

The Melton Round



Melton Mowbray Station welcomes you

Distance: approximately 64 miles. Section by section distances are likewise approximate (and can feel longer or shorter according to the lie of the land and walking conditions).

Recommended Ordnance Survey maps: 129 (Nottingham and Loughborough) and 130 (Grantham), or relevant Explorer series for small scale detail.

Introduction

The Melton Round is our second attempt at a long distance footpath. Our first, *The Uppingham Round*, can be found as a downloadable PDF, to include full directions and photographs, on Rutland County Council's website. (Use the search box on the front page). Our methods here are similar; essentially we've tried to map a visually interesting and culturally rewarding circular walk which anyone of reasonable fitness may enjoy, in whole or part. With the latter in mind, the *Round* is divided into easily negotiable sections. It can be entered and left at any point: our starting section was quite arbitrary.

The Melton Round represents many years of exploring this area of the country. It's a landscape we've grown to love, and we are indebted to existing long distance and shorter footpaths, byways, green lanes and other walkable tracks which precede us. Indeed, it was our experience of *The Leicestershire Round*, *The Rutland Round*, the *Jurassic Way*, the central section of the *Midshires Way*, and the *Jubilee Way* (to mention just four recognized routes) which made *The Melton Round* possible. While the English landscape can be easily accessed by car (a necessary environmental evil, until vehicles become carbon neutral) nothing can replace walking through the countryside for a close up of its manifold identities, seen at a pace more in keeping with the absorption of scale and detail.

We've been greatly helped by the existence of Leicestershire's and Rutland's excellent waymarking schemes, where the painted posts can usually be seen from a distance. But note that these posts can list due to ground movement or other cause, making their direction discs misleading. And discs can go missing. Follow our instructions carefully and you should have no problems, unless the path itself has been re-routed. Waymarkers can also rot through at the base; we found one or two lying in ditches waiting for repair. Where there is a danger you may miss a turn or a direction, we've underlined the text.

At the time of writing, all local authorities are struggling to deal with a climate of 'austerity', brought about by events following the financial crisis of 2008. While we received excellent support when reporting problems of broken stiles, waymarkers buried by hedge growth, overgrown paths and other issues, there's no doubt that footpath maintenance has to take its place among other local authority duties, to include the protection of front line services. We therefore urge walkers to be patient and sympathetic if something is lacking, and to report the matter to the local footpath officer via the authority's website, or by 'phone, using an accurate description of the location. We have asked Leicestershire County Council and Melton Borough Council to keep us advised of anything which requires our directions to be amended. It goes without saying that footpaths are occasionally diverted, wooden gates become metal, farm buildings disappear, housing estates are built, and other things change over time. For this reason we have not used trees as direction markers, given that we cannot predict the impact of diseases (e.g. ash dieback, caused by the fungus *Chalara fraxinea*) which may mean that the landscape looks different in years to come. We have also ignored wind turbines as direction finders, simply because their planning consents usually include a specific length of time before they are required to be decommissioned and removed.

Please observe the *Country Code*: leave gates as you find them or as directed by notices, keep dogs on a lead where necessary (especially when instructed by notices), take litter home and respect the land you

walk over. We've found over decades of walking in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire (to include the Soke of Peterborough), Rutland and South Nottinghamshire that farmers generally try to mark paths through crop fields. But if no such path exists, please walk round the edge of the field to pick up the route on the far side.

We debated the extent to which notable cultural landmarks should be mentioned and described in the directions. In the end we've done things sparingly, simply because doing the job properly would lead to a series of impossibly long narratives. All sorts of publications are available to flesh out the picture; for example, anyone interested in the relationship of landscape to disused railways (and the story of the railways is a key ingredient in any appreciation of socio-economic history) will find that Geoffrey Kingscott's *Lost Railways of Leicestershire and Rutland* includes information on what remains of the old lines, some of which can still be accessed. The area's churches are commonly focal points for footpaths, and are often of architectural and artistic interest. The bible for a basic knowledge remains Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's *The Buildings of England*, originally published by Penguin in volumes arranged by county from 1951-1974, and carried on, to include updates, after Pevsner's death in 1983.

Finally, the virtues of exercise are well known. But there's so much more to walking through the landscape, where aesthetics (the appreciation of beauty) and semiotics (the recognition of history's signs, such as land ownership, rural labour, mechanization and the transformation of nature into culture) combine in various ways. We hope you enjoy *The Melton Round* as much as we did when mapping it. As with *The Uppingham Round*, and *The Market Harborough Round* (forthcoming), DAW did the initial mapping and can be blamed for any lack of clarity in the directions. He is also responsible for the photographs. Elizabeth and Sue are also culpable where proof reading errors are concerned. All three of us decided upon the final content of the present document.

DAW, June 2016

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Nether Broughton to Grimston, via Upper Broughton and Old Dalby (5 miles)

Locate the footpath at the stile opposite 'The Anchor' pub in Nether Broughton. Go over the stile almost immediately on your right and head diagonally left to find the waymarker in the hedge. Go through the gate, and carry on diagonally left to the next waymarker, in the middle of the hedge – Upper Broughton is now up ahead on the hill. Go over the double stile and head downhill to the bottom right-hand corner of the field. Cross the little bridge and go over the stile to carry on with the hedge on your right. As the hedge bends round to the left you will find another stile which allows you to pass through the hedge. Go ahead up the field to find a stile half way along the hedge at the top. Go over, and carry on, tracking the hedge on your left. At the top of the field turn right by going behind the hedge, then over two stiles to emerge onto the busy A606, which connects Melton Mowbray with Nottingham. Turn left and walk uphill into Upper Broughton.

