

STEPPING OUT: AUBOURN'S TWO CHURCHES



Moderate Terrain



**3 Miles
Circular
1.5 hours**

200519



Access Notes

1. The walk is relatively flat for the most part, with just a couple of gentle slopes, plus one short but steep slope up a grass riverside embankment.
2. Some of the paths can be very muddy and churned so good boots are a must (or wellingtons in the wettest months).
3. There are no stiles on route, but you will need to negotiate several kissing gates and footbridges.
4. You will cross seven grass pastures that are likely to be holding cattle.
5. Aside from a short stretch along the car park access lane, all the sections along village roads have pavements, so there is no significant road walking involved.
6. 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.
7. OS Map Explorer 272.

A 3 mile (4.5km) circular walk between the villages of Aubourn and Haddington in Lincolnshire.

The walk leads you through open grass pastures and village streets as you tour the villages and their fascinating landmark attractions including Aubourn Hall, the two Churches of St Peter, the River Witham and the archaeological remains of Haddington Hall. 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 walk passes The Royal Oak in Aubourn and there are also pubs in nearby Basingham. Nearby attractions include Hill Holt Wood, Whisby Nature Park and Aubourn Hall Gardens.

Getting there

Aubourn and Haddington are small villages just east of the A46, between Lincoln and Newark. This walk starts and finishes at the free Stepping Out car park (which has space for just two or three cars) on Dovecote Lane in Haddington. The approximate post code of LN5 9EF will take you to the junction between the main road (Butts Lane) and the start of Dovecote Lane (a single-track road). Follow Dovecote Lane past a few houses on your right and you will find the car park (a small square area of grass and stone, with a wooden fence surround) on your left, just by the litter bins. If you are coming by bus, there are bus stops on Bridge Road (on the walking route). For information on bus transport, call Traveline on 0871 2002233 or visit www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/busrailtravel.

Walk Sections



Start to River Crossing

Standing in the small parking area with your back to the pasture and facing the lane, turn right to follow Dovecote Lane. At the end of the lane, you will come to a junction with the main road in Haddington, with a small village green and artwork to your left. Go ahead here, crossing over Bailey's Lane, to join the pavement leading you towards the national speed limit signs (on South Hykeham Road).

Immediately after the national speed limit signs, turn right onto Bridge Road (signed to Aubourn). The pavement leads you past the Bridge Farm bus stops. Ignore the



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footpath signed to your right, instead keep ahead along the pavement to cross the River Witham.

1 → 2 River Crossing to Aubourn Hall



Immediately after the river crossing look for a footpath fingerpost across to your left. Cross over the road to turn left onto this public footpath, passing the railings of a water facility on your left, to reach a farm gate and wooden kissing gate ahead. NOTE: You may come across cattle in the pastures from this point.

Pass through the kissing gate to enter the field and take the right-hand of the two grass tracks ahead (about 1 o'clock). The track leads you between two sections of scrub. Beyond this, continue by staying close to the hedgerow on your right. Ignore the kissing gate into Sibsey Wood on your right, instead continue along the right-hand pasture boundary. You will pass the rear of a few properties on your right to reach a kissing gate ahead.

Pass through this and continue ahead along the right-hand edge of this second pasture. At the far corner of this large pasture, you will see a kissing gate on your right. Pass through this and follow the path along the edge of a woodland belt. As you reach the corner of a fence ahead (with a fingerpost on your right), turn left to continue on a grass path with a fenced field on your right. At the end of this enclosed path, look to your left for a glimpse of Aubourn Hall.

2 → 3 Aubourn Hall to First Church

Aubourn Hall was designed in the 1600s by James Smythson for Sir John Meres, and is set in 1.2 hectares of gardens. The hall has been the residence of the Neville family for more than 350 years and walkers are asked to respect the family's privacy. The gardens are open to the public between May and July and



are well worth a visit.

Take the small metal gate on your left to enter the grounds of Aubourn Hall and turn immediately right along the grass path to reach the driveway. Go ahead to join this, passing the hall and a converted barn on your left and continuing ahead to take the gate into the grounds of St Peter's Church. Follow the stone path through the churchyard, leading you directly to the church door.

