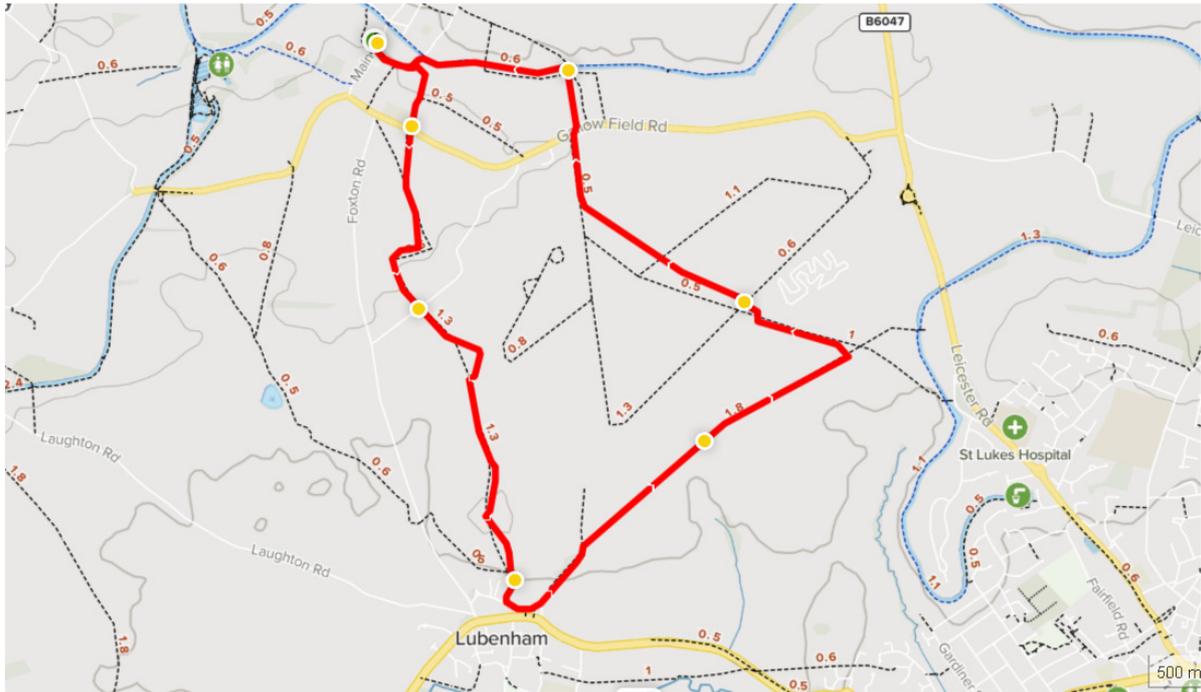


Foxton & Lubenham Circular Walk



A 5 mile circular walk through rural Leicestershire, near Market Harborough, taking in the arable fields and pastures and finishing along a short section of the Grand Union Canal.

The walk is relatively flat and follows field paths in the main, which will be very muddy after wet weather. The crop fields can become a bit more challenging to cross close to harvest time and the pastures will be holding cattle and sheep so take care with dogs. There are several kissing gates and 13 stiles (all of which have open fencing or adjacent lifting gates for dogs but some are quite high for the humans!). Approximate time 2 to 2.5 hours.

- **Start to Gallowfield Road**
From Main Street in Foxton, turn into Swingbridge Street with the church on your right. Follow this narrow tarmac lane heading downhill and, just before you reach the swingbridge, turn right through a staggered metal barrier onto a tarmac footpath signed towards the school. Follow this fenced tarmac path as it goes ahead and then bends hard right. Continue to reach the T-junction with Gallowfield Road.
- **Gallowfield Road to Access Lane**
Cross over the road, with care, diagonally left and pass through the metal kissing gate opposite into a crop field. Follow a fairly obvious path heading slightly left across the centre of the crop field heading towards the tall trees on the opposite side. As you reach the tall trees, skirt to the left of the hedgeline and continue with the hedge now on your right, following the yellow arrow markers. At the end of this second field go straight ahead across a narrow sleeper bridge across a ditch and over a wide stile/fence into an open playing field area. Turn right and follow the field boundary with the hedgeline to the right, to reach a tall yellow marker post in the far corner. Pass over the stile here and then cross diagonally left across the pasture in front of you, again heading for a yellow marker post in the far corner. Go over the stile here to reach a T-junction with the tarmac access lane.
- **Access Lane to Playing Fields**
Cross over the access lane and go straight ahead through the small metal gate signed as the Footpath to Lubenham. Follow the fenced grass footpath and part way down use the sleepers to cross to the right hand side of the hedgeline and turn immediately left over a stile into the next field. Walk along the field boundary with the hedge to your left and at the far side turn right along the bottom edge of the field to reach the yellow marker post in the far corner. Cross this stile (or use the adjacent gate which may be open) and head diagonally left across the next field heading for the yellow post within the hedge on the left hand side. Cross this double stile and then keep diagonally right through the next field to reach the next yellow post. Here another double stile takes you into the

