

Waterside WANDER

Whatever the season, this scenic Rutland Water ramble is a joy. **Jo Vaughan** is your guide

RUTLAND WATER is somewhere I visit regularly to walk the dog or take photographs. In autumn the leaves change to a glorious colour, in winter the reservoir's outer edges freeze scenically and spring-time brings out walkers, cyclists and watersports enthusiasts eager to work off their Christmas paunch. In summer Rutland Water is the perfect place for picnics and afternoon strolls. Since they are mainly gravelled, the footpaths around the lake are suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs, while the café makes for a welcome stopping point.

This walk also takes us through the small village of Empingham – look out for the beautiful carved village sign just before you turn left towards the church and the small local shop.

DIRECTIONS

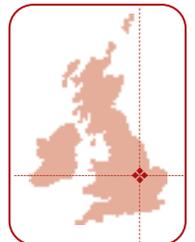
1 From the pay and display machine nearest the entrance to Sykes Lane car park, take the adjacent footpath, following

the sign 'Sykes Lane, Normanton – 2 miles, Normanton Church Museum – 1.5 miles'. Go through the wooden gate which takes you to the start of the dam. Instead of veering right to cross the dam, though, continue straight ahead across the grass until you reach an unmarked footpath which is merely seen as a line running along the bottom of the dam's outward slope. Turn right to walk along this path (following the line of the dam), until you get to a large concrete manhole.

2 Here, veer slightly left following the stony pathway. Then, at another manhole cover, turn left and head over the stile marked with a yellow arrow (beside a metal farm gate). Follow the direction of the lightly-grassed footpath to the right, to a stile on the other side of the field. Cross this and continue ahead through the avenue of trees. Just before the fence, veer left down some wooden steps and cross the small wooden plank bridge. Cross the stile.

3 Follow the arrows across the left-hand side of the field towards the church

spire before veering left over another stile. Follow the yellow arrow diagonally right across the next field towards some houses. Cross the stile beside the farm gate and go straight ahead to the road. Go straight ahead up the lane (passing the front of Honeyley House) to the main road. Cross this road and keep right along the pavement. Then, at a small green where there's a road sign to 'Stamford',



Ordnance Survey
Landranger Map 141



keep left before veering left again to pass both the front entrance to the church and the village store.

4 Just past the end of the graveyard, following its stone wall, immediately take a right turn down Crocket Lane towards the willow trees. Turn right at the thatched cottages, following a public footpath sign (positioned on a lamppost to your left).

5 Go through a black kissing gate and turn right down a residential road (Willoughby Drive). Almost immediately, at a small green, veer left to cross diagonally towards a house with a double garage coloured red with white diagonal stripes. Turn left down the road, past this house (number 27) and, where the path forks, turn right past number 43.

6 At the end of the road, cross the stile and follow the arrows ahead, crossing the centre of the field. Go over another stile leading to a wooden bridge across the brook and then another stile before turning right, following the sign for the 'Hereward Way'. Go over the stile beside the cattle grid and continue ahead down the tarmac lane. When you reach the house, turn right following a public footpath sign marked 'Public Byway', crossing the field slightly diagonally right towards a small green metal footbridge.

7 Cross this via a metal gate and continue along the left side of the next field (following a yellow arrow). At the field's end, go through a metal gate, across the main road and through another wooden gate at the side of a metal gate, past the sign saying 'Caution - Stock Grazing'. Walk along the left side of this field. Pass through another wooden gate and continue along the left side of the next field. Go through the gate at the end of the field, but don't cross the road - instead turn left and immediately left again, over another stile. Immediately turn right to walk along the right side of the field.

8 Follow the field's edge, past a silver barn on your right, until you get to a public footpath post. Follow the arrow



directly ahead through the centre of the next field. Cross the stile at the footpath post and continue ahead through the centre of the next field, then follow a lightly-trodden path through the crops.

9 Cross the stile, but instead of continuing straight along as marked by the yellow arrow, turn right following the right side of the field, along a tractor track. At the corner of the field continue ahead (following yellow arrows) down the same track, past some farm buildings on your right. Cross the road, and then continue straight ahead down a smaller lane.

10 At the next road, by the 'Give Way' sign, turn right and walk along the road all the way back to Rutland Water. At the main road, with a chained path almost directly in front of you, turn left to walk



along the road's verge before turning right into the reservoir car park. Turn right towards the visitor centre (signposted 'Rutland Belle'). Go past the café and through the next car park before continuing down a tarmac path, keeping left by a park bench down the lane.

11 Follow the sign to 'Normanton Church Museum', along the lane adjacent to the lakeside. Walk past the church and continue ahead along the paved path all the way to the dam. Pass through three gates and cross the dam following the line of its stony form. Continue through the gate and head back to the car park.

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



INFORMATION

Club site: Rutland Caravan and Camping Site, Park Lane, Greetham, Oakham, Rutland LE15 7FN. Call 01572 813520. Open all year.

Distance: 7.8 miles/12.5km

Terrain: grassy paths, quiet lanes

Number of stiles: 12

Essential equipment: Ordnance Survey Explorer 234 - Rutland Water, Stamford and Oakham

Level of difficulty: easy to moderate

Refreshments: Rutland Water Café (see instruction 10), Empingham

Directions and parking: Sykes Lane car park (£2 for the day) is on your left when travelling along Whitwell Road from Empingham (it's a short distance to the west of the village).

Toilets: Rutland Water Café (see instruction 10)

