

STEPPING OUT: RIVER WITHAM CIRCULAR



Moderate Terrain



A 4.5 mile (7.5km) circular walk from North Hykeham, near Lincoln in Lincolnshire.

The walk follows long stretches of riverside paths along the River Witham, with views of Lincoln Cathedral and Lincoln Edge along the way. 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.

Nearby places of interest include the Natural World Centre (at Whisby Nature Park) and Hill Holt Wood. If you are looking for refreshments, there are several pubs within North Hykeham.

Getting there

North Hykeham is a small town located immediately south of the city of Lincoln. The walk starts and finishes at the playing fields car park on Fen Lane (alongside the Town Council offices and Witham Court NHS facility). Follow the signs for the Town Council and Witham Court from the main road (Lincoln Road) to join Fen Lane, and you will find the playing field car park on your left.

Approximate post code **LN6 8EY**.

For information on bus transport, call Traveline on 0871 2002233 or visit www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/busrailtravel.

Walk Sections

Go 1 **Start to Riverside**



Leave the car park via the vehicle entrance and turn left.

Get the iFootpath App for a smarter walking experience. Hundreds of walking guides in the palm of your hand with live maps that show your progress as you walk. Say goodbye to wrong turns!

get iFOOTPATH



**4.5 Miles
Circular
2.5 hour**

190918



Access Notes



1. The walk is relatively flat and follows grass riverbanks, field edge paths and one cross-field path, all of which can be muddy (and slippery) after periods of rain or in the winter.
2. There are no stiles on route, but you will need to negotiate kissing gates, small metal gates, two small flights of steps and a couple of (quite generous) squeeze gaps.
3. You will not be sharing the paths with any farm livestock, but you will need to cross one paddock that is likely to be holding horses.
4. 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.
5. OS Map Explorer 272.



Follow the road and then a tarmac track which leads you between Witham Court NHS buildings on your right and the Town Council offices and playing fields on your left. At the end of the track, keep ahead across a ditch to reach a fingerpost. Turn left here to join the signed public footpath, a grass track with the drainage ditch running on your left.

Follow this grass track ahead for some distance, later with a fine view of Lincoln Cathedral on the horizon ahead. Eventually you will come to a path junction (with fingerposts visible to your left and right). Turn left to cross the ditch and then turn immediately right through a kissing gate to enter a paddock (which may be holding horses). As you walk into this paddock, you will notice the drainage ditch (now on your right) merges at this point with the River Witham.



Hall fishing ponds, a relic from the time when Bracebridge Hall stood in extensive grounds.

1 → 2 Riverside to Newark Road Bridge



Follow the path ahead through the horse paddock and exit via two small metal gates. Now simply continue on the riverbank path heading north, with the River Witham running on your right. The river has an interesting history and this stretch of riverbank is a good place to explore this...

During the Roman period, the river basin underwent dredging, the addition of lock and sluice gates and the clearance of woodland upstream which raised water levels. As the Empire imploded and contact was lost with Rome in about 410, the following 500 years saw a lack of channel maintenance leading to accumulations of peaty deposits. Archaeologists have found evidence to suggest that it wasn't until the beginning of the 900s that the River Witham was cleared for commercial river traffic. By the Middle Ages, the navigable Witham between Lincoln and Boston linked the city to the channel ports of Flanders and France. In 1762, the Witham Act was passed in parliament which included the widening and deepening of the river from the High Bridge in Lincoln to Chapel Hill. At the same time, a sluice gate was built in Boston, effectively turning the Witham into a main drain for the surrounding lowlands and preparing the way for fen drainage and the agricultural landscape we see today.

Continue until you emerge alongside a petrol station forecourt to reach a junction with Newark Road. Turn right to cross the river via Newark Road Bridge.

2 → 3 Newark Road Bridge to Concrete Footbridge

Immediately after the bridge, turn right through the kissing gate to join the opposite river bank. On your left are the Bracebridge

Follow the riverside path for 3km. During the latter section of this stretch, you will pass a water treatment works on your left, which includes a pipe bridge across the river on your right. About 500 metres later you will come to a concrete footbridge over the river (with squeeze gaps at each end). Turn right to cross the river via this footbridge.

3 → 4 Concrete Footbridge to End



At the far side of the footbridge, turn right and immediately fork left onto the track leading you down the grass bank. At the bottom of this short slope, turn left through a small metal gate to join a field-edge footpath (with a hedgerow running on your right). Keep ahead along the edge of two crop fields to reach a crop field ahead. Cross this field at about 1 o'clock (heading for the fingerpost visible on the far side).