You will soon come to 'Bottom Green', on the bend. Turn left here (signed to Willoughby and Wymeswold) and after 150 yards or so you will come to a footpath sign on the left. Go over two stiles and carry on to find the waymarker in the right-hand corner of the field. Cross a double stile to go right. If it's still there, go round the horse paddock – the next waymarker is visible diagonally left at a five barred gate. Hold a diagonal course past the waymarker in the middle of the next field, proceed down the slope to pass through the hedge by means of the wooden bridge, then cross a stile to turn left. Walk with the hedge on your left. Cross a double stile and go diagonally across the next field. Cross another stile and hold your course, then find another stile to enter 'Dickens Dell'.

Keep to the path to emerge via another stile. Keep the hedge to your left (ignoring double wooden gates) to find a stile beside some gates. Pass into the field and still maintaining the hedge on your left, head towards the railway line up ahead. At the end of this field, find another stile and carry on, still with the hedge on your left. You will come to a stile and a footpath on your left, which you should ignore (though this could be used as an alternative route into Old Dalby – see OS map). Carry on to find the next waymarker in a bit of fencing on your left. Cross the stile and proceed now with the hedge on your right. Cross the stile at the end of the field and pass under the railway bridge. Turn immediately left over the little wooden bridge and continue with the hedge and railway embankment on your left. Cross the bridge in the dip and continue to the next waymarker; swing right to keep the hedge on your left until, after about a quarter of a mile, you will find a waymarker. Turn left to pass through the hedge, holding direction round the edge of the field, thus to emerge onto the road in Old Dalby.

Turn left and walk along this road to the T junction with Main Road. Go straight across at the 'public footpath' sign to pass the waymarker up ahead. Maintain your direction as the road bends round to the right to access the small housing development. Go between the fences and then down the steps, turning right to walk up the rise. Just before the Church you will see a footpath sign which takes you over a stile. You should head pretty much straight ahead up the rising ground of this field, keeping the wire fence some distance away to your right. As you crest the rise you will see the waymarker for the entrance to the wood. This passage through the trees does not last long: you will emerge via a stile, and carrying on will enter a larger wood at a gate. Hold to the path ahead until you reach a T junction with a track. Turn left and proceed round the bend until you encounter a waymarker, at which point the track forks. Take the left option, and continue up this narrower path which rises to pass another waymarker. You will eventually emerge through a five barred gate onto the B676, which is a busy road. (Be careful with dogs here!). Cross the road, and go over the stile into the field. Walk to the left-hand corner, with Grimston Church coming into view up ahead. Cross the stile at the metal gate; go through the next metal gate on your left (just after the first one), then find a double stile in the hedge after proceeding diagonally right for a short distance. Cross over and walk through the field, passing two waymarkers before threading your way through the alley which leads to the road in Grimston. Turn right towards the village green, with 'The Black Horse' on your right.



Shoby (but not to Shoby!) at Grimston on a bright day

Grimston to Thrussington, via Ragdale (5.75 miles)

The signpost is opposite The Black Horse, behind the village green. (Do not take the road to Shoby).

Go past the cottage and over the stile, turning left to make your way through the garden of a house, then into a field, as indicated by the waymarker. In the right-hand corner of this field you will find a double stile which lets you onto a grassy track. The way forward here looks like it might be indicated by a stile opposite, but this was blocked when we mapped the route in August 2013. If this remains the case turn right to a gate just up the track, and then left to find the next waymarker in the hedge up ahead.

Pass through the hedge, and then through a very large field which leads to the edge of a small wood. The path tracks the right-hand perimeter of this wood; as it bends left you must continue onto the grass and so to the next waymarker. Carry on to the next waymarker at a metal gate. Keep the hedge to your right and walk on until you reach the road.

Cross the road, go through the wooden gate, and hold course along a gravel road which leads past a large modern house with equine facilities. You will see Leicester in the far distance. The track eventually swings left. Some care may be needed here as the waymarker for your route may be concealed by the hedge on your right, just as this

ends, a few yards after the bend. Turn right at this point to follow the hedge at right angles to the previous one. Go through a five barred gate at the next waymarker, where another one appears to your right a little further on.

Press on with the hedge at this waymarker on your left and you will see the top of Ragdale Hall up ahead. (NB: The next section of the walk can be a little overgrown, but should be easily negotiable). Keep the hedge to your left, and pass a gap where the waymarker may again be concealed by foliage. Walking straight on you will arrive at the next waymarker, at a T junction of your route and another footpath. Turn left and after about a hundred yards you will find a waymarker at a slight right diagonal. Follow the line indicated to walk downhill to the next waymarker at a truncated hedge. Turn right here onto the farm track and emerge onto the road just below Ragdale.

(NB: The following section of the walk to Thrussington crosses some huge fields, where it can be difficult to find the precise direction. (These fields really need interim waymarkers). Follow the directions carefully, especially if some of the existing waymarkers are not immediately visible because hedges have grown up around them. The views are superb, even if the ploughed fields may sometimes be heavy going).

Turn right and walk into Ragdale village. Ignore the first footpath sign at the bend and cross the road to locate the next footpath on your left, which leads between hedges to pass over a stile, and then another stile at a gate. Follow the hedge on your right, and as this ends head diagonally right to the top left-hand corner of the field, to find the next waymarker.

Cross the stile and carry straight on across the field. The tallest buildings of Leicester will appear in the distance as you go over the rise. The next waymarker lies down the slope near a group of three electricity poles. Cross the ditch and hold course across the next huge field, again over rising ground. (The spire of Hoby Church can now be seen over to the left – this is a check that you have taken the correct footpath; if the spire is up ahead go back to Ragdale and start again!).

Head for the left of a small group of trees up ahead to find a wooden bridge with a waymarker. Do not pass through the gap in the hedge to the right of the trees, where there is no waymarker. Proceed at a slight left diagonal: in due course the next waymarker can just be seen at the hedge/ditch ahead, approximately 200 yards from the left-hand corner of the field.

