

# The Uppingham Round

**Ordnance Survey map required: Landranger 141. Very roughly, the route takes Uppingham as its centre and describes an extended and winding ovoid.**

**Total Distance, approx 80 miles.**

**Individual distances quoted below are all approximate.**

## Origins and Aims

Having completed most of the long distance, and many other, cross country routes in an area including East Northamptonshire, the Soke of Peterborough, Rutland, Leicestershire and South Nottinghamshire, we wanted to design our own 'round' of reasonable length – about 80 miles as it turned out - taking in some of our favourite routes, but also incorporating others, perhaps less well trodden. The result is The Uppingham Round, which crosses some of the most attractive landscape in the locality, not to mention those features, such as notable parish churches and the Harringworth viaduct, you will find en-route, or close by.

The Uppingham Round came about almost by accident when we walked from East Norton to Blaston. Turning off the road above East Norton one of us remarked on the view ahead, which stretched right into Northamptonshire. It was then a small step to think about how we would get there, and how we might connect up a series of walks, very roughly with Uppingham at the centre. The result is set out below, and we hope you enjoy it as much as we did while we mapped it out. Any problems of access on the route can be reported directly to the relevant local authority. Please note that not all the route is the responsibility of Rutland County Council.

The route was mapped out and written up by David Wragg, with suggestions from Sue and Elizabeth. Thanks to Stuart Crook of Rutland County Council for preparing the PDF.

Please respect the codes of the countryside, and bear in mind that farmers' uses of land may change, and that a path through a field may not always be marked out in the way it was when we walked that section. If in doubt, try to avoid crops by walking round the edges of fields. If you pass through gates please close them after you.

**Elizabeth Bacon,**

**David Wragg,**

**Sue Wragg**

## East Norton to Blaston, 5 miles.

Leave East Norton and cross the A47, taking the side road to Hallaton, a little way East. Ignore the first footpath on the left, climb to the top of the hill and go round the bend. Just before the road descends take the gravelled track opposite the road signpost. Walk on until this track bends round to the right: at this point carry straight on along the grassy, usually rather rutted, track, keeping the hedge to your left. (This may be a crop field; if so, keep close to hedgeline).

Pass through a gate (or use the stile) at the waymarker and hold your course, still with the hedge and later a fence on your left. Go past the marker stone for the Ordnance Survey trig point and at the next waymarker swing right to keep the hedge on your left. Your exit lies up ahead in the corner of the field, through a gate with another waymarker. Go down the farm track and pass Fearn Farm, where it is sometimes possible to stop for refreshments. (Shortly before the farm buildings you will cross the Leicestershire Round which comes up from Allextion on your left and proceeds to Hallaton past the animal pens on your right).



Carry on down the lane until you reach the minor road. Cross the road through the gate with a waymarker and walk ahead keeping

the hedge on your left. (Taller walkers may at this point be able to see the top of Horninghold Church spire to the right of the brick buildings on the edge of the village in the distance). Go through a metal gate, still keeping the hedge to the left, and onto a second gate with a waymarker at the bottom of the field.



Hold your course, this time with the hedge on your right, towards the farm buildings. You will arrive at Horninghold through another set of gates. Passing the barns you will come to a metalled road and houses. Carry on to the T junction and turn right towards Hallaton. At the top of the rise beyond the village take the option on your left at the signpost reading 'Gated Road to Blaston'.

In time you will come to a gate at the top of a rise which lets you into the Estate grounds, where there are usually livestock. Simply carry on down this road until you reach a gate at its end. Pass through and turn left, and then right at the bend in the road, signposted 'Field Road to Medbourne'.

## **Blaston to Great Easton, 4¾ miles.**

Carry on past the delightful village church. After roughly a quarter of a mile, as the lane curves gently to the right, and before you get to the copse, locate a bridleway which leaves the lane on the left by the yellow waymarker.



Go up the rise with the hedge on your left to the waymarker at the top. (The view behind is worth consideration, as it will be on a number of occasions as you move towards Nevill Holt). The waymarker indicates that you should proceed ahead, but there is no obvious path. Better, then, to follow the left hand edge of the field, turning right in the corner before the gate, and continuing downhill, until just before the bottom you find a gap in the hedge with a waymarker. Carry on a short distance to the next waymarker, pass through the trees, and go across the field to the road. (This is the B664 running from Medbourne to Uppingham). Cross the road and hold direction up the slope along the bridleway, now with the hedge on your right. At the top of the field, pass the waymarker and go through the hedge via the gate.

Carry straight on across the field to Nevill Holt, emerging at the 'phone box. Turn right and walk past the Hall on your left until you

find the bridleway on your left. Take this and, passing a couple of waymarkers, proceed down the grassy track until in a few hundred yards you will find a gate, just beyond the point where the track bends to the left. You will then find a double gate which leads to a field, the exit from which can be found on a diagonal course to the top right hand corner. Pass through the gate (the waymarker just beyond) and keep the hedge on your right.

\*\*Bearing in mind that the signage here is inadequate, take the second gate on your right (what remained of the sign was just about visible in June 2010) and track the edge of this field with the hedge now on your left, taking the right angle at the field corner.

