

STEPPING OUT:

TEMPLE BRUER AND THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR



Moderate Terrain



A circular walk of just over 6 miles (10km) from Temple Bruer in Lincolnshire.

The route takes you through gently rolling farmland, taking in the remains of a Knights Templar Preceptory, a restored Horse Gin and a stretch of the old Roman Road, Ermine Street, along the way. 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 or other places of interest nearby, Navenby High Street features a wide range of interesting local shops and pubs, and there are also a couple of pubs in Wellingore.

Getting there

The walk starts and finishes from St John the Baptist Church at Temple Bruer, a remote church which is located on a minor road between Wellingore and the A15. The minor road is accessed from the A15 (about 5 miles north of the roundabout between the A17 and A15) and heads west, signed towards Temple Bruer and Wellingore.

The nearest post code, **LN5 0DE**, will take you into a farm on this lane, from which point continue west to reach the church on a right-hand bend in the lane.

There is some parking along the access track for the church, but if there is a church service or other parish event underway, please use roadside parking along the minor road (heading back towards the A15) instead.

Walk Sections



Start to T Junction

The walk starts and finishes at St John the Baptist Church and a wander around the churchyard before you begin is recommended. This stone church was designed by James Fowler (an architect from Louth) and was built in 1873. To the side of the church are the old school rooms which were built at the same time as the church for up to 45 pupils, although the average attendance was only 22 even in these early years. We were lucky enough to run into a former pupil from the 1940s, who was one of just 12 school students at that time and remembers walking to school across the fields and seeing the World War II aircraft flying overhead. Today the school rooms serve as parish rooms.

Access Notes



1. The walk includes only gentle gradients, with nothing too strenuous.
2. It follows a mixture of quiet lanes and farm tracks of stone, tarmac and grass. Some of the grass tracks are rutted and can be muddy in winter and after periods of rain.
3. There are no stiles, gates or steps on route.
4. Whilst most of the surrounding fields are arable, you may come across sheep in some of the fields adjacent to the tracks, contained with electric fencing, so take particular care with dogs.
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.



6 Miles
Circular
3 to 3.5
hours

200519



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To begin the walk, make your way to the metal pedestrian churchyard gate on the minor road. Standing with your back to this gate (and the church), cross the road diagonally left to join the tarmac farm track, which runs directly away from the bend in the road. Follow the track between hedgerows and crop fields.

Temple Bruer lies at the western edge of Lincoln Heath, close to the Cliff, and the word Bruer comes from the Norman-French term Bruyere which means heath. For centuries, Lincoln Heath enjoyed an evil reputation as the haunt of highwaymen, but in the last 200 years its poor soils have been improved to support agriculture.

At the end of this stretch of track, you will come to a T-junction with a Restricted Byway, marked by a fingerpost.

1 → 2 T Junction to Knights Templar Preceptory



Turn left at this T-junction to continue on a stone farm track, initially with a hedgerow running on your right and later with open crop fields each side. The stone track becomes a tarmac access drive, leading you past a couple of houses on your right. About 80 metres later (with a private sign and waymarker post ahead), turn left onto a stone side track. Just a few metres along, you will come to the tower remains of the Knights Templar Preceptory on your right, within the farm yard.

This tower is a rare standing remnant of a Knights Templar Preceptory. The Order of the Knights Templar was formed in 1118 after the first Crusade. Their role was to guard the shrines of the Holy Land and protect pilgrims against attack. They raised funds to support their work through a Europe-wide network of Preceptories which were religious houses from which they administered their estates. From poor beginnings, they quickly attracted widespread support and became both powerful and wealthy. By 1190, the Templars controlled 10,000 acres in Lincolnshire and in Kesteven they owned property in 50 percent of parishes – a record for England. Temple Bruer Preceptory

grew to be the second wealthiest in England.

