



Walk on the WILD SIDE

JO VAUGHAN ENJOYS A GENTLE STROLL IN THE HEART OF THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTRYSIDE

ASITE close to the A1 might not be the most obvious choice as a holiday destination, but with its attractive fishing lake and landscaping there are far worse places at which to spend a vacation than Milestone Caravan Park, near Newark. Just 100 yards away is a visitor centre celebrating real ales, while the small village in which the site is situated, Cromwell, is famous for its Dolls Museum. Newark, with its historic castle, is nearby, as is a large and famous motor caravan dealer, making

this a perfect stop-off location for browsers or those looking to change their vehicle.

The local landscape isn't really walking territory, but just east of Cromwell is the small village of Girton which is surrounded by rivers and lakes. Annoyingly, there's no way of crossing the A1 unless you drive back to Newark and head north again on the A1133, but the 11-mile trip isn't the end of the world. Your reward is a walk that constantly changes, despite the flat terrain.

Tourist information

Newark Tourist Information Centre,
The Gilstrap Centre, Castlegate,
Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 1BG.
Tel 01636 655765



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General information

NEAREST CLUB SITE: Milestone Caravan Park, Great North Road, Cromwell, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG23 6JE. Tel 01636 821244

DISTANCE: 5.4 miles/8.6km

TERRAIN: Flat, but sometimes boggy

NUMBER OF STILES: 11

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT: Ordnance Survey Explorer Map of Newark-on-Trent, Retford, Southwell and Saxilby (1:25,000); stout boots

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Easy

REFRESHMENTS: In Besthorpe

DIRECTIONS AND PARKING: Head south on the A1 until you reach the 'Newark, A17' junction. Follow the signs for the A46 to Lincoln, but almost immediately take the A1133 north, through Collingham, before turning left at the signpost 'Girton – Village only'. Continue down this road, and park between the small church and the village hall, where the road widens slightly. Parking is unsuitable for the largest of motor caravans

TOILETS: None



Local attractions

- The Vina Cooke Museum of Dolls & Bygone Childhood, The Old Rectory, Great North Road, Cromwell, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG23 6JE. Tel 01636 821364. Open: all year. Cost: £3 for adults, £1.50 for children, £2.50 for seniors. Disabled access: not wheelchair accessible but handrails provided

- Millgate Museum, 48 Millgate, Newark NG24 4TS. Tel 01636 655735. Open: Tuesdays to Sundays. Cost: free. Disabled access: limited. Streets, shops and rooms in period settings, housed in a Victorian warehouse

- Newark Castle, Gilstrap Centre, Castle Gate Newark. Tel 01636 655765. Open: all year. Cost: free. Disabled access: full access into the grounds and the Gilstrap Centre. Tours of the castle aren't accessible



DIRECTIONS

1 Leave your vehicle and proceed along the road with your back to the church, passing Girton village hall. Continue through the village as the road bends firstly to the right and then to the left, and then right and left again. As you exit Girton, pass the derestriction sign and continue along the road.

2 When the road bends to the left continue straight ahead, joining a smaller track following the public footpath sign. This track follows the line of the river to your right. Cross the stile and continue. Soon veer left to walk along the top of the bank. When you come to a post with a yellow-painted top, walk through the gate and continue ahead down a narrow, fenced alley.

3 At the end, veer right and walk past a wooden gate with an arrow on it marked 'Trent Valley Way'. Keep right and walk along the road into the village. Pass the red postbox, and at the road junction, where there's an island with a tree at its centre, turn right towards the church. But almost immediately, before the church, turn right again following a public footpath sign.

4 Continue ahead, past the sign 'Fleet House Farm, Private Drive, No Vehicles'. As the drive turns to the right, cross a stile in front of you and continue ahead, over another stile and then a wooden plank bridge.

5 Walk ahead for a few paces, but just past a lone fence panel and telegraph pole, turn right along a small bank. Cross the stile and continue ahead following the yellow arrow, keeping the water to your right. Cross another stile, and very soon veer to the left following a trodden footpath to the left of a dyke.

6 At the larger mud track, next to the public footpath sign, turn right along the track. Follow this around to the left, but soon, at a right-hand bend, leave the track by

continuing straight ahead following a partially hidden footpath sign (behind a mound of grit). Follow the trodden track.

7 Continue past another wooden post with a yellow-painted top. Continue along the footpath, keeping to the left of an open field at one stage before the path heads once again through trees and bushes.

8 At the end, cross the stile and turn right. Walk past the 'Besthorpe Nature Reserve' sign and the twin metal gates, before turning right at the end of the fence. Walk along the main track. When the track starts to follow the line of a fence, cross the nearby stile following a yellow arrow. Follow the track again, but at a post with a yellow arrow on it, turn left following the arrow over a concrete bridge.

9 Cross a stile and continue, following the track around to the right, along the bank. Head over another stile and then continue straight ahead following the yellow arrow. Cross another stile by some trees, again following the yellow arrow. Continue down the left side of the field.

10 Continue around the field's perimeter until turning left next to a public footpath sign following a yellow arrow. Go over a bridge and cross its stile. Ignoring the direction of the arrow to the right, continue straight ahead along the bank before veering right. Proceed down the bank, but still follow the left-hand side of the field.

11 When you meet a track, veer right and continue along it. Cross a green railed bridge, and continue along the track. At the T-junction turn right. Just past the 'Be Aware – Footpath Crossing Ahead 25mph' sign, turn right and follow the track.

12 Continue past the 'Neighbourhood Watch Area' sign and the first house, and immediately turn left following a narrow lane that passes between two other houses. Very soon you arrive back at the church. Turn right at the road and return to your vehicle.