In the next field, head diagonally to a gap in the hedge, well before the pylons up ahead. (The waymarker may be visible only from the other side of the gap). Pass through the gap, and then track around the left-hand edge of the field, swinging right to find the next waymarker. Continue to track the hedge on your left until you reach a gap where the grassy track swings left. Do not go downhill here – if you reach the brook at the bottom of this field you have missed the crucial gap.

Continue on, following the power lines and passing a pylon, until you swing right to find the next waymarker. Go diagonally across another huge field to locate the waymarker about 200 yards in from the left-hand corner of this prairie. Cross the stile, and then three more in rapid succession, to pass the farm/equestrian buildings on your left. There are then two more stiles to negotiate before you pass some houses, to continue along a gravel track which leads into Thrussington, swinging right onto a conventional road. (The track may have become a road to handle the new houses by the time you read these directions).

At the village green and 'The Star Inn' turn left, and left again into Hoby Road. Then turn right into Back Lane to find the exit from Thrussington.



Walking down into Ragdale

Thrussington to Gaddesby, via Brooksby (5 miles)

Walk down Back Lane to the end and swing left to find the waymarker. Proceed down the tree-lined avenue and pass through the gate into open farmland to find the next waymarker up ahead with an electricity pylon behind. Go through the gate, cross the brook and through the next field, keeping your course. You will see Brooksby Church spire in the distance, a little off to the right. Go past the waymarker and over the gravel track, then past the electricity pylon on your left and through a metal gate in the hedge at the waymarker. Pass an interim waymarker and carry on to another metal gate and waymarker. Hoby Church can now be seen ahead over to your left. Aim for the next waymarker up ahead. Pass through another metal gate and continue with the hedge on your left – you will now see the next waymarker in the distance at a metal and wooden bridge which crosses the River Wreake, coming up on your right. (Do not mistake this bridge for the nearer brick construction, which is disused and fenced off).

NB: This land often contains farm animals belonging to Brooksby College – please keep dogs on leads, as instructed by the signs.

Cross the ditch at the little bridge – do not be misled by the waymarker on your left, which signposts the footpath to Hoby. Now cross the Wreake at the bridge with the waymarker mentioned above and turn left to find the next waymarker and metal gate immediately in front of you. Aim diagonally right to pick up the wire and post fence up ahead, with its waymarker, part way along. Brooksby College, Brooksby Church and the Leicester to Melton railway line are now over on your right at the border of this field.

(NB: older versions of OS Landranger 129 may show the footpath which used to cross the railway line to enter the precincts of Brooksby College, but the correct route is the one you are currently reading).

Carry on with the post and wire fence on your left until you exit the field at another metal gate. Proceed along the gravel path, climb the steps and emerge onto the road between Brooksby and Hoby. Turn right, negotiate the level crossing (noting what's left of the old Brooksby Station buildings just down the track on your left), and walk up the road to the A607.

Cross the road carefully (it's fast and busy!) and continue directly opposite, once again into Brooksby College, which includes a garden centre. (NB: At the time of writing outline planning permission has been granted for a small housing development here, but there are no plans to change the route of the footpath). As you do so you will note the marker for the *Midshires Way* (whose route, indicated here and there with an acorn sign, you will now follow until you reach a country lane just above Gaddesby). The waymarker takes you to the right of the barn directly ahead to continue along a metalled path. Carry on to pass the brick houses on your left, and then through a metal gate. After a few hundred yards the track bends round slightly to the right and then back to the left, to take you to some farm buildings at Spinney Dairy.

Go through the gate and proceed ahead up the rise to the next metal gate at the top, where the view begins to open out. Carry on here with the hedge to your right (a grassy track should be visible) and you might just be able to see the top of the next waymarker about 1/3 of a mile ahead. At this point the track swings round to the left but you must carry straight on through the gate to keep to the *Midshires Way*. Your course leads to another metal gate, and you will see Messenger's Lodge farm over to your left. Go through the gate, still keeping the hedge on your right. Keep to this course, which will lead you past a wood on your right until Gaddesby comes into view. Carry on between the hedges, eventually passing through another metal gate, to carry on, now with a field on your left. You will come to a waymarker in the hedge on your right, and this does indeed indicate a route through the fields, which emerges at the edge of Gaddesby village. But the direction through the crops may not be clear, so it is easiest to hold your course to emerge onto the country lane a little further up ahead. Turn right and walk into Gaddesby. Pass the entrance to Gaddesby Hall (there is a tarmac path here on your left leading to the Church) until you reach the T junction at the 'Cheney Arms'.



The footpath opposite Chapel Lane and the 'Cheney Arms' in Gaddesby

Gaddesby to Burrough on the Hill, via Barsby and Twyford (6 miles)

*According to Pevsner's *The Buildings of England (Leicestershire and Rutland)*, Gaddesby Church is one of the finest in this area, and is well worth a visit, not least to see the extraordinary alabaster monument by Joseph Gott, which depicts Colonel Edward Hawkins Cheney, C.B., of the Scots Greys, on one of the four horses killed under him at the battle of Waterloo in 1815. Colonel Cheney had a distinguished military career, after which he retired to Gaddesby Hall, parts of which can be seen from the Churchyard.

Carrying on with the Round, find the footpath opposite Chapel Lane, just before the 'Cheney Arms', passing between the trees after the stile next to the metal gate. You will then find a stile with options to Queniborough and – the one you must take – diagonally left at the waymarker, which points your route to the next waymarker in the fence up ahead.

Carry on here and hold your course to the next waymarker in the hedge. Cross the stream at this point and head diagonally to the corner of the new field. Cross the next stile and head to the right-hand corner of the field to find the waymarker next to a tall Willow tree. Go through the gate and keep the fence to your right until in a short while you find another waymarker. Cross the stile and the stream and head for the top left-hand corner of the field, up the rise.

