



The Peatlands Way

Route Description

Ordnance Survey Explorer maps No.279 (Doncaster), No.280 (Isle of Axholme), and No.291 (Goole & Gilberdyke)

The 50 mile challenge walk

The Peatlands Way is a circular route designed to traverse the raised peatlands of the Thorne, Crowle and Hatfield moors. The cross moor routes (waymarked with the Nightjar symbol) have been selected to provide an insight into the diversity of the moors, their history and their long-term reclamation programme.

The links between the moors (mainly public footpaths and bridleways) are not necessarily the shortest routes. The aim is to provide a general picture of the nature of the Humberhead Levels, as the area is known, and to show some of the large scale water engineering which helped determine the agricultural and industrial development.

The waymarked route is intended as a core way that can be combined with other paths to make a series of walks. The full 50-mile circuit is not recommended to be undertaken in a single day except as an organised challenge. Being on one or other of the moors without support during darkness is not advisable.

This route description outlines the clockwise organised challenge circuit from Thorne. Shorter (charity sponsorship) routes run in conjunction with shuttle bus pickups from checkpoints.

Even if you are an experienced walker take great care if you depart from or lose the waymarked route on the peat moors - especially in poor visibility. Large areas are trackless apart from (often misleading) animal tracks. Water movement can render apparent routes (such as old bunds) hazardous or impassable.

Although the soft, springy peat can make for easy walking, mistakes can be very tiring. You can go a long way before finding out you can't go any further - and that means a long way back to where you were!

The Humberhead Levels Green Tourism Forum

Thorne Moorends Town Council

Assembly Rooms Fieldside

Thorne Doncaster DN8 4AE

**** Amended copy March 22 2007 ****

Thorne to Moorends

From the Sea Cadet HQ (OS279, GR682132) turn right along Lock Lane, bearing left at the junction to cross the A614 to Thorne North railway station. Keep to the right of the station yard to a cinder track and, shortly before some sheds, go right on a narrow pedestrian-only footpath dropping slightly downhill behind apartment blocks and turning right to a road end.

Ahead to the end of a row of terraced houses on the left to turn left on to a signposted field path. Keep ahead, hedge on right, across fields, crossing (right, then left) a tree-lined track. Then, with a dyke on the right, ahead again over a footbridge to a path alongside the dyke.

At a footbridge (GR689152) over the dyke on the right and with a pedestrian rail crossing on the left cross the bridge to the lane (Bloomfield Road) into Thorne Moorends.

Turn left at the road end along Moorends' main street, crossing as you approach the Winning Post to Grange Road on the right.

Go to the end of Grange Road to the entrance gate to the Recreation Ground (**Checkpoint 1 - GR693 158**). Take the barred former pit road, now a footpath, on the left of the gate and follow it left then right to the main pit entrance road. Cross to the signposted track bearing right to Thorne Moor.

Moorends to Crowle

Follow first the track then a signed footpath to the pedestrian only footbridge on to the moor.

Keep ahead on the signed footpath (right/left jink after the rhododendron bushes on to the path alongside the overgrown canal) to the viewing platform (OS 291 GR733154).

This marks the limit of English Nature's waymarked trails.

The Peatlands Way continues ahead on the track on the bund (the raised area left after the peat has been extracted). At the T-junction of tracks turn left and then turn right on to the wide track with more recent industrial peat extraction beds on the left.

Follow this through to the grey-roofed English Nature store and turn right on to the wide green lane with the Swinefleet Warping Drain on the left and the flooded Will Pits on the right.

Look for the metal Bailey Bridge (GR746149), the drain's main crossing on to Crowle Moor, on the left. Cross and either follow the waymarked bankside path

or bear slightly right on to the footpath running alongside fields.

This extra loop offers the chance of spotting red deer and the path shows signs of the former hand truck railway used to haul the peat. On a straight stretch look for a waymarked track on the left on to the area managed by the Lincolnshire Trust for Nature Conservation (or continue ahead for a slightly shorter route to Crowle).

The track to the left goes through worked-out peat beds to the bank of the Swinefleet Warping Drain. Turn right to follow the drain side path to a track on the right which crosses the (part reclaimed) moor to a gate on to a green lane.

Turn right along the lane, which soon becomes a track, passing on the right the National Nature Reserve sign and parking area marking the exit of the shorter route. The track becomes a tarmac road and where it meets the road from the small peat works on the right (OS 280 - GR759141) turn left to Crowle.

