

# SPIRES AND STEEPLES

## Part 2:

### BRANSTON TO METHERINGHAM



Moderate Terrain

6 Miles  
Linear  
3 hours

160519



#### Access Notes

1. The walk is almost entirely flat and follows a mixture of pavements, tarmac paths, quiet lanes, grass tracks and field paths.
2. The route crosses several crop fields so these paths can be narrow in part and can also be muddy depending on the time of year.
3. There are a couple of sections of road walking that need care.
4. You will cross the rail line at an official but unsignalled crossing point, so look and listen carefully for trains before you proceed here.
5. You will need to negotiate some steps, staggered barriers and a kissing gate plus two stiles, but there is no livestock on route. The two stiles (which are each side of the rail line) have closed fence surrounds, but the footplates are very generous (almost creating mini flights of steps) so medium-large agile dogs should have no problem climbing over, although small or less agile dogs may need a lift.
6. OS Map Explorer 272 Lincoln.
7. Please remember the Countryside Code.

**A 6 mile (10km) linear walk from Branston to Metheringham, forming the second part of the Spires and Steeples Trail in Lincolnshire.**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** This is a linear walk that uses a bus service for the return leg, with buses running Mon-Sat only, with **NO SERVICE on Sundays**. On Sundays, you will need to use two cars instead.

This stretch of the trail takes you through four delightful villages, each with churches, plentiful history and community artwork to enjoy, plus beautiful open expanses of arable farmland in between.

**ABOUT:** The Spires and Steeples Arts and Heritage Trail is a 27 mile (43km) linear long-distance walk from Lincoln to Sleaford. The name refers to the spires of churches being the landmarks to which visitors make their way and to the rural sport of steeple chasing. This guide is 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.

**LOGISTICS:** As a linear walk, you will need to make transport arrangements for the return leg. The return leg can be completed by a 20-minute bus journey. Bus Number 1C5 normally runs hourly Mon-Sat but there is **NO SERVICE on Sundays**. Check details via Traveline on 0871 2002233 or at [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/busrailtravel](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/busrailtravel). On Sundays, you will need to use two cars. If this stretch sounds too long for you, it is possible to split it into two parts, breaking the trail at Potterhanworth which is on the same bus route.

**FACILITIES:** Refreshments are available at The Chequers Inn in Potterhanworth (3 miles along), The Red Lion pub in Dunston (5 miles along) and at the Star and Garter pub or the White Hart pub in Metheringham at the end of the walk.

#### Getting there

The walk starts at All Saints Church in Branston and ends at Metheringham Church, both churches being in the centre of the villages. There is a good car park adjacent to Branston Church or you could use the Stepping Out car park at the village hall on Lincoln Road.

Approximate post code of church **LN4 1LZ**.



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# Walk Sections



## Start to Moor Lane



Standing with your back to the main entrance gate for All Saints Church in Branston, turn left to pass through the small car park. Take a moment here to look at the paved area surrounding the line of trees and you will see the large mosaic designed by artsNK associate artist Alan Potter and made by village residents. The sinuous design depicts aspects of village history, with one panel being a particularly graphic illustration of the 1962 Christmas Day church fire.

Keep straight ahead to join the tarmac footpath at the far side of the car park, which leads you out to Silver Street. Cross over to the far pavement, turn right for a few paces and then turn left to join the tarmac footpath which runs along the left-hand edge of house number 23.

Follow the narrow path between hedgerows, crossing straight over a cul-de-sac, continuing between garden fences and emerging to join the pavement of Villa Close at a T-junction with the main village road. Cross over the main road with care to reach the far pavement. Turn right along this and continue to reach the side road, Moor Lane, on your left.



## Moor Lane to Potterhanworth Road



Cross over Moor Lane to take the signed public footpath directly ahead, passing through a belt of trees and emerging into a grass field. Follow the obvious path directly ahead to reach the far hedge and then turn right to continue with the hedge on your left. In the field corner, follow the path into the trees and then turning left to follow the line of the sports field wire fence on your left.