Before reaching the end of this field you will come to a double gate in the hedge with a waymaker. Pass through and now enjoy a walk by the hedgerow on your left for several fields, with gates and waymarkers. (As you proceed, Rockingham Castle will come into view in the distance just a little to your right). You will eventually pass through a gate into a field at the end of which some properties in Great Easton are visible.



\*\*It is easy to miss the exit from this field, so keep close to the hedge on your left and locate the waymarker in the dip as the hedge gives way to a fence and gates. Pass through the metal gate, and very shortly another one,

and immediately swing right to find a track which leads out of the field into the village. Take the little road past the brick cottages on your right, which leads to Pitchers Lane.

### **Great Easton to Gretton, 5¼ miles.**

Carry on to the end of this lane and turn left to find the Sun Inn at the T Junction. Walk down the road towards Caldecott away from the Sun Inn. Go out of the village until you come to a No Through Road sign on your right, which is also marked as the Jurassic Way. (This is Gatehouse Lane, though the nameboard is not visible until you take the turn). Proceed ahead and pass through the wooden gate. (Do not take the bridleway going left). Keep to the path around the barn, but turn right onto the grassy track at the barn's corner. Cross the little stream at the brick bridge and hold your course through the next field. Cross the river Welland and carry on, noting Rockingham Castle on the promontory up ahead. (The Castle has a wild garden which is well worth a visit, and the view from the Castle ramparts is worth the detour). When you reach the road turn left to find the Jurassic Way signpost up ahead on the right. This takes you diagonally into Rockingham, emerging at the Sondes Arms, where breakfast is sometimes available, should you be an early riser.

Cross the road and turn right, walking up hill to the next Jurassic Way signpost on the left, marked to Gretton. Go through the yard keeping to the right, and you will see your exit along the line of the fence. Cross the stile immediately in the fence on your left, and move slightly diagonally across the field to the gate in the hedgerow. Passing through will oblige you to turn right into the next field. Carry on with the with hedge on your right – on a clear day you will see Gretton Church in the distance. Pass through the hedge at the end of this field, moving on to a gap in the next hedge, where you will leave the current track as it bends to the right -

you go over the small footbridge. (Your direction is pretty much straight on here).

Looking back from the edge of Gretton



Hold your course to a gate in the fence, and proceed with the hedge on your left. Go through the next gate and swing slightly left to another gate in a hedge. Carry on with the hedge on your right and at a gap in same, where the hedgeline bends to the left, pass through and hold your course, so that the tower of Gretton Church can be seen directly in front. Go through the gap in the next hedge and take the grassy track with the next hedge on your right. This leads to a double gate in the corner of the field. Keeping the hedge on your right, move ahead and cross the footbridge over the stream. Once more, keep the hedge on your right, passing under the power lines and across another footbridge. Still keeping the hedge on your right, your route passes through this hedge and swings right under the railway bridge, turning sharp left immediately at the gate, to run for a while alongside the embankment of the line that links Corby with Manton Junction.

Pass through another gate into the field and move up the steep hill to a gate almost in the right hand corner. You will see a track though the next field leading on a left diagonal into Gretton. (Be sure to pause at the gate to take in the view behind, where you can see

all the way back to Nevill Holt). When you reach the road turn left into the village, round the bend to School Road, turning left.

Carry on and you will see the Church ahead. When you reach the T junction turn right and proceed to the Pocket Park.

**Detour:** anyone interested in railways and railway architecture should certainly visit the Harringworth Viaduct – the longest in England, and still in use. To do so, drive west out of Gretton on the Rockingham road, shortly taking a right turn to Lyddington. When you reach the T junction turn right and simply carry on until you reach the Viaduct. You can drive or walk on more than one road to pass underneath, and there are good vantage points in the locality, for example in Seaton.

### **Gretton to Bulwick, 5½ miles.**

Look for the Jurassic Way at the north eastern edge of the Pocket Park (there is a sign). Go up this path through the gate and into the field. Carry on ahead, ignoring the bridle way which swings round to the left, to the gate in the fence. Cross the next field to the right hand corner (the Jurassic Way sign points straight on, but this is misleading) where there are two gates in quick succession; the second one is at right angles on the left. Go through this and turn right, so that the hedgeline is on your right. In the corner of this field the track bends round to the left, keeping the hedge on your right.

At the next opening in this hedge you will find a gate with bridle way signs. Go through and carry on along the path with the wood on your left until you reach a gap, where you cross the hedgeline and walk in the same direction with the new wood on your right.

Carry on until you meet a more formal gravelled track. Carry straight on for some distance until Harringworth Lodge appears across the water on your left.

As the Jurassic Way bends round to the left, take the footpath right. Follow the marker

through the hedge in front of you and proceed along the grassy track until you

**The route to Bulwick, straight ahead**



come to a minor road. Cross the road and carry straight on along another grassy track.

As you proceed you will see the spire of Laxton Church across the fields to your left. On reaching the trees swing right, with the wood on your left. At the end of the hedgeline, just beyond the wood, turn left and carry on until the track swings right up the rise, at the top of which you turn left across the bridge over the main road. Bulwick Church is now in view straight ahead, but you must turn left at the bottom of this road, then right at the end, to reach it.

