington Park to the dry Welland Navigation Canal (1673-1863) which you cross. Continue AHEAD with wire fence left and posts right to gate and bridge which you cross. (This is the river Gwash which you have crossed before).

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Pass hospital on right then at next roundabout keep RIGHT to pass gateway on right. This was the house of the Whitefriars (1285-1539) visited by Richard II in 1392. Queen Elizabeth was entertained here in 1656 by the Lord treasurer Burghley. Cross A6121 (signed Sleaford/Bourne), head LEFT up St Paul's Street (signed Town Centre) to traffic lights with Brazenose Lane left and East Street right. Cross and continue ahead, pass Stamford school right, Star Lane right, St Georges Street left and enter the shopping precinct and High Street. In 100 yards Stamford public library on right, Maiden Lane left and information finger post indicating the many attractions and amenities of Stamford, including the Tourist Information Offices,

4 From the Stamford public library on the right and Maiden Lane on the left walk FORWARD 50 yards to redundant church on left, now converted to commercial uses. Turn RIGHT into Ironmonger Street and proceed to pedestrian crossing lights at Broad Street, with Brownes Hospital diagonally left. Cross the road, ahead is the Pear Tree and to the right of it Nags Head Passage which leads you to another set of pedestrian lights. Cross this road, turn LEFT then shortly RIGHT into car park. Pass through this to exit between mature trees into public grassy area with footpath that passes to left of tennis courts. This is now Constable Mews. Turn RIGHT again, beyond tennis courts, then immediately LEFT up path with stone wall left. (On right is a delightful public park with bowling green, bandstand, swings and welcoming public seating).

The path beside wall ends at a road. Turn LEFT and in front of first house (called Montaigne) cross to path between gardens. At next road junction cross to a similar path opposite. This is the least attractive part of the walk but it only takes 5 – 10 minutes.

At junction with gravelled track turn LEFT with high wire fencing to right. Follow this fencing (around school playing fields) to the RIGHT and RIGHT again until you reach children's paly area. Turn diagonally LEFT then LEFT again onto path between gardens, now maintaining a northerly direction.

At Edinburgh Road cross to a similar path almost opposite. Follow this between gardens to arrive at wide grassy area still between houses and gardens and still heading north. At next road cross to footpath sign and gate to fields.

An obvious grassy track between crops drops to hedge where you turn LEFT then shortly RIGHT through gap to maintain direction up field between crops. At farm follow waymarks left around buildings then right to follow power lines in hedge on left. At hedge gap pass through and continue to follow power lines through next gap and the extensive views of Rutland countryside are to your left with the rooftops of Little Casterton nestling in the valley.

5 FORWARD to stile (uniquely with tap fitted) which you cross onto road. Turn LEFT downhill for 150 yards then RIGHT, signed Tolethorpe Hall, which is on your left. This is where Stamford Shakespeare Company performs at the Rutland Open Air Theatre. The lane bears left past Tolethorpe Lodge then a tall conifer hedge. (To divert to Tolethorpe Mill continue downhill and turn LEFT before the bridge. Then return back up the hill to bend and gate).

At next LEFT bend there is a gate on the RIGHT that you cross into a narrow field. Keeping hedge left, head for stile in hedge opposite, about 10 yards from left corner of field. Turn LEFT for 25 yards then turn RIGHT on wide grassy path between crops.

This arrives at track with river Gwash to the left. Follow track with hedge left and fence right then up slight gradient to field gates and road. Cross with care to Balk Road which is unmade (or sadly in need of attention) and this brings you back to Ryhall Village Hall on left and public library on right.

A varied and interesting 8 mile circular walk with plenty of opportunity to discover the delights of Stamford – Lincolnshire's gem.

Solvitur ambulando

This old latin tag means something like
'You can seek it out by walking.'

Working out, finding out, freeing are all possible interpretations of the word solvitur.

Andrew Young used the words in his poem A Traveller in Time.

Were was I? What was I about to see?
Solvitur ambulando
A path offers its company.