

Hough-on-the-Hill

Start: Playing field car park at Fulbeck on the A607 Lincoln-Grantham road. (SK949504) Post Code: NG32 3JL

Distance: 8.5 miles

Refreshments: Hare & Hounds (walk end), Waggon & Horses & Red Lion, Caythorpe (3/4 distance). Craft Centre teashop in Fulbeck (passed at end of walk)

A walk following a section of the Lincoln Edge, visiting villages on the spring line and affording good views. Mostly field paths (some cropped cross-field paths if walked at the wrong time of the year,) and short stretches of quiet roads.

From the car park or bus stop (Interconnect 1 Lincoln - Grantham), pass the Hare & Hounds across the road to your right and keep on the pavement as it parts from the road, cutting the corner to Lime Tree Close at its junction with South Heath Lane. **POINT A.**

Turn left and follow the pavement until it peters out and you are forced to cross to the one opposite. As this ends at the last house on the right, notice a few yards further, a track left and grassed area right; this was the course of the Honington and Lincoln Railway.

The Railway was opened in 1867 by the GNR to provide a more direct route from Lincoln to London and to connect the villages between Lincoln and Grantham. It also gave access to local iron ore deposits that were quarried and sent to Derbyshire and Scunthorpe until World War I (several quarry branch lines between here and Caythorpe are still discernable on the OS map). Use of the line declined in the 1930s with growing competition from buses and it was closed for regular services in 1962, but was used occasionally until 1965.

Continue along the road passing poultry sheds on the right, until a finger post on the right directs you along a farm drive. Skirt the metal barriers and go up to the left and the field edge. You will have difficulty here if the cross-field path has not been reinstated! First, look for the uprights of a footbridge in the far boundary (note that the OS maps show three field boundaries that no longer exist!). Head out across the field, roughly parallel to the stream on your left. Three-quarters of the way across **POINT B**, look to the far right side of the field. You need to make for a transformer placed on power poles located by an opening in the hedge. If you can see it, fine; if not, aim roughly for the far right corner of the field and adjust your route when you get a better view.

Anyway, I'm sure you will find the path cleared of crops and with a waymark post at the change of path direction!

So, having reached the gap in the boundary, go through and turn left, with an embankment on your right. Follow the track to the top of the field and round to the right, continuing to reach a surfaced track, then onto grass. Turn right in a few yards between trees and bushes, passing a lake on the right **POINT C.**

When you reach the end of a row of conifers and a fine house over to your left, walk to the right of the conifers, along a field-edge path. At the top of the path, walk right, along the field edge with a low wall to your left, replaced by trees as you lose height. Where hedges replace the trees, go right through a gap into another field and cross diagonally right aiming for an electricity pole in the further field, framed between two trees. Pass through a waymarked gap in the far boundary to another field, then walk diagonally across in the same direction towards the right boundary and distant factory units.

Cross a ditch to a track and turn left, walking to a road where you turn right along the pavement and continuing a short distance to cross a footbridge on the left **POINT D.** Go ahead to the far side of the field and over another bridge, then turn left and walk along the field edge, boundary left. At the corner, go right and follow the boundary to the next corner, ignoring a footbridge on the left just

before it. At the corner, go right again (three sides of a square) with the boundary on your left and head for metal gates.

Don't go through the gates, but turn left along the field edge, boundary right. Continue to a footbridge, cross, then walk ahead, boundary right and cross the old railway again **POINT E**. Keep to the right boundary until it bears right and here, look for a cross-field path left. Take this to a footbridge and road beyond. Turn right along the road towards Frieston, crossing the main road to Hough Road.

Walk along the road into the village to reach the green, where you go right into Frieston Road, signed Caythorpe. Follow this to the right bend where you go left, over a stile into a field. Here, ignore the waymark, but walk ahead keeping to the left boundary to reach metal gates on the left, a few yards before the field corner **POINT F**. Pass through and walk down the track for a few yards before going right along another track that leads you back up to the fields, where you walk left again.

There are good views from the path now as you are following the western scarp of the Lincolnshire Edge.

The scarp is formed of oolitic limestone and is remarkable for its length and straightness. Never rising more than 150 feet it runs for over 50 miles from the Leicestershire border near Grantham to the River Humber, and is broken only twice by river gaps at Ancaster and Lincoln. The view right is to the Trent Valley.

After passing a fire beacon, go ahead across a track and on to a cross-field path that takes you towards a farm. At the far side, climb a stile and go ahead to another. Beyond, walk ahead, picking up a boundary on the left and continuing to the field corner where a gate gives access to a lane. Turn left and walk to crossroads where you go right, along High Road to reach the church. Pass through the new lychgate to reach it.

The Church of All Saints has 11C origins and was built on the site of a medieval motte and bailey castle on raised ground known as Castle Hill. The church is notable for its Saxon tower and unusual circular stairway, one of only four remaining Anglo-Saxon stair-turrets in the UK. The top storey of the tower was added during the 15th century.

The name Hough is Old English 'haga', or 'enclosure'. The parish is listed in the 1086 Domesday Book as Hag, and it's not clear when the 'on the Hill' suffix was added, but it was apparently done to differentiate the village from similarly named places on railway time tables!

At the far side of the church, go through the graveyard and pick up a path running past the Old School House and going downhill to a road. Opposite is Thompson's Lane, follow this to a junction where you climb the stile opposite **POINT G**.

Walk across the field to a gap in the far hedge where you climb another stile, then follow the field edge path, boundary left with the spire of Caythorpe Church ahead on the horizon. Walk ahead through a second and third field, then climb a stile into pasture where you keep in the same direction with the roofs of houses appearing on the horizon. Just before reaching the houses, climb a stile on the left and turn right **POINT H**.

With the field boundary to your right, cross the field diagonally to meet a boundary corner on the top side (with luck, the path will be visible on the ground). Now keep with the boundary to reach a lane, where you go ahead onto South Parade, ignoring a footpath right and road left. At a T-junction, turn left and walk through the Caythorpe village, passing the Waggon & Horses left then the Red Lion right **POINT I**.

Walk to the junction with the church ahead and turn left onto Church Lane. Follow the road, bearing right into Waterloo Road, and keeping with it as it leaves the village. Just beyond a right bend where Gorse Hill Lane joins from the left, look for a fingerpost on the right **POINT J**. Follow the footpath along the field edge with a smallholding on the right. As the boundary reaches a corner,

strike out across the field to the hedge ahead, then continue along the field edge with the boundary right to reach a T-junction.

Turn right along this bridleway, continuing as grass gives way to a surfaced track and eventually reaching a finger post on the left just before a road. Go left here following the field edge path and as you approach the top corner, cross a footbridge right **POINT K**, then walk diagonally left across the field to reach a footpath between properties, then on to a lane.

Follow the lane into Fulbeck and at cross roads, turn right into Washdyke Road and walk to a point where the lane narrows between old walls. Here, take a signed path up left and on reaching the top, the craft centre has a teashop through the iron gates on the left. To finish the circuit, walk ahead along the pavement, passing the 17th century Grade II listed Hare & Hounds where you cross to the bus stop or car park.