In 1291, after the fall of the last Christian stronghold in the Holy Land, the Knight's popularity waned and they were accused of corruption. In 1308, the Preceptor of Temple Bruer and the Grand Prior of England, William de More, was arrested here along with his Knights and imprisoned in Lincoln. The Preceptory passed to the Knights of Hospitaller until Henry VIII granted it to the Duke of Suffolk, and it is known that the King stayed here on route to Lincoln. Today the tower is managed by Heritage Lincolnshire and the door is normally unlocked should you wish to take a look at the intricate stone carvings inside. If you choose to follow the spiral staircase up to the upper floor, do take care as this is very steep with narrow treads.

2 → 3 Knights Templar Preceptory to Horse Gin



When you have finished at the tower, continue on the farm track, passing the tower on your right. Beyond the farm buildings the track swings right, leading you through a dip and then passing a single property, Walnut Tree Lodge, on your left. A few paces later you will emerge to a junction with a road, Temple Road. Should you wish to take a shortcut here (reducing the walk to about 4 miles), turn right along this old drove road and continue for about one mile, to reach a junction with the Viking Way footpath (which crosses the road immediately after passing a woodland, Cocked Hat Plantation, on your left). Turn right to join the Viking Way and then pick up the instructions from the section called Temple Road to End.

For the full route, cross over Temple Road and continue on the footpath ahead, a grass farm track with a hedgerow on your left and open crop field on your right. Now simply keep ahead along this track, ignoring any side turns for 1.25 miles (2km), eventually passing horse paddocks on your left and emerging to a junction with Long Lane in Brauncewell.

The route continues to the right in a moment, but first we take a short detour to visit the village Horse Gin. Turn left along the lane heading into the village. Just before the last building on the right, look for the circular stone building with exposed roof timbers – a restored Horse Gin. There is an information board directly outside. This polygon building was designed to harness horse power to drive threshing machines, with four horses walking around the building to turn the machine. It is thought this Horse Gin was used to crush bone which would have been used as fertiliser on the surrounding fields.

3 → 4 Horse Gin to Temple Road

When you have finished at the Horse Gin, retrace your steps





back through the village on Long Lane, passing the farm track from which you emerged on your right. Continue along Long Lane, taking care of any occasional traffic, for a further 1.25 miles (2km). About two-thirds of the way along this stretch of road walking, you will pass High Dyke Farm on your right. If you look to the left here, you should be able to see the distinctive dome sitting on College Hall within RAF College Cranwell in the distance.

Continue on the lane, to reach a subtle double-bend in the road where the road leads you through a strip of woodland. Immediately after passing through this woodland strip, turn right onto a wide grass track with the woodland running immediately on your right (don't worry if the waymarkers are missing here). This footpath follows the course of the old Roman road known as Ermine Street and is part of the Viking Way.

Follow the course of this old Roman road directly ahead for about a mile, eventually passing another woodland on your right before emerging to a junction with Temple Road. Cross over and continue straight ahead on the Viking Way.

lane for about a mile, passing Griffin's Farm on your left then swinging right and heading on to pass through a gateway (with metal farm gates each side). Immediately after this gateway you will come to a junction that you should recognise from the outward leg. Turn left and follow the tarmac track which leads you directly back to the church 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.

