

Walk 11 – Belton in Rutland.	Leigh Lodge optional loop via Withcote 5 or 9 miles
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How to get there: Belton in Rutland lies 4 miles west of Uppingham on the A47 Leicester to Uppingham road.

Car parking: There are no public parking space. Some of the streets are quite wide and parking with discretion is advised.

Public transport: See www.traveline.info

Maps: Ordnance Survey Explorer 15 Rutland Water & Stamford with part of the loop on Explorer 233 Leicester & Hinckley.

Route: Hilly, with stunning views over wooded countryside. The route passes through mixed sheep and arable land, mainly on farm tracks which can be muddy at times. **Please note; At the time of writing, the narrative of this walk does not, in places, correspond with the route shown on the Ordnance Survey maps. There is an application by the landowner/s currently being processed by Rutland County Council for the route to be changed in parts that enhance the enjoyment of the walk. These changes have already been made and the route is easy to follow on the ground.**

Refreshments:

The Sun Inn on Main Street, is only open Tuesday - Saturday evenings, Saturday and Sunday lunch times. See the village website for full details www.beltoninrutland.co.uk. On the longer route, The Dairy Tea Room at Launde Abbey open daily 10am until 4.30pm. See www.laundeabbey.org.uk.



Items of interest: Belton in Rutland is a pretty village with a number of attractive houses. Leigh Lodge, with its old fish ponds, sadly no longer visible from the walk, is the site of a hunting lodge at the time of King John. **On the loop:** Launde Abbey – a religious retreat.

The walk: Starting at the church, walk along Church Street to the junction with the war memorial on the right and continue left into Chapel Street.



At the fork in the road with the noticeable signpost, take the road on the right, sign posted Lambley Lodge, No through Road & Leighfield Way. (Locals pronounce it Lyefield). Where the road turns left at Lambley Lodge, continue straight ahead, climbing uphill on a shale and grass track with the hedge on your left, until reaching a metal field gate and track.

Here turn left for a short distance before turning right in front of a number of barns and follow the well-made lane downhill. There are some lovely views of open countryside at this point and Ridlington village can be seen on the right. At the bottom cross the bridge over the River Chater and continue slightly uphill before turning left following the drive, with the buildings of the lodge on your left. Ignore the nearby bridleway (MacMillian Way) and a short distance further on, the footpath (Rutland Round) both on the right, and continue straight ahead on the track.

At the first crossroads of tracks, carry straight on through a wide gap in the hedge onto a wide grassed avenue with hedges on both sides, continue along the avenue (**alteration to the route**) at the end, the route bears left down a dip, through a line of trees and rises the other side onto a grassed track. Continue along the track between eventually, a wire mesh fence on the left and hedge on the right, (**an alteration**) which sweeps downhill to meet another crossroads of tracks.



To return to Belton in Rutland on the short walk, turn left on the track, downhill on the Leicestershire Round.

Optional extra loop (4miles) Note: the extra loop is worth the effort.

To continue on the loop, go slightly right ahead on the Leicestershire Round, in the general direction of Launde Abbey, with the hedge on your left. After a short distance, at a metal field gate on the right with a yellow topped waymark post nearby, and where the

Leicestershire Round bears slightly left and downhill, go through the gate into the field, leaving the Round, and continue straight ahead with the line of trees and bushes on your left, until you reach another gate and track. **(Here is another chance to take a shorter walk – after going onto the track, turn left and follow it in the general direction of Withcote Lodge, Cottage and Avenue Farms – note the route has also changed to that on OS maps and does not now go through the field)**

Our route, after turning left on the track for a few metres, turns right into the trees, on a clearly seen narrow track, opposite the waymark post in the field. The track climbs steadily through the trees and upon leaving the treeline, continues uphill with the hedge on the left.

At the brow of the hill it meets another track at a T junction. Turn left here and follow the track with the hedge on your right and fence on the left. Shortly after a field gate crossing the track, the route bears left. Ignore the first metal bridleway gate in the hedge on the right and continue a little further on to the second gate on the right. Go through this gate and continue downhill towards the farm buildings in the distance, keeping the hedge on your left. Upon reaching the farm buildings go right, around them to meet a shale driveway.

Here, turn right along the driveway passing Cottage Farm. At the minor road to Launde Abbey, go straight over onto the drive and then pass Avenue Farm on your right, following the garden fence line and bear right into an avenue of trees.



Follow the line of trees, which eventually opens out, and keep straight ahead towards Withcote Hall until reaching a barn on the left. Turn left to meet the Leicestershire Round after the building, and go through a metal gate with the steep hill in front of you.

The route to Launde Abbey goes slightly right of the brow of the hill and drops down the other side to a stile in a hedge. Cross the stile into a gully and continue to a footbridge crossing the River Chater. Follow the contours of the gully to rise on the far side at a metal gate. Note: the terrain can be tricky to negotiate when wet

Go through the gate into the field, to the right you should see Abbey Farm, Veer slightly left as you cross the pasture heading towards a wooden power cable pole in the field, with the road to Launde Abbey dropping steeply behind. To your left Launde Abbey comes into view. After going through the gate in the corner of the field, meet the cattle grid and road just before the junction. If you wish to visit the Abbey's tea room, the entrance is on the right of the building, but you are asked not to use the driveway that passes at the front, but to use the drive furthest away.

At the road turn immediately left on the Leicestershire Round and follow the road for a number of metres to reach the finger post on the right grass verge. Turn right and head towards the metal gate on the bridleway that passes between the Abbey's boundary and lake. The route runs parallel with the railing fence on your right towards to the corner of Launde Park Wood. At this point, go through the gateway and head diagonally left across the arable field towards the left-hand corner. Or you may prefer to use the headland around the field.

Upon reaching the corner of the field, go through the gate and follow the narrow track as it crosses the River Chater and then rises slightly to meet the metal gate at the start of the loop walk. Follow the grass track right until it joins the shale track then turn right for the route back to Belton in Rutland.

The Route back to Belton in Rutland – for both walks.

On the wide shale track, follow the Leicestershire Round downhill and cross the River Chater once more. The track gradually rises and continues through a large pasture, eventually crossing a cattle grid and then continues to rise with hedges on both sides. At the top, where the track turns sharply left, go through the metal gate directly ahead. Here again, are some fantastic views of open countryside.

Having gone through the gate follow the grass field track through the field, downhill towards the bottom left corner and then continue between hedges to reach the tarmac road in front of Brickies Farm. Turn left along the road for a mile back to Belton in Rutland, entering the village on Chapel Street.

