

SPIRES AND STEEPLES

Part 1:

LINCOLN TO BRANSTON



Moderate Terrain

7 Miles
Linear
3.5 hours

160519



Access Notes

1. There is one long steep downhill stretch through Lincoln and several other gentle gradients throughout.
2. More than half of the route uses hard-surfaced paths, the remainder being grass paths that can be muddy at times and some narrow stretches that are prone to being a little overgrown.
3. You will need to negotiate some steps, footbridges and single gates, but there are no stiles or livestock on route.
4. OS Map Explorer 272 Lincoln.
5. Please remember the Countryside Code.



A 7 mile (11km) linear walk from Lincoln to Branston, forming the first part of the Spires and Steeples Trail in Lincolnshire.

You will have chance to explore some of the key attractions in Lincoln, including the cathedral, castle, churches and museums, before setting off alongside the River Witham. Passing through the village of Washingborough, the trail takes you through parks and arable farmland to follow a pretty stream into the village of Branston. The village is home to another beautiful church, several artworks and an old waterwheel that once generated the local supply.

ABOUT: The Spires and Steeples Arts and Heritage Trail is a 27 mile (43km) linear long-distance walk from Lincoln to Sleaford. The name refers to the spires of churches being the landmarks to which visitors make their way and to the rural sport of steeple chasing. This guide is 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.

LOGISTICS: As a linear walk, you will need to make transport arrangements for the return leg. The return leg can be completed by a 25-minute bus journey via Bus Number 2. This normally runs every 30 minutes Mon-Sat and every two hours on Sundays. Check details via Traveline on 0871 2002233 or at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/busrailtravel. Alternatively, you could use two cars. If this stretch sounds too long for you, it is possible to split it into two parts, breaking the trail at Washingborough.

FACILITIES: Refreshments are available in Lincoln at the start of the walk, at the Ferry Boat or Hunters Leap pubs in Washingborough half way along, and at the Waggon and Horses pub or Branston Cafe in Branston at the end of the walk.

Getting there

The walk begins at Lincoln Cathedral and ends at All Saints Church in the centre of Branston. If you are coming by train, Lincoln Station is in St Mary's Street, off the High Street. The bus station is in Norman Street, an extension of St Mary's Street. If you are coming by car, parking is available in Lincoln at various locations in both the upper and lower city.

Approximate post code for one long stay parking option is LN2 5AP.



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Walk Sections

Go 1 Start to Jews' Court



The walk begins directly outside the front of Lincoln Cathedral, with the pair of towers towering above you. For generations Lincoln Cathedral was the tallest building in the medieval world. If the Spires and Steeples walk had existed 200 years ago, it would have begun in the shadow of two mighty spires on the cathedral's twin west towers. They were removed in 1807, a storm having already destroyed one of the central towers in 1548. The towers still stand at 82.8 metres high, although the spires once added a further 100 metres.

Standing with your back to the cathedral frontage, walk ahead through the stone Exchequer Gate (circa 1320). Immediately afterwards pause a moment to understand the history of the surrounding buildings. On your right is the side wall of the Church of St Mary Magdalene with St Paul in the Bail and St Michael on the Mount – maybe the longest dedication in the land. Directly ahead of you across the square you will see Lincoln Castle. Although occupying a Roman site, it mostly dates from 1068. Inside, should you wish to visit, you will find a Victorian prison and an exhibition that includes an original copy of the 1215 Magna Carta.

Walk ahead a few paces into the square and then turn immediately left into Steep Hill, heading steeply downhill. At the bottom of the first stretch, there is an old stone house on your left, The Norman House, which has a plaque showing it to date from 1170. Keep straight ahead at this junction (ignoring one left turn and two right turns), continuing down Steep Hill. At the fork in the road, take the right-hand branch, continuing steeply downhill (ignoring Danesgate which branches left).

Where the pavement railings end, keep ahead for another stretch to reach a junction with an early medieval stone building on your right, Jews' Court. This was formerly a Synagogue or school room.