Shortly after entering the village turn right along Commonside and then left at the end on to Cross Street. At the T-junction at the end turn right on to High Street and then right (at the war memorial, opposite the Resource Centre) into Church Street and the Parochial Hall (**Checkpoint 2 - GR773128**).

Crowle to Epworth

To continue on the Peatlands Way return to the High Street and cross it or take (according to how much of the town you wish to see) any of a series of short side roads or passages on the left leading through to Fieldside, which runs parallel to the High Street.

You need to turn into Field Road (GR774126) which is on the left (bridleway sign) near the southern end of Fieldside.

Keep ahead as the tarmac lane turns into a farm track, turning right at the signposted junction of tracks and continuing through to the lane where the track emerges alongside the dismantled railway line in Ealand. Turn right and then left to follow the village's Main Street towards Crowle railway station.

Where the road swings right before the station approach follow it round to the A161 and go left for the foot crossing over the main road. Turn left over Crowle bridge crossing the railway, canal and drain and take the footpath descending from the bridge embankment to the A18.

Cross with care from the grass strip in front of the white painted company offices to the traffic island and then to the disused stone bridge over the drain

opposite. Cross the minor road and follow the line of the old road to the A161

This is a busy link to and from the M180 motorway so continue ahead with care for around 500 yards to Kingfisher Nurseries on the left and immediately beyond take the signposted broad track on the left (GR783097) between the River Torne and the Folly Drain.

Turn right through the arches of the disused railway viaduct, then left towards the farm entrance and quickly right on to the green lane running alongside the plantation. The green lane gives way to a track and where this forks (at Three Cocked Hat Wood) continue slightly right to the motorway fence (GR791085) and turn left on the track alongside the motorway.

Go right over the motorway bridge and then right again to follow a parallel track on the other side of the motorway to a clearly signposted left turn. Where the track enters the village of Belton turn right and look for the footpath (signed Jeffrey Lane GR788073) on the dismantled railway line on the left.

The line skirts the eastern side of Belton. After passing the playing field on the right turn right at the double-gated crossing of a tarmac road (footpath sign to the left) to pass The Steers public house and cross the A161 to the turning on the left and Belton church tower (**Checkpoint 3 - GR782065**).

Retrace your steps to the railway line and continue to where it meets the A161 by the entrance to Belton Brickworks. Cross the main road and go left for 100 yards to the parking and picnic area, continuing diagonally right across the car park to pick up the gravel track on the line of the dismantled railway.

The track rises to the right of an old windmill and just after the start of a paved area take the footpath to the left through an unusual metal portico stile. Follow the field edge path to a similar stile by the old mill and take the track ahead to the converted windmill on the A161 (GR781043).

Cross and take the signed track almost opposite, following it via a sharp right turn to the lane leading into Epworth. Follow the road uphill and round a right hand bend to take the turning on the left (Greengate). At the end of Greengate cross Rectory Street (Epworth Rectory, home of the Wesleys and now a museum is a few yards along on the right) bearing slightly right to the footpath sign and narrow pedestrian opening alongside a metal gate (GR785035).

Epworth to Haxey

With just one minor left/right jink at the next field edge this well waymarked path heads south for well over a mile. After a short stretch of green track turn right on a track to Low Burnham and as it passes alongside a small copse (Holy Well) watch for the waymarked U-turn.

After running along the other side of Holy Well the path bears right round

the field edge to a waymarked right turn at another small copse (GR787020).

Go slightly uphill to a field corner and small drain. Ignore the waymark to the right (Low Burnham) and continue ahead alongside the drain to a gap in the hedge and the (waymarked) left turn along next field edge. The path keeps to the field edge, turning right uphill past a small copse to High Burnham Farm (**Checkpoint 4 - 785012**).

This also the shuttle bus pick-up point for entrants on the shorter route.

Turn right on to the road in front of the farm and around 100 yards past the farm take the stile and signed footpath (GR780013) running alongside the right hand hedge of a long field. Towards the end of the field take the stile on the right and cross a short stretch of field to the hedge end almost opposite. Take the left hand side of the hedge and continue ahead to a broad track leading down to the A161 and the outskirts of Haxey.

Turn left across the road and take the right turn a few yards further on into Haxey.

