

# Be a responsible walker

Please remember the countryside is a place where people live and work and where wildlife makes its home. To protect the Lincolnshire countryside for other visitors please respect it and on every visit follow the Countryside Code. Thank you.

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

## Most of all enjoy your visit to the Lincolnshire countryside

This leaflet is one in a series of walk leaflets produced by Lincolnshire County Council's Natural Environment Team to help you explore and enjoy the county's countryside. If you have enjoyed these walks and would like information on other walking routes in Lincolnshire then please visit our website.

If you encounter any problems whilst on these walks, such as an overgrown path or a broken sign post, please let us know so they can be corrected.

We would also welcome your comments and suggestions on the walk and leaflet to help improve future editions.

*If you require this leaflet in another format please contact us.*

**Lincolnshire County Council  
Natural Environment Team**

**Tel: 01522 782070 Minicom: 01522 552055**

**Email: [dev\\_net@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:dev_net@lincolnshire.gov.uk)**

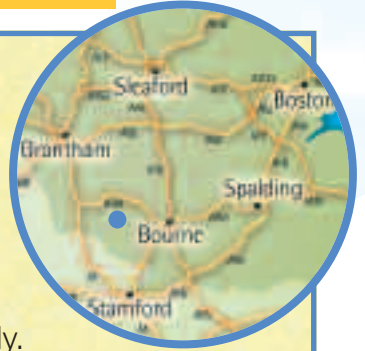
**Web: [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/countryside)**



# Walk Information

**Walk location:** Swinstead is situated just off the A151, approx 8km (5 miles) to the west of Bourne.

**Starting point and parking:** The market cross in the centre of the village. There are places to park on the main street through the village. Please park responsibly.  
Grid reference: TF 018 225.



**Public Transport:** There are bus services between Grantham, Bourne and Stamford that stop in Swinstead. For times call the Traveline on 0871 200 22 33 or visit [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/busrailtravel](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/busrailtravel).

Public  
Footpath

**Walk length:** 4 km (2½ miles) or 10½ km (6½ miles).

At a leisurely pace the walk will take approximately 1¼ or 3¼ hours to complete.

**Type of walk:** The walk uses field paths, farm tracks and minor roads. There are two ascents (one of which is very steep and the ground uneven) and two descents on both walks. It may be muddy in places in wet weather.

**Ordnance Survey maps for the area:** Explorer 247 Grantham and 248 Bourne & Heckington. Landranger 130 Grantham.

**Refreshments:** The Windmill Inn in Swinstead and the Royal Oak in Swayfield.

*Lincolnshire Walks*

# Swinstead



A circular walk of 4 or 10½ km (2½ or 6½ miles)

# Introduction

This walk is set in the gently undulating landscape of South Kesteven, around the attractive village of Swinstead. The walk will take you through the delightful Swinstead Valley and up on to The Drift, one of several ancient highways in the area.

Swinstead, and its stone cottages with their steeply pitched pantile roofs, is an interesting starting point. The village was known as Suinham in the Domesday Book of 1086, but by 1150 this had changed to Swinsteda, from the Old English meaning 'the homestead where swine or pigs are reared'. The date of the old stone market cross in the middle of the village is not known, although it bears a strong resemblance to the

one in nearby Corby Glen, which was erected in the reign of Edward III (1313-1377). The market cross would have been an important focal point in times past.

St Mary's Church dates from the 12th century and is memorable for its striking gargoyles that look out from the low 600-year-old tower. Many of the church's elaborate memorials bear witness to the patronage of the Eresey family, associated with nearby Grimsthorpe Castle since the time of Henry VIII. You may wish to note the position of the Windmill Inn for your return. This hostelry dates back to the 17th century, although there may have been an alehouse on the site for many years before that.