There is a bench on your right, the perfect place to pause and hear the story of Aubourn's two churches, both dedicated to St Peter. The story spans 600 years. This is the earlier church, standing in the grounds of Aubourn Hall. It was erected in about 1200 on the site of an earlier wood and stone structure that was recorded in the Domesday Book. In 1862, most of this building was demolished and the stone was incorporated in the building of a new church. The new church (which we will pass later in the walk) was a joint parish church built mid-way between Aubourn and Haddington. In less than 100 years, the second (Victorian) church had deteriorated to the point that it was deemed unsafe and was partly demolished, leaving little more than the tower and steeple. The congregation moved back to this original church which had been restored in 1933.

3 → 4 First Church to Riverbank Slope



When you are ready to continue, stand facing the church door and turn left across the grass, passing through a kissing gate into the next pasture (which may be holding cattle). Walk directly ahead along the left-hand edge of this pasture and, at the far side, the next kissing gate leads you to the path alongside the River Witham.

Do NOT go ahead across the bridge, instead turn right to follow the riverside grass path (a permissive bridleway), with the river running on your left. About 100 metres before you reach the metal pipe bridge across the river, look out on your right for a fingerpost on the top of the grass bank. Turn right here, heading up the steep grass slope to reach this fingerpost. (These high flood banks were built along both shores of the Witham after



World War II to reduce the flood risk to the village of Aubourn, which had historically been prone to frequent flooding).

4 ➔ 5 Riverbank Slope to Second Church



Standing with your back to the river, walk straight ahead to join the grass track heading directly away from the river. Follow the grass track as it swings right and then left, leads you through a gate and then continues a short distance to reach a junction with the road. Turn right to follow the pavement, leading you towards the village of Aubourn.

As you reach the road one-way system in Aubourn, stay ahead on this right-hand pavement which leads you through the village, passing the village pub on your right. At this point, you are forced to swap to the left-hand pavement to continue through the village. Just after passing the bus stop, swap back to the right-hand pavement. Follow this as it bends left and then right, now heading for the church spire visible ahead.

As you reach the junction with Bridge Road on your right, you will see the second Church of St Peter directly in front of you. From this angle you may be fooled into thinking that the church has been completely restored and rebuilt. However, it is worth making your way into the churchyard to see the extent of the ruins. Go ahead to cross Bridge Road, then turn right through the gate into the churchyard and walk behind the church tower to see the partly demolished remains of this empty church. The remaining structure, including the clock tower, is Grade II listed and is maintained by the Parish Council.

5 ➔ 6 Second Church to Scheduled Monument Meadow



When you are ready to continue, exit the churchyard, turn left

along the pavement and left again into Bridge Road. Continue along the left-hand pavement as it leads you back over the River Witham. 100 metres later, turn left onto the signed public footpath, crossing a wooden footbridge and taking a kissing gate into a grass pasture (which may be holding cattle).

Walk straight ahead across this pasture and take the metal gate and footbridge into the second pasture. Cross this at about 11 o'clock and take the gated footbridge to enter a third pasture. Walk straight ahead across this to reach a gate which leads you into a fourth and final pasture, a meadow of special historical interest.

6 ➔ 7 Scheduled Monument Meadow to End



This riverside meadow pasture actually contains a number of scheduled monuments including the archaeological remains of two manors, several fishponds, some formal gardens, moated grounds and a dovecote. If you look at about 2 o'clock you will see the most obvious of these remains, a square stone building, the dovecote. This medieval building is thought to date to the 1400s and houses 500 nesting boxes for doves and pigeons. It provided a place for the birds to live and breed before they became meat for the Lord of the Manor's table. This building is thought to be the last standing remnant of Haddington Hall, home of the Meres family before they moved to Aubourn Hall.

There is permissive access to allow you to explore the whole field should you wish. For the most direct route to the car park (via the dovecote), walk straight ahead from the gate, initially following a fence on your left. Continue ahead on the slightly raised grass path and, before you reach a solitary tree, fork right heading towards the dovecote. The path passes an old pond immediately on your left, to reach the dovecote also on your left. Pass along the far edge of the dovecote and you will see the car park where the walk began, through a kissing gate on your right.

