

Vales & Views



A circular walk of 7½ miles from the historic town of Louth, through Welton Vale and South Elkington



INTRODUCTION

This walk takes in the high points above Hubbard's Hills before dropping down into the secluded Welton Vale. Explore the historic church and parkland at South Elkington before journeying back to Louth.



Long-tailed tit



Oak leaf sculpture - Westgate Fields

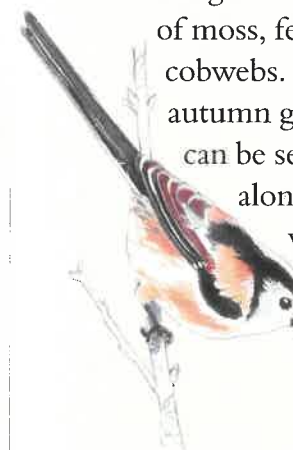
LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

For bus services to Louth contact Traveline on 0871 200 22 33 or www.traveline.info

Louth Community Access Point, Town Hall, Cannon Street, Louth

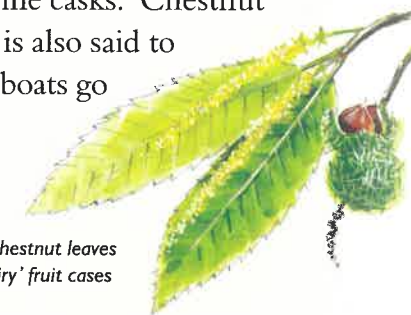
POINTS OF INTEREST

Look out for the long-tailed tit on the edges of the woodland with its distinctive buff pink, black and white plumage and long tail. It is a master builder of the bird world, constructing intricate oval nests out of moss, feathers, hair and cobwebs. During the autumn groups of them can be seen flitting alongside hedges and woodland edges, feeding on insects, spiders and seeds.



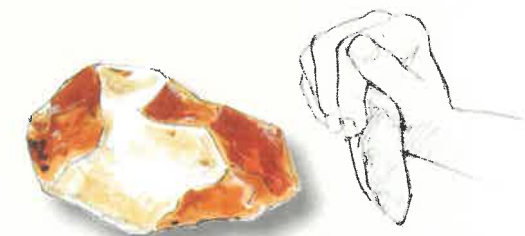
The woodlands through Welton Vale includes both deciduous and conifer trees. One tree in particular to look out for is sweet chestnut, with its distinctive leaves and bark patterns. They were introduced to this country by the Romans from their native Mediterranean lands. Whilst the fruit of the sweet chestnut is used at Christmas, the climate in this country is too cool for them to ripen fully.

The wood is similar to oak and is used for fencing, thatching spars and wine casks. Chestnut wood is also said to make boats go faster!



Sweet chestnut leaves and 'hairy' fruit cases

The quarry is a designated geological Site of Special Scientific Interest and Local Geological Site due to its important sequence of ice age deposits. In the late 1960s and early 1970s hand axes and remains of straight-tusked elephant, giant deer and horse were discovered. The small quarry face you can see is nationally important as this is the southern limit that the ice-sheet extended into Lincolnshire.



Hand axe and how it may have been used

THE ROUTE

1 From St James's Church, walk along Westgate and turn left into Westgate Fields with its wooden leaf sculptures created as part of Louth Art Trail. Follow the River Lud out of the fields, along Crowtree Lane and into Hubbard's Hills, following the tarmac footpath through the hills to the southern entrance to emerge on the side of the road to Hallington.

2 Follow the road to the right, under the bypass, keeping to the right side of the road and facing on-coming traffic. Continue along until you reach a small bridle gate on the right, go through the gate and walk directly over the field to another small gate. Go through this and continue straight ahead, with the hedge on your left.

3 Turn left at the next signposted path on your left and follow the hedge, now on your right. Continue over the stile and straight ahead, crossing a tarmac farm track then crossing the next field to emerge onto a road. Turn right and walk for a short length on the roadside until you reach a stony farm track. From here enjoy good views toward Louth and the coast.

