

STEPPING OUT: SLEAFORD RIVERSIDE



Moderate Terrain

**6.5 Miles
Circular
3.5 hours**

210519



A 6.5 mile (10.5km) circular walk (can be shortened to 3 miles) from the market town of Sleaford in Lincolnshire.

The route leads you alongside the River Sleas, passing a watermill, nature reserve, windmill and several artwork installations within Sleaford. Leaving the town behind, the route heads out into countryside towards South Rauceby, enjoying beautiful areas of woodland and long stretches of peaceful farm tracks. 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.

There are plenty of attractions in Sleaford if you wish to extend your visit. If you are looking for refreshments, you will be spoilt for choice within Sleaford, or you may wish to visit The Bustard Inn in South Rauceby (just a short detour from the walk, about half way around the route).

Getting there

Sleaford is located close to the junction between the A15 and A17. The walk starts from Cogglesford Mill on East Gate. If you are coming by public transport, the town is served by both buses and trains which will take you to within easy-walking-distance of the start point. For information on bus transport, call Traveline on 0871 2002233 or visit www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/busrailtravel. If you are coming by car, Cogglesford Mill has its own small pay and display car park on East Gate, which costs £3.10 for more than 2 hours (correct March 2018). If this car park is full, there are several other car parks in the town, including the nearby Eastgate Car Park.

Approximate post code **NG34 7EE**.

Walk Sections

Access Notes

1. The walk is relatively flat with only a couple of gentle slopes. It follows a mixture of riverside paths, roadside pavements, farm tracks, field edge paths and woodland paths.
2. Some stretches can become muddy after periods of rain. You will need to negotiate a generous staggered barrier plus one stile (which has a large hedge gap alongside for dogs).
3. You will need to cross the A15 twice, so take care as the traffic is fast-moving (although visibility is very good).
4. The stile and A15 crossings can be avoided entirely by following the shorter version of the walk.
5. You will not be sharing any of the paths with livestock.
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.



Start to Leisure Centre

Before you begin the walk, you may wish to visit Cogglesford Mill, the red brick building alongside the car park. This was one of at least a dozen watermills along the River Sleas in medieval times. As a watermill site, Cogglesford's origins may go back to Anglo-Saxon times although the building we see now dates from the early



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1700s. The mill still operates as a working watermill and, during opening times (usually every day in summer and weekends in winter), you can view the mill and buy flour made here.

To begin the walk, stand in the car park with your back to the road and walk ahead for a few paces to reach the riverside path, with the River Slea ahead. Turn right to join this riverside path, heading away from the mill with the river running on your left.

You will come to a junction in the path. Take the left-hand branch, staying alongside the river. The area to your right is known as Lollycocks Field. This rough grassland was mentioned in the Domesday Book and is now managed as a nature reserve. At the end of the reserve, turn left to cross the footbridge over the river. At the far side, turn right to continue on the riverside path, with the river running on your right and passing the leisure centre on your left.

1 → 2 Leisure Centre to Southgate



On this stretch of the pathway, you will see three mosaic panels set into the pavement. These are by Alan Potter and are designed to highlight the three types of power on which the navigation bargemen relied; horse, wind and manpower.

Beyond the three mosaic panels, pass a few properties on your left and then ignore the large green footbridge over the river. Instead, keep ahead with the river on your right and you will pass a stainless steel sculpture rising from the water, Mast and Sail by William Lasdun.

You will emerge via a staggered barrier to a junction with Carre Street. Cross over via the zebra crossing, turn right along the pavement for just a few paces and then turn left under the brick arch to enter the courtyard and car park of Money's Yard. Cross the car park to pass between the central brick building on your right (the Tourist Information Centre) and the impressive black tower of the former windmill, Money's Mill, on your left. After passing the mill, turn right for a few paces and then turn left to

exit Money's Yard via the pedestrian arch into Sleaford's main shopping street, Southgate.

2 → 3 Southgate to Castle Causeway



Turn right for just 30 paces and then use the pedestrian crossing to swap to the left-hand pavement. Continue along the left-hand pavement for about a further 100 metres, crossing one branch of the river, passing Sleaford Riverside Church and continuing to reach a second branch of the river which sits alongside a bench. Turn left here to enter the Riverside Shopping Area, following the course of the river which is running on your right.

At the end of this shopping area, notice the beautiful red brick building on the far riverbank. Dating from 1829, this building once housed Sleaford's fire station. At this point you will emerge to a road junction. Keep straight ahead, crossing over the side road (Riverside Precinct) and joining the left-hand pavement along West Banks (with the river running across to your right). Continue all the way to the end of West Banks, where you will reach a T-junction (with West Gate to your right and Castle Causeway to your left).