Before the end of the sports field, the path veers right away from the wire fence and continues with trees on your left and a crop field on your right. After just 20 paces, the trees end and your grass path continues ahead, with open crop fields each side, to reach the corner of a woodland. Keep directly ahead on the grass track with the woodland running on your right. This woodland surrounds Longhills Hall, built in 1838, which was one of the houses supplied by Branston's waterwheel when it began operating in 1879.

Stay on the track, passing paddocks and stables on your left, to reach a junction of tracks with Gardener's Cottage on your right (once part of the Longhills Estate cottages). Turn left here and follow the stone access track out to the road, Potterhanworth Road.



## Potterhanworth Road to Station Road



NOTE: The next section of the walk follows this road so take particular care of any traffic. Turn right along the road, ignore the side road on your left and continue to reach some workshop buildings on your left. Immediately afterwards, turn left onto the signed footpath, crossing the gravel parking area and passing through a fence gap into a crop field. With the workshop on your left, cross the field corner diagonally right (about 1 o'clock) to reach the rail line.

This is an official but unsignalled rail crossing point, so make sure you look and listen carefully for trains before you cross. Cross the railway via the two stiles and flights of steps. With your back to the rail crossing, cross the crop field slightly right, at about 1 o'clock. At the far side, cross over the access track and pass a waymarker post then continue in the same direction across a second crop field (with Rushfield Fishing Lakes across to your left).

In the field corner, turn right and immediately left to join a grass track with a drainage ditch on your left. The track bears steadily right to reach the edge of the next crop field. Maintain your line across this, heading for a house visible on the far side. As you reach the hedge, turn right for just a few metres to reach Station Road in Potterhanworth.



## Station Road to Potterhanworth Church

Cross over with care to reach the far pavement and turn left along this. Cross the access drive for Battle's Farm (signed FG Battle and Sons Ltd) and, just four paces later, turn right through the kissing gate within the hedge to enter the farm grounds. Walk diagonally left, soon following the line of a hedge on your





left. Join an enclosed path between fences to reach Cross Street.

If you are looking for refreshments at this point, you will see The Chequers Inn just a few paces to your left. Otherwise, go straight ahead along Middle Street to reach the village green alongside the church and old water tower. This is the perfect spot to pause and learn more about the village.

As the name suggests, Potterhanworth had a thriving local pottery industry from the 1300s. There are two village greens, both to your left. One is home to a colourful village sign while the second is home to the war memorial. St Andrew's Church can be seen ahead, with a tower dating to the 1300s attached to a Victorian nave and chancel. The church is overshadowed by a larger building, ahead and to your left. This huge water tower was built in 1903 as part of an innovative water supply system from a borehole in a local field.

## 4 → 5 Potterhanworth Church to Nocton Green



With St Andrew's Church on your right and the water tower on your left, walk ahead along Nocton Road, passing the manor house on your left and the churchyard on your right. Cross over the side road, The Park and, as the main road swings left, go straight ahead onto the signed public footpath. Follow the grass path, initially running alongside the power lines, then passing a small brick hut (a pump house) and continuing directly ahead. You will pass a woodland on your right to reach a junction with a farm track.

Keep straight ahead along this and follow it out to a lay-by on the B1202. Turn right along the road (taking good care of any traffic) to reach the village of Nocton. Beyond the 30mph signs, join the left-hand grass verge for your safety. Ignore the first side road, Nocton Park Road, instead stay along the main road using the grass verge as much as possible and then joining the right-hand pavement as soon as this begins.

Follow the road as it bends right and then left to pass a bus shelter. Swap to the left-hand pavement here and then fork left into the side road, The Avenue. Half way along, join the enclosed path running along the right-hand side of the road, noticing the Roman Centurion Head plaque at the start of this path. Keep an eye on the bottom of the hedge as you walk, to see a few charming artwork waymarkers that are present throughout the village. You will emerge out to the village green within Nocton.

## 5 → 6 Nocton Green to Nocton Cow



Here we take a small detour to visit the beautiful village church. Turn left to pass the large village green on your left, taking time to look at the Dandelion Sundial metal sculpture by Cliff Baxendale, surrounded by relief panels depicting various aspects of Nocton's history.