When you get there, turn sharp left at the waymarker (which points in our direction to Barsby) just before the metal gate. Go over the stile, finding the next one with its waymarker by keeping the hedge on your left. Cross this stile and hold course to the next waymarker, where Barsby becomes visible up the hill to your left. Cross the stile and head diagonally left to the next waymarker in the hedge, where you will cross the stream. The next waymarker is in line up ahead in the fence/hedge. Cross the stile here and hold course to the farmyard ahead.



Between Barsby and Twyford, near the intersection with the Midshires Way

Pass between the barns, as indicated by the waymarker, go through the metal gate and carry on along the tarmac and gravel track. (Do not turn left along the footpath). Carry on through Barsby, along Main Street, and then cross the road signposted Ashby Folville (left) and South Croxton (right) to find Baggrave End. Carry on to find the waymarker at the end of the village.

Go between the conifers and the brick house, jaggng left at the sign for 'Public Footpath'. Pass between the hedge on your left and the house with a fence marking its border. Carry on up the track to a five barred gate, where the landscape opens up for a 360 degree panorama. (Stand on the stile for a good view!).

Go straight on (not diagonally right, one of the options indicated by the waymarker), along the grassy track to pass the Poplar trees on your left, then round the right-hand bend. You will find a waymarker just before the track bends round to the left. Cross the stile here to keep the hedge on your right as you walk up the rise.



Twyford Church

A waymarker appears as the hedge rounds the corner: you must carry on ahead at a slight left diagonal going down the rise, to locate the next waymarker in the hedge. Cross the little bridge with a handrail. Go over the rise to the next waymarker and stile, crossing the Midshires Way as you negotiate this field. (The MSW is heading to Ashby Folville). Having passed over another little bridge hold your course to the next waymarker, where you must cross another stile, once again proceeding ahead. There is then another waymarker and stile, with a fence now appearing over to your left, with a pylon and a modern farmhouse beyond. Go over the little plank bridge and on to the corner of the field, keeping the hedge on your left. Cross two stiles separated by about 30 yards, with power lines overhead. Hold course to the next waymarker in fence/hedge - you are aiming for the houses you can see before you, slightly to your right. So cross the stile, and then another, then keep to the hedge on your left. Go over the stile at the five barred gate and follow the track to find the main road in Twyford.

Turn left, and then right into Main Street. Carry on to the Church and go through the Churchyard, and turn left. (Those with dogs should carry on along Main Street, taking the left turn at the corner – dogs are not permitted in the Churchyard). Carry on to find Hollands Lane on your right. Go down Hollands Lane and fork left at the waymarker, going over the stream. The path goes through trees, then over a stile and up the rise, swinging right to pass a waymarker to find another one in the hedge ahead. The old London and North Western railway track bed is now visible, with a bridge at the end of the field. Your waymarker is slightly to the right.



Bridge under the old London and North Western railway trackbed, near Twyford

Climb over, cross the track bed, and head to the top of the rise at a right diagonal after passing the hedge which marks the boundary the old LNWR route. (This has arrived on your right from the Marefield Triangle, heading for Melton Mowbray, passing Thorpe Satchville and Great Dalby to the West). Hold your course over the ridge and furrow field; the waymarker becomes visible in the hedge at the bottom of the rise. Cross over the ditch and turn right to go round the edge of this next field, keeping the hedge on your right. Turn left up the rise at the corner, still keeping the hedge on your right.

Pass another waymarker and hold course – there is a fine aspect behind you now, with a view all the way over to Charnwood Forest. When the hedge gives way down a short slope, pass through the gap on your right via the waymarker, then take a left diagonal to proceed up rising ground. As you crest the rise you should be able to spot the waymarker up ahead in the corner of the field. Pass through and hold course to access the next waymarker in another hedge. Hold course again to the corner of the field. Just before you get there find the road coming up from Twyford, via the waymarker. Turn left and walk into Burrough on the Hill.

*You may wish to visit the Iron Age fort, which is part of a Country Park, open to the public. At 210 metres (690 feet) above sea level the site has a commanding view of the surrounding landscape. This has been an important location for archaeological investigations since the 1930s, with recent activities superintended by the University of Leicester. The hill fort is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. When you

arrive in Burrough simply continue out of the village on the Somerby Road. At the sharp right-hand bend the entrance to the car parks is on the left.

Burrough on the Hill to Cold Overton, via Somerby (4.5 miles)

Walk down the road in Burrough towards Somerby. About 300 yards past the Church find a footpath on the right which leads down the alleyway between two houses, then through a gate into a large field.

Keep ahead and cross the field: the next waymarker is at the far side at the bottom of the hill in line of sight with the house at the top. Go through the gate and proceed diagonally up the hill to the next waymarker, passing through another gate. Keeping the fence to your left go through another gate, and then keep the fence on your right to find a metal gate.

After the gate, keep the fence on your left, and almost immediately turn left through 90 degrees. Carry on along the field edge, turning right through 90 degrees at the gate ahead (do not pass through). Proceed ahead towards the copse in the distance, keeping the fence/hedge on your left until you come to another gate. Pass through and into a large field. The sign at the gate may appear a bit misleading: your exit from this field is in the far left corner. Emerge onto the road and turn right to walk into Somerby.

Carry on right through the village until you come to a T junction. Directly across the road you will pass through a metal gate (possibly still with a broken signpost) and into a farmyard. Keep the new housing development on your right and exit this area into a field. (There may be temporary fencing here).

From here, the waymarkers should be visible, initially lined up with Cold Overton Church spire in the distance. Negotiating the gates and stiles, proceed to the hedge up ahead, and then again, and still yet again until you pass through a tiny copse to emerge in a field with farm buildings up ahead. Pass through this area onto the road to find two five barred gates. Cross the paddock to the next waymarker, and then repeat, crossing a stile.