### **Bulwick to Kings Cliffe, via Apethorpe, 6½ miles.**

Leave Bulwick by the road at the right hand side of the Church. Just before the gates you pass through the hedge on your left and into the field. Keep the hedge on your right. Very shortly there is a gap in this hedge and a stile. Cross the stile and proceed to the right hand corner of the field, crossing another stile, following the waymark sign. Cross the road and carry on at the 'Footpath' sign. Cross the field with a slight diagonal to a gap in the hedge. Carry on the same line, following the hedgeline at the top on the left, swinging slightly right. Follow the signs, and

aim for the right hand corner of the wood after passing through a gap in the hedge.

As the wood comes to an end, cross the ditch on your left to the wooden bridge which gives access to a big field. Your line roughly follows the waymarker to the far hedge over the slight rise, where you will find a stile. (If the field is ploughed you can walk round its edge, always keeping the hedge on your right). Cross the stile and take a sharp left as indicated by the waymarkers. You will see a derelict stone cottage in front of you. (Explore at your own risk!). Your way out of this field lies diagonally right from the cottage, through a narrow gap in the hedge and then through a gate.

Proceed with the hedge on your right. At the end of the hedge, carry on across the open field in front of you to its right hand corner. Here you turn sharp right and immediately sharp left into the copse. The path here leads across a track and through a gate, and then to a bridge. Cross the bridge and carry on uphill with the hedge on your left. Swing left with the track until you come to a pair of gates, with a new build red cottage affair on your left. Turn right and proceed along the gravel track with the trees on your left.

You will eventually join a more made up road at the edge of the next wood. Turn right towards Apethorpe, which you may already have spotted across the fields. Carry on towards the large house apparently at the end of this road. Before you get there you will reach some farm buildings on your right. Turn left here along the 'Diverted Bridleway'. This route takes you around the small lake to a gate onto the road. Turn left and carry on for the better part of a mile. The houses of the village eventually appear on your right (and depending on the season you may be able to see the Hall, noting the nearby dovecote).

At the T junction you may wish to turn right since there is a pub at the bottom of the road. You may certainly wish to visit

Apethorpe Church, which contains a surprise!

Our route carries on across the road, following the footpath sign to King's Cliffe through a gate. The route is now clear and well signposted, for a while keeping the hedge on your right. You may meet some earthworks with a diverted path (October 2009) which essentially maintains your course until it runs out at a gate on the edge of the village. Here you should turn left and look out for a right turn to the bridge across the stream, and thence past the house and up to the Church. If you walk up the road past the Church you will find a pub called The Cross Keys.



### **King's Cliffe to Barrowden, 5½ miles.**

Your route out of King's Cliffe lies at the other end of the village, where the road leads to Blatherwycke. So after passing the Church, turn left along the main street and go as far as you can until you reach the junction with the road coming from your right.

Turn up Wood Lane opposite and carry on up the track at the end of the metalled section. Going up the rise, this track leads into the wood directly ahead but you should take the stile/gate into the field on your left and proceed with the hedge on your left to a stile

which allows you to cross a fence. Carry on holding the same line, now with the fence on your right.

You will reach the wood ahead and enter over a stile. Keep to the meandering path; you will eventually reach the track bed of the old railway line, where you swing right. Almost immediately, and just before what remains of the bridge pillar, turn left up the bank and swing right to proceed through the avenue of trees.



**Kings Cliffe Wood – route up the bank**

Railings will appear on your right as the path leads a little left, and the railway track bed below you bends away to the right. When the railings end, keep to the path through the wood.

When the fence on your left ends, bear left (not right, which will take you in the wrong direction!). Then bear right when you come to the field and proceed to the gap in the hedge in front of you, where you can see another wood across the field. Walk round the right hand edge of this field until the wood is on your right – the access point is about half way along its length. (It used to be guarded by a stile, but this was broken down in October 2009).

There is another meandering path to follow. You will come to a clearing where you should turn right onto a wider track which leads out

of the wood via a gate.

Go slightly left downhill (the stone buildings should be in front on your right – do not take the stile in front of them which leads away from your route!), aiming for the stone bridge which leads you straight on towards the A43. Walk roughly parallel to the line of poplars on your right; the exit to the road is to the right of the building you can see ahead. Cross the A43 with care and take the gate with a sign 'Bridleway to Laxton'. You will now be following the Jurassic Way to Barrowden: the JW is signposted by circular waymarkers, bearing the image of a *Kallirhynchia sharpi* (looks like shell).

Go straight ahead towards Laxton Hall, but turn right at the next fence, following the JW markers over a stile to Wakerley Wood, which is entered in the right hand corner of the next field, by another stile. Carry on ahead, take a dogleg right-left at the bottom of the slope and proceed to a T junction of the path. Turn left towards a gravelled path, at which turn right. At the end, join the road leading left into Wakerley, with the wood now on you left. (The Jurassic Way marker is placed a bit misleadingly here, suggesting you should go through the car park).



**Kings Cliffe Wood – route ahead at top of bank**

Carry on towards Wakerley, round the bend in the road, after which you will find a sign

leading you through the hedgerow on the left. Walk around two sides of the Church, keeping to the edge of the field. As you turn the corner at the tower you will see a stile in the hedge ahead. Carry on until you come to the road, where you should turn left (ignoring the road to Barrowden). In a couple of hundred yards or so you will come to a sign reading 'Jurassic Way Footpath', leaving the road on your right. Follow the path into Barrowden, crossing the River Welland and skirting round the Mill Pond.