At the end of the quiet lane, you will come to the church on your right. Before visiting, take a moment to glance to your left down a track under tree arches – this once led to Nocton Hall and so would have provided the promenade for the gentry to attend Sunday service. Nocton is known to have had a hall since around 1530, and Henry VIII is known to have stayed there in 1541. The hall passed through many hands, eventually passing to ownership of the Earls of Ripon. The hall they built burned down in 1841 and its replacement suffered the same fate in 2004. Nocton owes its current magnificent church to the Ripons, designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott and completed in 1862. The spire is 130 feet high and the interior brims with carving, wall paintings, mosaics, alabaster and glass.

When you have finished at the church, retrace your steps back past the village green and keep ahead to reach the road junction by the post office. Keep straight ahead for just a few metres and you will see a bridle road signed on your left. Before you take this, keep ahead a little further along the road to see a sculptural carved bench set on a mosaic in front of the terraced cottages across to your right. This was created by several villagers and includes a wren, a bird's nest and a cat.

Head back a few metres to take the signed bridle road towards Dunston. After the first property on your left, look on the stone wall on your left to see the Nocton Cow. This was created by Nocton school children with artsNK from old scrap farm tools which had been ploughed up in the surrounding fields.

## 6 → 7 Nocton Cow to Dunston Church

Continue ahead along the bridle road and you will come to a junction with a tarmac access lane. Go straight ahead onto the narrow tarmac path leading you between hedgerows and fields.





This area was once a major potato growing area, then being the main supplier for Smiths Crisps. The estate manager was ex-Army Major Webber and he set up a network of narrow gauge rail lines around the fields, using tracks recovered from World War I trenches. The network extended to 23 miles in its heyday, connecting to the banks of the River Witham six miles away to the east and to the main rail line in the west.

Simply keep ahead on the tarmac path, crossing one more access road along the way, to emerge to a village road in Dunston (with the school on your left). If you wish to visit the Red Lion for refreshments, you need to turn left for about 200 metres, ignoring a dead-end lane at the first bend. Otherwise, cross over to the far pavement, turn right for 20 paces and then turn left through the staggered barrier to join the next stretch of tarmac footpath.

You will emerge to another village road, Middle Street. Cross to the far pavement and turn right along this, passing the old village post office on your left. Before the road junction, swap to the right-hand pavement and follow this as it swings right into Vicarage Lane, to reach the church on your right. St Peter's Church was largely rebuilt in 1874 but its early medieval tower remains. Just as in Nocton, the rebuilding was paid for by the Ripons of Nocton Hall.

## 7 → 8 Dunston Church to End



With your back to the church gate, walk ahead over Vicarage Lane and follow the tarmac path across the small green to reach the main road. Cross over with care and turn left along the pavement, following the road as it swings right to become Chapel Lane. Pass a bus shelter on your right and then swap to the left-hand pavement, crossing over the village stream and a side road, Front Street.

Continue ahead on the left-hand pavement heading out of the village, following the road as it swings left and then right (ignoring the footpath signed right which only cuts off the road corner anyway, and is little used and so often difficult

underfoot). Simply follow the roadside pavement, passing over the railway to reach the crossroads with Lincoln Road and the High Street in Metheringham. Cross over the main road with care (there is a zebra crossing to your left should you need it), and go straight ahead into the High Street.

Continue all the way along the High Street to reach the war memorial on your left, where you will see a stone cross and the Star and Garter pub ahead. Just after the war memorial, look into a wall recess on your left to see the remains of the original ancient stone cross (probably dating to the 1300s). This once stood in the middle of the road, a replacement was made in 1911 to celebrate the coronation of George V, but following damage by an American Army lorry during World War II, the present cross was installed in 1949.

Follow the road as it swings left and, as you draw level with The White Hart on your left, cross over to turn right into Church Walk. Just by the church hall, join the left-hand enclosed path and this leads you to the church gates on your left where this leg of the trail ends. Much of Metheringham village was destroyed by fire in 1599 and little more survived than the Norman tower of St Wilfrid's. The porch door dates from the rebuilding in 1602 and the wooden lock bears the monogram of Queen Elizabeth I.

