

The Towers Way

1.

BARTON UPON HUMBER TO GOXHILL

Distance: 8 miles (12½ kms)

Maps: OS Landranger Sheets 112 (Scunthorpe)
113 (Grimsby, Louth & Market Rasen)
OS Explorer Sheets 281 (Ancholme Valley)
284 (Grimsby, Cleethorpes & Immingham)

Start: Market Place, Barton-upon-Humber (GR 032218).
Car park with toilets south of the market place behind The Old Mill inn and restaurant.

Finish: All Saints, Goxhill (GR 002212).
Ample parking immediately north of the church on King Street.

Public transport:
Both towns are served by rail and bus.

The walk: A stroll through the ancient town of Barton-upon-Humber and visits to its two magnificent churches takes us onwards to the banks of the River Humber. We wander onwards between the river itself and old claypits – now the haunt of a wondrous variety of wildfowl - before a little road walking and fieldpaths take us into Barrow-upon-Humber, a town with close associations with John Harrison the man who mastered longitude. Another and unfortunate stretch of road-walking leads to more fieldpaths and so to Goxhill and its fine church.
This first section of the Towers Way is a relatively short one but this is so purposely. The churches met will invariably be found open or, if not, the keys are easily available and what churches they are! Please try to spend a little time inside them, arm yourself with the excellent guide leaflets that are usually available and take this stage as a brief but pleasant introductory stroll with pauses before the main move southwards.

1. Return to the market place (Market Lane) and go right, passing The Old Mill inn and restaurant to right. At crossroads, go left onto Whitecross Street and at the mini-roundabout junction with Burgate, bear right then right again onto a cobbled lane which rises to the church of St Peter.

*As we meander southwards along the Towers Way we shall find that there are very few churches that have not been tinkered with during their history, each generation trying to make 'improvements' to the original structure as tastes and architectural styles changed. In most buildings we shall find examples of three, maybe four or even five distinct types of architectural style, ranging from remarkable Norman doors, arches and windows to Victorian 'refurbishments' to the entire structure. Here at **St Peter**, the styles are extremely well marked and give the impression that we have two different churches altogether. To the west is the remarkable and almost unique Anglo-Saxon tower (which would originally have served as a nave for the tiny church of the time) and adjoining baptistry whilst to the east are the imposing additions of the 14th/15th century Perpendicular period. The Saxon part of the building is a magnificent example of early church building with a tower reaching to a height of seventy feet remarkably decorated with typical early blank 'arcading', long and short work in the quoins, rounded and triangular doors and windows. The lower stages of the tower are believed to date to the 10th century whilst the top stage is 11th century work; the only intrusion being a 14th century window inserted in the west wall. Attached to the west wall of the tower is a very early baptistry which might pre-date the tower itself. Once there was a tiny Saxon chancel here too but this was destroyed in the 14th century to be replaced with Perpendicular style nave, chancel, clerestory and porches we see today. Although there were major restorations to the*

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church in the 1740s, in 1858, 1898 and between 1912-1914, these fortunately failed to spoil this magnificent structure for which we cannot but recommend the various guidebooks and pamphlets which are available and, in particular the descriptions by Pevsner and Mee.

2. Return to the mini-roundabout and bear right onto Burgate and so to St Mary's church.

3. Return to road and go right to continue along Burgate which soon becomes High Street. Pass the Police Station (dated 1847) and at the Red Lion inn, go right onto the High Street extension. Pass the Coach & Horses inn to right to arrive at another mini-roundabout. Go right onto Fleetgate, and continue to major road. Cross with care and go forward with railway station to right then go right onto Malt Kiln Road. Cross a beck and continue with shopping complex over to left and follow road as it bends to left with views now of the Humber Bridge to the front left. Follow road for about five hundred yards and where main road continues into gated development area, bear slightly to left on a parallel section of road then go sharply left, as finger-posted (Nev Cole Way), onto footpath with cottage to right. Immediately before old narrow-gauge railway line, follow path as it bends to right with rail track to left then bends again and rises to river bank. Keeping the river to left, continue forward to the River Humber bank with fine views of the Humber Bridge to left. *The Humber Bridge is Europe's longest single-span suspension bridge being over a mile long between its piers and was the first bridge of its kind to have its towers built of reinforced concrete instead of steel. Construction began in 1972 and it was officially opened by the Queen in 1981.*

4. Follow river-bank footpath round to right, with river to left. We stay on this route now for about a mile and three-quarters, passing to right, a sewage works, old brickworks, a lone cottage, Barton Clay Pits Nature Reserve and sailing lakes. Continue onwards, soon with water ski club lake then small static caravan site to right to arrive at fieldgate. Pass through then go right, dropping down embankment and leaving the river then go left through kissing gate beside fieldgate into Barrow Haven West Reedbed Nature Reserve. Follow path through the scrub (there is a bird watching hide a short distance along), the path eventually bending to right and emerging through another kissing gate and going forward up onto grassy embankment to another Humber feeder. Bear right along river bank with river down to left and at the rail crossing, pass through waymarked gateway and go left, over river with rail track to right to arrive on minor road with Barrow Haven Railway Station ahead.

5. Go right (the New Cole Way goes left here) with river to right and follow road for about half a mile, passing The Haven Inn Hotel to right, Marsh Lane to left and soon, an old windmill tower to right and converted Methodist Chapel (1877) to left (this marks the centre of the tiny settlement of Barrow Haven). Take next road to left (West Hann Lane) and continue along this quiet country lane for about half a mile, taking the opportunity to glance through first hedge gap to right at *the mounds which represent the site of an old motte and bailey castle dating from Norman times. This would appear to have comprised of a large, low motte and three very large baileys.* Two hundred yards before farm buildings and silos that can be seen to right of road ahead, go right through finger-posted hedge gap (beside useless kissing gate) onto headland path with hedge to right.

6. Follow headland as it drops gently to concrete footbridge. Cross and continue forward, now with ditch to left and with church tower in distance to front left. Soon we have a conifer garden hedge to left and, at end of conifers, go left onto driveway between garden hedges/fences/wall and continue along what is now a surfaced laneway (Cherry Lane). At a junction, go right onto North Street. At junction with the B1402 (Barton Street/Ferry Road East), cross road with care and continue along North Street extension with the John Harrison Primary School to right and church tower ahead. Cross Thorngarth Lane and enter church grounds.

7. Leave church by path from the south porch and drop down onto road to bear left with church up to left. At junction, go right (Church Side is to left here) and follow road as it bends to right, passing Cross Street to left. At T-junction, go right (onto Beck Lane), passing Glandford Grove and Palmer Lane to right and Old Dairy left. At major cross-roads with B1206, go left, signed to New Holland. Four hundred yards on, go right, signed to Goxhill. Stay on the walkway in grass verge of road for a little over half a mile, passing Providence Cottage left, Wavertree and Dyke Side Cottage right then, about a hundred yards beyond Boundary Farm over road to right, go left over finger-posted stile into field corner.

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8. Go forward along headland with hedge, bushes and trees to left and, at field corner, pass through hedge gap and bear right through scrub to footbridge. Cross and bear right with ditch down to left. Stay with ditch as it makes a gentle bend to left and, about two hundred yards on, look out for waymarker which takes you left, over culvert then right with ditch now down to right. Pass bridleway bridge to your right and at field corner, marked by a change of crop, bear diagonally left over the field aiming directly for the distant church tower, partially hidden by a large tree (if in doubt, the aiming point should be to the right of distant double power post with junction box). Arriving on Thornton Road, go left then right onto Howe Lane, entering the village of Goxhill. Pass the Brocklesby Hunt inn to right and continue over railway level crossing, then on into the village to turn right onto King Street which leads directly to the church.

2.

GOXHILL TO HABROUGH STATION

Distance: 9½ miles (15½ kms)

Maps: OS Landranger Sheet 113 (Grimsby, Louth & Market Rasen)
OS Explorer Sheet 284 (Grimsby, Cleethorpes & Immingham)

Start: All Saints, Goxhill (GR 002212).
Ample parking immediately north of the church on King Street.

Finish: Habrough Station Car Park (GR 146136)

Public transport:
Both villages are served by rail and bus.

Accommodation:
The Railway Inn, Habrough Station

The walk: We remain very much in the flatlands of North Lincolnshire today as fieldpaths and a little country-road walking take us from Goxhill to the magnificent abbey remains at Thornton. Onwards, we walk good tracks and more roads to the little church at East Halton before fieldpaths and lanes get us to North Killingholme. Tracks, country lanes and fieldpaths take us on to Habrough church before a final section of footpath and a walk through the houses of the village bring us to the railway station at Habrough.

9. Leave churchyard by north gate (car parking area to front left) and go right onto finger-posted path with church railings to right and garden hedges left. Follow path as it swings left to join access drive then go right to arrive on minor road. Go straight over to cross stile beside fieldgate and continue over field towards a power post ahead. Pass through the kissing gate here and continue forward to cross culvert at far side of field and emerge onto another country lane. Go right along lane for a hundred and fifty yards then go left through finger-posted gap to follow path between garden hedges/fences and emerge on field edge. Go diagonally right, cutting off field corner, and at the far side of field, bear right, aiming to left of the odd-looking Goxhill Hall and its 'Priory'. ***Goxhill Priory was never an ecclesiastical building but is part of a late 14th century domestic house of two storeys with fine three-light Perpendicular windows. It is attached to the adjacent Hall which itself dates from around 1700.*** Pass through kissing gate onto what was the railway line and go straight over onto field edge to bear diagonally left over the field to finger-post at far field corner and onto another country lane with Goxhill Hall to left.

10. Go left along lane to enter the tiny hamlet of South End. [To the left here is Bed and Breakfast accommodation – Glengarth – 01469 530991]. Pass Soff Lane to right and continue forward, passing telephone box left then Little Wick and Brantwood Farms right then go right onto narrow surfaced track with fence to left. Pass low bungalow building to left and continue forward, passing old military-style

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buildings to left. Where the lane swings left to these buildings, go forward into field edge then bear slightly left over field aiming for large tree almost at left hand end of hedgeline at far side of field. Here, continue line, as waymarked, along headland path with hedge to right. At top field corner, go left, still with headland but now with wire and post fence right. At end of this fence, go right, over stile to continue with fence now to left and with distant views to front right of Thornton Abbey. At the end of fence, go right with scrub and bushes left for a few yards then left again, along what is still basically a headland route with the scrub to left. Continue through two gateways and pass cottage outbuildings to left and so onto minor road. Go right along road (take care, there are minimal verges) then follow it as it bends sharply left. Ignore finger-posted path to left, (this will be our onward route) and where road bends sharply right, go forward into car parking area/picnic site adjacent to the entrance to Thornton Abbey.

11. Having fully explored the abbey, return to road through car park/picnic area and go right, retracing approach route for a short distance. Follow road as it bends sharply to left and ignoring waymarked path into Countryside Commission area, continue a little further to go right through finger-posted kissing gate. Go forward over narrow neck of grassland then cross footbridge and up steps into field corner. Continue forward with hedge/bushes and ditch then fence to right. Ignore kissing gate to right and at field corner, go left then right over footbridge with stile at its far end. Cross then bear left over narrow meadow to another footbridge. Cross and go forward with trees/bushes to left and reservoir over embankment to right. At field corner, go right with embankment and bushes to left then left through wicket gate beside fieldgate and up onto road. Go right (take care since there are minimal verges) and follow road as it bends to left. Two hundred yards on, at brow of gentle slope, go right onto finger-posted farm track.

