

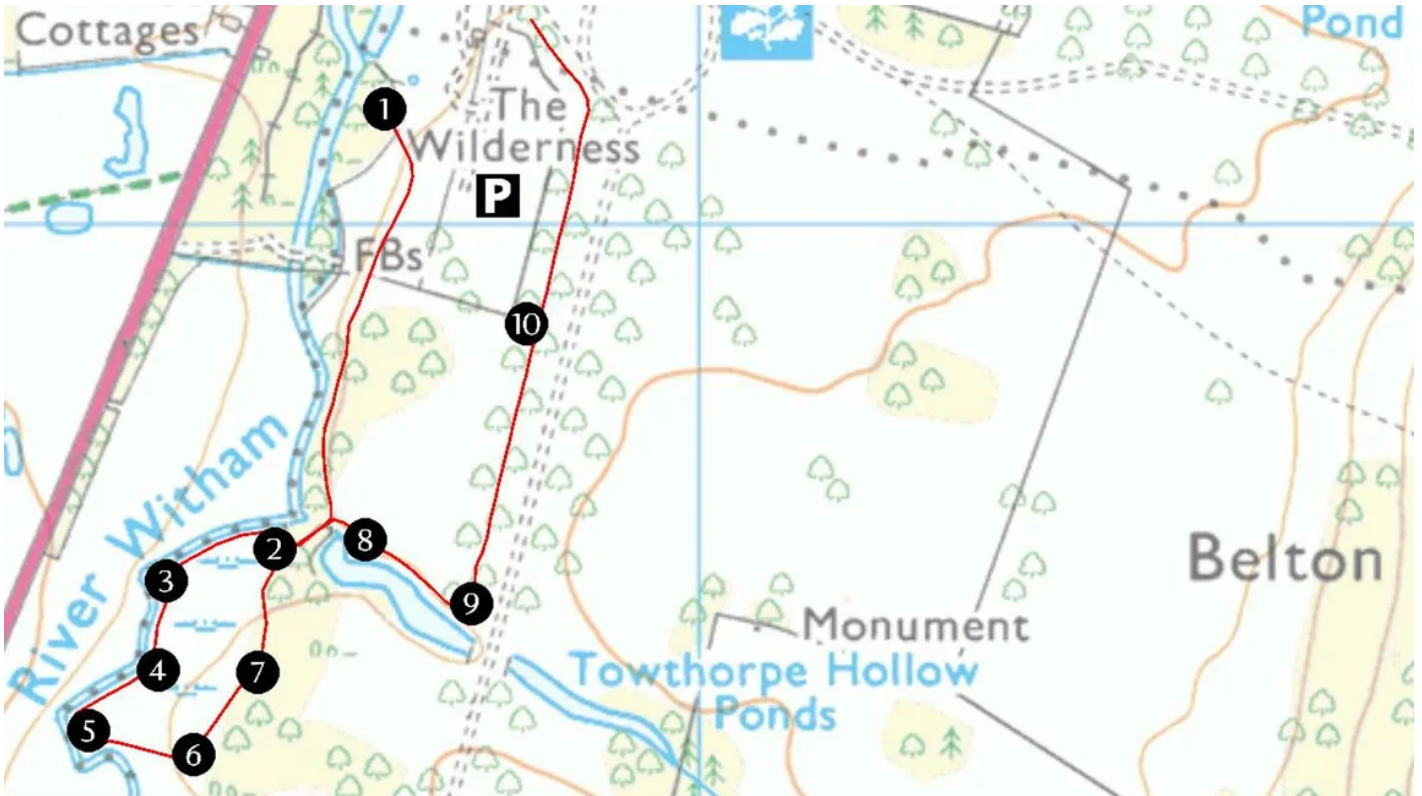
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE & LINCOLNSHIRE

## Belton Estate Riverside walk

This scenic riverside walk follows the River Witham as it meanders through Belton Park, a wildlife-rich open area of grassland and ancient woodland of around 1,300 acres with a historic herd of wild fallow deer. The walk links into a longer route which extends further into the park.

### ! Admission charges to Belton

Normal admission charges to Belton apply when accessing this walk, please buy your tickets from visitor reception before you set off.



### Information

Address: Belton Estate, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG32 2LS.

OS map: Landranger 130

Activity: Walking

Moderate: Uneven underfoot and sometimes muddy near the river edge. For further details, please see Terrain section.

Dog friendly: Dogs are welcome but must be kept on leads at all times due to the presence of deer and grazing livestock.

Full trail: Miles: 1.4 (km: 2.24)

Duration: 1 hour 15 mins

### Terrain

The terrain is uneven and the river edge can be wet and damp underfoot at times.

The route crosses rough, tussocky grassland, following deer and sheep tracks in places. It's generally firm in most weather conditions, but can be muddy closer

### Total steps: 10

Start point: Belton Estate, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG32 2LS.

1. After passing through visitor reception, turn right and walk behind the building following the surfaced path in the direction of the car park. Cross the drive (watch out for cars to your left) and follow the grass path through the trees. One of the first notable trees immediately on your right is a rare sugar maple.
2. Follow the path parallel to the river for approximately 200 metres until you see a gate and wooden fence. Go through the open gate. Carry on across the grass and bear left for 200 metres or so towards another small gate next to a pond. You'll come back to the pond on your return journey and find out more about it. Once through the gate head right, down towards the raised wooden boardwalk.
3. At the end of the boardwalk, head towards the river. The grass can be marshy and wet in places, especially in the winter when it floods as river levels rise. Follow the meandering course of the river upstream. The dense and varied bankside vegetation includes bulrushes, willow, alder and hawthorn and is a natural habitat for water voles that flourish at here at Belton, despite being in decline elsewhere.
4. Continue to follow the course of the river as it meanders. The quiet location, size and speed of the river benefits a diverse range of wildlife. Butterflies are frequent visitors to the river corridor, especially in summer, and include speckled woods, several white species, coppers, silver-washed fritillary and banded and blue azure damselflies. One of our earliest butterflies is the orange tip, which loves the lady's smock as an early nectar source. The river is also home to a nationally rare species of crayfish.

to the river, where there is a wooden boardwalk for some of its length.

There's a slight hill and a number of gates, but no stiles. There are no benches at present.

5. With the river on your right, head up the incline to the site of the deserted medieval village of Towthorpe. Though hard to see, there are earthworks here and evidence of the ridge and furrow associated with medieval farming methods.
6. Head for the wooden post with a waymark on it and follow the path through the trees, known as Little Towthorpe Plantation.
7. As the plantation narrows you'll see the timber wicket gate you originally came through beside Towthorpe Hollow Pond. Go through the gate and bear right, following the path that leads along the northern edge of the pond flanked by mature alder trees, which would have been coppiced to provide useful branches for hurdles or charcoal. Alder is also a good host for moss, lichen and fungi, and attractive to small pearl-bordered fritillary, chequered skipper butterflies and crane fly.
8. Follow the path along the edge of the pond to the surfaced drive, which links the Lion Gates to your right with the mansion down the drive to your left. Look out for the historic bridge crossing the culvert that takes the water from one pond to the other under the drive.
9. Head down the avenue of trees towards the mansion and you'll gradually see the mansion, in all its majesty and stature, emerge as you continue along the path.
10. Continue down the drive and as you approach the overflow car park look out for a large veteran sycamore tree on your left next to the car park fence. Carry on walking towards the mansion and the Oval Lawn where Belton Park Cricket Club play their home matches during the spring and summer. Why not complete your walk with a tasty takeaway treat from the café?

End point: Belton Estate, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG32 2LS.

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