### **Alternative Route around Blatherwycke Lake, 6½ miles.**

At the Blatherwycke end of Kings Cliffe do not walk up Wood Lane. Instead, go down Orchard Lane on the left past the allotments. At their bottom corner take the stile on your right. Maintain a course on the left hand side of the first field and the right hand side of the next. Cross the stile and find the footbridge over Willow Brook. Turn right and carry on along the waterside. After crossing further stiles you will come to Alder's Farm. You should carry on between the buildings, through a gate and over the field to the left hand corner, where there is another stile; then bear right to regain your direction.

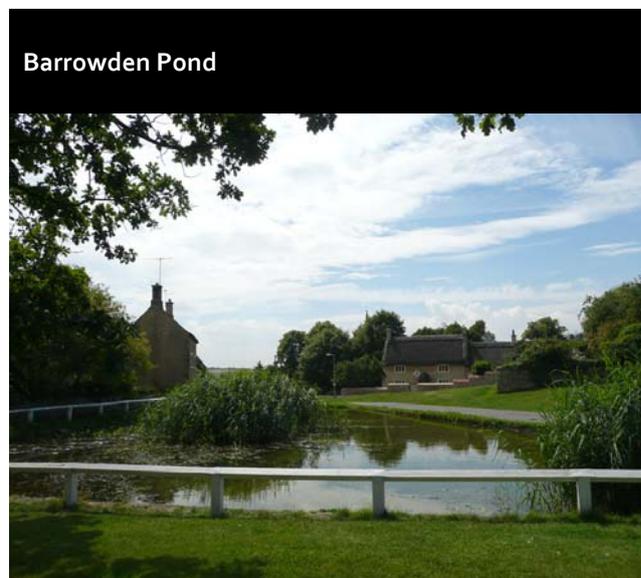
Carry on along the right hand side of this field. Blatherwycke Lake is visible through the trees to your right, and you may find an access point for a better view of the water and its inhabitants. Carry on until you reach Blatherwycke, noting the ruined house on your right.

When you emerge onto the road, turn right and walk towards the other end of the village, crossing the fine stone bridge. When you reach the junction to Wakerley, go over the stile and proceed straight through the field, crossing another stile to continue down the left hand edge of this field. When you reach the corner take a left hand diagonal over the field, heading towards the left hand corner of the trees.

Maintain your route through two gates, bearing right past the corner of the wood and cross the stile next to the stream. Go through the gateways to find the stone bridge on your left, then proceed as above towards the A43 and Wakerley Wood.

### **Barrowden to Wing, 5 miles**

Leave Barrowden by the footpath past the white cricket club buildings in the Park at the northern end of the village. Follow the waymarker through the field and exit through the hedge onto the road. Turn right and proceed to the fast-moving A47. Cross carefully, carrying straight on down the road opposite.



After about 200 yards take the signpost on your right into the field and head diagonally to the stile about halfway along the hedge which appears ahead. Maintain your course to the largish gap in the hedge and then swing left to track a hedge on your left. You will emerge onto the road in the left hand corner of the field. \*Note that the OS map is not sufficiently detailed to guide you through the village, so make sure you follow the next set of instructions carefully.

Go down Hall Lane until you turn left at The Old Boot pub. Carry on to the Church and swing left with the road until you come to a T junction, emerging from The Street. (Do not

exit the area of the Church down Church Lane in the right hand corner - this footpath goes in quite the wrong direction!). Turn right, and proceed past the grassy track to the left and ignore the first signpost at the gap between the stone houses.

At the next signpost on your left, leave the road and follow the track slightly uphill towards the copse up ahead. You will come to a gate which steers you between two fences. North Luffenham is now visible to your right across the fields. Carry on, cross the country lane to North Luffenham, following the signpost up the gravel track, which gives way to its grassy version. Proceed ahead until you meet the road coming round from your right. Follow it ahead (left) into Pilton.



View from Wing Church

At the crossroads, turn right into this small village and swing round left to pass the Church. As you leave the village look out for

a signpost on your left. (In October 2009 it had fallen down and was not easy to spot at a car sized gap in the hedge). Keep to the left hand edge of the field, taking the right turn at the corner to keep the hedge on your left. Keep on until you pass between two posts at the gap in the fence (no waymarkers in October 2009). Your route lies past the left hand edge of the wood, via the next marker post in the hedge up ahead.



Moving past the wood, you are faced by a very large field, the exit from which is not immediately apparent. It lies in the far hedge in front of you (not the one which borders the road to your left), though you might be tempted to think that you can find the road into Wing via the metal gate in the left hand corner of the field. (If it is open, you can: you then simply walk down the road into the village).

Pass through the gap in the hedge, turn left up the road, and immediately right into the field at the signpost. (If this field is under cultivation you may find it easier to carry on up the road to the T junction, then turn right to walk into Wing: the metal gate just mentioned in parenthesis will be at the corner). Moving diagonally, you must cross another couple of small fields and three stiles before emerging on to the road at the edge of the village.

## Wing to Brooke, via Manton, 6 miles, or 6½ miles via Rutland Water

Your route from Wing starts at this same edge of the village where the line across the fields and stiles emerges onto the road at two signposts. (So if you want to visit the Church, or call in at the Kings Arms, you must carry on into the village).