12. Follow track for about six hundred yards, soon picking up line of power posts in hedge to left then go left through fieldgate to pick up headland path with intermittent tree-line then hedge to right. Soon we join the stony access track that comes in from Westfield Farm to right and continue forward with ditch now to right. Where main track swings off to left, continue ahead on grassy path with ditch to right. The track makes a mini S-bend and we continue with initially ditch then line of scrub and trees to left. The path soon improves and continues to road at East Halton. Go right along road (cross to surfaced walkway in far verge), passing the Amethyst Hotel over to right. Follow road through gentle S-bend and continue all the way to the lych-gated entrance to East Halton church over road right.

13. Return through lych gate to road and cross with care into Chase Hill Lane. Follow lane as it bends to right and at T-junction, go right for about fifty yards then left over finger-posted stile into meadow. Go straight over field, aiming to the right of power pylons ahead (ridge and furrow in the field here mark the site of an ancient settlement) to cross plank bridge and stile and go forward along a path through bushes and trees. Cross fence beside metal fieldgate and continue through overgrown area to emerge at field corner. Go forward with hedge to left, passing beneath power cables. We are here passing along the edge of what was once **North Killingholme airfield**. *The airfield had a brief but active life, being operational for just 16 months. During the whole of that time it was occupied by 550 Bomber Squadron who moved in during January 1944 having been formed just a month earlier at Waltham. The Squadron, equipped with Lancasters, was a multi-national squadron as evidenced by the memorials to be found in the church and one of its aircraft was to drop the very first of the bombs which opened the Normandy Landings in June 1944 – the entire aircrew later being awarded the Croix de Guerre.* Stay with headland as it bends to left and continue forward to pass through gateway where the path improves and leads onto track with church tower to front left. Go left for about fifty yards then right, through kissing gate beside telegraph post. Pass kennels to right and continue towards church tower ahead. Where main track swings as house driveway to left, go right through wicket gate into the churchyard.

14. Leave church by the south gateway, passing through the millennium archway and go diagonally right into Vicarage Lane. Follow the lane as it bends to left as Clarkes Road then right, leaving the village behind and crossing railway bridge to arrive at farm buildings. Go left, with farm buildings to right and hedge to left then go right through kissing gate into field. Go forward over field to cross stile at far side and go left along headland with hedge to left. At field corner, cross stile and go

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right, with hedge now to right [the walked route tends to be along the internal headland keeping hedge to left]. At field corner, cross stile and go forward, still with hedge to right and playing fields left, passing community centre to right and emerging onto end of cul-de-sac. Go forward along road into outskirts of South Killingholme (north) and at T-junction, bear left. At junction with Greengate Lane, bear left again, passing Briar Close then the Methodist church to right and, walking beside a small green to right, continue along the main road to arrive on busy dual-carriageway A160.

15. Cross road with care (there is a central reservation) and continue forward along the Town Street extension opposite passing Primitive Chapel Lane to right. Stay with lane as it makes a sharp bend to left (ignore finger-posted footpath ahead here) then to right to enter the hamlet of South Killingholme (south). At T-junction, go left onto Baptist Chapel Lane (Faulding Lane is to right) and, at end of garden hedge to right, go right, picking up headland path with hedge to right. Just before the field corner, bear right through hedge to cross footbridge and continue forward over a huge field, passing well to the left of farm buildings in field centre. Once abreast these, continue forward, aiming now well to the left of distant double power posts and for the left hand end of intermittent bushes/trees at far side of the field to arrive at waymarked footbridge. *(Should you have had enough of muddy field-walking by now, go forward over the footbridge then continue along headland path with hedge to right to emerge on road. Go right along the road for about 600 yards to find Habrough church to the left at the next T-junction/mini roundabout).* Do not cross the bridge but go right, keeping ditch to left and at field corner, continue forward with house garden to right and ditch left to emerge on road. Go left, (take care, there are minimal verges) to pass over mini roundabout at Immingham Road junction with Habrough church on corner ahead.

16. Leave church by the west gates that lead onto road with Habrough Hotel opposite. Cross and go right, passing beside the mini roundabout then at end of wall, go left onto surfaced lane with hotel buildings and the Churchside Close residential area to left. Stay forward on the lane, passing cottage to right and bear right with the lane as it runs parallel to the A180 trunk road that can be heard in a cutting to left. Four hundred yards on, go left, over bridge which spans the road and at far side, leave the surfaced lane to go left down finger-posted steps and go forward along headland path with wooden fence/trees/bushes and road to left. About 150 yards on, go right over field to pick up hedge/treeline to right. At next field corner, go round to the right onto grassy lane and, having passed small sewage station to left, go left between garden hedges onto end of cul-de-sac. Go forward along road and take first road to right. At T-junction, go right for a few yards then bear left onto Chapel Road. Pass Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (dated 1868) and stay with the main road as it bends to left as Westend Road, eventually emerging onto Station Road with The Station hotel on corner to left and railway station opposite.

3.

HABROUGH STATION TO LACEBY

Distance: 11 miles (18 kms)

Maps: OS Landranger Sheet 113 (Grimsby, Louth & Market Rasen)
OS Explorer Sheet 284 (Grimsby, Cleethorpes & Immingham)

Start: Habrough Railway Station Car Park, Station Road, Habrough (GR 146136).

Finish: St Margaret, Laceby (GR 214065).
Ample parking to the rear of the Nags Head/Waterloo inns in the centre of Laceby (please park to the rear since the car park is heavily used by patrons of the hotels).

Public transport:
The walk starts at Habrough railway station. Laceby, the end of this section is well served by buses.

Accommodation:

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The Railway Hotel, Habrough Station
Keelby Bed and Breakfast, 01469 560463

The walk: A short section of road walking leads to farm tracks and fieldpaths that take us into Keelby. Another section of road walking (unfortunately, not a very pleasant interlude, but a short one) brings us by quiet but lengthy, surfaced farm lanes to the edge of Riby. Here we enter Wolds country with a gentle climb into the hills along farm track and footpath, eventually dropping into the lovely Irby valley. A short climb leads us to the village church before we drop back down into the valley, pass through woodland and continue along field edges to a country lane to Aylesby. A fieldpath and a wander through the large village of Laceby bring us to our objective, the church of St Margaret.

17. From the station car park, return to Station Road and go left, passing over the level crossing then follow the main road as it bends sharply left (Newsham Lane goes off right here). Six hundred yards on, the road bends sharply right and after a further hundred yards go left onto surfaced access lane for New Farm. Pass lone cottage to left and half way between this and farm buildings ahead, go right onto farm track with hedge to right and continue to bridge over the New Beck Drain. Cross and bear left over field, passing external hedge corner to left then aiming for hedge gap ahead where finger post can be seen. Here, bear left, following the bridleway to pass through bridlegate beside fieldgate into a meadow edge. Continue forward over the field, noting down to left the ridges and furrows where once stood **Nun Cotham (Nuncoton) Nunnery** which in medieval times was a great wool producer and in 1376 is recorded as having a Prioress and twelve nuns, aiming for point where tree-line joins hedges ahead to arrive at a bridlegate beside fieldgate at the far field corner.

18. Pass through the bridlegate and go forward on track with, initially, hedge to right then hedges/trees to either side to eventually arrive on narrow surfaced lane. Continue along the lane (Cissplatt Lane) for about seven hundred yards to Yarborough Road in Keelby. Go left, passing Methodist church left then take first road right (South Street) and continue to church which stands at the junction with Church Lane.

19. Leave church by west gateway and go left along road with church left. Follow road as it bends left to become Riby Road (St Martin's Place and the Post Office are up to right) and continue through the outskirts of the village, staying with the main road as it bends to right and left to arrive at junction with the A18. Cross the road (taking great care – it can be very busy) and go left along grass verge for about five hundred yards then go right onto finger-posted surfaced lane. Stay with the lane (a bridleway) for a little over a mile (*the tower, which can be seen in the distance ahead is **Pelham's Tower**, 128 feet high and built by Charles Pelham in 1848. It celebrates the planting by the First Baron Yarborough of some twelve and a half million trees in his park at Brocklesby between 1787 and 1823*), passing barns left and cottages right to eventually arrive at lane T-junction. The bridleway goes off right here but we go left along another section of surfaced lane (classified as a public accessible white road). Stay with this lane for about a mile and a half, passing barns and buildings of Grange Wold Farm and Grove Wold Farm to drop gently to the A1173 south of Riby.

20. Cross road (with care) and go right for a few yards then left through finger-posted fieldgate. Pass between barns (that to right has a most unusual roof) then continue forward with, initially hedge left. Our path becomes a stony farm track which bends right then sharply left (a bridleway goes forward at the turn) to climb quite steeply with hedge right. At the top of slope, pass through hedge gap and bear right over field beyond. Mid-field, our path bends gently to left to arrive at stile beside gateway. Cross and go forward along headland path with hedge left to arrive at corner of woodland (Irby Dales Wood). Continue forward, keeping trees to right. Soon the track begins to drop with trees to either side then passes through scrub then through trees and bushes to arrive at field corner with the magnificent Irby valley below. Continue the line, dropping down to the valley floor with ditch right to pass through hedge gap and arrive on major track crossing. Go left for a few yards to pass through kissing gate beside metal fieldgate to another track junction. Ignore path to right and continue along valley floor for about three hundred yards to go sharply right up a gently sloping and well-walked path that rises to hedgeline. Continue along what is now a headland path with hedge left to eventually bear

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left just before field corner and pass through kissing gate beside double fieldgate onto track beside cottage. Go right to the A46 and cross diagonally right with care to pass through hedge gap into a layby with, opposite, Irby upon Humber's lovely church.

21. Return to the A46 to cross with care and go right along road verge passing path by which we approached and cottage to left. At far side of cottage, go left onto finger-posted track between hedges, soon to arrive at field corner. Go forward with hedgeline left and a few yards before point where hedge and track bend to left and where finger-post directs forward over field, go left through waymarked hedge gap into area of undergrowth. Continue through trees and bushes, the path dropping very gently to kissing gate beside metal fieldgate. Pass through and drop steeply into the wonderful valley below, going right in valley floor through a fieldgate (or kissing up to left) into woodland. Take either of the tracks that run forward through the trees to cross bridge at far side of wood onto field edge.

22. Go right, with woodland to right, soon passing through gate into field corner and continue forward along headland, initially with fence and ditch to left. Where the hedge swings off left, stay forward over the meadow to arrive at field corner where we bear left to pass through two sets of gates and join farm track that continues to the busy A18. Cross this dual carriageway with care (there is a central reservation) and go forward onto minor road (Temple Lane). Follow road for about half a mile to arrive in the tiny village of Aylesby with its church to right.

23. Return to road and go immediately left into field corner. Follow the direction pointed by the finger-post that takes us along a narrow metalled path that dives in a straight line diagonally over the field, eventually passing through cycle barriers and onto surfaced lane. Follow the main lane forward then to left, ignoring finger-posted track right and continue along what is now Cooper Lane into the outskirts of Laceby. Pass school and library to arrive at junction with High Street with, over to left, the large red brick Methodist Church with its tall single lancet windows. Go right along road, passing Old Chapel Lane to left and arrive at the church. [Note the entrance to the churchyard is at the junction of High Street and Church Lane and is approached on a blind corner with no pavement. Take the greatest of care crossing to the gateway].

4.