# The Walk

## The Walk

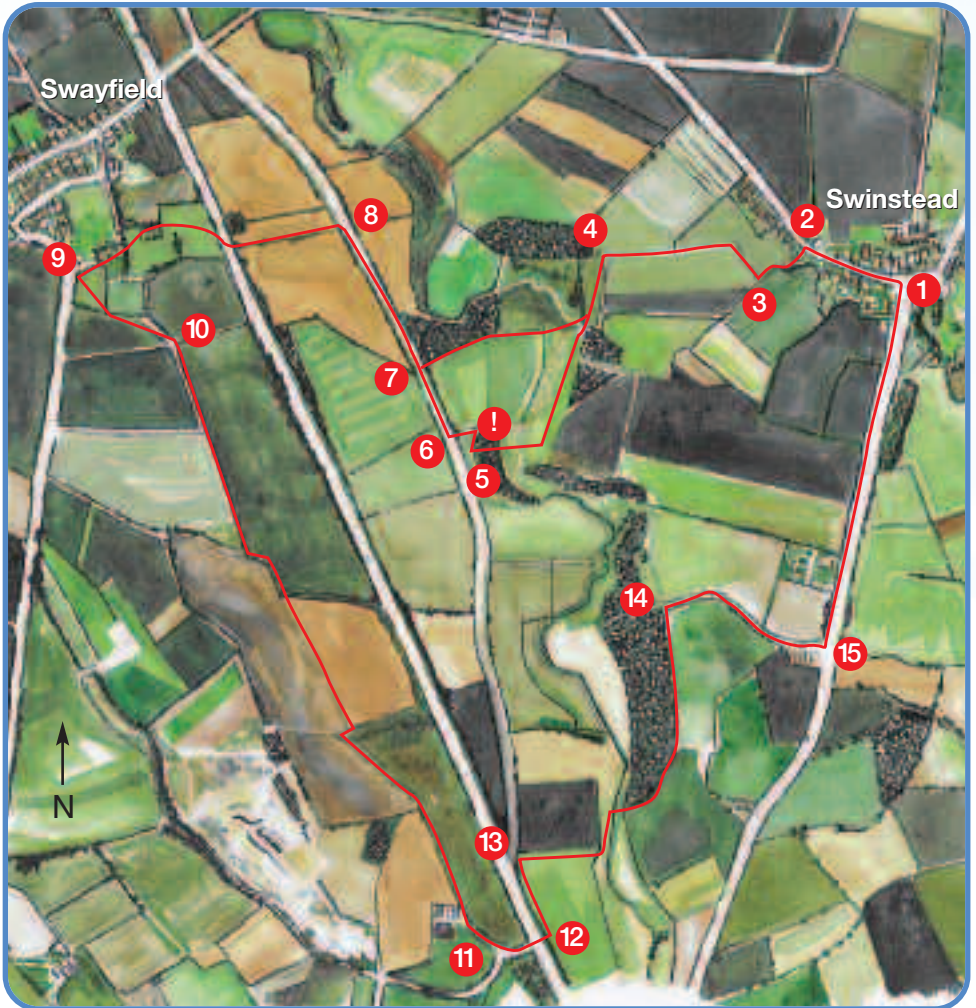
- 1 Start at the market cross and walk along the B1176 in the direction of Corby Glen.
- 2 After approximately 300m, at the edge of the village, turn left along a public footpath and track.
- 3 After approximately 200m where the hedge on the right ends, turn right through a gate and continue along the edge of a large field, keeping another hedge on your left. Follow the way markers towards a stand of trees.

- 4 Approximately 100m before the trees turn left over a stile, and then diagonally right to go down a grassy slope to reach the valley floor. This area is regularly grazed so if you have a dog please keep it on a lead.

*Swinstead Valley, with the West Glen River meandering through it, is an attractive feature of the landscape. In addition to being Access Land, it is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is a fine example of calcareous grassland, a type of grassland that is rare both in Lincolnshire and nationally. The site is grazed, keeping the turf generally short, and it has not been subject to agricultural improvement in the form of fertilisers and pesticides. As a consequence, the characteristic herbs of limestone grassland – such as common rockrose, mouse-ear hawkweed and common bird's foot trefoil – are well represented.*



# Map & Walk



400 m / ¼ mile

! Steep slope and uneven ground

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# The Walk

On reaching the river do not cross the bridge, but bear left to follow its twists and turns down to a second bridge approximately 500m further on. Use of this permissive path is by kind permission of Grimsthorpe and Drummond Castle Trust. Cross here and then bear left to follow the permissive path up the very steep slope between the trees.

**The ground is very uneven here so please take care.**

- 5 Turn right on reaching a path at the top of the slope and then left after approximately 40m to emerge on to a straight track with wide grass verges.
- 6 Turn right along the track.

*You are now on The Drift, an ancient highway that runs parallel with the main east coast railway line on your left and connects the villages of Creeton and Swayfield. The rough grass verges and mature hedgerows are important habitats for a variety of wildlife. Fallow deer roam this area and you may catch sight of one or two, particularly where the track runs alongside woodland.*

- 7 For the **SHORTER WALK**, turn right at a footpath sign after approximately 400m and follow the track down a gentle slope to the valley floor, keeping a wood on your left. Cross the river by the bridge and retrace your footsteps up the other side of the valley and back to Swinstead.

For the **LONGER WALK**, continue ahead for a further 500m along the Drift.

- 8 Turn left along the public footpath and walk along the field edge towards Swayfield.

Follow the way markers to walk through a tunnel under the railway line and then bear diagonally right across a paddock towards a farm gate, stile and field corner. Continue straight ahead, crossing two stiles, to reach a farm and short drive.

Walk straight on down the drive and then continue ahead along a tarmac lane, with the church on your right.

# The Walk

- 9** Turn left at a footpath sign, just before a road junction, and walk across the field to the far left hand corner.

Cross the stile and bear diagonally left over the next field towards the hedge and bridge in a hollow. Go over a footbridge and walk straight up the next field slope towards a hedgerow that will come into sight on the horizon.

- 10** On reaching the farm track, continue straight ahead for approximately 2km (1¼ miles), keeping parallel with the railway line now on your left. Pass through a farmyard and bear left down a lane.

- 11** Turn left at the road junction to walk through the tunnel under the railway line.

- 12** Turn left again almost immediately after the tunnel, following a footpath sign, to follow a wide track for 300m – another section of The Drift.

- 13** Turn right at a footpath sign and walk down the field edge.

At the bottom of the field turn left and after 125m turn right to reach a bridge and stile on the river. Cross these, and another stile, and bear left to go up the slope, with a wood on your left. Stay on the path as it swings to the left around the edge of the wood.

- 14** On reaching a track and an isolated ash tree, turn right and follow the track towards the farm.

Follow the way marked path to the left of the farm buildings. Cross a footbridge to reach a tarmac road.

- 15** Turn left and walk back along the road to Swinstead and your starting point.