You will reach more farm buildings on your right: two metal gates permit access to the next field which you may exit via a double stile and a metal gate. Having negotiated this passage you will need to keep a fence, with a ditch, on your right for some distance, making sure to observe the notices about the new plantation of trees on your left. (Please keep your dog on a lead here!).

Pass by the small lake, and just before the end of the field you will find a 90 degree right turn, then through a gate and into the wood up ahead. Pass into the wood at an entrance on your left, and keep to the path, emerging at a stile into another large field. Walk up the hill to find the next waymarker. Go through the gate and pass the house standing on your left at a slight diagonal. You will emerge onto the road through two five barred gates.



Changing fields on route to Burrough on the Hill, with a typical Leicestershire waymarker

Cold Overton to Langham (4.5 miles)

Turn left and walk down the road for a mile or so, past Mulberry Meadows on the left and Pickwell Farm on the right. The view ahead is impressive. As you progress you will tracking a long thin wood over to your right and as this comes to an end you will find a signpost on the right in the fence. Directions according to signposts and waymarkers from this point on can be somewhat approximate. Here, the disc, rather than the sign, is correct, so take a right diagonal towards the trees, and go over the rise to the waymarker in the dip. Pass through the gate to the next waymarker, very soon on the left. Go through the trees and up the slope to the next waymarker, where an open field confronts you. The waymarker is misleading: your direction continues at quite a sharp right diagonal to find the next waymarker in the hedge.

Pass to the other side of the hedge and follow its line, on your left. The next waymarker with a gate appears ahead as you pass over a rise in the ground. Here there is a very large field. Contrary to the waymarker, your direction is diagonally left towards the trees at the bottom of the little green hill, where there is a sign reading 'End of Byway', targeted at horse riders. You may carry on keeping the hedge to your right.

At the end of the hedgeline Rutland Water becomes visible in the distance over to your right. Go down the hill past the waymarker and you will see the next waymarker at the gap in the trees at the bottom. Langham Church spire is clearly visible in the distance. Pass through the gap and cross the next field to its left-hand corner to find a

gravelled road which passes some farm buildings (which may be used for equestrian purposes). You will turn left here to pass the buildings and then carry on up to the T junction, where the main road up ahead will be audible, if not visible.

At the T junction turn right and then immediately left, over the stile and into the field. You will see the next waymarker at the other end of this field. Go over the stile and you will find the site of a caravan park, which may or may not be occupied. The waymaker seems to suggest that you carry on, but your route is now on the left in a narrow alley between the hedge and a wire fence (the first part of which was broken down when we walked this section). This will bring you to a waymarker along a residential road. Leaving the caravan park, emerge onto the metalled road. The signpost here is a little misleading; there is actually a dog leg (left then right) across the road, through the hedge onto another road running parallel to the one you have just left. Turn left here to find the waymarker a little way along. Turn right between the houses, with the fence on your left, to emerge onto the small housing estate. Turn left to find the main road, then turn right and left again into Well Street. Proceed ahead to pass the Church on your right, until you reach the T junction. Turn left here into Church Street, then right at the next T junction. Walk ahead until you reach the signpost, and on your left the sign to the Burial Ground.



Langham, looking back down Well Street

Langham to Market Overton, via Ashwell (5.75 miles)

Take the tarmac road as indicated: at the end there are two footpaths. Take the one between the trees/hedge and carry on straight ahead. You will arrive after a while at some farm buildings beyond a five barred gate. Carry on for approximately 50 yards to find a stile in the hedge on your left. This is followed immediately by another stile on the right which lets you into a field, and then another stile in the fence up ahead on your left. Climb over and hold direction to the stile in the next fence, with cottages and farm buildings on your right. The next stile with its waymarker is visible in front of the trees just beyond the barn. Go over, with the fence on your right, turning left when you very soon arrive at a dirt road which goes across the stream by a bridge.



Looking toward Ashwell after reaching the road down to the level crossing

You are now in open landscape heading towards a small wood up ahead. As the dirt track becomes grass bear right at the waymarker to keep the hedge on your left along the boundary of the field. (The farm buildings you passed earlier should now be away over to your right). In due course this path turns left to a waymarker which tells you to turn right, all the while keeping hedges on your left. At the next waymarker, cross the stile (or go through the gate) and immediately turn left along a path which may not be signed. (If you carry on you will reach the railway line just beyond which you will have to turn left to walk along the road into Ashwell). Our route avoids the traffic here by proceeding with the fence on your left and the hedge on your right to pass by a small wood, emerging onto the

less busy minor road. (The last yards here can be muddy in wet weather when the path is churned up by horse riders).

Turn right and, ignoring the footpath on your left, walk down the road to the railway line, taking care at the level crossing. Carry on to the T junction, cross the road to the footpath and turn left. When you reach the crossroads turn right (signposted to Cottesmore and Stamford). Walk along this road, past the Church, until you find the footpath which leads to Market Overton, at a little road called 'Woodside'.



The Level Crossing at Ashwell

Go through the gate to a second gate, and then diagonally through the field to a waymarker which should be visible up ahead. You will see Market Overton on the horizon's rising ground. Pass through the gate and aim for the next waymarker on a diagonal – again this should be clearly visible. Cross the stile, and hold your course to find a gap in the hedge with another waymarker. The next waymarker can be seen at a sharp right diagonal. Then go across the field to the next waymarker. Cross the little wooden bridge and aim for the next waymarker at a left diagonal, almost immediately. Cross this next stile and pass the waymarker in the middle of this field to find the next one in the hedge line ahead. Hold your course to the next waymarker, crossing what remains of the track bed of a dismantled railway in the process. Cross the ditch and take another right diagonal to find the next waymarker, with a gate and stile. Proceed at another diagonal to the right-hand corner of the field, emerging onto a dirt and

gravel track. Turn right here and in about 100 yards you will find a signpost taking you left through a few trees to a long field. Walk along its length until you locate a stile in the hedge on your right. Then take another diagonal, this time moving left, to cross the plank bridge, through the hedge and once again diagonally across the field, with Market Overton on top of the rise up ahead. At the end of this field go up the grassy bank with the hedge on your right until you reach the road, pausing on the way to look back at an outstandingly open landscape. Emerging onto the road, turn left into the village, reaching a T junction. Passing through the Churchyard opposite bear right past the Church to the lychgate to reach Church Lane.