LACEBY TO ROTHWELL

Distance: 12½ miles (21 kms)

Maps: OS Landranger Sheet 113 (Grimsby, Louth & Market Rasen)
OS Explorer Sheet 284 (Grimsby, Cleethorpes & Immingham)

Start: St Margaret, Laceby (GR 214065).
Ample parking to the rear of the Nags Head/Waterloo inns in the centre of Laceby (please park to the rear since the car park is used by patrons of the hotels).

Finish: St Mary Magdalene, Rothwell (GR 149993)
Please do not park at the church. Parking can be found either in the car park of the Nickerson Arms (with the landlord's permission) or in the large layby on the north side of the Caistor Road at GR 150996).

Public transport:

Laceby is well served by buses. Unfortunately, Rothwell is an isolated spot as are the villages in between. Public transport by bus will therefore have to be well planned in advance since the next well served village is Caistor, 5 miles further along our route. It is therefore suggested that if you are reliant on public transport then for this particular stage, arrangements be made with the landlord of the Nickerson Arms, Rothwell, for overnight accommodation.

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The walk: A gentle stroll along headland paths and field tracks lead to the isolated church at Bradley where a short section of country lane and more track take us through the small but attractive woodland to the south of the village. A good track leads southwards to Barnoldby le Beck before a lengthy section of stream-side path leads to the village of Hatcliffe and its idyllic church. Retracing our steps for a short distance, we continue over fields to Beelsby. From here, another short section of country road lead us to fieldpaths and more country lanes to the beautiful church at Cuxwold. Again, we have to retrace our steps for a short distance to pick up more fieldpaths to Rothwell. Three of the churches visited today lie just a short distance off the direct route but all three are 'classics' and we would put them amongst the category of 'unmissable' buildings so, unless you really are in a hurry, please try and incorporate them into your walk.

24. Return to the High Street/Church Lane junction and cross with care to bear left (the village central triangle, the Nags Head and The Waterloo inns are over to right) to continue along Grimsby Road. Pass telephone box then Field Close to left and follow the road all the way to the busy A46. Cross the dual carriageway with care (there is a central reservation) and take the finger-posted drive opposite. Go almost immediately left over stile beside fieldgate into paddock with cottage to right. Bear right over the paddock to far hedgeline then continue along the headland with hedge to right. Cross fieldgate at field corner and continue forward with ditch and tree-line to right. Follow the headland as it meanders its way onwards, crossing two footbridges and eventually arriving on farm track. Go straight over, crossing finger-posted stile and continuing along the headland with ditch and hedge still to right. Having passed abreast a power pylon in field to right, the headland bends sharply to left and, a hundred yards on, go right over footbridge and go forward along headland with deep drain down to right. At a major waymarked cross-track, go left for four hundred yards then right onto bridleway. Stay with the main track as it eventually meanders between old brick barns and sheds to arrive on minor road with the church over.

25. Return to the lane and go left. At Y-junction, take the right fork that continues as a surfaced lane aiming towards woodland ahead. The lane makes a sharp bend to left and, immediately before cottages, bear right (not sharply right) with cottage fence to your immediate left, then go left again, still hugging cottage fence, to enter the edge of Bradley Wood. Follow the main path which keeps to the edge of the trees with ditch to left then bear left over beck then to right through the woodland to a picnic and parking area. Go straight over the glade and continue along a wide path through the trees to emerge onto field edge. Continue forward along what is now a headland path with broken hedgeline to left and soon, with distant views to the front left of Waltham Windmill. At the field corner, bear slightly left then go forward again along farm track with ditch and hedges to right. Arriving on a narrow surfaced lane, go right, then almost immediately left onto wide path with ditch to left and continue forward on the main route, eventually passing beneath power cables.

26 A few yards on, the main track swings sharply right but we go forward for a few yards then right with ditch to right. Follow the track as it bends to left, now resuming our original line of walk with ditch to right. Approaching the outskirts of Barnoldby le Beck we pass a smallholding left (Glebe Farm Cottage), our track soon rising gently to become a surfaced lane, the church appearing ahead. *Just before arriving abreast of the church, note a plinth to the left that was erected to mark the spot where William Smith, huntsman to the Earl of Yarborough fell on 11th April 1845. 'His gallant horsemanship and the management of hounds in the kennel and in the field were unsurpassed. His horse, falling over a small leap, whilst Smith was shoeing on his favourite hounds, he was thrown on his head, and from the injuries he then received, he died on the 16th April 1845 at the house of his friend, Richard Nainby of this village, Esq, by whom the site for this memorial was given on the 6th April 1861'.* Continue with the church building to right then go right onto minor lane to find churchyard gate to your right.

27. Leave the church and go forward on narrow lane (Church Lane) to the Waltham road (the Ship Inn is down to the left). Go right along the roadside path for about a hundred and fifty yards, passing

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finger-posted path to right then, at end of speed restriction signs, cross, to go left through finger-posted kissing gate beside fieldgate and continue along a cinder track until the route is barred by another gate. Go right here over footbridge then left with beck down to left and garden fence to right. Follow the path as it bends to right then cross stile to left into meadow. Continue along the meadow edge with fence to right and passing beneath telegraph cables, leave the headland to bear left over the field corner to stile. Cross onto surfaced farm track and go left then, at Y-junction, go forward for a few yards and, just before entering gateway of the large house ahead, go right onto headland path, soon with woodland to left. Continue with fence to left and at field corner, go forward on path between fence and trees/bushes to emerge onto Barton Street (the A18).

28. Cross the road with care to pick up finger-posted path with beck down to left and new housing development to right. Pass through waymarked metal gateway and continue through scrub and saplings with beck over to left. Our route soon meanders through trees, hugging the beck to left and we continue in this way to eventually emerge at field corner. We hug the beck now for about a mile, passing close beside two electricity pylons then another one up in the field to right, eventually reaching a small Anglian Water sub station. Go forward here through hedge gap and continue with beck to left, the path soon mounting gently with garden hedges to left and, at the field corner, bear left to drop down onto road at the edge of Hatcliffe. Go left, down the road and follow it as it bends to right through the village and eventually brings us to the church.

29. Back on the road, go left, retracing your steps through the village. Pass the approach footpath to right and continue forward up the lane. Pass village sign to left and about a hundred yards on, bear right over finger-posted stile beside fieldgate and cross field to line of conifer trees at the far side. Here, go left along headland with trees to right, rising gently. At top of the slope we get our first views of Beelsby church ahead and continue beneath power cables and with wire fence to right. Pass through kissing gate right and aim diagonally left over field, the path dipping to a stream then rising to another kissing gate that can be seen on the far side of this attractive little valley. Go through the gate then go left along farm track and with grain silos to front left and immediately before breeze-block pig sheds, go right, with sheds to left. At the end of the shed, go left to rejoin farm track then go right with pig sheds to left again. Follow the track as it bends to left and at hedge crossing the front, go left for a few yards then right over stile into field edge. Go forward over field, soon picking up fenced pond to right and where this fence comes to an end, continue the line to pass through kissing gate at far side of field and go forward again down path between garden hedges to road. Go right along road and immediately after the house named Deepdale left and opposite Garden House to right, go left beside village and church notice board, up steps that lead into the churchyard.

31. Return to road and retrace your steps through village then, where road bends to left, go right onto finger-posted gravel driveway which we noted on our earlier approach. Pass garages then cottage (dated 1861) to left then barns to right to emerge on field edge. Go forward up slope of field (not left along headland) and at brow, pass through recently planted hedgeline and continue towards right hand end of woodland ahead. At wood corner, bear gently left, down field, aiming for midway point between double wooden power post to right at bottom of field and huge power pylon to left in field on far side of the valley to arrive at footbridge. *(The bridge holds a small plaque telling us that it was erected in memory of Jim Cook [1951-1958] who was a member of the Lincolnshire Ramblers' and who initiated the Lindsey Loop, a section of which we have been walking today).*

32. Cross the bridge and go right, passing beneath power cables and through hedge gap to follow headland path with ditch down to right and walking towards buildings in distance ahead. At major cross-track go right for a few yards and, before entering industrial estate complex, go left onto surfaced service road, picking up Nev Cole Way markers. Stay on this road until it makes a sharp bend to left where we go forward. At gateway to Anglian Water sewage plant, go right and follow hedged perimeter of the plant eventually joining headland path. Follow this, keeping ditch and hedgeline/bushes to left. Pass through wide hedge gap and continue along field bottom then, just before field corner, go forward onto country road. Go forward again along road, signed to Thoresway, Caistor and Binbrook, passing into the village of Rothwell. Just before Nickerson Arms inn to front right, go left onto Beckside (road) signed to Thoresway, Stainton le Vale and Binbrook. Pass entrance to Rothwell House Farm to left then, just as the road bends to left and becomes enclosed between high hedges, go right, through gateway which mounts gently between fences to another gateway into the grounds of Rothwell's lovely church.

5.

ROTHWELL TO NETTLETON VIA CAISTOR

Distance: 7½ miles (11½ kilometres)

Maps: OS Landranger Sheet 113 (Grimsby, Louth & Market Rasen)
OS Explorer Sheet 284 (Grimsby, Cleethorpes & Immingham)

Start: St Mary Magdalene, Rothwell (GR 149993)
Please do not park at the church. Parking can be found either in the car park of the Nickerson Arms (with the landlord's permission) or in the large layby on the north side of Caistor Road at GR 150996).

Finish: Nettleton Village (GR 110002)
There is very little parking to be had in the village itself. Most appropriate would be the car park of The Salutation inn (by arrangement with the landlord) or along Cooks Lane on the west side of the A46.

Public transport:

Rothwell is an isolated spot and public transport by bus will therefore have to be well planned in advance, however, it is easily accessible by taxi from Caistor. Nettleton is well served by buses and is also easily reached from Caistor by taxi. Alternatively you might wish to arrange overnight accommodation at the Salutation Inn which is at the end of this section of the Way.

The Walk: Leaving the lovely village of Rothwell, we mount gently onto the Wolds before dropping with fine views to the village of Nettleton. Here we pick up the Viking Way and follow it into the historical market town of Caistor. A walk along fieldpaths bring us back to Nettleton which marks the end of this short stage.

33. Leave church by wicket gate to west (beyond the tower) to emerge onto surfaced lane (School Lane). Go right, passing village hall (no parking) to left and drop to road (Hill Rise) with Nickerson Arms opposite. Go left for a few yards then right onto Wold View (road). Where road bends to right to enter residential cul-de-sac, bear left up surfaced track with thick hedge to right. We mount gently and at the top of slope where the track (now of hard earth) swings sharply to left to pass in front of farmhouse, go forward onto wide grassy bridleway between open fields with wide views to front and to right. The path dips then rises to a broken hedgeline which comes in from the left and at four-way finger-post here, go left onto headland path with hedge initially to left. Stay on this path, passing through two hedge gaps and picking up tractor track, still with hedge to left. Arriving at major track crossing, go left, keeping hedge to left for about twenty five yards then go right, over field to pass through finger-posted hedge gap onto minor road.

34. Cross to surfaced access for Rothwell Grange Farm and go immediately right, onto finger-posted headland path with hedge to right (waymarked for Nev Cole Way) and, after some five hundred yards, pass through bridlegate onto another minor country road (Caistor High Street). Cross and continue down finger-posted bridleway opposite (still Nev Cole Way) with hedge to right. Soon we are on the edge of the magnificent Nettleton Beck valley and gain magnificent Wolds views to the front. Drop gently on the path with distant views to the right of Nettleton church tower. Pass through waymarked fieldgate and to right of old farm buildings and follow stony track down into valley floor. Pass finger-posted path to left and continue over a ladder stile beside fieldgate. (*The stile is a*

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memorial to James Neville Cole MBE, 1915-1989 and was erected by his friends in Rambling groups all over Lincolnshire and South Humberside and the Wanderlust Rambling Club, Grimsby - 'The fields his study. Nature was his book'). Go forward to follow main route as it bends to right, passing farm house up to left and continuing with access track which becomes a surface driveway, eventually passing through another gateway and so to minor road in outskirts of Nettleton. Bear right along the road, initially between cottages and continue as it meanders towards the church tower ahead. Ignore for the moment Mansgate Hill off to right (this will be our onward route to Caistor) and go forward to church which is just a few yards on.

