

STEPPING OUT: BLANKNEY CIRCUIT



Moderate Terrain



A 4 mile (6km) circular walk close to the village of Blankney in Lincolnshire.

The walking route explores the local countryside, once part of Lincoln Heath and now a patchwork of arable farming and sections of woodland. This walk is part of the Stepping Out network, published through a collaboration between iFootpath and North Kesteven District Council to inspire more people to enjoy the district's landscapes, ancient woodland, historic buildings and charming villages.

If you are looking for refreshments, there are pubs in two nearby villages; The Royal Oak in Scopwick and the Penny Farthing Inn in Timberland.

Getting there

Blankney is located on the B1188, about 9 miles north of Sleaford and 9 miles south of Lincoln. The walk starts and finishes from the dedicated Stepping Out car park and picnic site, just to the west of the village and accessed via Drury Street. Heading north on the B1188, pass St Oswald's Church on your right within Blankney and take the next right turn, Drury Street, which is marked with a brown sign for Blankney Walks.

The post code **LN4 3BB** will take you to this point and then, where Drury Street bends left, fork right onto a minor road (still following the brown Blankney Walks signs). Follow the minor road over a small bridge and you will find the car park immediately on your right. If you are coming by public transport, there are bus stops in the centre of the village itself. For information on bus transport, call Traveline on 0871 2002233 or visit www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/busrailtravel.

Walk Sections

Go → 1 Start to Woodland Copse

Standing in the car park with your back to the vehicle entrance, turn right, passing between the wooden posts and following the unmade path between trees to reach a picnic bench. Pause and glance to your right here, and you should be able to see the beautifully renovated bridge which used to cross the carriageway leading to Blankney Hall. The hall was once the centre of a large estate, originally granted to Walter De Aincourt by William the Conqueror for his services at the Battle of Hastings. Today's village, with its limestone cottages, golf course and cricket ground, is largely the creation of the Chaplin family who acquired the estate in 1719. Sadly, the hall itself was destroyed by fire in 1945 and the ruins were demolished in 1965.

Access Notes



1. The walking route is relatively flat, with only very gentle gradients.
2. It follows mostly stone or grass farm tracks, with a couple of paths across grass fields and some stretches that can get muddy in winter or after periods of rain.
3. Most of the land is arable, but you will cross one pasture twice (at the beginning and end) which is likely to be holding sheep (or other livestock).
4. You will need to negotiate a couple of footbridges, a kissing gate and three stiles (the first two stiles have built-in dog gates and the third stile can be avoided completely by following a short stretch of quiet lane instead).
5. Please remember the Countryside Code. Some paths are provided by kind permission of the landowner, please only use the waymarked paths. Where young stock may be present, please make sure your dog is under firm control in these areas.
6. OS Map Explorer 272.

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From the picnic bench, do not fork right towards the bridge, instead stay ahead on the path running alongside the fence on your left. A little way along, the path dog-legs right then left to continue with metal railings on your left and beech woodland on your right. Continue until you reach a yellow-topped waymarker post and a kissing gate on your left. Turn left through the kissing gate to enter the grass pasture (which is likely to be holding sheep). With your back to the gate, walk directly ahead through the grass pasture and exit via the stile (with built-in dog gate) at the far side.

Beyond the stile, turn right and immediately left to cross the concrete bridge over a small stream. Continue on the waymarked footpath, running through scrub and continuing along the edge of a crop field, with a hedgerow on your left. At the end of the field (with the buildings of Hall Farm across to your right), cross the footbridge ahead and continue along the left-hand edge of a second field. After about 100 metres, you will reach a T-junction with a grass track. Turn left here and then keep ahead on the grass path (with a hedgerow on your right) to reach the woodland copse ahead.

1 → 2 Woodland Copse to Acre Lane



With the woodland copse in front of you, turn right to continue on the footpath and you will emerge to the corner of a crop field. Continue straight ahead, following the hedgerow on your right. In the next field corner, you will see a memorial on your right. This commemorates eight airmen who lost their lives at this site following a collision between a Lancaster and a Hurricane on 11 March 1945.

Turn left here, to continue along the field boundary with the hedgerow on your right. Part way along the field you will reach a waymarker post and hedge gap. Dog-leg right then left through the hedge gap to continue ahead on a grass track with the hedge now on your left. Keep ahead until you reach a patch of scrub ahead. Follow the track as it bends right here but do NOT follow it bending left into the scrub. Instead, follow the waymarker post, turning left immediately AFTER the scrub and

trees to follow a field-edge path. At the corner, stay with the field-edge boundary as it turns right, with a hedge running on your left.

Continue until you reach a wide hedge gap on your left. Dog-leg left then right here, passing through the hedge gap and then through an old gateway, before continuing along the next field edge (with the hedgerow now on your right). At the end of the field, you will emerge to a T-junction with a stone farm track. Turn left to join this and follow it along to a T-junction with a tarmac track, known as Acre Lane.

2 → 3 Acre Lane to Brickyard Junction



Turn left to join the tarmac track, and follow it as it swings right, heading towards Lowfields Farm. Taking care of any vehicles, keep ahead through the farm buildings. Immediately after the last barn on the right, continue on the farm track which swings right and then left, continuing with a hedgerow now on your right.

