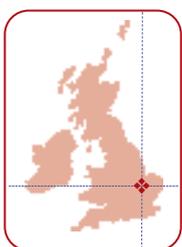


Jurassic Jaunt

Jo Vaughan steps out along the Jurassic Way in Northamptonshire, safe in the knowledge that she won't come across any dinosaurs



Ordnance Survey
Landranger Map 141

IT'S SO easy to travel far and wide and neglect what's on your doorstep. That's why it was such a pleasure to head the 15-or-so miles from my Lincolnshire home to The Caravan Club's Top Lodge site to enjoy a walk along paths and through villages that I didn't even know existed. In fact, this turned out to be the best local discovery I've made in a long time. This part of

Northamptonshire comprises beautiful rolling countryside, and our walk takes us past a lovely abbey and through the pretty village of Blatherwycke. Then it skirts a lake, runs along a brook and up through Westhay Wood. Also look out for the red kites for which this woodland is famed – two of them were hunting in the fields above my head at Blatherwycke. They are a magnificent sight.

DIRECTIONS

1 Leave via the main entrance of the site and turn left. Follow the road round to the right, following the arrow marked 'Way Out'. Cross the bridge that spans the disused railway and almost immediately turn left – there's a wooden signpost partially hidden in the trees. Pass through a dilapidated gate and continue ahead, following the direction of the yellow arrow on the side of the disused stile.

2 Enter the woods ahead, this time following a black arrow with a shell marked 'Jurassic Way'. Follow identical arrows through the woods and then over a stile. Once again continue ahead. When you reach the fence and the wooden gate (beyond which are lovely views of Fineshade Abbey), turn left to the field's corner – without going through the gate. Go over the stile and follow the arrows, continuing ahead between two fences.

3 Cross another stile and continue following the wire fence on your right before veering left at the first wooden pole, towards a small bridge over a stream. At the signpost, which directs you in three ways, leave the Jurassic Way by continuing ahead, passing the entrance to the bridge without crossing it. Continue past a number of metal gates bound together before crossing a stile. Continue ahead following the black arrow.

4 Walk diagonally across the field, heading towards, and then past, the tip of the tree line to your left. Walk up a lightly trodden path that passes under the electricity wires at the central point between the poles. Go through the permanently open gate and continue ahead, following the black arrows up the right-hand side of the field and around its perimeter. When you see a gap into the next field, turn right at another black arrow on your right. Follow the direction of this arrow diagonally left over the field, heading to the left of a large oak tree and some farm buildings beyond.

5 Where the three fields meet, keeping the lake to your left and the hedgerow to your right, walk towards the farm buildings ahead of you. Go over the stile and continue ahead, following the arrow through the buildings. Cross the stile and then continue ahead up the lane (signposted 'Blatherwycke ¼ mile').

6 Follow the road around to the left to enter the village of Blatherwycke. Continue over the pretty stone bridge and walk along the lane until the road bends sharply to the right, next to Park Barn. Here, turn left (signposted 'Blatherwycke Church') and keep left where the track immediately forks. Go past the church and continue ahead at the track junction (signposted with a black arrow). Keep following the edge of the field, past the lake, and at the public footpath arrow >>



follow its direction left through the fence line. Then immediately follow the fence once again (it's now on your right).

7 Follow the arrows past the farm buildings, taking you straight ahead. When you reach an electricity pole ahead, veer left through a gap in the hedgerow and continue along the obvious route ahead (unsigned). Walk along the banks of Willow Brook (to your left), following the next arrows as you pass them. Pass over the stile and continue ahead, ignoring the bridge on your left, before heading through another gate and continuing once again.

8 Beside a ford, cross one stile, and then another to the right, and follow the footpath signs ahead. Cross another stile



and continue, but soon veer left across two stiles either side of a wooden bridge marked with a black arrow. Go straight ahead across the field, cross another stile (signposted 'Bull In Field') and go straight on. Cross the next stile and continue once again, before crossing another field and walking behind the allotments. Go through the gate and turn left up the road towards the houses.

9 Cross the more major lane and walk up Wood Lane. Go ahead again at the 'No Through Road' sign (signposted 'Byway'). At the top of the hill go past a green gate marked 'Warning - These Premises are Guarded by a Securitech System'. Keep left through the yard, heading for another green byway sign to the right of a red skip. Go ahead through a gate (signposted with a black 'Public Bridleway' arrow) and at the clearing marked 'Westhay Wood' keep left following the track, once again rejoining the Jurassic Way.

10 Where the path forks, keep left (signposted 'Jurassic Way') and pass a panel explaining about Smelter's Walk. Keep to the main track all the way back to Top Lodge. Just in front of the buildings, where the track turns to tarmac, keep left and then bear right to return to the site.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Club currently offers a **30% discount** on Ordnance Survey Landranger and Explorer Maps – see caravanclub.co.uk/books for details

The Caravan Club Magazine recommends the use of Ordnance Survey maps, your ideal passport to navigating Britain



INFORMATION

Club site: Top Lodge, Fineshade, Corby NN17 3BB.

Call 01780 444617. Open 19 March to 8 November

Distance: 6.1 miles / 9.8km

Terrain: fields, tracks and some pavement walking

Number of stiles: 15

Essential equipment: Ordnance Survey Map sheet 234 (Rutland Water), good walking boots

Level of difficulty: easy/moderate

Refreshments: King's Cliffe (just off route), Top Lodge

Toilets: none