35. Return to Church Street and go left, retracing your steps with church up to left. At first junction, go left onto Mansgate Hill, signed to Rothwell, Cuxwold and Croxby. At top of slope where road bends gently to right, go left over finger-posted stile beside house driveway. Continue forward up field slope with garden fence to left and where fence bends off to left, continue forward to field corner. Go right over waymarked stile and continue along field edge with hedges and bushes to left. Cross double stiles at next field corner and bear left, still on headland with wire fence to left now and views of Caistor church tower in distance to front left. Cross stile at field corner and continue forward up a gentle rise with hedge to left then dropping to stile in field corner. Cross and continue over field aiming for wide hedge gap at field corner ahead. Pass through gap and continue along headland of next field with hedge to right to cross stile at field corner and mount ramp to the A46.

36. Cross the road with care and drop down finger-posted (Viking Way) ramp at far side to join a narrow alley between garden fences which meanders to end of cul-de-sac. Go right down road then right again (on West Wold Road), aiming for church tower ahead. Ignore side road to left and continue to end of cul-de-sac to follow finger-posted alley which bends left and right between garden fences/hedges and drops to road (Nettleton Road). Go right, taking the forward fork at Y-junction (*note the lovely Victorian Gothic school building which dates from 1860 on South Dale over to your right*) then bend left to drop then rise to the Market Place.

Immediately beyond the Georgian House with Doric columns supporting its entrance and bearing the date 1682, go left onto Bank Lane. Pass small chapel to right dedicated to Sir Thomas Moore and continue forward along what has become Church Street to the church ahead.

37. Return to Church Street and go left with church to left and Caistor Grammar School to right. (*The school was founded in 1631 by the Reverend Francis Rawlinson and the front wall is inscribed with a quotation from Homer's Iliad which is the school motto - 'Always to Excel'.*) Follow road as it meanders onwards, passing Castle Hill (road) to right then descending quite steeply, passing Chichester Drive to right and arriving at major junction. Go sharply to right here onto Navigation Lane and follow this long straight road as the tarmac runs out and the route continues as an earth and grass track. Pass sewage works to right and stay forward with ditch down to right to arrive at a track T-junction.

38. Go left here along a headland path with ditch to left. At the field corner, follow the path round to right, keeping beck to left and at next corner, go right again, still following beck edge. Follow path round to left as it keeps to edge of field to another path junction and three-way finger-post. Go forward for about fifty yards then go left over culvert into field corner and continue along headland with, initially, thick hedge to left, Nettleton church tower soon coming into view in the distance to front left. Cross stile at field corner and go left along grassy swathe with stunted bushes to either side and follow pathway as it bends gently to right to cross stile beside fieldgate. Continue forward along headland with hedge to left then go right over footbridge then left along edge of field with beck down to left. Pass between beck to left and a little red brick pumping station right, crossing stile and continuing forward towards the tower of Nettleton church in distance ahead. Pass to left of concrete plug to drop down to footbridge. Cross and bear to right, aiming to left of cottage with silo in its garden. Pick up hedge to left and continue to cross stile and go forward onto lane in the outskirts of Nettleton. Continue along the lane (Cooks Lane) to join the busy A46 with The Salutation inn over.

6.

NETTLETON TO WALESBY

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Distance: 7½ miles (11½ kilometres)

Maps: OS Landranger Sheet 113 (Grimsby, Louth & Market Rasen)
OS Explorer Sheet 282 (Lincolnshire, Wolds North; Louth and Market Rasen)

Start: Nettleton Village (GR 110002).
There is very little parking to be had in the village itself. Most appropriate would be the car park of The Salutation inn (by arrangement with the landlord) or along Cooks Lane on the west side of the A46.

Finish: St Mary, Walesby (GR 133923).
Parking is available in the small Viking Way car park on Otby Lane (GR 134924) which is passed at the end of our walk.

Public transport:

Nettleton is well served by buses and is also easily reached from Caistor by taxi. Alternatively you might wish to arrange overnight accommodation at the Salutation inn which is at the start of this section of the Way. Walesby is a relatively isolated village and lacks an inn, but it is accessible by bus provided you plan your route in advance. It is also easily reached by taxi from Market Rasen. Alternatively you might wish to extend this leg by a further two miles to the next stage at Tealby where there are two inns where accommodation might be arranged.

Note that accommodation may be arranged at the Viking Centre, Claxby. Bookings may be made through Mrs G Forster, Corner Farmhouse, St Mary's Lane, Claxby, Telephone: 01673 828648.

The Walk: A climb onto the slopes above Nettleton leads to a magnificent ridge route which eventually drops to a long series of field edge paths and a section of country lane that brings us to the lovely church at Claxby. Here we mount steeply to Lincolnshire's highest village and church at Normanby le Wold where we pick up the route of the Viking Way. We continue along yet another fine ridge before dropping to the attractive village of Walesby which boasts two churches, the more modern of the two being our aim in this stage of the walk. The churches and villages along this stage are all covered in an excellent and exceptionally low-priced publication – Churches of the Western Wolds, by Dr Charles Kightly. The booklet is produced by the Tourism Development Unit of the West Lindsey District Council and is usually available in the churches themselves. It will make an admirable companion to the churches of this and the next section of Towers Way.

*We begin today's stage at **Nettleton**, whose attractiveness is often missed by travellers on the busy A46 for its charms, described at Section 5 paragraph 34, lie to the east and just off the main road.*

39. With your back to The Salutation inn, go left along the A46, passing access into Nettleton village and keeping to pavement of this busy thoroughfare for about a hundred yards. Just beyond road over to right signed to Moortown and South Kelsey, go left, crossing stile beside fieldgate and entering conservation area managed by the Countryside Commission that gives access to some beautiful heathland above the village. Go left along headland with hedge (road over) to left and follow headland as it bends to right, passing house over to left and mounting gently to field corner. Cross stile here and bear gently to right, aiming for wooden marker post on slope ahead. Go right here, along the contour, to another marker then go left, climbing steep slope to hedgeline. Here, pause for a breather and take in the magnificent views, which include Caistor and Nettleton churches, behind you.

40. Go right along ridge-top with stunted hedge to left and follow hedge as it bends sharply to left, giving more magnificent views. The path drops then rises along the ridge top, still with stunted hedge left and continues to a point where power lines pass overhead and fence crosses our front. Go right here, dropping steeply beneath power cables with hedge over to left to stile at bottom field corner.

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Cross and go forward along the headland with fence and hedge to left. Fifty yards on, go left through wicket gate onto farm track and go left again with hedge (and approach path) to left. Follow track as it bends right with hedge to left and old farm sheds over. Stay with headland as it eventually makes a sharp bend to left, then right, then right again, soon picking up perimeter fence of a weather station to left. Just beyond end of the overgrown fence, go left over plank bridge then bear left along headland with hedge left and weather station beyond. Cross stile in field corner and bear left along field edge with hedge still to left. Cross another field corner stile and bear left again along field edge with hedge left to yet another stile.

41. Cross onto surfaced lane and go left for a few yards then right over finger-posted stile into field corner and follow headland with hedge to right. Soon walking between a beck and hedge/trees, we are forced into a funnel to arrive at stile beside small pond in corner of field. Cross and bear left, still along headland but with hedge then beck to left now. The headland soon bends gently to right and half-way down the side of this field, go left, dropping down steps to cross footbridge and mounting embankment at the far side into field corner. Continue forward with hedge to left, passing through wide hedge gap and going forward again, still with hedge to left. Cross a footbridge at field corner and continue with ditch and fence/stunted hedge left to another footbridge close to field corner. Cross and continue forward, leaving headland which bends off to left and aiming for wide gap in hedge at far side of field. At three-way finger-post here, bear slightly left onto another headland track with ditch and hedge to left. Pass beside plantation to right and emerge onto field edge. Go forward over field aiming to left of barns in distance to cross a footbridge and stile onto metalled track. Go straight over track and waymarked stile and continue forward with wire fence to right (barns over). Where fence bends off right, continue forward over field, to pass to right of a power post and arrive on surfaced lane. Go left along lane (Pelham Road), soon gaining sight of Claxby church tower in distance ahead. The lane leads us into the outskirts of the village and we pass the Viking Centre (accommodation available – see 'Public Transport' above) to left. Where main lane bends left, go forward onto St Mary's Lane and to church.

42. Return to lane and go left, retracing your steps for about fifty yards and at three-way finger post hidden amongst bushes to left and beside telegraph post right, go right through bridlegate. Continue with thick conifer hedge to right and follow path as it bends left to pass through another bridlegate then bear right with hedges/bushes to right. Pass through another bridlegate at field corner and continue with house garden over fence to left and bushes right to emerge onto minor road. Go straight over to cross stile and continue to left of house driveway and out of garden by a stile at rear. Bear gently right over field beyond to cross stile at left end of wooden fence and continue forward with hedges/bushes to left to a further stile and go forward again along edge of gardens with bushes/trees to left to yet another stile. Cross and go diagonally right over next field, aiming for wooden gateway that can be seen at far corner to bear right down driveway onto road (Normanby Rise).

43. Go left, up slope, passing out of village speed restriction signs. Just beyond earth mound right (Anglian Water station), go right over finger-posted stile into field edge. The next five minutes are hard work - its all uphill! Keep woodland over to right and climb steadily, aiming for power post on hillside ahead. Here, bear right, aiming to left of next power post and passing it to your right, continue upwards, still with woodland right. Where trees come to an end, bear gently left, climbing towards stile in hedge on horizon. Here take a well-earned rest to look back on the magnificent views over Lincolnshire. Cross stile and continue over grazing land, keeping wall and farm buildings over to right to pass through metal gateway in far field corner and out onto lane. Go right along lane (not sharp right onto the Normanby Grange farm access track) and down slope to junction. Ignore Viking Way sign pointing left and go straight on to gateway of church.

44. Return to lane and go left, passing church tower to left and old Sunday school (now used as barn) right. Follow track as it bends right (Viking Way), ignoring Countryside Commission access stile to left, and cross stile beside fieldgate into field corner. Go forward along edge of grazing field with hedge to left, crossing another stile. Continue forward along field edge with hedge to left to pass through bridlegate and continue with hedge/bushes down to left. Emerging onto the edge of a ridge with wonderful views in all directions, follow path to right, picking up low wall to left. Keep beside wall as it bends left and continue forward, eventually dropping gently to another bridlegate and three-way finger-post. Pass through gate to go forward (leaving Viking Way which bears right here) and continue down slope for about a hundred yards to go left through finger-posted bridlegate then right, down slope again, with hedge to right, passing through yet another bridlegate and descending more steeply. At the

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valley bottom, go through bridlegate then forward, passing three-way finger-post, to bear left over bridge onto farm track. Go right along the track for about twenty yards and at finger-posted cross track, bear left, over grazing field, aiming for stile in far hedgeline. Cross, and go forward over field, aiming to left of modern house that can be seen in distance. We soon pick up hedge left and continue along headland towards the house, passing through gateway at field corner and continuing with wall to right and so out onto a lane (Otby Lane). Go right along lane, soon passing Viking Way car parking area to left and emerging at junction in the centre of Walesby. Go right along road (Moor Road) signed to Osgodby and Glenthams and a hundred yards on, just before a house with the interesting name Wychaway, go left up little concrete pathway that leads into the grounds of Walesby's more modern church.

