

How to get there: Woodhouse Eaves is south of Loughborough (SatNav – Main Street LE12 8RZ) on the B591 road, well signposted from Quorn, Rothley and Anstey.

Car parking: There is a public car park in the centre of Woodhouse Eaves on Main Street next to the Village Hall (LE12 8RZ). This walk could also be started at Quorn, where there is also a public car park.

Public transport: See www.traveline.info

Map: Ordnance Survey Explorer 246 Loughborough

Route: Easy walking on level tracks (but can be muddy in places after wet weather).

Abbreviation in the text: Metal kissing gate – MKG.

Refreshments: Several options in Woodhouse Eaves and Quorn: as well as places to eat, there are small shops selling food for a picnic.



Items of interest: Varied buildings in Woodhouse Eaves, including the church (built over a cave in a rock) and a new round Baptist Chapel. Old Woodhouse has a fine row of old almshouses built by Mrs Perry Herrick for her workers. Rabbits Bridge crosses the Great Central heritage railway, with a good view of the trains passing below. Near the end of the walk, Johnsons' Meadows is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The walk: Out of the car park, turn left down Main Street. You pick up the Leicestershire Round at the bottom of Maplewell Road (where there is a general village store on the corner). Enter Meadow Road, opposite. The road continues as a grass track, to the right of a primary school. Enter a field through the gateway ahead. Go diagonally right on a well-walked path, aiming just to the right of tall farm silos in the distance, to arrive at a hedge corner. Bear left and walk with this hedge and ditch on your right to the road (Brand Lane).

Cross the road and enter the field via the metal kissing gate (MKG) directly opposite. Keeping close to the hedge and ditch/stream on your left, you are now going to walk in the same direction, following Leicestershire Round waymarks, through five fields, including the one you are now in (Field 1).

Field 2 is entered through a gap; Field 3 by crossing a stile to a MKG opposite, over a farm track. (Ignore a footpath crossing a stile/footbridge over the stream on your left in this field.) Field 4 is entered via a MKG and a second metal gate over a farm track. Field 5 is entered via a MKG (named 'Julie's Gate').

At the far left-hand corner of Field 5, turn right. With a hedge still on your left, ignore the wide gateway on your left and go to the MKG in the hedge ahead. This leads to a field corner. Follow the field edge, with hedge and ditch on your left, to reach a MKG in the next corner.



The path now passes just to the left of an isolated oak tree in the field to reach a small water treatment works on your right. Cross the concrete bridge and turn right, following the railway embankment on your left and then bear right up to a MKG to emerge just to the right of Rabbits Bridge. Turn left on the wide track to cross the railway bridge.



This is the only heritage railway in Britain where a section of double track has been preserved – making it possible to see two locomotives passing each other. So if you hear one (or, if you are very lucky, two) trains approaching, it is well worth waiting! From the bridge, you can also walk a little way to have a fine view of Swithland Reservoir.



Here we leave the Leicestershire Round by turning left at a footpath signed 'to Quorndon 1½'. Cross a stile into a fenced path running alongside the railway embankment. After crossing another stile, there are now woods on your right. Just after a brick tunnel on your left (taking water under the railway line) the path bears right, away from the railway embankment, to cross an open area fringed by woodland. The path swings right and then left by iron railings to cross a stream via a footbridge between iron railings.

The next section of the route is enclosed and can be very muddy in places. The path zig-zags at first, skirting the grounds of the Victorian Swithland Water Works (which may have been glimpsed through the trees) to cross another footbridge. After a long, straight stretch with fence and open field on your left, you arrive at a stile in the hedge on your right. Over the stile is a boggy area, crossed via a long footbridge, which bears left. Continue with the hedge on your left to reach a bend in the Quorn Brook.



Follow the path to the left of the brook as it meanders through woodland. This path is well-used and can be very muddy in places. Eventually, a stile right next to the brook, by a farm gate, leads to a track. Turn right on the track to cross another stile by a farm gate and join the drive coming from Mill Farm to your right. Follow this to the road (Chaveney Road).

Quorn village centre – with shops and places to eat – is to your right, but to continue the walk at this point, turn left on Chaveney Road. When the road swings right, do not follow it, but continue straight ahead down Buddon Lane. This becomes a short, grassy track, leading to a field.

Bear left to cross the field corner, heading for a yellow-topped waymark post by a gap in the tall hedge ahead, to enter a wooded section of track. This becomes 'sunken', with high banks on either side and can be muddy. You have the choice of staying down on the sunken track or, to avoid the mud, taking the higher path that runs along the top of the right-hand bank.

After passing under the railway bridge (with another opportunity to see trains!) the sunken track swings sharp right and gradually rises up between hedged banks to emerge in an open field with a hedge on your left. Follow this field edge to reach a hard track and turn left onto it. At 'The Well House', it becomes a tarmac drive. Turn right at the T-junction. The drive now swings left to reach another junction, with a lovely thatched cottage over the field to your left. Here, turn right onto a narrow lane, leading to the village of Old Woodhouse.

At the main street, turn left. At the road junction by the church, take the left fork signed 'Swithland' to walk downhill, passing the churchyard on your right.



At the bottom of the hill, pass historical, thatched 'Pestilence Cottage' and turn right into School Lane, soon with a stream running along the left-hand side.

The lane becomes a tree-lined footpath, with the stream still down on the left. At the end, a wooden kissing gate leads to Johnsons' Meadows.



Johnsons' Meadows was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 2020. It is a block of six species-rich lowland meadows, supporting a diverse range of wildflowers- such as common knapweed (pictured). To maintain its biodiversity, the site is managed traditionally as hay meadows. There is also evidence of an old medieval settlement here.

In the meadow, the path forks. Take the left-hand path with the hedged stream still just to your left. At the hedge corner, continue ahead, crossing the meadow to reach a wooden kissing gate. Continue on the path along the next right-hand field edge, to reach a MKG leading to the village cricket field. Continue in the same direction to pass the children's playground and emerge onto Main Street, Woodhouse Eaves and the Village Hall car park.

A walk from *32 Short Circular Walks* based on The Leicestershire Round. Copyright: © Heather MacDermid for Leicestershire Footpaths Association 2000. Updated and photographed by Janina Holubecki 2023