1 2 Jews' Court to River Witham

With Jews' Court on your right, turn left along the side road (Danes Terrace), signed to Collection and Usher Gallery. You will approach The Collection, Lincoln's art and history museum and gallery, which you can visit should you wish. Immediately before The Collection building, turn right down the side road (signed to High Street and Drill Hall). This road is Flaxengate and leads you past the tall stone walls of the museum on your left.

Continue downhill and use the two pedestrian crossings to cross over Clasketgate and then Silver Street. Beyond the



second crossing, turn left and then immediately right into Freeschool Lane. There are three buildings of interest along this street. First on your left is a brick gable end, part of the performance venue Drill Hall, which has a large metal sculpture based on a Commedia dell'arte mask by Rick Kirby. Next comes Lincoln Library, with its beautiful domed roof. Third is St Swithin's Church, the first spire on our walk.

At the T-junction, cross diagonally right over the road and pass alongside a vehicle barrier to follow an access road between buildings, heading down towards the river. Turn right and then left up the steps to cross the footbridge over the River Witham. On your right you will notice the sculpture Empowerment by Stephen Broadbent, a gleaming millennium piece which arches over the river.

2 3 River Witham to Washingborough Old Station



Beyond the footbridge, turn immediately left to follow Waterside South with the river running on your left. As you approach the road junction, swap to the right-hand pavement and then use the large footbridge to cross over the dual carriageway. At the far side, turn right to continue along Waterside South with the river still running on your left.

Further along you will pass Stamp End lock on your left. Built in the 1770s, this marks the point where formerly tolls had been collected at a chain strung across the river. Stamp End once contained boat-building yards, but from the 1840s it rapidly developed as the nucleus of Lincoln's engineering industry.

Continue along Waterside South, passing under the rail bridge and passing warehouse buildings on your right. After the last building on your right, fork left to join the shared footpath and cycleway alongside the river. Pass through a width-barrier and immediately on your right you will see Lincoln Stump. This is an observation platform (climb up if you wish) that marks the start of the Water Rail Way – a 31 mile shared footpath and cycleway that follows a former rail line between Lincoln and Boston. Just



past Lincoln Stump, bear left to join the former railway path. Follow this for just under two miles to reach the square brick building of Washingborough Old Station. It is worth spending a moment at the riverbank here, to enjoy the views back to Lincoln.

3 → 4 Washingborough Old Station to St John's Church



Turn right immediately before the old station, crossing over South Delph Drain, to reach the end of Ferry Lane. Keep ahead along the lane for just a few metres, until you reach a fingerpost on your left. Turn left here onto the public footpath, an unsurfaced path between hedgerows. When you reach the next fingerpost, turn right and the grass footpath leads you into the car park of the Methodist Church and Chapel Park.

Keep straight ahead to reach the main village road at a mini-roundabout. Turn left along Main Road for 200 metres and then cross over to turn right into the High Street. Pass the Ferry Boat pub on your right and the Hunters Leap pub on your left (either one makes a great mid-walk refreshment stop).

Continue ahead for a few more metres to reach the village green with a war memorial on your right. Just behind this is St John's Church. It has an Early English tower and nave of about 1190 plus a decorated chancel. It was restored between 1859 and 1862 by Sir George Gilbert Scott.

4 → 5 St John's Church to Rail Underpass



Continue ahead uphill on the High Street, passing the village green on your right. At the end of the High Street, go straight ahead into Pitts Road. When you reach a side road on your left, Park Lane, cross diagonally left over this to join the signed

tarmac public footpath. You will pass a carved log bench on your right, which depicts aspects of the village's story. As you pass Pitwood House on your left, the surfaced path passes between wooden posts and narrows to lead you through Pits Wood.

You will emerge to a junction with Washingborough Road. Cross over to the far pavement, turn left along this and take the first right into Millstream Road. Follow the residential road as it bends left, then right and continue ahead until you reach House Number 14 on your right.