Alternative paras 40 and 41

40. Go right along ridge-top with stunted hedge to left and follow hedge as it bends sharply to left, giving more magnificent views. The path drops then rises along ridge top, still with stunted hedge left and continues to a point where power lines pass overhead and fence crosses our front. Go right here, dropping steeply beneath power cables with hedge over to left to stile at bottom field corner. Cross and go forward along headland with fence and hedge to left. Fifty yards on, go left through wicket gate onto farm track and go left again with hedge (and approach path) to left. Follow the track as it bends right with hedge to left and old farm sheds over. We stay with headland now for about a mile as it bends erratically but with hedges/bushes and trees always to left, crossing stiles and footbridges and at one point walking to right of weather station perimeter fence to eventually cross stile onto surfaced lane.

41. Go left along lane for a few yards then right over finger-posted stile into field corner and follow headland with hedge to right. At far field corner cross stile (pond to left) and bear left, still along headland but with hedge then back to left. Stay with the headland now for a further three-quarters of a mile as it twists and bends with hedges/bushes/trees to left and crossing three footbridges. At the last of these, leave headland to go forward over field aiming for wide gap in hedge at far side of field. At three-way finger-post here, bear slightly left onto another headland track with ditch and hedge to left. Pass beside plantation to right and emerge onto field edge. Go forward over the field aiming to the left of barns in distance to cross footbridge and stile onto metalled track. Go straight over track and waymarked stile and continue forward with wire fence to right (barns over). Where fence bends off right, continue forward over field, to pass to right of power post and arrive on surfaced lane. Go left along lane (Pelham Road), soon gaining sight of Claxby church tower in the distance ahead. The lane leads into the outskirts of the village and we pass the Viking Centre (accommodation available – see 'Public Transport' above) to left. Where main lane bends left, go forward onto St Mary's Lane and to church.

7.

WALESBY TO MARKET RASEN

Distance: 11½ miles (18½ kilometres)

Maps: OS Landranger Sheet 113 (Grimsby, Louth & Market Rasen)
OS Explorer Sheet 282 (Lincolnshire, Wolds North; Louth and Market Rasen)

Start: St Mary, Walesby (GR 133923).
Parking is available in the small Viking Way car park on Otby Lane (GR 134924). The route from here to St Mary is described at the end of Section 6.

Finish: St Thomas, Market Rasen (GR 106892).
Ample parking in the Festival Hall Car Park off George Street west of the church.

Public transport:
Walesby is a relatively isolated village and lacks an inn but it is accessible by bus provided you plan your route in advance. It is also easily reached by taxi from Market Rasen, which has its own railway station.

The walk: Our walk continues through magnificent Wolds hill-country as we climb with the Viking Way to the Ramblers' church of All Saints. A fine ridge path eventually drops us into Tealby where we leave the Viking Way and the Lincolnshire 'highlands' to continue over the flatlands to North Willingham. A section of unfortunate road-walking gains us the final heights of Towers Way (until the very end that is!) as we mount to Sixhills. Soon we follow tracks and footpaths down into the tiny village of Legsby before a short section of woodland and more fieldpaths bring us to Market Rasen. Three of the churches visited in this section of the Walk are beautifully described in a booklet

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entitled 'Churches of the Western Wolds' by Dr Charles Kightly. The book is usually found for sale at an exceptionally modest price in the churches themselves or may be obtained from the Tourism Development Unit of West Lindsey District Council.

45. Leave the church by the south-east gate (the opposite side of the churchyard to the one by which we entered) and turn left along the road, passing telephone box to left. Pass a side road to the left (which leads to the Village Hall) and where the main road swings left, go straight on, signed 'Footpath to the Old Church' (Viking Way). Go forward along the surfaced lane to pass through a bridlegate beside double wooden gates and continue upwards with the main path to the churchyard gateway (with a little plaque in memory of Jim Cook of the Lincoln Ramblers').

*Although restored in 1931, this was fortunately accomplished tactfully and everything about **All Saints** is interesting although it seems to have become a souvenir site for walkers, with benches and gates and nearby trees dedicated to Rambler's and their organizations. Before entering the building itself, note the beacon that was erected to celebrate 'Fire over England'. It was lit on 19 July 1988 as part of the beacon chain to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the sighting of the Spanish Armada. Also here are a couple of useful benches, one bearing the inscription 'Sit ye with a friend and rest your weary soles'. The church itself is a massive building, sitting on the 264 feet contour with magnificent views to west and north. The locally quarried ironstone tower is basically of the 13th century, the change in masonry at the higher level indicating that the battlements and pinnacles are 15th century additions. There is a blocked Norman doorway in the north wall of the nave whilst the south porch arch and the aisles are early 13th century. The clerestory probably dates from the later 15th century whilst the doorway into the church itself is magnificently Transitional. Internally, the church is a museum; the box pews here are outstanding and the magnificent and battered drum-shaped font is believed to be 13th century work. Wonderful Norman pillars support the north arcade, there is a magnificent chancel screen and a lovely Jacobean pulpit of 1626. As walkers we should note especially the east window of the Lady Chapel donated in 1950 by The Grimsby and District Wayfarers Association in memory of lovers of the countryside whose annual pilgrimages to this church began in 1932. Again, there is so much to see and enjoy here that we cannot but highly recommend Dr Charles Kightly's booklet which is usually available for a give-away fee in the church.*

46. From the porch, go forward over the churchyard to pass through kissing gate and turn left to follow the headland with fence/hedge left and the church over. Follow the headland as it bends right and mount to stile in the top field corner. Cross and continue forward over the next field to another stile at left end of woodland. Cross and bear gently left, dropping down a steep grassy slope between bushes then over grazing land to a stream in the valley floor. Cross the stiled footbridge and climb the slope on the far side, bearing gently right and keeping thick hedgeline over to your left. At the top of the slope (waymarker post) where magnificent views are to be had stretching out to Lincoln Cathedral, aim slightly right, away from the wall and Risby Manor Farm, to cross stile beside metal fieldgate and arrive on surfaced track. Cross the track and continue over the field beyond, aiming for a short section of fence beside telegraph post ahead. Cross a stile here and bear gently left, up slope, towards trees on the skyline. Cross a stile in the top field corner (where there is an advertisement for Tealby Tea Rooms – open April to September) to enter the edge of woodland and go right with fence/hedge right and trees left. Continue your line, dropping gently and crossing four more stiles to emerge beside farm buildings. Go forward for a few yards to a finger-post then go left, dropping gently through the valley floor. At the Viking Way waymarker post, bear right towards a fieldgate at the bottom field corner. Pass through the gateway and follow the path which bends to the right, passing a footbridge right then bear left, picking up a headland path with hedge right. Cross a stile in the field corner and bear left, up the shoulder (not steeply upwards) of the slope passing a waymarker hidden amongst gorse bushes left, soon aiming for the left end of cottage which backs directly onto the field. Here, pass through fieldgate and follow the short section of Roman Road/Memory Lane onto road in Tealby. Go left, (there is a surfaced walkway in the far verge) and where the road bends right, go forward to the church.

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47. Leave the church by the way you entered to go left then left again, signed to Binbrook and Grimsby with the church building up to your left. At the next junction, go right, signed to North Willingham and Louth, dropping down Beck Hill. Follow the road as it bends sharply right (parking at the Memorial Hall left is private) and continue along what is Front Street to pass the old school building (dated 1856 and paid for and designed by Charles Tennyson d'Eyncourt). Passing the Tealby Tea Rooms, follow the road as it bends sharply left and ignoring the finger-posted footpath right, continue along the road to pass the Methodist Chapel (1819) left. Where the main road swings right as Sandy Lane, go forward onto Kingsway, the thatched Kings Head pub to your right (walkers and boots unwelcome). Go to the end of the surfaced lane and, ignoring the path swinging off right, go forward over footbridge to arrive on field edge. Go straight over the field to cross a stony track and continue forward over another footbridge then on over the field beyond. At the far side, pass over another bridge and bear gently right, aiming for a wide hedge gap. Pass through this and bear right, cutting off the field corner and aiming for a white post ahead. At the post, go forward through gap to pick up a headland track with hedge to right. Stay on this line now, passing a track that goes off left and leads to the ruin of 'the Clump' visible on the hillside. Where the headland (now marked by a ditch) bears right, stay forward on the main track that soon follows a thin screen of trees on embankment to left. Where the trees come to an end, go left onto a headland path with embankment left. About a hundred yards on, at the finger-post, bear right over the field with the tower of North Willingham church in the distance to the front left. Cross the footbridge at the far side of the field then stile into paddock. Here follow the diverted footpath signs which lead around the edge of a field, first to left and then right (keeping hedge to left), skirting a pond to your right. At the end of the diversion, go left over stile and plank bridge then right, along field headland with fence and bushes right to cross a stile beside fieldgate onto road in North Willingham. Go left along the road and ignoring the lane going off right signed to Sixhills and Hainton (this will be our onward route), continue to bear left and find the church over to the right.

48. Return to the road and go left. Where the road bends right, go sharply left onto Sixhills Road signed to Sixhills and Hainton. The road walk from here to Sixhills is a little over a mile in distance and is not the most exciting walking experience. However, it is a quiet highway and in the field to the right just before the buildings of the large farmhouse, note the ridge and furrow landscape which marks the site of the ancient **Gilbertine Priory of St Mary**. *Current mapping shows this to have been a Benedictine Priory but it was in fact founded between 1148 and 1154 by the Gilbertine order, established by the Lincolnshire priest Gilbert of Sempringham. His was the only purely English religious order and the only one whose monasteries housed both nuns and male canons. Sixhills was one of the larger Gilbertine houses and was used by Edward I as a conveniently remote place of exile for the female relatives of his enemies. Amongst these were Gwladys, daughter of the executed Welsh Prince Dafydd III who lived here as a nun from 1283 to 1336 and Christina Seton, sister of Robert the Bruce. When the Priory was dissolved in 1538, it had one Prior, a Prioress, seven Canons and fourteen Nuns – five of the latter having married by 1554!* Stay with the main road, ignoring the side lane to Little London and Legsby, as it now climbs to the village of Sixhills. Immediately beyond the telephone and post boxes, go left up a track that leads to the gateway of this beautifully sited church.

49. Return to the road and go left, still mounting through the village. Pass the road left signed to Ludford and Kirmond le Mire and follow the main road as it bears right signed to Hainton and South Willingham. Ignoring the finger-posted footpath right, (which crosses the site of the old Nunnery) continue along the winding road until it makes a sharp turn to the left. Here go right onto a finger-posted bridleway that runs as a farm track over the field (the steeple you can see far over to the left is at Hainton) and emerges at the edge of a ridge with magnificent views ahead. Follow the track as it bends left with hedgeline left and stay with it as it drops gently through wide curves to fieldgate. Go through the gate and continue forward over a grazing field keeping hedge/fence to right. Pass a large clump of gorse and a pond to your left then bear gently left, away from the headland, to walk beside another clump of gorse to your left. Here, bear gently left, continuing forward towards trees ahead and so arrive at the field corner gate. Pass through and continue along a farm track with thick woodland (Croppersgorse Plantation) right and hedges/trees left to arrive at a cross-track and three-way finger-post.