4 Turn right onto the track. This section of the walk is permissive, agreed with the kind permission of the landowners and is only available to walkers. Follow this track down the hill, through the hedge, over a footbridge and stiles to emerge on the A157. Cross carefully and take the footpath into Welton Vale woodland. Enjoy the different colours of the mixed woodland.

As the track emerges to join a bridleway, rest a while on the bench and take a closer look at the remains of the whale bone arc.

The track through the woodland was once the main entrance to South Elkington Hall. The whale bone arc is a reminder of the importance of the fishing industry in Grimsby that influenced the wider area.

5 Take the bridleway to the right, following the track in the woodland until you reach a footpath to the left. Take this track and continue on it as it becomes a wide stony track through farmland. Follow the track to the left and view the disused gravel quarry on your right.

In the late 19th century, this former river valley was commercially quarried for sands and gravels. Extraction intensified during the 1st and 2nd World Wars to provide materials to build runways. The quarry ceased to operate in the late 1970s after nearly a century of excavations.



The disused quarry face



Whale bone arc - Welton Vale

6 When you reach a small gate on the right, go through and walk across the field, going through two more small gates and continue with the hedge on your right. Follow the track through a metal gate and past house on your left. Opposite the pond on your left, turn right over the stile into the parkland just before you reach the church. If you wish to visit the church or village shop in South Elkington, continue along the road then retrace your steps.

All Saints Church at South Elkington sits slightly above the village, enjoying a prominent location and surrounded by fine specimen trees. It is partly constructed of locally quarried chalk, with font and tower dating from the 15th century.

7 Cross the field, keeping to the higher ground then drop sharply down to the stile hidden amongst the trees. Crossing the stile back into the woods and follow the footpath to the right. Once you have crossed the boardwalk, turn left then enter the field through the small gate. Follow the hedge to your left through the field to emerge onto a track with lakes on your left. Cross the stile on your right, into another field, and turn left, keeping the stream on your left. In the far left corner of the field, cross the stile and footbridge and continue up the field to cross another stile to emerge on the Market Rasen Road.

8 Carefully cross the road and follow the footpath uphill into Cow Pasture Wood. Once through the woodland, follow the path over the grassland, keeping the trees and hedge on your left, passing Pasture Farm to the bypass.

9 Carefully cross the bypass, then go over the stile into the field. Cross the field with the hedge on your left and past the old buildings. Follow the track right down the drive and turn left at the road. Ignore the next road on the left and follow Westgate over the bridge and back to St James's Church, your starting point.

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ROUTE INFORMATION

Distance: 7½ miles, 11½ km

Time: Approx. 3-4 hours at a leisurely pace

Maps: OS Landranger 122 and OS Explorer 282

Parking: Numerous car parks throughout the town - please check for parking tariffs.

Terrain: Along footpaths and bridleways, can be muddy at times, particularly through Welton Vale. Some roadside walking and crossing Louth bypass.

Refreshments: Cafes and pubs in Louth and shop in South Elkington.

Toilets: Public toilets on Eastgate, behind the New Market Hall and at the Bus Station on Church Street.

Stiles: Numerous. Many are stock proof and therefore maybe difficult for some dogs.



Tourist Information - Tel: 01507 601111

Email: louthinfo@e-lindsey.gov.uk

Website: www.visitlincolnshire.com

THE LINCOLNSHIRE WOLDS

The Lincolnshire Wolds is a nationally important and cherished landscape. Most of it was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1973. Covering an area of 558 square kilometres or 216 square miles, the AONB contains the highest ground in eastern England between Yorkshire and Kent, rising to over 150m along its western edge. Rolling chalk hills and areas of sandstone and clay underlie this attractive landscape.

The Lincolnshire Wolds has been inhabited since prehistoric times and the appearance of the countryside today has been greatly influenced by past and present agricultural practices.

A Countryside Service helps to protect and enhance the landscape through partnership projects with local landowners, farmers, parish councils, businesses and residents of the Wolds.



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COUNTY COUNCIL



West Lindsey



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