3 → 4 Castle Causeway to Cranwell Railway



Cross over the road diagonally right to reach the start of a riverside tarmac footpath, with a beautiful metal sculptural map of the river on your right. Keep ahead to join the riverside path, with the river running on your left. Almost immediately on your right, you will see another artwork installation; a number of metal plaques depicting the flora and fauna of the river and its surroundings, alongside two ornate metal benches.

Follow the riverside path ahead, to a point where the houses on



your left end. Ignore the tarmac path to the right here, instead keep ahead on the riverside path leading you under the railway bridge. Continue for a further 400 metres, passing the extensive allotments on your right to reach a junction with a raised embankment tarmac path. This embankment path is the line of an old railway, the old Cranwell Railway.

4 ➔ 5 Cranwell Railway to Boiling Wells Farm



At this point you have two choices:

For the shorter route (3 miles), turn right to follow the old railway path until it emerges to a T-junction with a vehicle track. Turn right along this track and follow it until it leads you across a bridge over the railway. Now skip forward and pick up the directions in the walk section called Rail Bridge to End.

For the full route (6.5 miles), go straight ahead to continue on the riverside path. At the end of this stretch you will emerge out alongside the A15 road. Follow the fingerpost signs, leading you right and then left to reach the road crossing point. Taking extra care to wait for a suitable gap, cross over this fast-moving road. At the far side, follow the fingerposts once again, turning left along the grass verge and then turning right to re-join the riverside path with the river running on your left.

Follow this riverside path, leading you over a ditch footbridge ahead and then under some power lines (where the river bends left). About 30 paces later, you will see a waymarker post. Fork right here, leaving the riverbank and following the footpath diagonally over the crop field. At the far side go ahead, passing through the hedge gap and joining the path with the fenced paddocks of Boiling Wells Farm running on your left.

5 ➔ 6 Boiling Wells Farm to Farm Track



Beyond the paddocks, continue ahead to pass the farm buildings on your left and you will reach a waymarker post. Fork slightly right here, to continue on the footpath with a hedgerow on your left and fenced paddocks on your right. At the end of the hedgerow, go straight ahead, crossing a farm track and following the right-hand edge of an open field, with a hedgerow on your right.

In the field corner, cross the stile ahead (there are gaps in the adjacent hedgerow that should be suitable for dogs) and continue along the right-hand edge of the large crop field. Continue ahead along this field-edge path for some distance, passing one square of woodland on your right and continuing on to reach a second area of woodland, Ash Holt (alongside a waymarker post).

Fork right here, to join the path leading into the woodland, passing the site of an old quarry on your right. Stay with the main path as it bends right to stay alongside this quarry and you will reach a beautiful metal sculpture on your right. This is called In the Field, was designed by Richard Farrington and represents the fields around the village of South Rauceby.

Stay with the main woodland path as it bends left at this point and you will emerge to a junction with a farm track, with a fenced area of parkland ahead.

6 ➔ 7 Farm Track to Field Farm Junction



If you wish to visit The Bustard Inn in South Rauceby, turn left and follow the track and then lane to reach the village. Otherwise, turn right to join the farm track and follow it as it bends left and then right to pass the buildings of Hall Farm on your left.

Beyond the farm buildings, keep straight ahead on the stone farm track with a hedgerow on your left and open crop fields to your right. After only about 100 metres, stay with the main stone track as it turns left, leading you gently uphill to pass through a copse of trees. As you emerge from the trees, follow the track which turns immediately right, passing the copse on your right and then passing a second copse on your left. At the end of this second copse, glance to your left and you will see a sculptural bench, Sleeping Shepherd Seat, depicting a shepherd sitting with his sheep.

Ignore the side turn at this bench, instead keep ahead on the farm track with far-reaching views all around. After about 900 metres, you will come to a junction with a tall metal fingerpost on your left (this is just after passing the buildings of Field Farm which are visible across to your right, and as you draw level with the end of Summer Plantation which is visible across to your left).



7 → 8

Field Farm Junction to Rail Bridge



This fingerpost has several Stepping Out routes marked. Ignore the path to the left (which is part of the South Rauceby walk), instead take the footpath signed diagonally right, a grass track which leads you to a small circular copse of trees. Go through the copse of trees, pass alongside a vehicle barrier and go straight ahead to join a farm vehicle track.

The track leads you past a beautiful old stone house on your right, Drove Lodge, to reach a T-junction. Turn left and follow the access track leading you back to the A15. Once again waiting for an appropriate gap, cross over the A15 with care and walk directly ahead on the path leading you through an old gateway.

Keep straight ahead to join an access track. This track is part of an old thoroughfare known as Drove Lane (so no prizes for guessing its original purpose!). Simply follow the access track ahead, eventually passing the allotments on your right and then heading up a slope to cross the railway via a road bridge.

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Rail Bridge to End



After crossing the railway, continue ahead on Drove Lane to reach a T-junction (with Bristol Way to your right and The Drove to your left). Turn left to follow The Drove, passing a primary school on your right. At the end of the road you will reach a T-junction with Northgate.