Market Overton churchyard, with a view across Church Lane

Market Overton to Wymondham, via Edmondthorpe (3.5 miles)

Turn left, to pass the Church and house on your left, until Church Lane becomes a grassy track. Take care here: your route lies not toward the wood in the distance but down the slope on your left where waymarkers are temporarily hard to spot. There is a track turning 90 degrees left to find them. Here you have a choice, so be sure to cross the little bridge, rather than continuing straight on. Your route lies diagonally left across a huge field, past another waymarker, with a little bridge, to the next one in the hedge up ahead. Now continuing at a diagonal, you must aim for a gap in the hedge, where – despite the absence of a waymarker – you should turn right along the grassy track between the hedges until after a short distance you find a waymarker, probably concealed by the

hedge on your right. Take care here too: your route lies on the other side of the hedge which marks the field boundary coming up on your left as the track peters out.

Go diagonally left to find the waymarker in the hedge ahead, beyond which you will see the next one at the top of the rise. Go through the hedge here (not left following the blue arrow, though this would take you to Edmondthorpe via a road) and once again proceed diagonally through this field to find the next waymarker in the hedge, which is not immediately visible due to the lie of the land. This waymarker leads to another, about 50 yards further on. Hold your course to find a small gap in the hedge which hides the next waymarker. Cross the stile, go through the gate and aim diagonally right to the waymarker at the end of the field. Pass through a metal, then a five barred, gate. You will see a stone wall ahead which is the boundary of the road in Edmondthorpe. Your exit will be found by taking a left diagonal towards the stand of trees, keeping the red 'phone box away to your right. Go through the five barred gate onto the road and turn left.



Sir Roger Smith and family - the Monument in Edmondthorpe Church

Almost immediately, turn right at the bridleway sign, down the little alley with the brick and stone wall on your left. This gives way to a path between trees, where you should carry on, ignoring the option on your left. You will walk through an avenue of trees and after a while will pass through a metal gate, keeping the hedge on your left. At the next waymarker – actually just before you reach it – swing left to find the grassy track which crosses the

stream in due course by another little bridge. Proceed to the back road in Wymondham. Go left, and left again at the T Junction. Cross Edmondthorpe Road and carry on round the bend to the Churchyard.

Wymondham to Buckminster (4.5 miles)

Leave the Churchyard and walk up to the village high street. Turn right and proceed for about 350 yards, going beyond the last house to a signpost on the opposite side of the road which announces 'Footpath to Buckminster'. Go through the metal gate and proceed at a slight right diagonal to find the marker post in the trees up ahead. Go through another metal gate and across the track bed of the dismantled railway. Take the option marked to go right (not straight ahead). Follow the line of the railway until your route swings left through ninety degrees. Keep a lookout for a small metal gate in the hedge on your right. Pass through, and then through another metal gate to keep the hedge on your left. You will see the next waymarker up ahead, with another metal gate. You will now see Mount Pleasant farm over on your left. Carry on along the edge of the field keeping an eye open for the waymarker on the other side of a little bridge on the right of your course. Passing over, take the left option here (not straight on) and continue with the hedge on your left. The path swings right: now look for a gap in the hedge with a waymarker to find the metal gate. Pass through and continue through the triangular field with the hedge once again on your left to find the next metal gate and the road.

This is a staggered crossing: do not enter the field immediately opposite. The signpost (which may be concealed by vegetation) is at the right-hand edge of the next field as you turn left down the road. Enter this field and keep the hedge on your right until you arrive at the next waymarker. Pass through the hedge and maintain a course with the hedge again on your right. You will see another waymarker which directs you through this hedge, so you may carry on, now with the hedge on your left. At the end of this field cross the hardcore track and proceed ahead with the hedge now on your right. Cross another hardcore track and continue through the next field to find the waymarker in the hedge. Pass through and cross the next track, continuing with the hedge on your right. Pass through the next hedge with its waymarker and hold your course.

At the next waymarker, do not carry on into Sewstern, but turn left to keep the hedge on your right. You will reach a road which you must cross by finding the signpost on the other side as you look right (another staggered arrangement). Carry on with the hedge on your left. Hold course on this path, ignoring the waymarker which appears in a hedge which eventually leads off to your right. You will come to a track which bears you diagonally right into Buckminster, winding round some garages until you emerge onto the main road. Turn right and walk along to the bend.

Buckminster is an Estate Village (see its website for more information), described by Pevsner as 'very handsome' (1960, p. 79).



Buckminster Estate Houses

Buckminster to Saltby, via Sproxton (4 miles)

At the bend in the main road, go down Back Lane. At the bottom turn left towards the Church to find the waymarker on the left of the stone house. Go down the slope and through the gate at the bottom. The next waymarker lies diagonally ahead; it is easiest to locate by following the hedge over to your right, moving down the field. Cross the little bridge at the waymarker and continue with the fence on your right. The next waymarker with a metal gate lies at the end of the field. Hold your course with the hedge on your right to find the next waymarker. Proceed ahead adjacent to the parkland and hedge. At the end of this field cross another little bridge with two half height waymarkers to find the dirt road. Carry on in the same direction as before, again with the hedge on your right.

As the road swings round to the right two routes are possible. The nearest leads to a country lane behind vegetation over on your left; the second, which you should take, leads up a long gentle slope to another waymarker in a hedge at the top of a huge field. The view to your left is now especially impressive. Walk over the crown of the rise, and hold your course until you pass a house and garden on your left to emerge onto the road.