Immediately after this, turn right onto the public footpath between fences. Follow the path as it bends left behind gardens and continue gently downhill with the railway on your right. You will emerge to a junction with a surfaced path, with the railway underpass tunnel on your right. Turn right to go through this rail underpass.

5 → 6 Rail Underpass to Cliff Farm



Beyond the underpass, keep straight ahead on the surfaced path (with a pretty stream on your left) to reach the road. Cross over with care and then turn right to join the shared footpath and cycleway which runs parallel with the road. Just before the road bends right, fork left to join the permissive path which runs along the right-hand edge of a meadow. You will have the stream and a line of poplar trees running beyond the fence on your right. NOTE: The official right of way runs in the field to your right (beyond the stream), however this permissive path is provided to help you avoid any cattle within that field and the overgrown banks.

Towards the end of this large meadow, the path turns right to cross a wooden footbridge and then turns left to continue on the official right of way with the stream running on your left. After about 30 metres, look out for a fingerpost on your left. At this point turn left, crossing a footbridge and passing through a small metal gate to continue on the narrow grass path with the stream running on your left. At the end of this path, a sleeper bridge and steps lead you up to a junction with a track (with a fingerpost on your left), alongside the buildings of Cliff Farm.

6 → 7 Cliff Farm to Paddock Lane

Your path continues straight ahead here, passing between the old stone barns on your right and the stream on your left. However, should restoration work be in progress, you may need to take a short diversion to the right, passing around the outer edge of the barns and construction fencing. Once you are past the buildings, simply keep ahead on the grass path with the stream running to your left.





Ignore the first hedge gap on your left and continue until you reach a footbridge on your left (near some willow trees). Turn left across this footbridge, go down the steps at the far side and keep ahead along the field edge, with the hedge on your right. About 90 metres along, you will come to a fingerpost on your right. Turn right here, passing through the hedge gap to continue with a crop field on your left.

In the field corner, pass through the staggered barrier, keep ahead on the grass path and then continue ahead on the tarmac footpath. At the end of this path, you will pass two white houses on your right, marking the start of Paddock Lane in Branston.

7 → 8 Paddock Lane to The Waterwheel



Before we finish this leg of the walk at the village church, we first take a worthwhile detour to visit the village waterwheel. Keep ahead to reach a junction with the main village road, Lincoln Road. On your right here you will see metal sculptures of sheep and lambs. Look across the road at about 2 o'clock and you will see another tall metal sculpture, which marks the site of the village sheep wash.

Cross over the road to the far pavement with care, turn right along this and then turn left into Rectory Lane, passing the Waggon and Horses pub on your left and the Branston Cafe on your right. Immediately after the pub, take the right-hand branch at the fork, Rectory Lane. At the T-junction, turn right along Hall Lane. Follow this as it bends left to reach another T-junction. Turn right and immediately left into Waterwheel Lane.

At the end of this small lane, you will come to a private property called The Wheelhouse ahead. The public footpath runs directly ahead along this driveway, so keep ahead (passing the house on your right) and then continue ahead on the stretch of grass to reach the waterwheel at the end of the garden. This was constructed in 1879 to supply water to the houses of the local gentry, including Alexander Leslie Melville of Branston Hall. The

waterwheel supply ran until 1897, when it was replaced by a gas engine to power the pump. Mains water came to the village in 1933.

8 → 9 The Waterwheel to End



When you have finished at the wheel, retrace your steps back to the start of Waterwheel Lane. Turn right and then immediately left into Hall Lane. Follow the road as it swings right, ignore the side road (Rectory Lane) and continue a short distance further to reach the triangular village green. This is home to carved wooden sculpture seats designed by village residents.

At the T-junction beyond the green, turn left and a short distance ahead you will reach All Saints Church in Branston where this leg of the trail ends. Like almost all old churches, All Saints is very much a hybrid, including a largely Norman west door and a spire in the perpendicular style, popular in the late 1400s. From 1680 to 1891, a continuous period of 211 years, Branston's rectors were all members of the Curtois family. They are commemorated by a plaque next to the lower entrance for the church.