At the far side of the field, cross the ditch ahead and then turn immediately right, to follow the grass footpath with the ditch running on your right. Stay with this path as it leads you through a staggered barrier and past fenced horse paddocks on your left. At the end of the paddocks, cross the grass bank ahead (via the wooden steps) and then turn right to follow the grass track with a drainage ditch running on your left.

Continue past several houses on your left and, where these end, you will see a fingerpost and ditch bridge at a path junction (which you should recognise from the outward leg of the walk). Turn left over the ditch bridge, walk ahead along Fen Lane and this leads you directly back to the car park where the walk began.

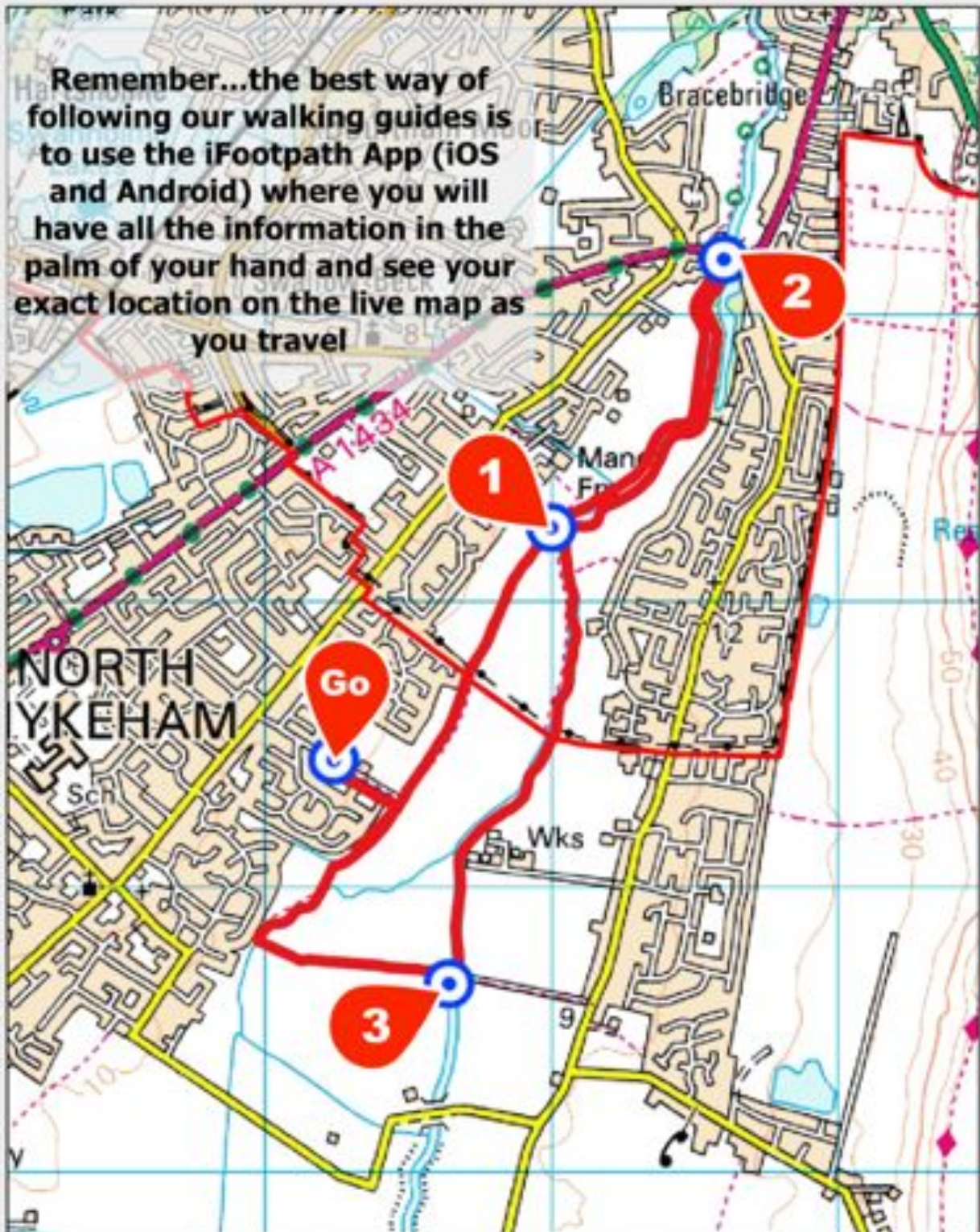


Disclaimer

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.



© Crown Copyright and database right 19 June 2018.
Ordnance Survey 100017926.