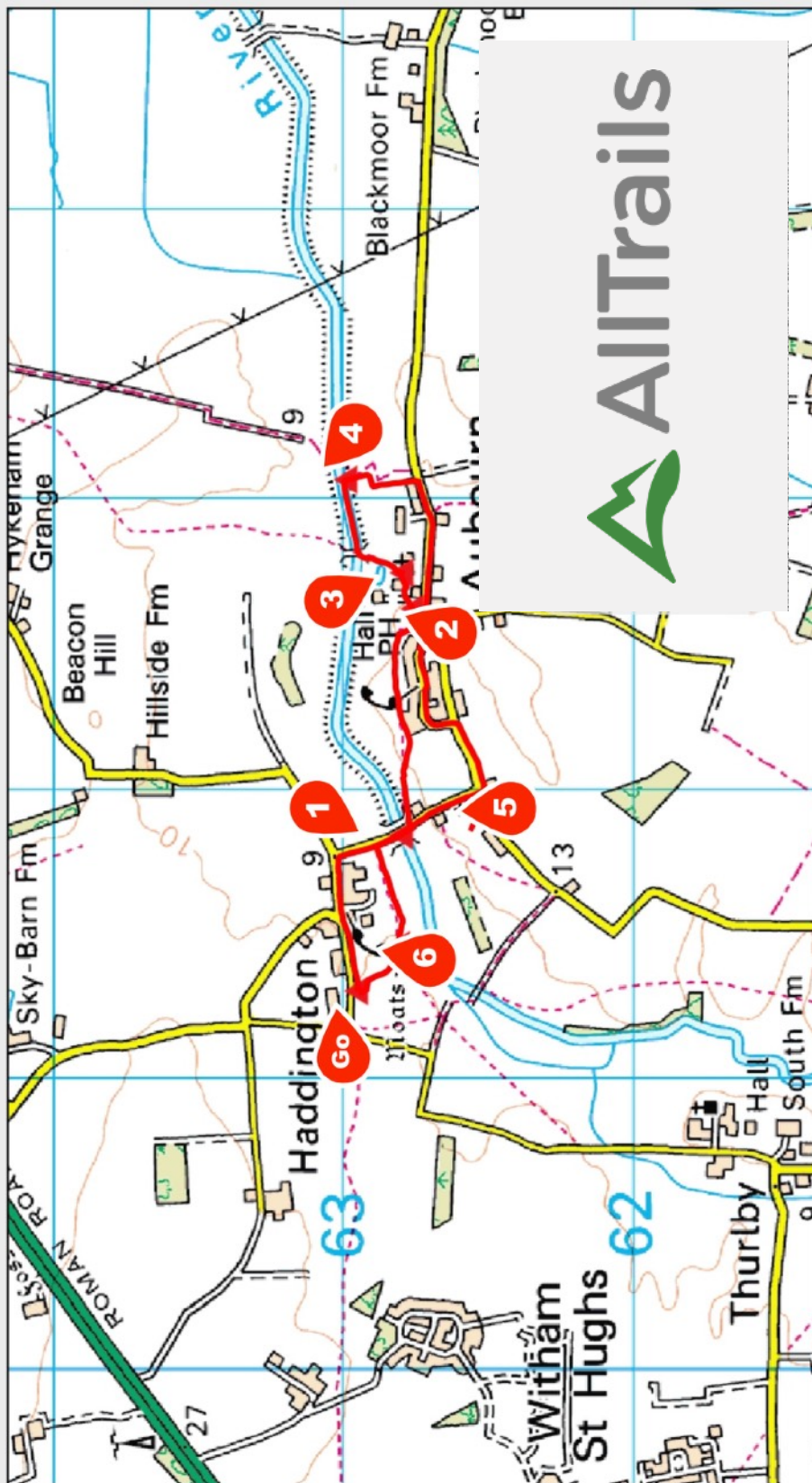


Disclaimer

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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