

STEPPING OUT: SKELLINGTHORPE OLD WOOD



Easy Terrain



**4.5 Miles
Circular
2 to 2.5 hours**

200519



Access Notes



1. The walk follows a mixture of village pavements, stone woodland tracks, unmade woodland paths and a tarmac cycleway.
2. The unmade woodland paths can be very soft and muddy so good boots are a must and wellingtons are recommended in the winter or after periods of rain.
3. You will need to negotiate a single wooden gate but there are no kissing gates, stiles, steps or livestock on route. It would be possible to take a rugged pushchair or rugged disability buggy around the walk during dry periods, by following a short-cut that excludes the narrow and softest woodland paths.
4. Please remember the Countryside Code. Skellingthorpe Wood is owned by the Woodland Trust, walkers are asked to help to ensure a continued welcome by keeping dogs under close control.
5. OS Map Explorer 272.

A 4.5 mile (7km) circular walk (including an easy access option) from the village of Skellingthorpe in Lincolnshire.

The route heads through the village before looping through the beautiful Skellingthorpe Old Wood, a Woodland Trust mixed woodland with wildlife, wild flowers and wood carvings to enjoy. The return leg follows an old rail line, now a shared footpath and cycleway. This walk is part of the Stepping Out network, published through a collaboration with 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, the Lincolnshire Co-op shop, The Stone Arms pub and The Plough pub are all located along the High Street in Skellingthorpe village. There is also a picnic site within the woodland. Nearby attractions include Daisy Made Ice Cream, the Natural World Centre at Thorpe on the Hill and Doddington Hall and Gardens.

Getting there

Skellingthorpe is located about 3 miles west of Lincoln city centre and is accessed from the A46 bypass road. The walk starts and finishes at the free Community Centre car park in Skellingthorpe on Lincoln Road. For information on bus transport, call Traveline on 0871 2002233 or visit www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/busrailtravel.

Approximate post code **LN6 5UU**.

Walk Sections



Start to Wood Bank



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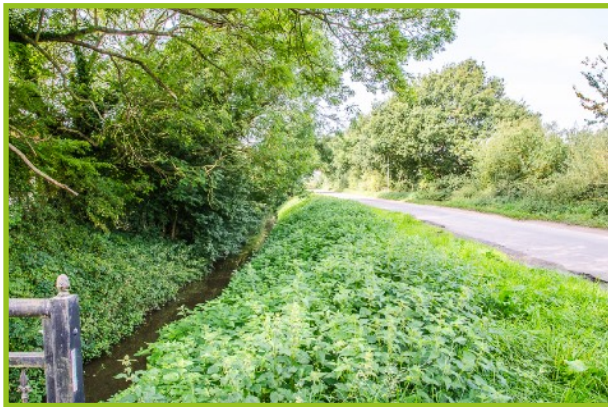


From the Community Centre car park return to the road, passing the Heritage Room on your left. This is well worth a quick visit if it is open, it tells the story of the local connections with the RAF. RAF Skellingthorpe operated from 1941 to 1945 and was home to 50 and 61 Squadrons of Bomber Command.

Turn left along the pavement and follow the road, passing the Old Station House on your left and heading into the village. At the first road junction, follow the main road as it swings left and, immediately before the Co-op, cross over to turn right into the side road, High Street.

You will pass the Methodist Church on your right. In the Domesday Book (1086) the village is referred to as Schelinchope, suggesting Scandinavian origin. As you cross the drainage ditch, Catchwater Drain, swap to the left-hand pavement and where the road bends right, turn left into Woodbank (signed to Old Wood South).

1 → 2 Wood Bank to Old Man of the Woods



Follow this road ahead, soon with the drainage ditch on your left and passing a cemetery on your right. This is a fairly quiet road being a dead-end, but do take care of any traffic. Further along, as you pass a post box on your right, you will come to a fork. Take the right-hand branch, a continuation of the quiet tarmac lane which leads you between a number of properties. Look out for the beautiful carved tree trunk (including an owl, squirrels and a fox), outside the property called Squirrel Corner.

At the end of the lane, you will come to a junction of tracks with a fingerpost just to your left (which includes three Stepping Out markers), and a Woodland Trust board for Old Wood also to your left. Take the middle of the three tracks (at about 1 o'clock), signed as a Stepping Out route and a bridleway.

Follow this stone bridleway for about 300 metres, passing Woodlands stables and paddocks on your right along the way. After 300 metres, you will see a set of wooden gates on your left with an Old Wood welcome sign. Turn left through the pedestrian gate to join a permissive path into Old Wood. Immediately on your right, you will pass a yellow-topped waymarker post as well as an Old Man of the Woods sculptural carving.

