

Winteringham & Alkborough

Start:	<i>Winteringham. Roadside parking on West End, Winteringham, by the old Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, corner of Hewde Lane.</i>
Nearest Post Code:	<i>DN15 9NL</i>
Grid Ref	<i>SE928222</i>
what3words	<i>unframed.otherwise.pickle</i>
Refreshments	<i>The Paddocks Tea Room, Alkborough. (01724 721642) or the Bay Horse pub, Winteringham.</i>
Getting there:	<i>Winteringham lies to the north of the A1077. West End is the main street in the village.</i>
Distance:	<i>9.5 miles / 15km</i>
Route Description:	<i>An easy, level walk outward along field paths, the return with fine river views. Both Winteringham and Alkborough have interesting buildings, and there are good bird-watching possibilities on the second part of the circuit. Note you're your return leg consists of almost 3 miles of exposed walking on the Humber bank – it can be very bleak in bad weather!</i>

The Walk

With your back to the chapel, walk left, passing Marsh Lane on the right. Continue to a right bend, where you take the driveway ahead with 'Humber View' to your right. Climb a stile and follow the track, ignoring a path up to the left and shortly after, one down to the right. This well-defined path soon bears right and here crosses the route of the long-defunct Scunthorpe – Whitton railway (more on that later) [A]. In a short distance, you meet a ditch as the path turns left. Continue to a footbridge on the right, cross, then turn left, so continuing in the same direction with a smaller ditch your left.

After a right-left dogleg, go ahead over a farm track with a low, grey barn ahead. Beyond the barn, turn left along the road for a short distance before taking a footpath on the right (currently unsigned, but just before the avenue of trees along the roadside) [B]. On reaching a footbridge, cross and go left along the field edge for just a few yards before taking a path right, across the field. At the far side, you enter a further field, and the path jinks right then left, so you are still walking in roughly the same direction. Eventually, the path joins a track coming from the left and you continue, with trees ahead. On reaching a surfaced road on the outskirts of Alkborough, follow it for a short distance, then take a path left [C].

Pass through a gate, cross the pasture ahead to a further gate, then continue, crossing a stone track and going half-right, across pasture with an old mill to your left, hidden in the trees.

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

Pass through the hedge in the far corner and go left, over a plank bridge then carry on, passing a smallholding to reach a road where you turn right [D]. In a few yards, you reach a junction. Cross to Back Street and walk a short distance to reach the Paddocks Tea Rooms on the left for optional refreshment.

The walk continues along Back Street, bearing right to reach a sign pointing left to Julian's Bower. Take this, reaching an open area with viewing platform, seats and a turf maze [E].

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

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

Return to the road, turn left and continue to reach the church, then keep left, passing it on your right. Where the tarmac ends continue ahead over grass, descending to a lane where you turn left, then immediately right. Notice on the lane, the brick construction on the left. Known as 'Low Wells'; it was built to make use of a spring coming out of the hillside and used to water cattle. Climb to a fenced path and follow it, passing a new housing development on the right, to reach a surfaced drive [F]. Cross into a field and walk left, boundary left, to reach a footbridge. Go over and take a descending path to cross a track, then climb steps to reach a kissing gate, beyond which there are fine views again over the river.

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

Head across the field towards a concrete structure [G], then through another gate, walking now along a field edge. Continue, skirting a further field to reach a path junction where you go through the gate, then contour the hillside, hedge right, to a signed track joining from the left [H]. Continue, passing back gardens of houses in the village of Whitton, where a gate gives access to the road. To the left is Station Road.

The North Lincolnshire Light railway operated from 1906 to 1951, though by that time it had passed into the hands of the London & North Eastern Railway. It initially ran from Scunthorpe to Winterringham, with a spur to Winterringham Haven. The line was extended to Whitton in 1907 and the railway company built a pier here on the River Humber, giving the Gainsborough–Hull packet steamer an additional calling point, which was utilised three times weekly. The line closed for passengers in 1925 and goods in 1951. Nothing is visible now; the area having been redeveloped for housing.

Walk half-left along Church Hill, passing the church on the right. Ignore Chapel Lane on the right, but walk on to the end of the lane where you veer left, onto the embankment and right, over a stile. Straightforward walking now for about 3 miles, with views left over the Humber.

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

You eventually pass a pumping station [I] then a little further, a farm road down to the right. Continue for another mile, before leaving the sea bank via a stile to reach Winterringham Haven [J].

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

Pass the yacht club to a road that you follow, passing through a gate and going left to a bridge. Cross the bridge and follow the road as it bends right, continue to reach the village.

Halfway along the road, opposite the 'Low Burgage' street sign, is number 43. A much-altered red brick house with the gable end facing the street, this was the stationmaster's house, with Winterringham station just behind the house.

Walk to crossroads and turn right, passing the Bay Horse Inn and continuing to your transport at the end of the walk.