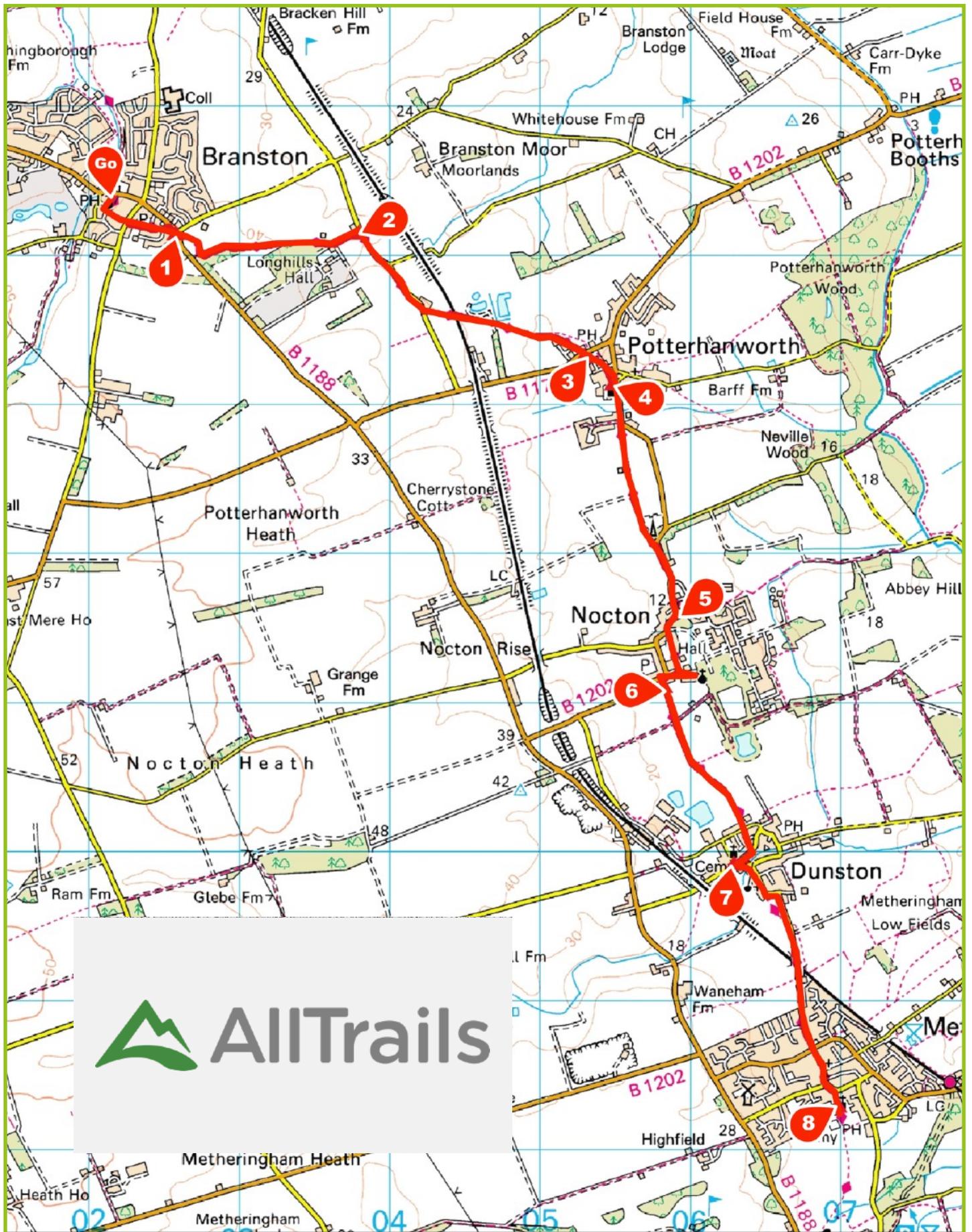
### Disclaimer

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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