2 → 3 Old Man of the Woods to Picnic Area

Follow the woodland track ahead, ignoring any smaller paths off to the sides. Further along, the path swings left and you will



reach a junction of paths with a short Stepping Out waymarker post on your right and a picnic site on your left.

At this junction, you have two choices. For the full route (which includes unmade paths that can be very muddy), we will turn right. However, for the easy access route which avoids the softest paths, you need to go straight ahead, continue to a point with a wooden barrier ahead, swing left here (staying on the main path) and then pick up the directions at the point indicated within the section called 'Bridleway to Cycle Path'.

Either way, before you continue it is worth exploring your surroundings. Just a few paces ahead on your right you will see another wood carving, this time depicting the head of a bird of prey. You can see many birds at Skellingthorpe including raptors like buzzards, goshawks and, if you're lucky, the hobby summer migrant. Hobbies are masters of the air, hunting dragonflies and even taking small birds like swallows on the wing. You may also want to explore the picnic area to your left, where you will find a bird table and carved mushroom and have chance to test your balancing skills on the log adventure walkway around the perimeter.

3 → 4 Picnic Area to Bridleway



When you are ready to continue, turn right at the picnic junction to follow a narrow grass path (this can be very soft in places and you may need to divert through the edge of the trees). At a T-junction in the grass path, turn left (as marked by the Stepping Out arrow). This is a quieter section of the woodland so keep your eyes for wildlife. We were lucky enough to have a roe deer cross our path.

Follow the path towards the edge of the wood where it bends left and travels along the woodland edge with a hedgerow and open fields running on your right. Ignore the first footbridge on your right and any small paths on your left.

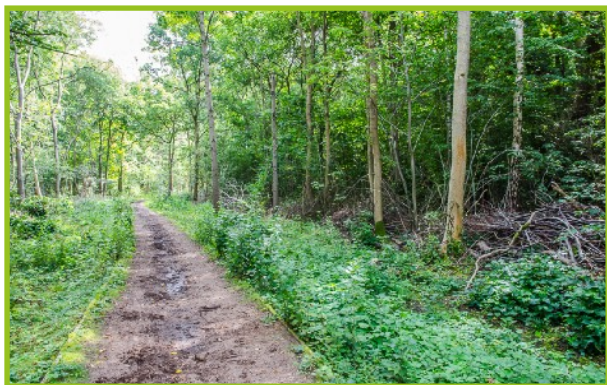
Skellingthorpe is an ancient woodland and originally would have



been populated by native trees such as oak, ash, lime and hazel. It is referred to as the 'Lound' in the Domesday Book, that being the Viking name for a wood with some form of important ritual use. In the middle ages, the woodland was used as a deer park, but by the 1600s the park had fallen out of use. In the 1940s extensive planting of pines began, destroying the natural woodland balance. Today, the woodland is owned by and is being restored by the Woodland Trust. Many species of wildflower can be found in the wood including anemone, violet, bluebell and snowdrop.

Continue until you reach a second footbridge on your right, which marks the point where the woodland path turns left to become a bridleway (in the south west corner of Skellingthorpe Old Wood).

4 → 5 Bridleway to Cycle Path



Follow the woodland path as it swings left and, a few paces along, ignore the path through the staggered barrier to your left. Instead, keep straight ahead along the bridleway, noticing a slightly raised bank on your right. This is thought to have been used as a hunting bank, a fenced-in area of cleared ground into which the deer would be driven. Archers waited just outside the area to pick off the deer as they were herded into the bank.

The woodland beyond the bank (to your right) is known as Hag Wood. Hag is an old word used to describe a method of coppicing trees, from which the modern word hack is derived. Coppicing is a system of timber management where, over a cycle of several years, trees are cut back to a point close to the base, resulting in each tree having multiple trunks growing from the base. You will see that most of the trees on your right form this pattern.

You will emerge out to a junction with a wider track, with a staggered barrier on your right. Go straight ahead here.

NOTE: If you have followed the easy access short-cut, pick up the directions at this point.

Follow the sandy track ahead and, after 300 metres, ignore the path to your left (marked with red-topped waymarker posts). Keep ahead on the sandy track for a further 100 metres, to reach another junction, with more red-topped posts, a staggered barrier on your left and a side path on your right. Turn right here and follow the path for about 300 metres, passing through a wooden arch to reach a T-junction with a cycle path.

5 → 6 Cycle Path to End

Turn left to join this cycle path, a Sustrans cycle route that follows the line of a former railway. The railway and



Skellingthorpe rail station were closed to passengers in 1955, although the line continued to carry freight until 1979.

Follow the shared cycle and footpath for some distance, passing under the road bridge of Jerusalem Road along the way. Just before you emerge to Lincoln Road, you will see the Community Centre and car park on your left, 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 a 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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