Go down the track, cross the railway line, and carry on along the grassy track in the same direction, with the hedge on your right, crossing the stream by the little stone bridge. Move ahead, and proceed up the rise so that when you look back Wing is directly behind. You will eventually emerge onto a road, where you will see a No Through Road sign opposite, and a board for the Lyndon Visitor Centre. You are now on the edge of Rutland Water and have a choice to make. So:

**A).** Cross the road and turn left, following the footpath into Manton. You will have a view of the Water to your right. Carry on through Manton to the A6003 (see below).

**B).** This is a more interesting, but has a problem which we will come to in a moment. Cross the road and carry on past the No Through Road sign and through the gate. As you walk down the hill, Rutland Water opens up in front of you – a splendid sight. You will

also be able to see Burley Hall away diagonally to your right. The Visitor Centre is well worth inspection, since it contains refreshments, toilets, publications, and bird watching opportunities, including a video of the famous ospreys, which have been successfully reintroduced to the area. (Note that it is not open at all times, especially during the winter months – information is posted).

You could, if necessary, now retrace your steps and proceed as at **A)** above. There is, though, another way out of the Visitor Centre environs, either through a metal gate at the end of the car park and so along the gravel track, or through a wooden gate by the Visitor Centre buildings, along a grassy track which runs roughly parallel.

**\*\*NB:** after extensive correspondence with a host of interested parties from November 2009 to January 2010, including Anglian Water and the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, and after Rutland County Council took legal advice on the situation, it appears that AWA is entitled to make a charge for a permit, obtainable at the Visitor Centre, to pass through the section described in the next paragraph. The permit is aimed at birdwatchers who bed down in the hides further along, and it seems unfair to make a charge for just passing through when the grassy route is only a couple of hundred yards long. The rationale seems to be that this area needs protection from the hordes who might traverse it. The situation is most unsatisfactory for walkers approaching this area from the Manton end (i.e. those doing the Round in a clockwise direction), since at the date of writing there is no warning about the restriction, or the necessity of a permit, until one reaches the Visitor Centre – but that is strictly impossible if the metal and wooden gates are locked. We have pointed this out, and are maintaining a watching brief. Walkers are welcome to contact AWA direct about these matters, or could leave a comment at the Visitor Centre.

If you pass through the wooden gate you will eventually come to a gate on your left through which you can gain access to the gravel track just mentioned. Go through it and continue with the Water still on your right. When you reach the next hide you will find a grassy track swinging away to your left, and then a small metal gate into a field. (This is a bridleway, and is included on the OS map). You can now see Manton in the distance. With the hedge on your left, pass through the gate in the hedge in front and make for the left hand corner of the next field, emerging through another metal gate between the bungalow and the house with dormer windows.

Go down the road, ignoring the footpath on your left. Swing left with the road, past the Village Hall and the Church, and walk up to the T Junction, at a triangle of grass, with a tree in each corner. Turn right and progress

to the A6003, Oakham-Uppingham road, firstly on the footpath, later by means of the grass verge. (Anyone looking for a pub will see the Horse and Jockey down a road to the right). Take extreme care to cross the A6003, which is dangerous at this point. Go down the track opposite.

You will be able to see Gunthorpe Hall to your right across the fields. Carry on through a metal gate and walk towards the stone building in front of you, passing through another metal gate. Pass the building on either side, and make for the pylon up ahead, joining the paved road coming up on your right. Going over the cattle grid you will find information about Old Hall Farm (the stone building) and Martinsthorpe House. From here your route lies straight ahead over mostly grassy and gravel surfaces until you meet a tarmac road at America Lodge.

17



Approaching Launde Wood

Carry on up to the crossroads and turn right to walk down the hill into Brooke to visit a delightful and interesting church. If you want to carry on without visiting Brooke...



Brooke church

### Brooke to Launde Abbey, 5 miles

If you visited the church retrace your steps up the hill to the crossroads and turn right; if you decided to press on when reaching the crossroads simply carry on straight across. In time you will come to a left turn signposted to Leighfield Lodge, which road you should take. (Note that the OS map has it as Leigh Lodge).

Continue along this road, enjoying panoramic views to both sides (assuming you can see over the hedges when these are in leaf!) until you reach Leigh(field) Lodge, passing round a metal gate next to a pair of modern cottages as you proceed. Turn right on to the gavel and dirt track. From here your route is easily followed until you reach Launde Abbey.

So: carry on until you reach a grass track between hedges with a small yellow waymarker, direction straight ahead. After a while go through the little wood and continue along what appears to be a grassed racetrack for horses. (Note that in wet weather there may be boggy patches ahead).

You will reach an intersection which you should cross at a slightly staggered junction at the Rutland-Leicestershire border (see OS map), following the bridleway sign.

Here the track narrows and bends round left and right until at its end you must go over the River Chater on your left, then through a gate into a field. Bear diagonally left and you will see the next waymarker over the rise. Go through the metal gate and carry on to the next marker post. When you reach it go through the metal gate on the right of the two, with the fence on your left. (Make sure you do not take the wrong gate at this point).

