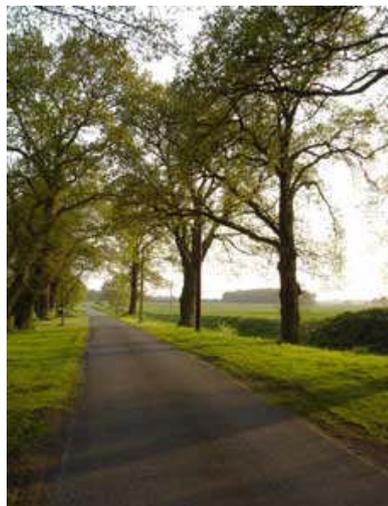


Walk 10 - The Viking Way & Water Rail Way

The Viking Way is a 147 mile (235km) footpath linking Barton-upon-Humber in the north to Oakham in the south.

From the Humber Bridge this gentle route heads south along the Lincolnshire Wolds through territory once occupied by Vikings to Horncastle, Woodhall Spa and Lincoln, finishing near Rutland Water. Almost the entire route forms part of European path E2.

Start from Royal Square (Grid Reference: TF 193631) is on the route.



To follow the route 'south' to Lincoln and Oakham, cross Station Road by the mini roundabout and head north along Stixwoud Road (this misses a section running through a new housing estate). Walk past Jubilee Park and the Petwood Hotel and turn left onto Green Lane. Continue westwards past a few houses and the northern boundary of Jubilee Park camping and caravanning ground.

Woodhall Spa is particularly fortunate in still retaining some fine hedgerows with all their abundant wildlife. Along Green Lane you too will be able to appreciate them. Honeysuckle, wild roses, blackberries, elderberries and hawthorns all abound in season. Walking quietly, stoats and weasels sometimes scuttle across the road and there are inevitable rabbits and wild birds. Some times moorhens and even ducks can be seen near the ponds and drainage ditches.

The Viking Way cuts across Green Lane approximately threequarters of a mile down. Turn right onto the track and follow it north until it rejoins Stixwoud Road. Turn left onto the road and left again after two hundred yards onto Green Lane (a different one). Follow the lane to its very end (1 mile) alongside what used to be Stixwoud Railway Station and the new Water Rail Way.

The Water Rail Way, is the latest link in the Lincoln to Boston Footpath and Cycleway project, completed in August 2007 by Sustrans (Sustainable Transport). It creates a new off-road route along the River Witham from Kirkstead Bridge near Woodhall Spa to Lincoln via Bardney. The route is appropriately named 'Water Rail Way' because it is based on the track bed of the disused Boston to Lincoln railway line and the secretive 'Water Rail' bird has been spotted along the river bank. Now that the track is complete the existing Harwich to Hull Cycleway has been rerouted along it.

Turn left on the track and head south for Kirkstead Bridge. Lincolnshire Long Wool sheep are usually to be found grazing beside this stretch of the track and you will find that one particular group are not easily intimidated and will insist in crossing in front of you. Eventually you will reach a gate and Kirkstead Bridge will be visible in the distance. Continue along the track and pass through another gate near the pumping station. Just in front of you and just before the bridge, are the moorings which attract a variety of colourful barges and pleasure craft during the summer months.



At this point you have the option of returning to Royal Square by a quiet country lane and Jubilee Park or via the old railway station, Railway Hotel (refreshments) and Witham Road.

Option 1 - Country Lane

Turn left through the gate and onto the Drainage Board track next alongside the pumping station. A walk of 200 yards through two more gates will bring you to Mill Lane. Turn left here and follow the road round to the right onto Green Lane. Half a mile will bring you back to the point at which you joined the Viking Way.



On the way as the road sweeps down into the Spa, you will pass the Jubilee Park. You may decide to stop and watch the bowls, tennis, putting, croquet or cricket in season, perhaps to look in on the open air heated swimming pool, sit in the gardens or take refreshment in the cafe.

Option 2 - Witham Road

The Water Rail Way track ends just beyond the bridge alongside Woodhall Spa Junction Station buildings (now in private ownership) and the old ferry crossing point. Turn left through the old railway crossing gates and head for the Railway Hotel. Those heading for Boston will now have to

cross the bridge and continue their journey south on the country lane running along the river bank.

To return to Woodhall Spa, walkers should continue east along Witham Road. Royal Square is approximately one mile from the river bank.

At this point bear left on to the old road which leads to the Railway Hotel, and the old river ferry crossing point. Pass through the old railway crossing gates and you are now on the former track bed. Turn right for Bardney and Lincoln and pass under the road bridge. Continue north to until you reach the platform and signal box of what used to be Stixwold Station.



To follow the route 'north' to Horncastle, use the guide for Walks 2,3,4 & 5 (Specifically 5)

Visit the Ramblers Association website: www.ramblers.org.uk