Turn right along the pavement of Northgate and follow it back towards the centre of Sleaford. Further along, go ahead over the entrance drive for a supermarket and, immediately afterwards, use the pelican crossing to swap to the left-hand pavement of Northgate. Continue along Northgate, passing some beautiful old stone buildings on your left and crossing over two side roads (both called Church Lane).

Just before you reach the next road junction ahead, turn left into the pedestrianised Market Street and this will lead you into the Market Place with the impressive St Deny's Church directly ahead. Cross the Market Place, keeping the church on your left, and then turn left to join the pavement of East Gate, passing the side of the church on your left.

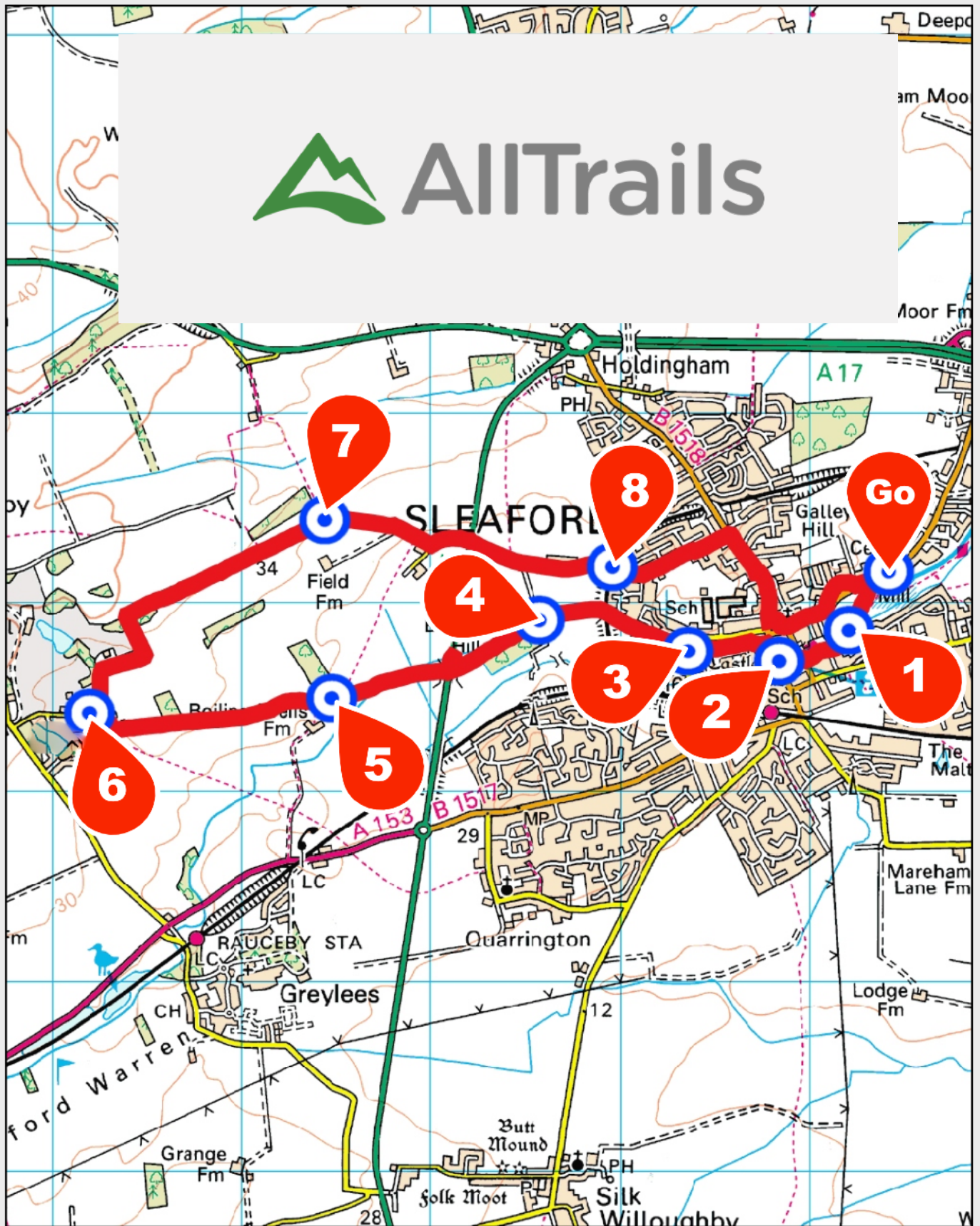
Continue along the left-hand pavement of East Gate, passing the old town hall and Lollycocks Field nature reserve both across to your right. Part way along the nature reserve, use the zebra crossing to swap to the right-hand pavement and, soon afterwards, you will reach the Cogglesford Mill car park on your right 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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