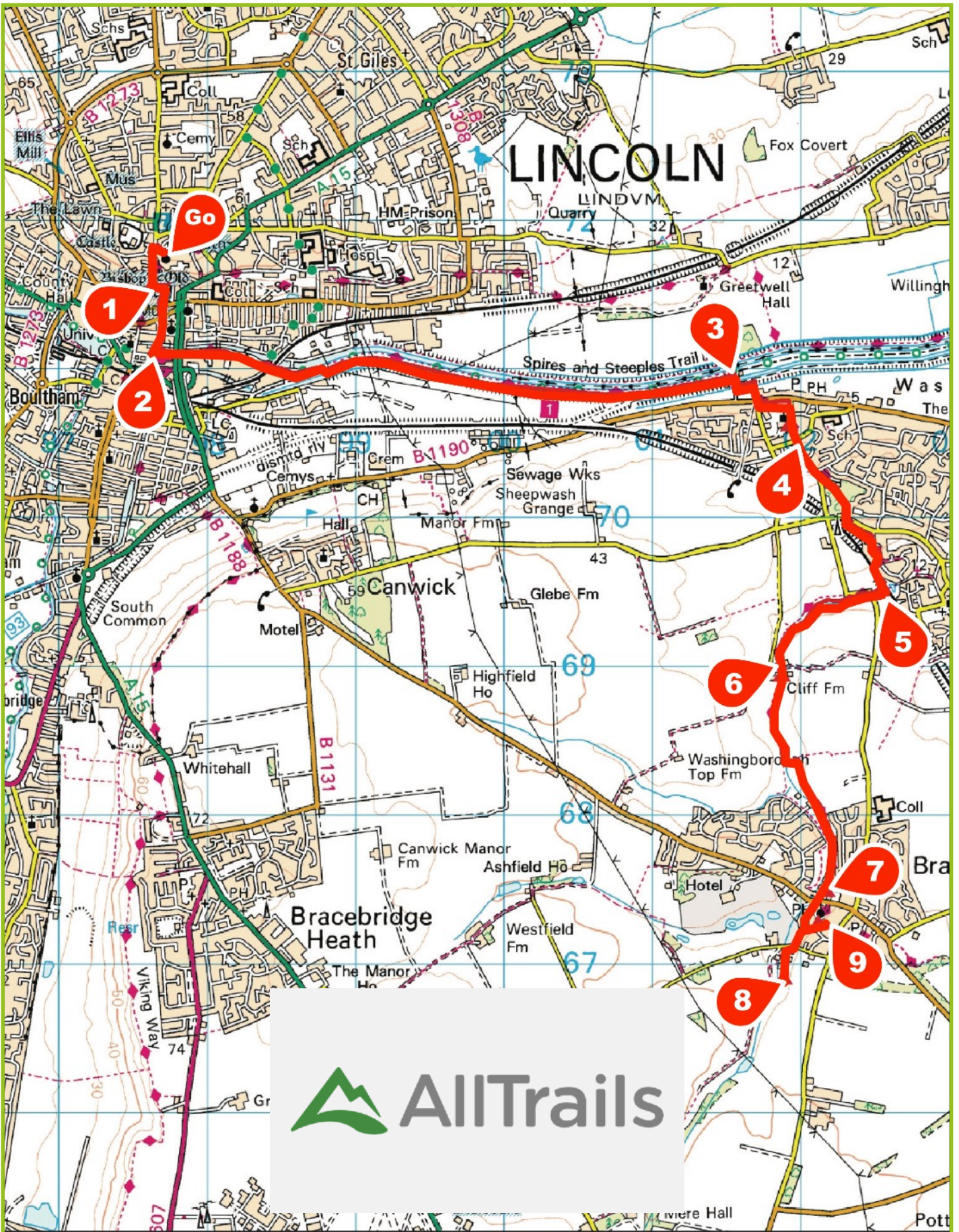
Disclaimer

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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