Looking back from the Church gates at Buckminster

Cross the road and proceed down Church Lane and out of the village. Ignore the waymarker and stile opposite Manor Farm and walk to the end of the country lane. At the T junction, turn left to locate a waymarker with a metal gate after about 75 yards on the opposite side of the road. Enter the field and strike a course over the rise by the fence, which soon peters out. As you crest this rise you will see the next waymarker in the hedge up ahead. There should be a path through the crops, but if not your route pretty much follows your existing direction over the next rise. Pass over the next stile and take a slightly left diagonal to locate a dog leg with two waymarkers and stiles in the hedge which comes up through a right angle on your left. You will see the next waymarker up ahead with the houses of Saltby in the background. Continue to the next waymarker and gate, passing through the field, to the little road.

Saltby to Branston (5.5 miles)

Turn right along this little road and right again, then left into Main Street. About 100 yards along you will find a signpost marking the route between two houses. Go through the gate into a field and proceed to the right-hand corner; go over the stile and hold course to bisect the small lake. The next waymarker may be concealed by the hedge, but your way lies through the metal gates. Skirting the right-hand side of a wood, keep to the path, passing through a wooden gate, then through a metal gate and over the little wooden bridge. Continue along the path, and round an 'S' bend. At the next waymarker you will see waymarkers ahead, and diagonally to the right – this last indicates the direction you must take. Passing this waymarker, carry on with the bushes on your left, towards the wood up ahead. At the next waymarker swing left onto a hard core track. When you reach the wood, turn right into the trees at the opening.

Carrying on, you will find that the hard core track becomes earth and grass, with the wood now on your left. Go through a metal gate at the wood's end, now with a field on your left. As the track swings round to the left make sure to take the footpath on your right to continue between the hedges, in time bending right past an interim waymarker. Now be on the alert for a gap in the hedge on your left with a hidden waymarker, (when we mapped the route there was a rutted patch in the track just before the opening). Pass through the hedge to find the waymarker in the next hedge. Hold course for the next waymarker in a gap in the hedge up ahead. Turn left onto the track you find there. This track very soon swings right, but you must leave it here to pass through metal gates at the waymarker on your left. Aim diagonally across the field and when you reach the dip look right to find the waymarker by the hedge. Follow this hedge (now on your right) all the way to the estate road where you will find a five barred gate and a cattle grid. The path lies ahead on the other side of the gate, so that the fence is now on your left. (NB: Dogs should be kept on a lead through this entire area).

Go over the stile next to the gate and proceed up the rise, holding course. Locate the next waymarker (initially invisible because of the rising ground of Windmill Hill) and go through the metal gate. At the next waymarker in another fence bear diagonally right to find a waymarker at the A607. Cross this road with care and carry on opposite, with the hedge on your left. Go over a stile to pass a clump of trees on your left, and now keep the fence on your right. At the bottom of the slope cross the stile, go past another stand of trees, cross the next stile and hold course towards Branston, crossing two more stiles in hedges to reach the village. Though it seems unlikely, the legitimate footpath carries on over the lane, passing on your left the stone house opposite to find another stile at the old parish pump. Pass this interesting survivor and carry on through the trees to reach the road. Turn left to find Main Street at the junction.



Branston Church

Branston to the Harby Hills (3.5 miles)

Your exit from Branston is found through the yard of The Wheel Inn, just down the road from the Church. Go over the stile and carry on toward the far hedge, where you cross another stile, now keeping the hedge on your right to find the next waymarker. Here you must descend some steep iron steps to take a dog leg at the next waymarker, into a field. Swing left roughly towards Eaton Church up ahead (there may be a path cut through the crops in which case the Church will be away diagonally right). Go through the field, over a stile and down to the next waymarker and another stile. Swing right up the bank passing buildings/stables on your right. At the metal gate go over a stile and onto a hardcore track which emerges immediately onto the lane into Eaton. Turn right towards the village. Carry on up Main Street, swinging round the bend to the left, marked to the Village Centre. Ignore the footpath signed on your left and turn left into Chapel Street.

*There are two footpaths to Eastwell. They are both listed here (**Options A and B**). You may find parts of **A** rather overgrown at some times of the year; if this is a matter of concern, use route **B**, which also offers wider horizons in this section of the walk.



Option A: Looking back along Waltham Lane, Eaton

Option A

Your next footpath is on the left between the chapel and a house to its right, where the waymarker is set back from the road. Pass close to the cottage and a hedge on your left (the roadway bends round to the right) – the waymarker is visible ahead. Cross the stile and proceed with the fence on your right – do not aim for the waymarker at the bottom of the slope. You should see a metal gate up ahead now, and you will find a couple of stiles there which give access onto a lane. (This is Waltham Lane, though not marked at this point).

Turn left down the lane until at the bottom, at a sharp left-hand bend, you will find a footpath sign on your right which lets you into a field via a metal gate. (In effect, you are going straight on here). Cross this field and pass the wooden electricity poles (one of which has a waymarker disc) to find the little wooden bridge with two waymarkers, then a third as you carry along a grassy path which swings right into a field. Proceed along the right-hand edge on this field to the next waymarker where you pass through a metal gate and turn hard right to find another metal gate. Whatever the waymarker may say, the path here swings left and carries on for a good (and possibly somewhat overgrown) distance with a fence on your left and a stream down the slope on your right. Eventually you will cross a stile which confirms your direction. In due course you will emerge into a field with the next stile and waymarker directly opposite. You will now cross the stream previously mentioned to find another stile and waymarker. Aim diagonally left to find the next passage through the hedge. **Hold your course for a

double stile in the hedge on your left up ahead. Cross the next field, aiming for the top left-hand corner, where you will find a metal gate and stile which lets you onto the road. Turn left into Eastwell.