50. Go right along the track with the plantation right and follow it as it bends left. Where the main track goes off to the right, go forward along what is now a green lane between bushes, hedges and trees. Pass (Clump Hill Farm) access track to left and two hundred yards beyond this junction go right at a three-way finger-post. Follow the track over a field and through a gateway, picking up a hedgeline initially to left then to right with farmhouse in the distance ahead. About a hundred yards before the

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farm and just beyond the point where a thick hedgeline comes in over the field from the left, leave the track to go left at a three-way finger-post and continue through scrub to a bridge and bridlegate. Pass through to a field corner with the tower of Legsby church in the distance ahead and go forward along the headland, passing through three field-corner gateways and eventually arriving at field edge. Here, bear diagonally right, aiming for the left hand end of red brick perimeter wall of cottage where a bridlegate takes us onto the road in Legsby. Go left along the road to the church.

51. Return to the road and go left, retracing the route past the bridlegate by which we arrived and follow the road as it wanders out of the village. The road makes a bend to the right and four hundred yards beyond this, where the road makes another bend right and at the far end of a copse to the right of the road, go left onto finger-posted farm access track. Pass farm buildings right, cross over stile beside farm gate and continue forward on a wide grassy lane between bushes and trees to climb another stile into the edge of Legsby Wood. Go forward again along what is now a footpath with thin screen of trees left and thick woodland right to arrive at a waymarked stile beside fieldgate. Cross and go forward into thick woodland, (bear gently left at first), now walking a path through bracken, scrub and trees. Our path eventually leads to a major stony track which we cross and continue the line of walk to stile beside fieldgate which takes us into the corner of a grazing field. Go forward along the headland keeping woodland over fence right and crossing three more stiles to arrive on a cross track with farm buildings to left. Go forward over the arable field ahead aiming for a wide hedge gap where we reach a major track.

52. Go left here for a few yards to a four-way finger-post, then right, crossing the field and aiming for the tree which stands at the far right hand end of a hedge seen in the distance. Once here, bear left over the field aiming now for the right hand corner of the perimeter fence/hedge of farm buildings. Go round to the left here, keeping the perimeter fence/hedge and house to left. Cross the driveway, pass through a hedge gap and bear diagonally right over the field beyond walking at an acute angle away from a line of power posts which slant off to the right, the aiming point being the tower of a brickworks which can just be seen in the far distance. Arriving at the far side of the field, go left along the headland with hedgeline/trees to right. Cross stile in the field corner and continue along the headland, still with hedgeline right. Follow the headland as it bends to right then left (the path has been diverted here – the map shows it crossing the field) and immediately beyond a large oak tree in the hedgeline, go right over waymarked stile onto field edge. Bear left over the field, aiming for the corner of garden fences and here, go right onto a narrow path with garden fences left and thick hedgeline right to arrive on road (Legsby Road) at the edge of Market Rasen.

53. Go left along the road (there is a footway on the far side), soon passing cemetery to your right. Where the road bends right and beside the cemetery gate, re-cross the road to walk a narrow footpath with brick wall to left and cemetery fence right. At the end of the wall, pass through a kissing gate and continue forward with the fence still right and open field left (with the brickwork chimney to the front left). Pass through another kissing gate and ignoring finger-posted footpath right, continue forward between fences/hedge to arrive on road (Chapman Street). Go straight over and continue on a narrow lane with garden fences left and wall right. Where the wall comes to an end, bear slightly right along the surfaced path passing the Cadet Force hut to left and arrive on the end of a cul-de-sac (Lammas Leas Road). Go straight over (ignore road to the left) to the far end of the cul-de-sac to find a small alley to the left which runs beside the old Maltings building and onto road (Serpentine Street). Go left, passing Maltings Court to left and at the cross-roads, go straight over onto Chapel Street. Pass beneath the railway bridge and continue along the front of the magnificent Methodist church with its Doric columned entrance and fine war memorial. At the next major junction with the Liberal Club and Institute (1908) on the corner to your left, go right (into John Street) which narrows to join busy Queen Street. Cross into the market place and walk to the top left corner (the Aston Arms inn is to the right) to find the gateway to the church.

MARKET RASEN TO HACKTHORN

Distance: 14½ miles (23½ kms)

The Towers Way

Maps: OS Landranger Sheet 121 (Lincoln & Newark-on-Trent)
OS Explorer Sheets 272 (Lincoln; Sleaford, Metheringham & Navenby)
281 (Ancholme Valley; Barton-upon Humber, Brigg,
Scunthorpe & Kirton in Lindsey)
282 (Lincolnshire, Wolds North; Louth and Market Rasen)

Start: St Thomas, Market Rasen (GR 106892).
Ample parking in the Festival Hall Car Park off George Street west of the church.

Finish: St Michael, Hackthorn (GR 991824).
Parking in the Village Hall car park a couple of hundred yards east of the church.

Public transport:

Market Rasen has its own railway station but Hackthorn, which lacks even an inn is difficult to access. There are buses but these are infrequent and your trip will have to be well planned. The village is, however easily accessible by taxi from Welton. Although this is a lengthy stage, Bed and Breakfast accommodation is available at Honeyholes Farmhouse which lies astride the route onwards to Welton about half a mile south of Hackthorn. (The route to the farmhouse appears in Section 9 paragraph 60)

The walk: The hilly Wolds have now been left far behind us and this is a section to get our heads down and move swiftly. Although a lengthy section, the land is flat and even featureless in places but the tracks and fieldpaths are generally good. However, do not move so quickly as to miss the seven lovely churches and 'lost' village on the way. For this stage, we have to bend the term 'tower' a little as two of the churches visited have either a bellcote or a cupola but perhaps for our purpose, they might be called bell towers.

53. From the south porch go right then right again, passing beneath the tower and dropping down to George Street. Go left along the road, passing the entrance to the Festival Hall and its car park left, crossing the River Rase then taking the first lane left (Rase Lane). Continue to its end and pass through kissing gate beside fieldgate into edge of sports field. Go left, keeping to the field boundary and bending to the right (*the saddleback church over to the left is that of the Holy Rood, the town's Roman Catholic church built in 1824*) then right again with the river down to the left. Pass behind the small stadium and at the next corner, go forward then left, as finger-posted, leaving the sports field behind but staying on the bank of the river which is still to your left. At a two-way finger-post beside paling fence, go right onto a narrow footpath with fence left and bushes/hedges right. Emerging onto a trading estate road, go straight over and continue forward along a path between new development and fence to stile onto road. Go left along the road (cross to the verge at the far side), Middle Rasen church tower soon becoming visible in the distance ahead, and after about three hundred yards, go right onto finger-posted surfaced access lane for Low Grange Farm. The lane crosses Brimmer Beck, passes a cottage then bends beside the farm buildings left before continuing to emerge onto another track (Low Lane). Go left here and ignoring all side routes, continue to the outskirts of Middle Rasen. Arriving on North Street, continue forward, passing Low Church Road and so onwards to the church.

54. Return to North Street and go right. Continue to the end of the village and where the road bends left and a finger-posted lane goes off right, go forward over finger-posted stile into field corner. Stay along the field edge keeping river left to pass through a gateway in the field corner fence then bear gently right over the next field aiming for the mid-point of the far hedgeline and leaving the river at an acute angle. (Note that the footpath linking Middle and West Rasen is likely to be diverted before Towers Way is completed. The proposed route is to follow the north bank of the river all the way to the centre of West Rasen). Cross a section of wooden fence here and the plank bridge beyond then aim a little to the left of the tower of West Rasen church which can be seen in the distance. At the far field edge, cross a plank bridge and go through a hedge gap onto farm track. Cross and go forward over the field aiming for the mid section of a screen of trees which can be seen ahead. Pass through the

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trees and cross a culvert into another field edge and continue forward, aiming for distant farm buildings. Pass through a gap at the field corner and continue along the headland with hedgeline to right. Where the hedge comes to an end, stay forward, now with ditch down to your right. At a waymarker post, bear left across the field corner towards the left hand end of farm buildings to arrive at a tractor bridge. Go forward over the bridge. (Alternatively, continue along the edge of the ditch and follow it as it bends to the left at the field corner then go right over the bridge). Follow the track as it passes along the front of barns to right then stay on what has become a surfaced access lane which bends left to arrive on the busy A631. Go right along the road (there is a surfaced walkway in the verge), entering the village of West Rasen and stay with it as it bends to the right. Having turned the bend cross the road with care since the footway is now in the far verge but, where the road bends sharply left, cross (again with care) to take a narrow lane between brick walls that leads to the church.

55. Return to the A631 and go right. About a hundred yards before the roundabout, and immediately before the little packhorse bridge to your right, cross the road to a finger-posted pathway into the old school/chapel grounds. Pass to the right of the building and cross a stile into field edge. Go forward, keeping the field hedge over to your right and, beside a telegraph post, go diagonally left, over the field to the far hedgeline. Bear right here, with the hedge left and cross stile into house garden. Go forward, keeping over to the left and emerge onto lane. Go left, and just before rejoining the A631, go right onto finger-posted farm track (access to Toftley's Farm). Five hundred yards on, ignore track swinging off right towards the farm and continue forward, soon dropping very gently into a shallow valley. At the bottom of the slope where a finger-posted line of trees and bushes come in from the right, go right, keeping the line of trees and ditch to left. Where the field edge makes a bend to the right, go forward over scrub with pond to right to re-emerge on the headland path. Go forward for a few more yards then left over waymarked culvert onto field edge. Go right along the headland with trees/bushes to right. Cross plank bridge at the field corner and bear right to keep close to the field edge with ditch to your right. Follow the ditch as it squirms its way forward eventually bearing left, with the waymarked path and aiming to the right of a lone barn where a finger-post can be seen. (If this section is not defined, continue forward along the ditch edge then follow it as it swings left to arrive at the finger-post just in front of the barn). Go forward over an access track and pass barns to left then continue your line over the field, aiming for a red brick building that can be seen in the far distance. At the field edge, cross a culvert and bear left, aiming for an external hedge corner where a finger-post stands. Go right here along the headland with hedge to left and emerge onto a lane in the village of Newton by Toft. Go left along the lane and follow it as it bends right to find the little church on your left.

56. Return to the road and go left then where the road bends to the left, go right, signed to Toft next Newton and Reservoir. Follow the lane for about half a mile and where it makes a sharp bend to the right, go forward, signed 'to Reservoir'. Four hundred yards on, immediately before the cattle grid and gated entrance to the reservoir, go left onto finger-posted concrete track with hedge to your right (the reservoir is over but is invisible behind a high embankment). The concrete track swings off to the left but we go forward on a farm track and follow it as it bends to the right and left between fields. Our route runs parallel to a chain link perimeter fence over ditch and hedge to left for a short distance and at the end of the fence, ignore the track going off left and continue forward towards farm buildings in the distance. Just after a red brick barn to left, leave the main track to skirt the edge of the buildings by going right, left and left again, then right, to regain the original line with ditch to left. At the field corner, go right, still with ditch to left and follow it as it bends sharply to the left. At the next field corner, go forward over a culvert then right with the ditch now down to the right. Follow the ditch as it bends gently to the left and at the field corner, go left, keeping ditch to the right. At the next field corner, go forward over a bridge and through a bridlegate to emerge at the corner of a grazing field. Continue along the field edge with hedge and bushes right and at the field corner, go forward with hedge now to the left. (Tree trunks to the right here make a good resting place). Pass through another gap and continue with ditch down to the right and trees/bushes over. At the field corner, go left for a few yards then right, through hedge gap then right again to cross concrete culvert onto the end of a green lane. Follow the lane as it bends gently to the left and left again before it makes a sharp bend to the right, passing between hedges to arrive on a surfaced farm access lane. Go left along the lane and follow it for a little under half a mile to a junction with the country road at the edge of Saxby. Go forward along the road signed to Spridlington and Lincoln and follow it as it bends to the left. As the road bends left again, go right signed to Saxby and Gainsborough and continue into the tiny village passing telephone box left then finger-posted footpaths to left and right and so to the unusual church approached through a gate and gravel drive left.