next crop field. Go straight on across the centre of this long field to reach the stile on the far field boundary. (If the crops are very tall you may need to turn left and then right to follow the field boundary to reach the top). You will emerge into an open pasture and here go diagonally left and then follow the left hand field boundary over the brow of the hill down to the fence at the bottom. This hill is known Mill Hill and is the site of an old mill. The views are lovely to the village of Lubenham ahead. Pass through the gate at the bottom into a small grass area and go over the stile opposite to reach a fenced footpath. Turn right over another stile into Lubenham's playing fields.

- **Playing Fields to Copse Pond**

Leave the playing fields at the far right hand corner and go down the narrow tarmac path to emerge out through gates onto the village road called The Green. Turn left along the road and keep left on this lane passing The Old Vicarage on the left. The Old Vicarage dates from the 17th Century. As the lane forks keep left, passing Manor Farm an ivy clad red brick building on the right. Continue straight ahead on the tarmac lane and continue as the lane begins to climb between ancient hedgerows. This section of Undle Lane is believed to be an ancient track that was used by horse drawn carts to take supplies to the mill on nearby Mill Hill. You will pass allotments on the right and then the lane bends left with a metal gate on the right. A few paces later fork right off the lane to pass diagonally across a crop field. At the far side go over a sleeper bridge and across the low stile and continue on the path heading diagonally right heading to the far edge of the copse ahead. Pass through an old metal gate and continue in the same direction to reach the marker post in the edge of the copse. Within the copse you will see a large pond on the left.

- **Copse Pond to Motorbike Course**

Continue on the footpath beyond the pond and under a very large oak tree and then keep right to follow the field edge path with the hedgeline on your right. At the field corner, go ahead through another old gate and pass diagonally through the next crop field. When you reach a junction with a wide grass track within the field, turn left along this. Follow this path and at the end of the field keep right through the treeline and then left and continue to reach the concrete track ahead. Turn right and over to the right you'll see the edge of the scrambling motorbike course. Look out for an unsigned but fairly obvious path into the crop field just a few paces along on your left.

- **Motorbike Course to Canal**

Turn left here and follow the path through the crop field. At the end of the first field you'll emerge onto an old concrete track which is the remains of a runway of a World War II airfield. You'll also see a yellow marker post confirming your route. Cross the track and go ahead across the next field with the prison buildings now directly ahead. Keep ahead over a wide grass verge to reach a T-junction with a concrete lane immediately in front on the prison fence. Turn right along the lane alongside HMP Gartree on the left. The prison was opened in 1965, and it is infamous for a daring helicopter escape that took place here in 1987, the only breakout of its type to have been carried out in the UK. The track emerges alongside a gate out onto the main Gallowfield Road. Turn right for a few paces and then cross over and go through the metal kissing gate opposite onto the footpath through another crop field. The path emerges to reach the canal ahead.

- **Canal to End**

Cross over the narrow footbridge across the canal and then turn left onto the towpath. Follow the towpath with the canal running on your left. This section of canal is part of the Leicester Line of the Grand Union Canal. The 35 mile stretch of the canal is famous for its staircase locks including the flight of ten locks which raise the canal at the far side of Foxton. After a little distance the towpath emerges through a gate onto the swingbridge at Foxton. (If you wish to visit Foxton Locks you can continue ahead on the towpath here to reach them less than a mile further along). Turn left across the bridge and follow Swingbridge Lane back to the start of the walk.

