

Groby Parish Walks

Groby is a small village on the western side of Leicester, with an historical link to Royal events of the 14th-15th centuries.

Elizabeth Woodville, a member of the Grey family through her first marriage, and latterly wife of Edward IV, may well have strolled along the paths used on these walking routes, as might have Lady Jane Grey, Queen for only nine days. The early home of the Greys of Groby was Groby Old Hall, which the family inherited in 1445 when William de Ferrers died. Although she was born in the splendid brick house in Bradgate Park, Lady Jane Grey would have visited the old family home in Groby

Both walks start from the car park at Groby Pool, Newtown Linford Lane, Groby. If travelling from the North, the car park is easily reached from the A50, via the slip road onto Newtown Linford Lane. Alternatively, from the South, head through Groby and take a right before the Co-op to go under the A50 onto Newtown Linford Lane.

Parking: Groby Pool Car Park

Walk 1:

5.6km (3.5miles), allow 1.75 hours, undulating farmland, mainly through fields with crops and cattle

Starting from Groby Pool Car Park, turn right heading south on Newtown Linford Lane. 20m before the slip road for the A50 cross the road and follow the footpath sign along the track.

Walk the length of the footpath towards the ford. Just before you reach it, turn left and cross the narrow footbridge 50m up on your right. Cross the track to the stile by the old oak tree. Once over the stile, turn left.

Note the field level to your left is much lower than that of the field through which you are walking. This is due to the need to contain water for the early mill pool. The lower ground extends for approximately 0.5 mile northwards, towards Sheet Hedges Wood in the distance. The Groby granite quarry workings are now up to the wood's southern boundary and may be clearly seen during the winter months.

New fish pools have been dug at the north end of the former mill pool. The black layers of silt, exposed during excavations in 1989 confirmed the location of the previous 16/17th century pool.

As you walk through the fields keep a look out for broken pottery. These fragments are likely to be the result of Victorian night soil spreading from the nearby villages.

A. Follow the left-hand field boundary to a stile, then cross the middle of the next field, over a ditch and then up the hill to the corner of Sheet Hedges Wood. Walking with the wood on your left you reach the crest of the hill and meet a farm track. The track is referred to as the 'Old Stone Way' or 'Rent Way' and was once a busy route-way for pilgrims travelling between Ulverscroft Priory and Leicester Abbey. At this point Walk 2 branches left

B. At the junction with the track turn right. Follow the wide footpath with the buildings of High Leys Farm off to the left. Eventually, you reach a stile. Once over aim for the field gate and stile. Here you will find a waymarker post with arrows pointing in many

directions. Follow the arrow pointing right and head for the electricity poles. Keep the hedge on your left, then cross the two stiles in the corner of the field.

C. Cross the middle of the next three fields and cross a farm track to a stile and bridge. Once over these, walk with the hedge on your left. At the top of this rise you can see the fish pools that were the old mill ponds. Descend the hill towards the waymarker post and the old oak tree to complete the circuit. To return to the car park follow the track back to the road then turn right.

Walk 2:

10.4 km (6.5 miles), allow 3 hours, undulating farmland, some hard paths, but mostly through fields. Possible short-cut making walk 6.8 km (4.2 miles)

Follow the description for **walk 1 until point B**. Turn left at the wood's edge and continue with the wood on your left.

Keeping to the waymarked path, the route briefly cuts into the edge of the wood, then back out into open fields with great views of Bradgate Park. Cross the first field diagonally to reach the far right-hand corner, then walk with the hedge on your right.

1. At the field end, head for the large barn by crossing diagonally right across the field. Keep to the enclosed footpath, with the stable buildings always on your right, and descend the hill to the village of Newtown Linford.

As its name suggests, this was once a 'new' settlement within the forest of Charnwood, a daughter settlement of Groby, with a ford across a fast flowing stream.

At the road turn left, follow the Main Street, then just before the Post Office and general store, follow the footpath fingerpost left and up the hill. At the top of the hill cross the road and continue to follow the footpath opposite.

This farm track was once used by carriers transporting stone from Groby granite and slate quarries which were both located alongside the Bradgate Hill out of Groby.

2. Once over the stile continue to follow the old metalled road downhill. As it approaches the wood, leave the track and walk down the field to reach a bridge over the stream. Ascend the hill on the other side of the stream to reach a stile and wooded footpath beyond. This path eventually leads to the rear of houses near the A50.

As you reach the A50 you can take the short cut by turning left and following the road up and over the hill and taking the footpath clearly visible across the fields down to the left. This is where you rejoin the main route.

3. To continue on the longer walk, turn right as you reach the A50. Cross the road at the traffic lights (this is far less hazardous). Once across the road turn left and continue towards Groby. After passing the house called Slate Brook, a footpath sign will be found on your right as the main road bends. Follow the route uphill - to the right of a large transport garage - towards Martinshaw Wood, which is managed by the Woodland Trust.

Continue through the wood following the yellow footpath arrows. At the southern edge of the wood and the rear of Groby Community College you will come across a footpath T-junction. Turn right and follow the footpath until you pass the College's all weather sports area. Do not pass through the squeeze, but turn left before the hedge and follow the winding footpath.

4. The footpath comes out on to open fields, where you need to head diagonally right aiming for a gap in the left hand boundary. Then follow the farm track along the right hand side of the hedge towards the motorway. At the far field boundary bear left to walk parallel to the motorway to meet the Groby to Ratby Road.

5. Turn left and follow the road until you reach the small Parish Council grassland area. Go left down off the road and head for the furthest corner of this thin strip of grassland, where you will meet a wide enclosed footpath.

This is the former Groby Granite Railway track engineered in 1831 by Robert Stephenson.

Turn left and follow this path back towards Groby. Eventually the enclosed path peters out at Spinney Close, where you need to maintain the same direction but this time on the pavement following Ratby Road.

On reaching the Stamford Arms public house, turn left and head uphill towards Groby church (note the Old Hall on the right).

Immediately beyond the graveyard take the footpath on the right, pass under the A50 then turn left then right, following the footpath across the field to Newtown Linford Lane. Turn right again to return to Groby Pool car park.

Useful information:

Buses: Service 28 Groby to Leicester Mon - Sat, Service 117,118,119 Swadlincote-Ashby-Coalville-Leicester Mon-Sat (& limited on Sun/Bank Hols)

Refreshments: Shops and pubs in Groby and Newtown Linford.

Toilets: Public WC in car park of Bradgate Park, next to the church, Newtown Linford.

It is advisable to wear suitable footwear when walking. Stout shoes or walking boots are recommended.

Some stretches of the route follow minor country roads. Beware of traffic approaching from both directions. If possible stay on the verge, if not walk in single file on the right hand side of the road.

Enjoy the walks, whilst observing the Countryside Code.

Walking - Be fit and well

The benefits of walking regularly include; reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, bowel cancer, breast cancer, osteoporosis and obesity. In addition, many people feel better in themselves. Regular exercise is thought to help ease stress, anxiety and mild depression.