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57. Return to the gravel drive, passing through the gap in the low stone wall and go right with the wall and church right and fine house over grass to left. Pass through a little metal gateway and go forward over grass onto a track. Go right along the track which passes between garden walls and a cottage to cross stile beside fieldgate. Go forward over a strip of grass and cross another stile into field corner. Drop down the field edge with wire fence and saplings right and at the far field corner cross a stile and concrete footbridge and bear right to mount through bushes to another field edge. Go forward up the gentle slope to pick up a hedgeline and follow this forward, keeping the stunted hedge/treeline to left. Cross a sleeper bridge and stile in the field corner and bear left over another stile to a cross-track. Go straight over then bear left through a plantation of Christmas trees to field edge and continue your line, aiming for the far field corner (the aiming point should be the village speed limit signs which can soon be seen over the far hedge). Cross a sleeper bridge and stile onto road at the edge of the village of Spridlington. Go right along the road, soon passing the gated entrance to the Hall which can be glimpsed to your right. Continue along the pavement passing, for the moment, the finger-posted footpath to the right (this will be our onward route after visiting the church), and continue for a further two hundred yards to the church which is at the next junction.

58. Return to the road and retrace your steps along Owmbly Road for about a hundred and fifty yards, passing the tiny bellcoted school (with the date 1870). Immediately after the cottage with the name Firsby View, go left onto finger-posted house driveway with hedge to right and cottage to the left. Entering the grounds of Old Rectory Cottage, keep right to find a waymarked path which runs between garage and hedge. Follow the path as it bends right to cross a stile then go left, with fence right (often with lamas over). At the field corner, go right, still with fence right then left over stiled footbridge into the corner of a paddock. Go forward along the field edge with fence and hedge right to cross another stile and continue forward to the next field corner. Cross the stile here and go forward along the field edge with hedge left. Pass through a waymarked hedge gap at the field corner and continue your line over the field ahead to go through another hedge gap and arrive on farm access track. Cross the track and continue forward over the next field, aiming for a gap that can be seen well to the left of a green water storage tank in the distance. Cross a sleeper bridge in the hedge onto a farm track and bear diagonally right over the large field beyond, aiming to the left of a lone tree in the far hedgeline. Pass through a waymarked gap here and bear very gently right, now aiming for the right hand end of a patch of woodland which can be seen in the distance (the gable of a cottage is just visible at the left hand end of the same trees). Arriving at a waymarked stile in the far hedgeline, cross and bear left over the grazing field, aiming now for the left hand side of a gabled cottage which can be seen in the distance. Passing immediately to the right of a lone tree in the middle of the field, continue to cross a stile beside gate in the field corner onto a major track with the cottage over.

59. Go left up the track with thick hedge to left. Stay with the track as it bends sharply right then left, skirting the edge of an oil pumping station perimeter and continue with ditch to left and soon walking parallel to an access lane as it dips then rises to a road. Cross, and pass through finger-posted metal half gate and pick up a continuation of the path, now a wide track with hedge to right. Ignoring all side tracks, stay forward, passing the buildings of Manor House Farm to right, the tower of Hackthorn church soon becoming visible through the trees to the front right. Our track eventually becomes an old surfaced lane running between hedges and bends through a metal half-gate then continues through more bends to drop gently as a surfaced lane, crossing a beck with lovely estate cottages and a triangular green to the front and left. Bear to the right, rising gently along the rear of cottages, then left to join the main road in Hackthorn. Go right along the road, passing out of the village and where the road swings sharply left go right onto surfaced lane signed to Village Hall and Church. (On the corner here is a little green and tree in memory of Weston Cracroft-Amcotts – 1888-1975). Follow the lane as it bends left, passing through a white gateway (the Village Hall car park is up to the right amongst the stables immediately after passing through these gateposts). Continue between the millpond to left and the lovely old mill with its clock right and so to the church.

9.

HACKTHORN TO CHERRY WILLINGHAM

The Towers Way

Distance: 10½ miles (17 kms)

Maps: OS Landranger Sheet 121 (Lincoln & Newark-on-Trent)
OS Explorer Sheet 272 (Lincoln; Sleaford, Metheringham & Navenby)

Start: St Michael, Hackthorn (GR 991824).
Parking in the Village Hall car park, signed from the main road and located a couple of hundred yards east of the church.

Finish: St Peter and St Paul, Cherry Willingham (GR 032724)
Ample parking in the shopping precinct car park, Croft Lane, Cherry Willingham (GR 032728) which we pass on our approach to the church.

Public transport:

Hackthorn, although close to Lincoln, is a fairly isolated village that lacks even an inn. There are buses but these are infrequent and your trip will have to be well planned. The village is however easily accessible by taxi from Welton and for this particular stage, Bed and Breakfast accommodation at Honeyholes Farmhouse which lies astride the route (described at paragraph 60 below) might be considered. Cherry Willingham is easily accessible from Lincoln by bus.

The walk: A good track leads from Hackthorn to Welton where fieldpaths which wend their way through and around new housing developments take us on to Dunholme. We continue along a fine beckside path and more cross-field routes to Scothern before crossing fields and passing through a short section of woodland to arrive at Sudbrooke whose church, unfortunately, is too far from or line of walk to be included. We walk a little distance alongside the busy A158 before more cross-field paths take us to Reepham. Our journey ends with a path that runs beside the railway line into Cherry Willingham and its fine Georgian church reminiscent of Saxby.

60. Leave the church and retrace your steps to the main Hackthorn road to go left and re-enter the village. Two hundred and fifty yards on, having passed the lane which was our approach (Section 8, paragraph 59), go right onto the finger-posted 'footpath to Welton – 2 miles' which starts as a surfaced lane between houses. Half a mile on, approaching a farm cottage and where the main track bends to the left, go forward onto a dirt track with hedgeline right to arrive at the cottage perimeter. Go left along the hedge/fence with the cottage over (this is Honeyholes Farmhouse which provides Bed and Breakfast) and at the end of the fence go right again with fence and cottage still initially to your right. Pick up a hedge right then bear left over the end of the garden to emerge over a stile beside gate into field corner. Go forward down the field edge with ditch and hedge left. Cross the stile and footbridge at the field corner and continue forward along the headland with hedge now to your right. Where the hedge comes to an end, continue your line with ditch right and at the field corner, go forward over a culvert then go left, now with the ditch to your left. At the field corner, go round to the right, rising gently on a headland path with hedge left and golf course over. Pass through a gap at the field corner and continue onto a dirt track that slowly improves to a surfaced lane (Prebend Lane) now entering the outskirts of Welton. Arriving at a major road crossing, go left, signed to Village Hall. Pass Chapel Lane to your right then, with the lovely Methodist Chapel on the corner to the right, go right onto Manor Lane to a road crossing with the lych-gated entry to the church grounds over and The Black Bull inn to the left.

61. *From the porch, take the path to the left that runs through the churchyard with the church building to your left. Drop down steps onto a lane and go left for about fifty yards then right into a finger-posted alley that leads to the corner of the sports field. Go forward along the field edge with hedge/trees left to a three-way finger-post at the far field corner. Here, go right with garden fences/hedges left and passing behind the sports and social club, follow the path as it crosses a footbridge and continues between garden fences/hedges to emerge onto a cul-de-sac. Go forward over the end of the cul-de-sac to pick up another pathway with house wall to your left and low fence right to emerge through a wooden barrier at the edge of grassland. Go left then right along the edge*

The Towers Way

of the grass with house fences left and wooden post fence right to arrive on a surfaced lane. Go left along the lane and, at its end, bear right, through cycle barriers into another alley between garden hedges/fences and follow the path as it bends to the right and left through a new housing development. Crossing an estate road, go forward, again between houses then through a gateway with stile beside into a field corner. Go left along the headland and follow the field edge as it twists its way onwards with hedgeline to your left and Dunholme church tower just visible in the distance to your front right. At the field corner, go right, with garden fences/hedges left and a hundred yards on go left onto a finger-posted path between bushes and trees which leads onwards to Ryland Road. Cross to the pavement on the far side of the road and go right. About 200 yards on, just beyond the school warning sign and house number 38, go left, initially between garden fences and follow the path as it bends to the right and left to pass through a kissing gate and cross a footbridge then up steps onto a field edge. Go right along the headland with stream down to your right and at the field corner, go left, now with fence to your right. Where the fence comes to an end, go round to the right (the definitive route crosses the stile to your right immediately before the end of the fence and follows the described route but on the other side of the fence. However, the normally walked route is as described), still with fence to your right, the church tower ahead. At the end of the fence, bear right then left, keeping a thick hedge to your right to arrive on the end of a cul-de-sac. Go forward between cottages to a T-junction then go left and follow the road as it swings to the right and left to find an opening in the wall to your right which gives access to the northern section of the church grounds.

62. Leave the church and follow the path that leads directly from the porch, passing beside the Victorian lamp standard and through a gateway onto a lane. Go left with beck to your right and join the main road. Go straight on, passing Holmes Lane left and noting *the little well to your left which is apparently 100 feet deep and was originally bored in 1892*. Go forward along the road, crossing to the pavement at the far side. Pass Beck Lane to your right and just beyond the Anglian Water pumping station, leave the road to go forward into a field corner and continue along the field edge with fence and bushes left and the road over. At the field corner, go to the right then left over a stile and footbridge then up an embankment to the busy A46. Cross this hectic road with care and drop down the far embankment to mount a finger-posted stile into field edge. Bear diagonally left over the field to pass over a footbridge then go left with beck down to your left. We follow this lovely meandering beckside path now for about three-quarters of a mile, keeping the beck to our left and eventually arriving at a stile. Cross and go forward, still with the beck to your left and with what is now Pickerings Meadow – a nature reserve - to your right. At the field corner (where there are convenient benches), ignore the stile ahead and go right along the edge of the meadow with hedge left. Half way down the field edge with finger-posted stile to your left, go right through a wicket gate and bear diagonally left over the meadow aiming for a section of wooden fence in the hedgeline ahead. Cross the culvert here and go forward over another field to cross a stile beside fieldgate onto a cross-track (Ashing Lane).

63. Go right for twenty yards then at a three-way finger-post, leave the lane to go left over a sleeper bridge and onto a headland path with hedge left. Far over to your front right now you can just make out Lincoln Cathedral whilst a little to the left of this is the tower of Scothern church. At the field corner, go right, with ditch and hedge left and about two hundred yards on, go left over finger-posted footbridge and stile onto field edge. Bear gently to the right over the field, aiming for a wide gap in the far tree/hedgeline ahead and to the left of the distant church tower. Cross a culvert and go forward along the tractor track that bends to the right and left onto a farm track which continues between hedges. Follow the track for about four hundred yards and at a three-way finger-post, go right through a hedge gap into field edge and go forward to a gap in the far hedgeline. Here, cross a plank bridge and bear gently left over the field, passing through a hedge gap at the far side and bearing gently left again over the next field, aiming now just to the right of the distant church tower. At the field corner, go left beside garden fences then over a stile into the grounds of the village hall. Continue to the road and go right (*over the road to your front left is Scothern Methodist church, originally a Wesleyan Chapel established in 1823, but the present building dating to 1858*). Pass Sudbrooke Road to your left (with the Bottle & Glass inn on the corner) and School Crescent right to find the gateway over the road to your left which leads into the north part of the churchyard.