Haxey to Wroot

After crossing the dismantled railway line the Peatlands Way continues on the footpath on the right about 50 yards further on (GR771103). Follow this main path round to the left, crossing a lane as the path develops into a farm track. Ignoring all turnings to left or right continue for two miles to the track end (GR748103).

A faint footpath bears off slightly left but turn right along the hedge (soon dike) side to a footbridge, Cross and bear slightly left to another footbridge on to a large turf-growing area. Cross with care bearing slightly left towards trees and a clear track running alongside a hedge. At the junction of tracks turn left and where the track forks take the right hand fork, following the clear track as it curves left to a metal gate on to Greenholme Bank.

Turn right and, at the tree belt, right again on to the track through Haxey Turbary. Continue ahead to Turbary Road and turn left over the waymarked footbridge at Skyers Farm (GR758015). Follow the footpath round the rear of the farm and left on to the farm track. Continue ahead on this track and the footpath alongside Old Turbary Drain to the polite notice and footbridge on to Epworth Turbary and continue left along this to the junction with Epworth Road.

Turn left along the road passing the end of Greenholme Bank (GR747038) on the left. Cross a bridge, pass a parking place, then, at a second bridge, turn left on to the flood bank path alongside the River Torne. At the T-junction of the lanes cross the road and continue ahead on the left bank of the Torne to a

footbridge. You can cross to the right bank or continue ahead. The next bridge (**Checkpoint 5 - GR708038**) gives access to the village of Wroot on the left, while the Peatlands Way turns right along a bridleway to Hatfield Moor.

Hatfield Moor

The bridleway bears right past a gated farm track and ends at a left turn on to a fieldside path leading to a newly built footbridge on to the peat moor. There is a comprehensive re-instatement programme on this moor so it is important to follow the waymarked routes. The primary route will be extended as areas are restored but may also be diverted at times if, for instance, high winter water levels affect paths.

After crossing the footbridge turn left and take the second track on the right to the edge of the industrialised peat workings. Turn left to follow the track around the edge of the workings. Do not attempt to cross the deep drainage ditch on to the worked area.

At the south western edge of the workings turn left along the track through the wooded area to circle a lake which has become a wildlife haven.

At the north west corner of the lake (OS279, GR695038) English Nature has cleared a wide green ride through the worked out peatland. This curves westwards to a long established track (Moor Bank) which takes the Peatlands Way north through English Nature's land for the next four miles. On the right hand side of this track one of the country's biggest nature reserves is being created out of the former peat, sand and gravel workings.

Continue alongside the lakeside fence to a green metal gate with a broad track coming in from the left. Go left up this track to Boston Park Farm, the white building at the top (**Checkpoint 6 - GR677045**), crossing the A614 with care as this is now becoming a busy link to the new Robin Hood Airport.

Return to the track down to the nature reserve, turning left at the end on to Moor Bank again, passing the sand banks specially constructed to encourage the sand martins to nest and the large flat open areas on the right which is the site of the planned visitor centre overlooking the lakes.

At this point you may like to make a small diversion to the group of trees on the top of the slight rise on the right and then go left on to the larger mound behind them. On this man-made hill you may wish to pick up pebbles (which have previously been hidden under the peat for 6,000 years) to add to the cairn created by long distance walkers developing the Peatlands Way. It is hoped the cairn will form the basis for a memorial to the airmen who lost their lives on these moors during WWII. Descend from the viewpoint

to turn right to regain the Moor Bank track.

As the track passes Lindholme Prison and former gravel pits which are now filling with waterfowl it becomes Moor Dike Road and, at a metal gate (GR693069) and new car park, becomes a tarmac road. Ahead there is limited access to 100 Acre Lake (yet to be fully developed as a nature reserve, but worth a few minutes diversion to the lakeside viewing platform). Turn left along the road and follow it through to Hatfield Woodhouse.

Hatfield Woodhouse to Kirk Bramwith

Where the road meets the A614 turn left and just before the next junction and the Hatfield Working Men's Club (GR678086). go left at the footpath sign to the village recreation ground. Pass the new Village Hall on your left and keep on ahead along a contractor's temporary road emerging at a bend in a lane (GR676090). Go ahead, passing Slay Pitts Farm on the left, to reach a Tjunction. Go straight across Epworth Road to the wide clear track opposite. Follow this, turning left, right and then left on to a track to the A1 146 with the M18 beyond.

