

Alkborough Flats

Start: Kerbside parking on West End, Winteringham, by the Bay Horse Inn (GR SE931221).

Distance: 9.5 miles.

Getting there: Winteringham lies north of the A1077 Barton-upon-Humber – Scunthorpe road

Refreshments: Well-stocked farm café in Alkborough (mid point of walk), or pub at walk end in Winteringham.

An easy, level walk outward along field paths, the return with fine river views. Both Winteringham and Alkborough have interesting buildings, and there are good bird-watching possibilities on the second part of the circuit. Note: for walkers preferring a pub midway through the walk, start in Alkborough where there is good kerbside parking on Front Street, near junction with Back Street (GR SE882217) and start the walk at **POINT E**.

With the Bay Horse Inn to your right, follow the road, passing Ferry Lane right. Ignore turnings left and right, but continue along West End and where the road bends right, take a path ahead signed 'Cowgangs'. Climb a stile and follow the track, ignoring a path up to the left and shortly after, one down to the right. This well-defined path soon bears right (and here crosses the route of the long-defunct Scunthorpe – Whitton railway) past a sign stating you are on 'Footpath 18' heading towards 'Haven Drain' **POINT A**. In a short distance, you meet said drain as the path turns left. On reaching a footbridge on the right, cross, then turn left, so continuing in the same direction with a smaller ditch your left.

At the next footpath junction, ignore the waymark post and go ahead over a farm track with a low, grey barn ahead. Beyond the barn, turn left along the road for a short distance before taking the first footpath on the right. On reaching a footbridge, cross and go left along the field edge for just a few yards **POINT B** before taking an unsigned path right, across the field. At the far side, you enter a further field, the path, now waymarked, jinks right then left, so you still walk in roughly the same direction. The path becomes a track that joins from the left and you continue, with trees ahead. On reaching a surfaced road on the outskirts of Alkborough, follow it for a short distance, then take a path left, signed 'West Halton Lane' **POINT C**.

Climb a stile, cross the pasture ahead to a further stile. Continue, crossing a stone track then going half-right, with an old mill to your left.

Until at least 1853 a post mill stood here but at some time after this a tower mill was built on top of the original roundhouse wall. The mill ceased working by wind in 1916 but continued to work by engine for a few years more.

Pass through the hedge in the far corner of the field and go left, over a plank bridge **POINT D** then carry on, passing a smallholding to reach a road where you turn right.

In a few yards, you reach a junction **POINT E**. This is the starting point for walkers wanting a mid-walk pub lunch in Winteringham. For those wanting refreshment here, cross to Back Street and walk a few yards to reach the Paddocks Tea Rooms on the left.

The walk continues left from the junction, along Walcot Road, signed 'Burton-upon-Stather'. Just beyond College Close on the left, take a signed footpath right, through trees and passing a burial ground left. Ignore a footpath right, but look right for a grass bank in the field beyond. The field is known as 'Countess Close' and the recently restored bank is thought to be of Roman origin.

As you reach woodland, you arrive at a major junction of paths. Go ahead initially to reach a waymarked path, where you turn right, signed Alkborough. Continue, to an open area with viewing platform, seats and a turf maze **POINT F**.

There are fine views from this scarp, the Lincoln Edge. It's a limestone escarpment that runs roughly north-south through Lincolnshire. From here, you can see the rivers Trent and Ouse as they meet to form the Humber.

The restored unicursal maze is thought to have been cut around 1200 by Benedictine monks who lived locally. The church that you will pass shortly has a replica of the maze in the floor of the south porch and in the chancel window. The church itself dates from the eleventh century and was restored in the late 1880s

Walk now to the road, turn left and continue to reach the church, then keep left, passing it on your right. Where the tarmac ends continue ahead, descending to a lane where you turn left, then immediately right **POINT G**. Notice on the lane, the brick construction on the left. Known as 'Low

Wells'; it was built to make use of a spring coming out of the hillside and used to water cattle. Climb a stile and follow the fenced path to reach a surfaced drive. Cross into a field and walk left. Beyond a footbridge, the path descends to cross a track **POINT H** then climbs to reach a kissing gate, beyond which there are fine views again over the river.

In Autumn 2006, the flood bank of the Humber estuary was breached and 450 hectares of farmland were flooded. This was part a huge scheme to restore some of the Humber estuary's natural flood control basins, while simultaneously creating a haven for wildlife. Flatts Farm is still marked on the OS map and its distant ruins can just be seen from here.

Head across the field towards a concrete structure, then through another gate, walking now along a field edge. Continue, skirting a further field to reach a path junction, where you climb the stile left, then contour the hillside, hedge right, to a signed track joining from the left **POINT I**. Continue, to pass back gardens of houses in the village of Whitton, where you climb a stile to the road and walk half-left along Church Hill, passing the church on the right. Ignore Chapel Lane on the right, but walk on to a farm entrance where you veer left, onto the embankment and right, over a stile. Straightforward walking now for about 1.5 miles, with views left over the Humber.

In summer, look for breeding lapwing and redshank in the wet grassland left, and whitethroats in the bushes right. A little further where the mudflats come into view, shelduck are plentiful.

You eventually pass a pumping station **POINT J** then a little further, pass a signed path down to the right. Continue onward, climbing a stile and walking for another mile to reach Winteringham Haven.

The Haven was once a hive of activity, with shipbuilding and repair, and by the 19th century, there was a regular ferry service to Hull. The railway also used the port – slag, coal and iron ore being loaded on to boats from a pair of chutes.

Pass the yacht club to a road, then follow the signed path to a bridge. Cross the bridge and follow the road as it bends right and stay on the road to reach the village.

Halfway along the road on the right, is a signed footpath. The large red brick house with the gable end was the stationmaster's house, with the station – terminus of the North Lindsey Light Railway's Scunthorpe line that opened in 1907 – just behind the house. The line was extended to Whitton (you passed Station Road there) in 1910. The route was short-lived, however, with passenger services ending in 1925 and freight in 1951.

Continue to crossroads, go right to the Bay Horse Inn, and the end of the walk.