The next marker post should now be visible, with its wooden gate, up ahead where the route bends diagonally right. Carry on through, following the trail to the next waymarker and proceed past the little pond to the road, where you should turn left to view the Abbey.



Launde Wood Notice Board

### Launde Abbey to Tilton on the Hill, 5½ miles

Your route initially leads to Launde Big Wood, which is one of the most important woods in Leicestershire, and a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

So keeping Launde Abbey on your left go up the hill and carry on past the cattle grid until

you come to a footpath on your right, opposite a bridleway on your left. Taking the footpath, enter the field along a hardcore track which turns into a grassy track before you reach Launde Big Wood, where you may enter on your right to explore.

Otherwise, simply carry on, keeping the wood on your right. At the wood's end, keep the hedge to your right, but swing round to the left until you reach the road. Turn right, and proceed for approximately a mile and a half. You will note the disused railway track bed on your left (easily viewable at the next crossroads) which the road eventually crosses. Robin-a-Tiptoe hill is in view on your right as you make your way to a signpost which appears as a minor road emerges on your right.



Pass over the stile into the field and head for the wood on the hill in front of you. When we walked this section all the crop fields had paths through them, courtesy of a considerate farmer. But if the route through the field is not indicated, aim for the steeple of Tilton Church, which appears at a left diagonal up ahead.

Cross the ditch at the next waymarker and maintain a slightly diagonal course towards the steeple. At the end of this field, pass through the hedge with its waymarker, and

hold course through another hedge to the next waymarker.

At the next hedge, cross the stile into a grassy field with a minor powerline overhead. Aim for the metal gate in the fence and the next waymarker. Go through this gate and hold course for the trees up ahead. Cross an unmarked stile in the next fence, with Tilton steeple now diagonally to your right, and head for the waymarker in the next fence, with the trees now on your right. At the stile, locate the next waymarker almost straight ahead beyond the dip in the field and proceed, emerging onto the road. (When we walked this section in May 2010 a fence was in being constructed in the dip, which may when completed contain a gate or a stile).

Turn right and walk into Tilton, passing the pond on your left before reaching the Churchyard, then swinging left to find the main road which connects the A47 with Melton Mowbray.

### **Tilton to Hungarton, 5¼ miles**

**Note:** Parts of this section of the walk can be boggy. We have avoided that part of the Midshires Way (MSW) which passes through Hammer's Lodge Farm because of a very muddy and slippery downhill section that can at times be almost impassable, though we understand the steps are in hand to improve it. The route we have chosen is a good deal better, but waterproof socks or boots may be advisable.

From the Rose and Crown advance to the main road which links the A47 and Melton Mowbray. Turn left and walk along the pavement, beyond the village, until you spot a footpath sign in the hedge on the other side of the road (your right). Go over the stile to the next yellow waymarker and the next stile. Carry on to the next waymarker, making sure that you are not misled by the route of the MSW.

The views from here are stunning, stretching all the way to the Vale of Belvoir. (Assuming

fine weather you will be able to see Trent Power Station over to your right).

Keep the hedge on your left as you proceed down the slope, where the next two yellow waymarkers come into view. At the second of these go through the trees and find the next waymarker. Go over the stile and carry on, still with the hedge on your left.

The next waymarker will appear: when you reach it cross the bridge and then the stile, always keeping the hedge on your left. The next waymarker will be visible in the hedge up ahead, to the right of the gate that leads to the farm buildings.

Proceed then to the next waymarker, aiming slightly right. You will reach a metal gate that allows you to cross the old railway track bed. Your route lies straight ahead up the bank, over the stile, and again in the next hedge, when you will reach Cold Newton. Access the road, turn left, and immediately right to find a gate and waymarker at the back of the village, passing by the farm buildings now on your left. Go through the gate and hold your course to the next waymarker.

Go through the metal gate and turn right to the next waymarker, which stands close by. Go over the stile into a big undulating field. Track the right hand edge of this field until you come to the next waymarker, which leads you down some steps into the trees, across the stream and out again into another field, where you will see two waymarkers for the MSW.

Cross the bridge and go through the metal gate, turning immediately left to follow the hedgeline on your left. The next waymarker is in the bottom left corner of this field. Go through the gate and aim slightly left to locate the next waymarker in the hedge up the rise. Go through the gate and again aim slightly left to reach White Barn. At White Barn the MSW continues into the copse at yet another yellow waymarker. Your route, however, follows the road over the cattle grid

past the house on your left. Turn right immediately at the T Junction on the road marked to Hungarton, signposted one and a half miles. Go down this road and in a little over a quarter of a mile you will find a waymarker on your left. Your route to Hungarton is now clearly signposted across the fields.



When you come to the large meadow keep the hedge on your right until at the bottom of gently sloping ground you will find a gate over on the left (not to be confused with the one immediately to your right which leads away from the village). Go through and along this, probably muddy, track, through the (even muddier) farmyard and along to the Church.

### **Hungarton to Billesdon, 6 miles**

As you arrive from the farmyard with the Church on your right, take the footpath on the left. Go down the grassy path past Brooke Cottage, through the gates, and across the stream, following the waymarker direction up the slope to meet the waymarker in the hedge up ahead. Cross the bridge and take a left diagonal course to the boundary of the Quenby Hall Estate.