Option B: Looking back just outside Eaton

Option B

Instead of taking the footpath at the chapel (see above) carry on along Chapel Lane and turn left at its end, and then immediately left again into Waltham Lane. Find the footpath on the right, just after the final house on the left. Cross the stile and continue between the hedge and fence. At the end of this little grassy lane cross the two stiles in rapid succession next to the hedge (to the right of the five barred metal gate) and then proceed at a left diagonal to find the metal gate in the hedge up ahead. Carry on through, now keeping the hedge on your left. This hedge will meet two metal five barred gates with a waymarker indicating a left turn over the stile. Hold your course to the next waymarker and stile up ahead. Cross the stile and continue between the hedge and fence, then almost immediately over another stile and into a large field. (The path between the fence and the stream described in Option A above is now to your left beyond the bottom hedge). Carry on along the field edge with the hedge on your right – you can see Eastwell in the distance. At the end of this field take a diagonal left at the waymarker across the field to the hedge where the land dips away. Find the stile and waymarker into the next field. Cross this field to the next hedge and waymarker with a plank bridge and stile. Cross the stile and proceed at a shallow diagonal right to find the waymarker in the hedge on your right. *At this

point you have joined the path in Option A above: follow directions in the previous paragraph from the point marked with a double asterisk** to arrive in Eastwell.

Carry on into the village and as the road swings left you will find a crossroads, with Stathern Road on your right. Take the next right turn (almost immediately) into Stanley's Lane which becomes a footpath in due course. Go through the metal gate. Here you are likely to be confronted by a movable complex of paddocks with horses and cattle variously disposed. Aim for the top left-hand corner of the big field within which all this is arranged, by whatever route is currently indicated (usually by yellow topped fence posts, with entry to paddocks controlled by lengths of electric fence cables which can be moved by insulated clips at one end). Cross the stile and you will see before you a breathtaking view of the Vale of Belvoir! Having paused to take in this majestic landscape, exit this field at the stile in the hedge on your left. Hold your course towards the road, at a gate and stile with another waymarker. Turn right along this road (which runs down the hill, eventually passing through Harby). Before the downhill bend find the broad hardcore farm track on your left at the entrance to Hilltop Farm which leads to your passage through the Harby Hills, thence to Long Clawson.



Coming down through the Harby Hills

Through the Harby Hills to Long Clawson (3 miles)

Taking the hardcore track, go past all the houses and farm buildings until you see a sign for a footpath on the right, at the end of the hedge. Take this route and keep the hedge on your right until after swinging round to the left a waymarker appears in the hedge. Go downhill through the trees; at the bottom pass through a metal gate bearing right, then cross the fence at a stile ahead and proceed. Go past the electricity pylon, over the stile at the waymarker, and carry straight on to find the next stile and waymarker in the hedge. You are now about to cross the track bed of the old London and North Western railway via steps on each side. Having done so, continue across the very big field, holding your course, to find the waymarker in the double fence. Cross the stile and proceed ahead to the waymarker in the middle of this next field. Swing diagonally left here, as indicated, to find the next waymarker at a plank bridge, with a stile to cross the fence. Carry on straight ahead with the farm coming up on your right. Locate the waymarker in the top corner of this field, with the farm house now close on your right. Go over the stile, turn left onto the track and immediately swing right to find the next waymarker at the five barred gate on the left. Pass through and continue with the hedge, then the fence, on your right. Cross the stile at the waymarker and then cross the stream at the bridge. Swing right to find a stile at the road.



A misty Autumn morning just beyond the Harby Hills, heading towards Long Clawson

Go across and carry on in the direction indicated by the green footpath sign. At the other side of this field find the waymarker at the gap in the hedge and fence, cross the stile, and continue at a right diagonal to find the next waymarker, fence and stile. At this point look back (and soon to your left) for a delightful view of the Harby Hills, which form a backdrop to this part of the walk. Keeping the hedge on your right, aim for the top left-hand corner of the field, passing the farm house on your right. Cross the stile in the hedge and carry on at a very slight diagonal to cross the plank bridge at the waymarker. Continue past the farm buildings to the next waymarker and go through the metal gate to swing left across the field towards a couple of low buildings with pantiled roofs. At the waymarker in the hedge, pass between the fence and the hedge, cross the stile and emerge onto the road which leads through Long Clawson. Turn left to walk through the village, passing Old Hall Farm, the sign to 'Village Centre', Hose End and East End as you progress to West End, noting Long Clawson Dairy, where Stilton cheese is made. Eventually you will find Coronation Avenue on your right.



Old petrol pumps at Long Clawson

And finally...Long Clawson to Nether Broughton (3.75 miles)

At the end of the Coronation Avenue cul-de-sac pass through a gap in the hedge and continue up Slyborough Hill, now with the hedge on your left. You will see an outstanding view to your right. Go over the brow of the hill and down the other side and aim for a gap in the hedge about a third of the way along its length from the left-hand corner. Keep the hedge on your right and find the next waymarker in the hedge up ahead, short of the electricity pylon in the next field but one. Keeping the hedge on your right proceed to the next waymarker at a gap in the hedge, pass through the gate in the next hedge, go over a plank bridge and again track the hedge on your right. At the end of the field swing left at the waymarker then right over a stile into the next field. Still keeping the hedge on your right, continue ahead. Go over the stile at the waymarker and carry on, yet again with the hedge on your right. Pass through this field to find a metal gate in the top right-hand corner, which leads onto a grassy track and then into King Street, Nether Broughton. At the T junction turn right and walk along Middle Lane, turning left into Hecadeck Lane. When you reach the main road, turn left until you find that part of the route with which these directions began, signposted opposite The Anchor pub.



Map reading and notating the route above Ragdale, with a visitor from the USA



An idyllic moment on *The Melton Round*:

A Buttercup field between Thrussington and Brooksby, just before crossing the River Wreake: Spring 2016