Turn right along the road and just before the Borstal on the right cross to a slip road and farm bridge over the motorway on the left. After crossing the bridge turn right on the track towards the M18/M180 intersection.

As the track begins a left curve round the intersection turn on to the track coming in from the left and follow this to a crossroads of tracks (GR106664). Turn right and as the track approaches a pumping station with another track coming in from the right bear left alongside the pumping station. As the Stainforth pit spoil heap looms ahead there is a stretch of industrial dereliction, with rubbish dumped on either side, as the track crosses the railway and curves left then right under the spoil heap rail track before reaching the road.

Turn left and where the road forks take the right fork to the T-junction and turn left and then first left to Stainforth Church (**Checkpoint 3 - GR642119**). Leaving the church turn right and right again to Stainforth Bridge (GR121641) and at the far side of the river bridge take the footpath to the left along the north bank of the River Don.

Entrants on the shorter (45 ml) route can go right along the river bank to Fishlake.

At the next waymarked stile you can continue ahead on the flood bank or take the waymarked loop to the right to follow the old course of the River Don (before the famous Dutch water engineer Vermuyden straightened it). Both

routes go to the bridge at Kirk Bramwith.

Kirk Bramwith to Thorne

Turn right along the road and follow it past the turn to the village and church on the right, taking care round the bends, to the bridge over the New Junction Canal. Immediately after the right turn over the bridge gain the footpath on the canal bank (GR618120) and follow this through to the next bridge at Braithwaite.

Here the Peatlands Way picks up the Trans Pennine Trail and the next ²Y, miles are on the walkers' equivalent of the M1 - a wide, arrow-straight surfaced path with the wide canal on one side and a wildlife haven of marshland and the typical countryside of the drained Humberhead Levels on the other.

At Sykehouse Lock (GR638161) cross the swing bridge and go ahead on the short stretch of lane past the lock-keeper's cottage. At the road turn right and continue along it for approx. one mile to Fosterhouses. The road turns right into the village and as it swings left at the end of the village street go ahead on the footpath at the end of the cottages. Go slightly left and continue ahead at a track. At Field House Farm turn right and continue on the road into Fishlake.

After the left hand bend into the village take the road on the right and go left at the T-junction. As the road turns right check in at the Donside Stores (**Checkpoint 4 - GR655133**) then take the turn to the left up to the church. Turn right at the church to the stile and the left-pointing signpost to the floodbank footpath on the River Don. Turn left on the floodbank path for just over a mile to Jubilee Bridge at Hangsman Hill.

At this point many entrants will be finishing in the dark and, since there is little difference in distance, may prefer to complete the walk under street lighting.

So, in both instances, at Hangsman Hill cross the river with care over the narrow road bridge.

Those preferring the footpath route should turn immediately right over the stile on to the opposite bank. The path drops from the floodbank to the river bank and where it ascends left again cross the stile and turn right along the footpath (alternatively you can continue on the floodbank path). Where the footpath meets a road continue ahead past the John Bull pub and a line of houses and, as the track bears left into a house driveway continue ahead on the footpath. After crossing two stiles turn left over a stile (the path from the floodbank comes in from the right at this point) and quickly right over another stile on to a track.

The track goes under the motorway, bears left then right around the Sheraton factory and is waymarked across the industrial estate road and round

the side of the Dixons car compound. Where it reaches a T-Junction turn right under the railway bridge and follow the track through to Lock Lane and the finish at *TS Gambia*.

Those preferring the road route should continue to the A614 Selby Road after crossing Hangsman Bridge and turn right along it towards the motorway flyover roundabout. Take the second (Thorne) exit from the roundabout and continue along the road under the railway bridge and past The Delves to Lock Lane and the finish.

Your comments on The Peatlands Way will be most welcome.

It is basically a community-run event and the several towns and villages involved will be seeking to develop their contribution in the future. As the route was only completed a short time ago with the building of the bridge at Wroot this first 50-mile challenge is largely exploratory in terms of organisation.

It will be an Anytime Challenge with route description and other information available from the Humberhead Levels Green Tourism Forum in Thorne and the local Tourism Information Centres. Current thinking is that it could also be an annual one-day event covering the full route.

Useful contact numbers

English Nature Site Manager 01405 740640
Thorne-Moorends Town Council 01405 812092
Epworth Tourism Partnership 01724 297356
Crowle Community Resource Centre 01724 297509

Brigg Tourist Information Centre
01625 657053