Enter the Estate, past the Lodge on your left and carry on along the road towards the Hall. Your route around the Hall bears to the right,

so leave the road just before the stone bridge and head diagonally towards the right hand edge of the Hall's boundary wall. Go through the gate and pass the Hall keeping its wall on your left. Make for the track which you will see emerging from the Hall over to your left and carry on along it, ignoring the first waymarker on your left. Go through the first metal gate, and carry on to the next gate.

NB: Signage could be better here so please follow the next set of instructions carefully, because the OS map (or at least the version we used) is temporarily misleading.



Quenby Hall, front view (walkers pass on the right)

At the gate turn right as indicated by the waymarker but having passed immediately through the next gate with its waymarker, go diagonally right to the bottom corner of the field. Go through the gate and cross the dip of the old railway track bed (you will be lower than the original embankment) to look for the next waymarker which is concealed by the trees on your left. Turn left here and head for Cold Newton Lodge, up ahead. Pass through a gate, and then another one. Then bear slightly right so that the Lodge is kept to your left ahead.

(Do not mistake this part of the walk – the waymarker you can see to the left of the Lodge is not the one you want). Go past the edge of the little orchard up to the

waymarker which lets you up onto the road emerging from the Lodge. Turn right and head for the road proper, noting the splendid view of Quenby Hall to your right.

Turn right and proceed for a couple of hundred yards or so to the metal gates in the hedge on the other side of the road. This is not marked as a footpath, though it is shown on the OS map. Go through the smaller gate, and head for the crook of the woods on your left. Here you will find a waymarker which indicates the entrance to Botany Bay Fox Covert, with a clearly defined path in front of you. This brings you out onto the road.

Being careful of traffic, cross to the next signpost which is just over the road to your right. Go between the houses and carry straight on between the buildings (note the interesting Bothy on your left) through gates into the field. Your route lies over a stile by the shed (not through the gate to its left) which admits you to another, bigger, field which you should cross diagonally. Go over four stiles in fairly quick succession, all with waymarkers, and then a double stile as you head up towards the A47, passing the smallholding with its delightful variety of animals and fowl.



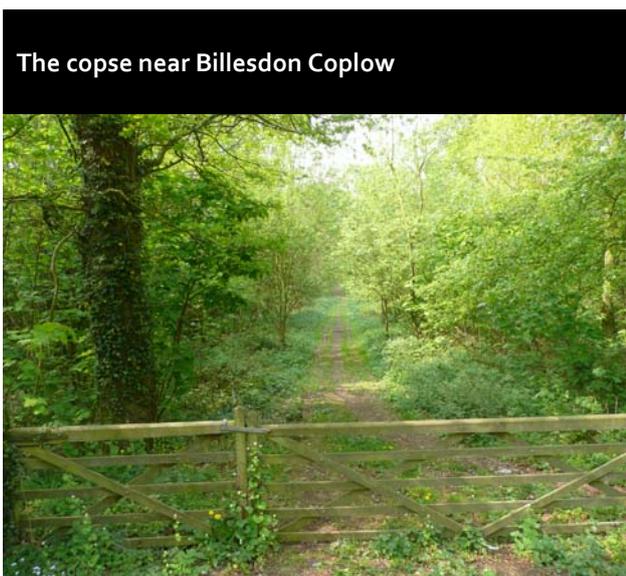
View between Tilton and Billesdon Coplow

Cross the fast and usually busy A47 with care, and follow the signs to Billesdon which

is a quarter of a mile in front of you, carrying on once there to the Church, which is clearly visible. (Once across the A47 make sure to look back at Billesdon Coplow wood and take in the panoramic view towards Loughborough).

### **Billesdon to Goadby, 4½ miles**

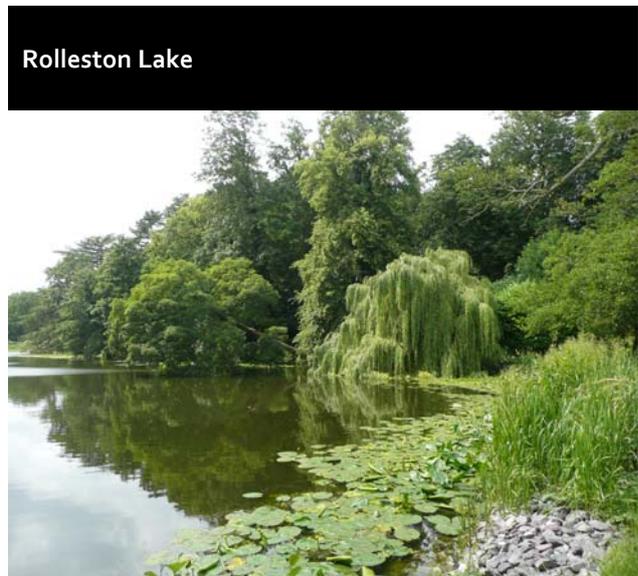
Walk up the road from Billesdon Church past Gaulby Road and take the footpath on the left into a field. Go up the rise and past the waymarker standing all by itself to the next waymarker up ahead in the hedge. Go over the stile next to the metal gate. Carry on up the rise, looking back at the splendid view, to the next waymarker where you cross the B6047 and proceed ahead. Go round the left hand corner of the hedge in front of you to find the next waymarker. Using this as a guide, aim for a half right diagonal into the dip of the field with the copse ahead. (There is an interim waymarker at the corner of the hedge on your right). Your exit from this field is marked by some ash trees at the bottom of the dip. Go through the gate, and turn immediately right to cross the stream again to find a path through the next field which should run diagonally right until it meets the hedge on your right, as it bends round.