64. Leave the church by the west doorway and descend to the road. Go left then left again onto Church Street, the church building up to your left. At the T-junction, go right for about a hundred yards and between the last bungalow and the first house to your left (Nos 27 and 31), go left through a wicket gate beside fieldgate onto a finger-posted pathway between house gardens. Cross an estate road and go forward again between gardens to cross a stile into field corner. Bear diagonally right over the field to cross a plank bridge through a hedge gap into field edge. Go right along the headland with hedge right, eventually passing an oil drilling area complete with 'nodding donkeys'. Arriving on a cross-track with the entrance to the oil drilling area right, bear left along the track and follow it as it bends to the left. Immediately before it bends to the right, go right over finger-posted stile into field corner. Go forward along the edge of the field with ditch then bushes to your right (the field is sometimes divided into two sections by wire and a stile) to eventually pass through a kissing gate onto another major track. Go left for a few yards, crossing the brook, then right, as finger-posted, to follow the brook which is down to your right. Our path meanders through a fine section of scrub and woodland, then goes right over a footbridge. On the far side of the bridge, go forward for a few yards then left along a grassy pathway between bushes and trees. Ignore the waymarked path off to your right and continue forward for a further seventy five yards to a cross track. Go left here, re-crossing the stream and continuing through scrub, bearing right at a Y-junction and arriving on a major track. Go right along the potholed track, passing through the edge of Sudbrooke Park and continue to eventually walk between the park lodges and through a gateway with lions and shields onto the A158.

65. Go right along the road (there is a walkway in the verge) for about four hundred yards, passing houses hidden behind hedges and a garage to your right then, immediately before the first house over the road to your left, cross the road with care to climb a finger-posted stile into field corner. Go forward along the headland with hedge right to cross another stile at the far end of the field onto a surfaced access lane. Go right dropping down the lane for a hundred yards then go left onto a finger-posted concrete track. About forty yards on, go right onto a finger-posted cross-field path and aim slightly to the right of the pyramid-topped tower of Reepham church which can be seen in the distance ahead, walking parallel to a line of wooden power posts over to your left. Cross the sleeper bridge and stile at the far side of the field and bear gently right over the next field aiming for a wide hedge gap at the far field corner. Pass through the gap and go right along the headland track with hedge right and the church tower in the distance ahead. (Note that the definitive line goes diagonally right over the field [from the gap] but the walked route tends to be the route we are following). Where the hedge comes to an end, go left along the track that passes between barns and onto a road in the outskirts of Reepham. Go right along the road into the village and follow it as it bends to the left with The Green to your right and Plough Lane left then continue as it bends to the right to arrive at the church gateway.

66. Return to the road (Church Lane) and go forward to the T-junction with Station Road/High Street with the Post Office/village store on the corner to your left. Go left and where the road bends to the left (the Fox & Hounds inn is ahead), go right onto a finger-posted driveway between gateposts immediately after the house called Walnut Garth. Continue to the end of the driveway to pass through a kissing gate and go left then almost immediately right onto a grassy path between garden hedges and so to an estate road. Go left to the end of the cul-de-sac and find a finger-posted pathway to your front right that leads between garden fences/hedges. Follow the path as it bends to the left and arrives at a cross-track and three-way finger-post. Go right to walk a headland path (there is a new residential estate to your right) with the railway line running parallel to your left. Stay forward, ignoring all side paths, eventually picking up garden fences/hedges right and continue to eventually emerge onto an area of greenery with road over to your right. Stay forward over the grass, still with the railway line over a fence to your left and garden fences right to continue on a surfaced way to a road. Go left along the road (Croft Lane), crossing over the railway line and passing a shopping precinct (with convenient parking and even more convenient Wishing Well inn) to your left. Follow

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the road as it bends to the right, passing the Post Office and at the junction where Croft Lane becomes High Street, go left onto Church Lane signed to Fiskerton, Short Ferry and Stainfield. Pass Lady Meers Road to your left (this will be our onward route in Section 10) and continue forward to the lovely little church approached through the gateway ahead.

10.

CHERRY WILLINGHAM TO LINCOLN

Distance: 7 miles (11½ kms)

Maps: OS Landranger Sheet 121 (Lincoln & Newark-on-Trent)
OS Explorer Sheet 272 (Lincoln; Sleaford, Metheringham & Navenby)

Start: St Peter and St Paul, Cherry Willingham (GR 032724)
Ample parking in the shopping precinct car park, Croft Lane, Cherry Willingham (GR 032728) which we passed on our approach to the church (Section 9, paragraph 66).

Finish: Lincoln Cathedral.

The walk: A short stroll along fieldpaths takes us to the village of Fiskerton where we wander to the banks of the River Witham and turn due west with our eventual aim – Lincoln Cathedral – directly ahead of us for the next couple of miles. Turning our backs on the river, we cross fields to Greetwell church then continue into the outskirts of Lincoln itself. Passing through a trading estate we soon pick up a ridge path that runs behind terraced houses before dropping down one of these terraces to visit the ruins of Monk's Priory. A gentle climb through the Arboretum takes us into historic Lincoln and so to our final destination.

67. Leave the church and retrace your steps for a few yards to go right into Lady Meers Road. Pass Dale Avenue to your left and follow the main road as it bears to the right passing Thornton Way then The Leys to your left and Jessop Close to the right. Just before Midholm, a cul-de-sac to your left, go left onto a finger-posted path between houses into a field corner. Go forward along the headland with hedge to your right. At the far field corner, pass through the hedge gap and go right along the field edge with bushes/hedges and trees to your right, Fiskerton church tower now visible in the distance over to your left. Stay with the headland as it bends to the left at the field corner, now following a line of power posts with hedge/ditch to your right. A few yards before the second of the wooden posts, go right through the waymarked hedge gap then left, now following the field edge with hedge to your left. At the next field corner, pass through the hedge gap and bear right, down the field, aiming for the handrails of a footbridge which can be seen in an isolated clump of bushes well to the right of the distant tower of Fiskerton church. Cross the bridge into field edge and bear left over the field beyond, still aiming a little to the right of the church tower. Cross the stile at the far side of the field and go forward along a grassy strip to the rear of houses to arrive on a minor road (Plough Lane) at the edge of Fiskerton. Go forward along the road and follow it as it bends to the left and passing a small triangular green to your left arrive on the main road (Chapel Road). Go right then take the first road to the right (Blacksmith Road). At its junction with High Street, cross with care and go left to the lovely church of St Clement.

68. Back on High Street, go right then, where the road swings sharply left, go forward onto Nelson Road with the Post Office on the corner to your left. At the very end of this cul-de-sac, go right over a finger-posted stile and along a narrow path between the rear of house gardens to bend to the left and cross a plank bridge onto a field edge. Go right here, and keeping the ditch down to your right cross a bridge over North Delph (drain) then up an embankment to the edge of the River Witham. Go right along the river bank, keeping the river to your left and the Delph down to your right, with fine views of our eventual objective - Lincoln Cathedral – in the distance ahead. We follow the river for almost 2¼

The Towers Way

miles, passing kilometer posts 7, 6 and 5 on the riverside and crossing two stiles on the way. At the third stile, ignore the Viking Way finger-post directing right and continue forward, passing Washingborough church and the old Washingborough railway station building over the river to your left then the 4 kilometre post. At the next finger-post located just beyond a large water pipe that crosses our path, leave the river to go right, dropping down the embankment and passing through a gateway to the left of a pumping station. Go forward on a headland track with hedge to your left, passing through another gateway and where the hedge swings off to the left, bear right to cross along the front of the church then bear left to find the little wicket gate into the grounds of All Saints.

69. Return to the track and go left to a cattle grid which takes the track onto Fiskerton Road. Immediately before the grid, go left (now picking up the Viking Way again) over the ridge and furrow grassland with the hall lodge bearing its coat of arms (and the date 1856 on a front gable) to your right to arrive at the field edge. Go left along the headland with fence to your right and the railway in a cutting beyond. Cross a waymarked stile and continue your line, eventually passing beneath power cables then beside double wooden power posts and through a wide waymarked gap at the field 'corner'. Continue along the field edge for a further sixty yards then go right through a kissing gate to cross the railway with care and pass through another gate onto field edge. Go left along the headland with the railway now to your left and at the field corner go right, still with the headland. Forty yards on go left over a stile and up steps into the edge of Allenby Trading Estate. Go forward to the end of a cul-de-sac then go right along the road (Dowding Road). Take the first left (Crofton Road) and follow it through to its crossing with busy Allenby Road.

70. Go diagonally left over the road to enter Tower Drive and continue forward until the road bends to the right as Roman Pavement (with shops ahead). Here, go forward over the top of Hillside Avenue onto a surfaced alley between garden fences. We soon pick up the fence of the County Hospital to our right and before long our route narrows to a stony path with terraced streets dropping sharply down to our left. At the second of these (Horton Street) go left, down the steps onto the end of the cul-de-sac and continue steeply downwards to the junction with Monk's Road, the Post Office on the corner to your left. Cross Monk's Road with care (there is a central reservation a little to your right) and go right for a few yards then left into the recreation ground with, ahead, the ruins of Monk's Abbey.

71. Continue along the path with the abbey ruin to your left to emerge from the park onto a residential street (Tempest Street) then go right to rejoin Monk's Road. Go left along the road (crossing to the far pavement as quickly as possible) to pass along the front of Monk's Road Primary School. Opposite an attractive old building with a cupola (previously a chapel dating from 1898, but now, commercial premises with the address 189 Monks Road), go right through a gateway into the bottom of the Arboretum grounds. **The Arboretum**, *originally an area of 14 acres of common grazing land, was officially opened by Bishop Wordsworth in 1872 and fills the slope between Monk's Road and Lindum Terrace. Apart from its wide grassy spaces, terraces and trees, it contains a couple of interesting examples of Victoriana including a huge stone lion which was presented to the people of Lincoln for the opening, a Victorian ornamental iron bandstand and an equally ornamental iron shelter. The north west corner of the park was added as a bequest in 1894.* Go forward with a pond to your left then bear left over a bridge then right, up the slope and continue forward at a cross track. With a huge stone lion to your left and the bandstand beyond, go right, to mount steps to a wide cross-path. Go left along this walkway and at the ornamental garden in the centre of the lane, go right, up more steps and continue with the main path, rising gently and bending to the left, right and left again to pass through a gateway onto road.

72. Go left along the road then take the first right (Upper Lindum Street) with a department of the Minster School on the corner to your right. At the T-junction, go left onto Wragby Road. Cross this busy highway with the greatest of care (there is a central reservation just up to your right) and go left, dropping steeply. Opposite The Adam & Eve Tavern go right onto Pottergate, passing to the right of the wonderful gateway *which is an 1884 restoration of the 14th century south gate of the Cathedral close wall built to encompass the properties of the Dean and Chapter.* We are now approaching the magnificent east face of the Cathedral that towers above us and *pass an ancient house to our right which was once used as an academy by Lincoln-born George Boole (1815-1864) who is described as the father of modern algebra.* Cross the road to go left into Minster Yard and continue with the Cathedral building towering to your right and emerge in the square at the west end – we have finally reached our destination!