

Branston

Start:	<i>Branston Village Hall car park</i>
Nearest Post Code:	<i>LN4 1PA</i>
Grid Ref	<i>TF017676</i>
what3words	<i>universal.trips.garages</i>
Refreshments	<i>None en-route. Pub and café in Branston High Street.</i>
Getting there:	<i>Branston lies on the B1188 southeast of Lincoln.</i>
Distance:	<i>8 miles / 12.8 km.</i>
Route Description:	<i>A circuit of Branston following field paths and tracks with views of Lincoln Cathedral. A short detour to view the 19thC waterwheel is recommended.</i>

The Walk

Leave Branston Village Hall by the main entrance onto Lincoln Road and carefully cross over, turn right and walk past the entrance to Branston Hall Hotel. At the end of their wall take the public footpath to the left and walk with woods to your left and garden fences to your right. Follow this path for almost half a mile, cross one small lane [A] and continue in the same direction until you come to an open field ahead. Turn left at the footpath sign onto a field edge path and keep the overgrown hedge to your left and the field to the right. At the bottom of the slope turn left to join a wide grassy track. Follow this eventually going right, crossing the stream by the stepping stones [B]. Follow the field edge path up the slope keeping woodland to your left and the field to the right. At the end of the bridleway join Hall Lane and turn left to walk towards Branston. As you enter the village you are going to take the footpath to the right but before you do this it is worth going a little further down the lane. There are two picnic tables and a bench beside the stream, a good place for a drink stop [C].

If you turn right beside the stream and walk along Waterwheel Lane, you will see the restored waterwheel, constructed in 1870 to supply water to the houses of the local gentry. The first wheel. Which began turning in 1879, was a wooden one with the present restored metal one replacing it in the early 20thC; this remained in use until the 1930s when Branston got a mains water supply.

Return to Hall Lane, retrace your steps, then take the footpath that is now on your left. It's a wide track with an orchard to the left and fields to the right. After the orchard, continue on the track as it winds gradually uphill for just over a mile with mainly woodland to the left and fields to the right. At one point it looks as though a footpath sign points you into a field but just do a slight left and right and keep to the grassy path at the edge of the field. Where the woods on your left finish, continue slightly left to a footbridge through the hedge ahead. This will bring you to a reservoir at Mere, another nice place to stop for refreshments [D].

Turn right and follow the track, with the reservoir on your left, walk through four zigzags to emerge onto Bloxholme Lane [E]. Turn right and walk along the lane for about ¼ mile to a footpath sign on the right. Follow the footpath with a hedge on your left and fields on the right. At the end of the path turn right onto a farm track and then almost immediately left onto a bridleway. Follow this grassy path with a hedge to the left and field to the right to the end and join Folly Lane. There is a bench here if you feel ready for another refreshment break. Turn left and follow the lane until you reach the entrance to Westfield Farm on your left. Follow the bridleway ahead, the track bending to the right and winding its way around the grounds of Ashfield House. At a left bend [F], ignore the bridleway signed to the right, staying on the track with the grounds of Ashfield House on your left. Follow the track, now surfaced, and walk down to Lincoln Road at the end. Cross the road with care and turn right to walk along the pavement for 100 yards before turning left onto a restricted byway.

Pass farm buildings on your right and continue to follow the farm track between fields as it gradually climbs to pass the former Washingborough Top Farm on the right. The track continues to zigzag over the heath with views of Lincoln Cathedral ahead, then descending to join Cliff Lane [G]. Follow the footpath sign to the right and stay on the track through the buildings of Cliff Farm. At the four-way footpath sign by the stream, turn right and walk with the stream on your left, continuing to a wooden footbridge over the stream on your left. Cross, and follow the footpath uphill with hedge on your right and the field to the left. After a few yards, look for a gap in the hedge with footpath sign [H], turn right through the gap and walk uphill with hedge on the right and field to your left. You are now approaching the outskirts of Branston, pass through the gap at the back of the houses and follow the path with houses on the left and brambles to the right.

Just after you join a tarmac path turn right to cross a local nature reserve known as The Jungle. Ignore the boardwalk that turns to the left, but continue up to the footpath sign on the far side. Turn right along the footpath for a few yards then turn left into Laburnum Close. At the top of the Close turn right into Beech Road [II] and take the first turning left into Forsythia Close. Follow the Close as it bends to the right, then go through the gate on the left into playing fields and cross to the village hall on the far side.