4 → 5 Temple Road to End

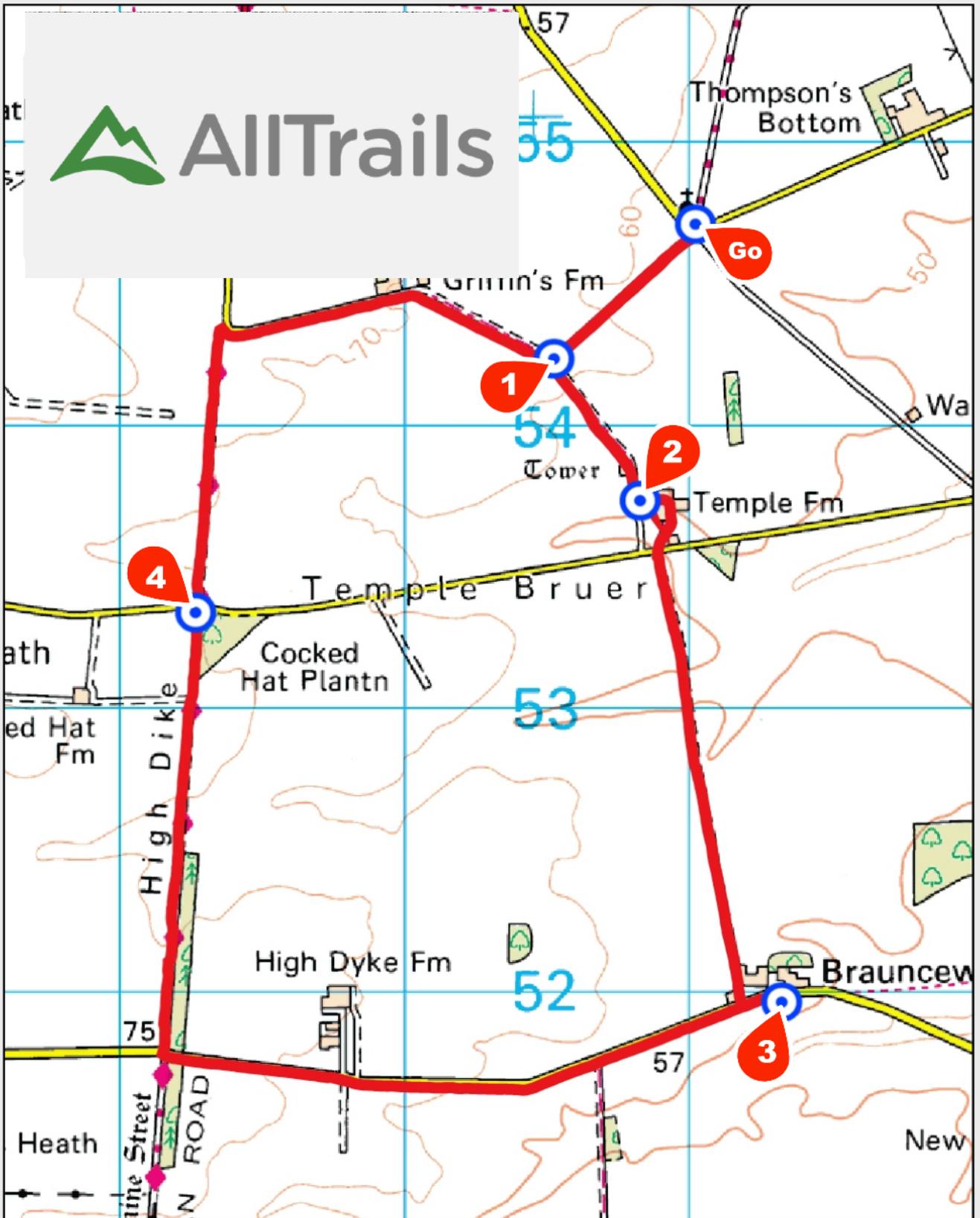


Follow the Viking Way grass track ahead, eventually passing a concrete pillbox on your left. About 250 metres later, you will emerge to a junction with a tarmac lane. Glance to your left here and you will see a beautiful mosaic artwork which depicts Ermine Street. Behind this mosaic is farmland which was once the site of RAF Wellingore.

The airfield had its origins as a naval landing ground in 1917. With the outbreak of war, the site was rapidly expanded as a satellite airfield for RAF Digby. With the end of the war, the site was adapted for temporary living quarters for 1,000 Ukrainian and German former prisoners of war. The site reverted to farmland in 1951.

Turn sharp right to join the quiet tarmac lane which immediately swings left and then leads you between hedgerows. Follow this





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