

Gainsborough & The Trent

Start: Ample roadside parking on left (east) side of A156 Lea Road, south of Lea Road railway station. (SK822878) Nearest Post Code DN21 1AQ

Distance: 11 miles

Refreshments: Stag's Head pub (5 miles), Rose & Crown (7 miles)

This walk, which crosses typical northwest Lincolnshire countryside, is only made possible by the inclusion of two lengths of Permissive Footpath. Access ends in April 2018 and July 2019, so plenty of time to walk this route.

The course of the River Trent is followed for some distance, and there are stretches of unavoidable road walking. I walked the route in November, when few cross-field paths had been reinstated after ploughing; hence the detailed description of field crossings in the text may be superfluous in the summer. Also likely to be less muddy!

From your parking spot, head south and cross the road when convenient. Walk about 0.25 mile and look for Causeway Lane on the right, opposite a phone box. It's signed 'landfill site', but that's a parallel lane that you don't want!

Follow the lane, going through a metal gate to reach the bank of the Trent. You will follow the river for almost 3 miles, with varying views. You may choose to walk this first part on the field edge, climbing to the dyke as the prospect changes. You climb three stiles on this stretch, the last one bringing you opposite EDF Energy's West Burton power station **POINT A**. Beyond here, the dyke moves away from the river so you have pleasant walking along the bank, interrupted by stiles and gates at intervals (some gates require climbing).

At **POINT B** you join a permissive path, though there is nothing on the ground to indicate it. Eventually, the sound of traffic can be heard, heralding a little more road walking. By field gates left and right, a fenced path leads you away from the river to a small parking area. At the road, turn right and follow the pavement for 300 yards to reach the village of Knaith.

The name 'Knaith' comes from the Anglo-Saxon 'cneothythe', 'the landing place by the river bend' Cross with care and take the first turning left – Knaith Hill. Keep to the road until a sharp left bend is reached and here, take the track right, then in a short distance go left on a signed path following the edge of the woodland **POINT C**.

This pleasant path eventually leads to a railway crossing, beyond which you continue ahead initially through trees, then along a field edge with a stream to your left to arrive at paddocks. The path is well marked and directs you right, then with fences either side leads you to a road. Go left, walking with care to enter the village of Knaith Park, then take the first turning right, signed Upton (unless visiting the Stag's Head pub a short distance further **POINT D**). Follow Upton Road to a left bend, and here, go ahead into a field, walking with a ditch to your right. In the far corner, climb a stile, then continue in the same direction, over another stile, and on, to cross a ditch into the third field. At the far corner of this field, do a right-left dogleg **POINT E** and walk now with the boundary left. Before reaching the field corner, look for a waymark directing you half-right, over the field to a footbridge that you cross. Ahead, you will see two long barns. The path heads out across the field and passes between them – choose your own route to reach the gap if the path hasn't been reinstated. Passing between the barns you reach the farmyard. It's likely that a high metal gate will block your passage – the latch is on the left, halfway up. Cross the yard and go straight ahead passing barns on your right, then a house left. Finally, a narrow, sloping path brings you to a road, where you turn left.

Walk into the village of Upton, passing the Rose & Crown on the left and church on the right. Continue to a right bend where you go ahead on Cade Lane and take a footpath on the left. Pass

through the gate, cross the field and go through another gate, then head out diagonally across the next field, veering left to a kissing gate **POINT F**.

In the next field, cut diagonally across the corner. If the path is unclear, look for the row of electricity poles following the field edge – there are six of them, aim to the third one, where a few yards beyond, you'll find a footbridge that you cross. Note the direction the waymark arrow is pointing and cross the field to a gap in the hedge, then cross the next field in the same direction, crossing a footbridge to a road.

Go right along the road as far as the gates of Walk Farm, then cross to the finger post and follow its direction diagonally across the field to a footbridge. Beyond, cross the next field diagonally left, aiming just right of the red-roofed cottage in the distance. Before you reach it, there is another footbridge to cross **POINT G** then a further field where you continue in the same direction, keeping to the right of the lone tree. At the far side, pass through a gate then continue a short distance to another and a driveway beyond.

Cross to another field, then turn left, walking the field boundary with the hedge on the left. A finger post directs you left **POINT H** into a further field where you follow the field edge with a ditch to your right. In the next field, continue along the edge to the corner of the woodland and here, strike out across the field in the same direction, keeping an eye out for a finger post on the far side by a broad gap in the hedge **POINT I**. Turn right in the next field and walk to the corner and another waymark. Now strike out across the field, aiming for the far end of a row of trees along the opposite boundary, (a waymark becomes evident as you reach the high point of the field). The waymark directs you along a grass track to a further marker, then ahead along the field edge, boundary right. At a driveway **POINT J** turn right and follow it to a road.

Cross, and go left, with a modern housing development to your right. You have about a mile of road walking to the end of the route, so follow the pavement until it bears right and runs downhill **POINT K**. Notice a memorial stone in a patch of woodland on the opposite side of the road; this commemorates the battle of Gainsborough

Also called the Battle of Lea, it was fought on 28 July 1643. The people of Gainsborough wished to remain neutral during the Civil War, but the town was seized for the King in 1642. A force of Parliamentarians attacked the town in 1643, with Cromwell leading the attacking force. The site of the battle was Foxby Hill, near to your present location, and The Royalists held the top of the hill. The Parliamentarians attacked up the hill from the south, driving the Royalists down the other side into the marshy area next to the Trent. This Parliamentary holding of Gainsborough was short-lived, as, the town was recaptured the next day after Cromwell had retreated to Lincoln. However, on 20th December 1643, a large Parliamentary force stormed the town and for the remainder of the Civil War, Gainsborough was under Parliamentary control.

At a junction with garage ahead, go left, then cross the road at the lights. Continue on the pavement, passing Lea Road railway station (teas, cakes etc. in the café here), then go under the railway bridge, continuing to your transport.

