

ENJOY YOUR VISIT

Please remember the countryside is a place where people live and work and where wildlife makes its home. To protect the Lincolnshire countryside for other visitors please respect it and on every visit follow the Countryside Code. Thank you.

- ◇ BE SAFE - plan ahead, and follow any signs
- ◇ Leave gates and property as you find them
- ◇ Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- ◇ Keep dogs under close control
- ◇ Consider other people

Most of all enjoy your visit to the Lincolnshire countryside

Don't forget to make time for a wander around historic Horncastle, famous for antiques and artisan shops. Visit the Joseph Banks Centre for tourist info or LoveHorncastle.com



For local walk ideas visit HorncastleWalkers.co.uk or try the Horncastle Heritage Trail.

This leaflet was produced by the Horncastle History & Heritage Society to mark 50 years since the closure of the Horncastle Railway. Find out more at HorncastleCivic.org.uk



WALK INFORMATION

Walk location: Horncastle is located 22 miles east of Lincoln on the A158.

Starting point: The Spa Trail begins near the bridge over the Horncastle Canal next to the Swimming Pool, Coronation Walk, Horncastle, LN9 6HP. Grid Reference: TF 254 693. What3Words: upcoming.founders.wound.

Public Transport: Frequent InterConnect bus services call at Horncastle on the route between Lincoln and Skegness. InterConnect 5 services from Lincoln to Boston call at Woodhall Spa. Less frequent services link Horncastle and Woodhall Spa, as do on demand CallConnect buses. Visit: lincsbus.info

Parking: Parking is available near the swimming pool as above. There is also free parking at The Wong, or pay and display in town centre. Free parking is also available at the Thornton Lodge, Martin and Sandy Lane access points. In Woodhall Spa there are car parks at Royal Square and The Broadway.

Ordnance survey maps for the area: Explorer 273 Lincolnshire Wolds South. Landranger 122 Skegness & Horncastle.

Walk length: 6.5 miles from Horncastle to Woodhall Spa, or 7.75 miles if extended to Kirkstead, where the route meets the Water Rail Way.

Type of walk: The first 4 miles is a surfaced track suitable for wheelchair users and families with pushchairs. Walkers can then follow the footpath from Sandy Lane into Woodhall Spa, with cyclists using the road. From Woodhall Spa to Kirkstead the route follows Witham Road.

Refreshments: shops, cafes and pubs in Horncastle & Woodhall Spa.

Public toilets: St Lawrence Street in Horncastle and Spa Road in Woodhall.

Tourist information: Make the most of your visit at the Sir Joseph Banks Centre in Horncastle or the Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum, where you can discover more about what the area has to offer plus displays on local history.

Published by Horncastle History & Heritage Society with help from Horncastle Walkers Are Welcome and funding from Lincolnshire County Council.



Horncastle History
& Heritage Society

Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
Working for a better future

Walk or Cycle the Horncastle & Woodhall Spa Branch Line

SPA TRAIL



6.25 MILES (10 KM) OF MAINLY TRAFFIC FREE ROUTE FROM HORNCASTLE TO WOODHALL SPA WITH
A 1.25 MILE (2 KM) EXTENSION TO KIRKSTEAD TO CONNECT WITH THE WATER RAIL WAY

INTRODUCTION

Explore Lincolnshire's peaceful countryside and fascinating history on the trail of a lost branch line.

Opened in 1855 the railway once linked the historic market town of Horncastle on the edge of the Wolds, and the Victorian resort of Woodhall Spa, to the main line at Kirkstead. Passenger trains stopped in 1952, and it was finally closed in 1971.

Today the line between Horncastle and Sandy Lane on the edge of Woodhall Spa has become the traffic free Spa Trail. Along the way you'll find interesting sculptures and stories about the line and its history.

The trail is suitable for wheelchairs, bikes, horses, and families with pushchairs. There are handy access points along the route so it can be explored in shorter stages.

Walkers can also follow the Viking Way footpath to the site of the old spa station, whilst cyclists can continue on local roads into the centre of the resort.

It is also possible to connect with the Water Rail Way that follows the old main line beside the River Witham at Kirkstead.



Horncastle Station. Credit: Bill Woodhouse Collection



THE ROUTE

Horncastle to Thornton Lodge

approx. 1.6km (1 mile)

The trail begins by the bridge over the Horncastle Canal and we follow it on our left throughout this section.

There are wide views across the meadows of the Bain Valley towards the trees of Banovallum Carr beside the old river.

We join the old railway line after about 500m, and continue between trees to reach the old level crossing at Thornton Lodge.



There are lots of sculptures to see along the Spa Trail. Created by local artists they are inspired by the area's nature and history. Look out for the Viking long ship, a diving otter, and some botanical gems.

Thornton Lodge to Martin

approx. 3.2 km (2 miles)

Cross the road carefully and continue past the former crossing keeper's cottage as the trail begins to curve to the west.

The canal is visible for most of this section until it flows away to south as we start the gentle climb towards the Martin Bridge.

This bridge was the only one on the branch line and here the trail runs through a cutting until we reach the car park at Martin.

Martin Access Point to Sandy Lane

approx. 2.4 km (1 ½ miles)

This straight section crosses Roughton Moor to the end of the Spa Trail on the edge of Woodhall Spa.

The moor was once an expanse of wild heathland (rare in Lincolnshire). Today the trail passes pastures, plantations and ancient woodland.

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Sandy Lane to Woodhall Spa

approx. 2.8 km (1 ¾ miles)

CYCLISTS MUST turn left onto Sandy Lane and then right onto Horncastle Road to reach the centre of Woodhall Spa. (3.1km)

WALKERS ONLY can continue close to the original railway line by following Viking Way footpath (cycling is prohibited). Turn right onto Sandy Lane for 300m then left to cross the golf course. The path becomes a stone track and then a road.

When you reach The Manor turn left and then right to re-join the old railway. Continue straight ahead, passing the Cottage Museum on your left, into the car park on the site of the old station.

Watch out for the medieval Tower on the Moor as you cross the golf course. It was once a hunting lodge for a deer park belonging to Ralph Lord Cromwell of Tattershall Castle.

Woodhall Spa to Kirkstead

approx. 2 km (1 ¼ miles)

Walkers and cyclists can reach Kirkstead on roads with pavements and some cycle path.

Turn right onto the Broadway and follow it to a small roundabout, then continue straight ahead onto Witham Road. After around 1.6 km (1 mile) turn left (still Witham Road) just after the garage to reach the old station besides the river.



At Kirkstead you can connect with the Water Rail Way. This mostly traffic free route follows the old main line from Boston to Lincoln.

It is also part of National Cycle Route 1 from Hull to Harwich.

There's lots more sculptures to look out for and plenty of wildlife to see as you make your way along the Witham Valley Fens.