You could be forgiven for thinking the land here has always been used for growing crops, however this is not the case. This area lies on the edge of Lincoln Heath, once mainly used for sheep grazing. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries, sheep farming declined and much of the heath probably reverted to its natural state of heather, gorse and furze. By the end of the 1600s, many acres of the heath were given over to rabbit warrens. This was a sophisticated operation, with black, grey and silver rabbits each segregated by miles of limestone or turf walls topped by gorse bushes, to ensure the furs produced were of a pure colour. Lincoln Heath was enclosed in 1799 and the warrens did not long survive. By 1830, the local farms linked to Blankney Estate were managing a combination of sheep, traditional root crops and corn. Today the land is almost entirely arable land growing a range of crops for food, fuel, animal feed and industry.

Continue until you reach a T-junction in the track, marked with a fingerpost. Turn left and follow this stone track heading north, with a line of mature blackthorn bushes running on your left. Continue for three field lengths, to reach the next fingerpost. This marks a path junction, with an old farm building known as the Brickyard visible across to your right.

3 → 4 Brickyard Junction to End

Turn left to join the side track and follow this, with a crop field on your right and a hedgerow on your left. After one field length, you will come to another T-junction at a small waymarker post. Turn right here and follow the track leading you under power lines, with a hedgerow now on your right.





Stay on the main stone track as it leads you around two bends (left and later right) and on to reach a wide metal gate ahead. If you look to the left here, you will see a stile hidden within the hedge. At this point you have two choices.

If you wish to avoid this stile (which does not have a dog gate), go ahead past the metal gate to reach the road, then turn left along the lane to reach the starting car park on your left.

Otherwise, cross the stile to enter the pasture (which may be holding sheep) and follow the obvious path diagonally right (about 1 o'clock), following the stream on your left. At the far side, a further stile (with dog gate) leads you directly into the car park where the walk began.

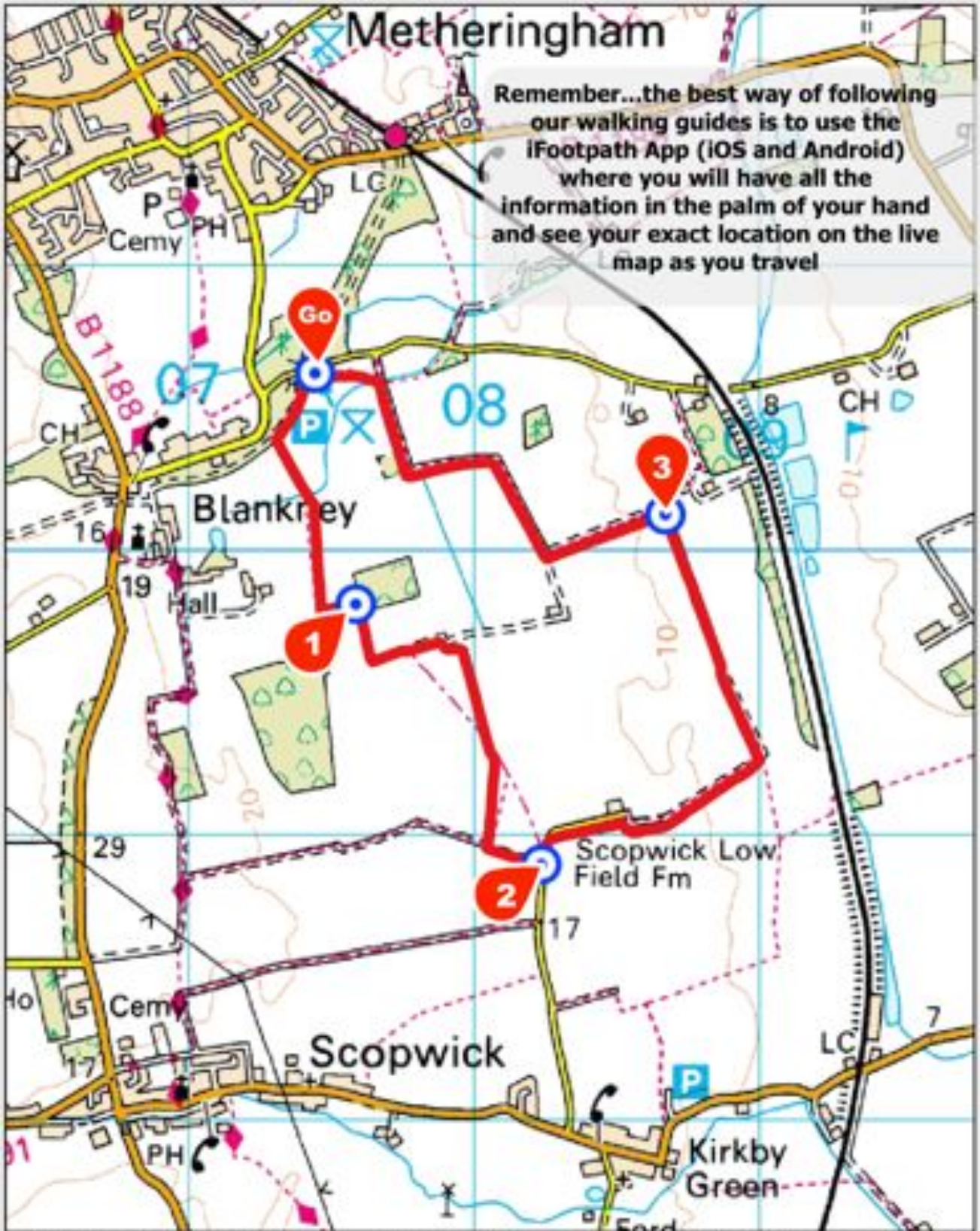
Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.





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