**The copse near Billesdon Coplow**

(If the path is not marked, just go round the edge of the field keeping the hedge on your

right). Find the two waymarkers, go over the stile and aim diagonally right to the next waymarker in the hedge, where you now proceed at a sharp diagonal left to find the road, passing through a metal gate. Turn right and simply carry on into Rolleston, which will come into view up ahead.



**Rolleston Lake**

You will reach a signpost at the T junction where you should turn left, and then left again at the next signpost marking the bridleway to Goadby, which presents itself as a Private Road over which you have a right to walk. You will pass through the Estate, noting the church on your right, and later the splendid lake.

Carry on until, going downhill, the track leans to the right. At this point carry more-or-less straight on with the grassy track, rather than following the road. (If the field is under cultivation, a path should be cut through the crop). There is an electricity pylon ahead which should be a little to your left. Aim for the place where the hedge meets you as it comes over on the left (do not take the gap), walk along under the power lines, keeping this hedge on your left.

Pass through two wooden gates with waymarkers, crossing the stream, swing left and then immediately go uphill to the right hand corner of the field where you will find

another gate. Pass through (the view behind is worth a look) and continue down the narrow footpath between hedge and fence to the road, where you must turn right.

### **Goadby to Glooston, 4¾ miles**

Goadby is a delightful small village in East Leicestershire and you may decide to walk up the hill to investigate. If not, carry on along the road, up the hill and past Noseley Hall, until you find a bridleway on the left. Pass through the metal gate and proceed to the next waymarker at another metal gate, where you hold direction to a third such gate with buildings on your left.

Carry on down the track to the next waymarker and hold your course to the corner of the wood, along the grassy trail. You will come to another metal gate where you turn left and proceed along the line of the fence (noting Noseley Hall and its nearby church over to your left) before entering the wood.



**Leicestershire Round & Midshires Way at Cranoe**

Hold your course until you emerge, then carry on downhill (Goadby now over to your left). Cross the stream at the waymarker and carry on up the hill with the electricity pylons to your left. You will find a wide grassy track where you should turn right, away from the pylons.

Your route now lies straight ahead, following this track, past another waymarker. Eventually, at the top of a rise, you will see the square church tower of Church Langton in the distance, pretty much straight in front, which moves to the left as you progress.

You will reach the four way signpost, situated somewhat incongruously in the middle of 'nowhere', where you must turn left towards Glooston. Your route lies straightforwardly along this track until you reach the village.

### **Glooston to East Norton, 5½ miles**

You may have paused at The Old Barn for refreshment. (NB: When walking part of this route again in June 2012 we noted that this establishment seemed to have closed down). Anyway, carry on along the road and hold your course at the cross roads and proceed towards Cranoe along the minor road. Long views will soon open out again.

After a while you will see a footpath on your left which you may take to another waymarker and a stile. This path may cross a crop field so you may wish to carry on down the road for a short distance until, rounding the left hand bend just outside Cranoe, you will find signs for the Midshires Way and the Leicestershire Round on your left by a gate and stile.

Follow the route for the former, up the grassy slope, passing the aforementioned waymarker on your left. Keeping the hedge on your left simply hold your course through two metal gates along a well marked grassy trail.

You will eventually arrive at a left-right dogleg on the MSW, where a gravel track comes up from your right from Hallaton. Hold course along what looks like a farm track, passing Keythorpe Lodge Farm on your left, and then the rather bigger cattle barns of Keythorpe Hall Farm on your right. (Keythorpe Hall can be seen on top of the hill up ahead).

Simply carry on until you reach the cross roads. At the cross roads leave the MSW, which carries on up the road into Tugby, and turn right along the road signposted to East Norton and Hallaton and proceed for about a mile until you pass the house on the left. Just beyond this property, at the bend in the road, you will find a bridleway which leads you uphill with a wood on your left.

Ignore the next waymarker and hold direction, going round the corner of the wood. Behind and to your left there is now a huge view stretching into Northamptonshire.

Carry on and you will see East Norton in the valley to your left. When you reach the road, if you began the Round from East Norton turn left and walk downhill to the A47. Cross with care and walk into the village.

For those who began elsewhere, turn right to find the gravelled track next up on your left and proceed as at the start of these directions (East Norton to Blaston)

### **Alternative Route from Cranoe, 4 miles**

The above directions provide a satisfying conclusion for those who, like us, began the walk at East Norton. Those who started at another staging post may wish to omit the route to and from East Norton, even if by doing this you will miss some splendid views.

At Cranoe, (ignoring the first signpost along the road from Glooston) instead of taking the MSW, proceed instead along the Leicestershire Round which departs diagonally over the field. This is well signposted and will lead you through to Hallaton.

You may then connect with Horninghold via the footpath which leaves Hallaton bearing East North East. From Horninghold then follow the route described above to Blaston, Nevill Holt, Great Easton, etc..

**View across the Welland Valley from the road between Glooston and Cranoe**

