

THE LOUTH NAVIGATION

The canal was built after it was realised that Louth was beginning to fall into decline. Construction began in 1765 at Tebrey Lock, with the canal reaching Louth in 1770 at total cost of £28,000. The 12 mile route allowed sea-going vessels to navigate between Louth, the North Sea and beyond. The main imports were coal and timber, whilst corn and wool were exported. With the advent of the steam engine and railways, the canal fell into decline towards the end of the 19th century. The Louth flood in 1920 caused much damage to the locks, bridges and roads serving the canal. This was finally the end of the canal as a business and it eventually closed in 1924.

The Louth Navigation Trust was established in 1986 to promote the canal, its history and wildlife for recreation and education. It works to restore and regenerate the canal and its corridor and hopes to re-open the waterway for boats. The Trust, working with Groundwork Lincolnshire, was instrumental in renovating and reopening the Navigation Warehouse, currently used as offices for the Trust.



For more information contact: Louth Navigation Trust,
Navigation Warehouse, Riverhead Road, Louth, Lincolnshire LN11 0DA.
Website: www.louthcanal.org.uk Email: info@louthcanal.org.uk



LINCOLNSHIRE NAVIGATION WALKS



Two Churches and a Canal



Two circular walks; one of 6 miles, the other of 8½ miles from the historic town of Louth, through Alvingham and back

If you would like this leaflet in an alternative format, please contact us.

INTRODUCTION

Enjoy the peace and tranquillity of two walks exploring the Louth Canal and nearby villages of North Cockerington and Alvingham, with two churches in one churchyard. Keep a watch for the darting blue of the kingfisher or the antics of the moorhens as they squabble amongst themselves.

The two churches at Alvingham sharing the one churchyard. St Mary's (top centre) and St Adriwald's, the larger of the two.



Mute swan - the sight of this graceful and dignified bird is one of the highlights of the canal walk



ROUTE INFORMATION

Distance: 8½ miles, 14 km or 6 miles, 9½ km

Time: Approx. 4 - 5 hours at a leisurely pace for the longer route
Approx. 3 - 4 hours at a leisurely pace for the shorter route

Maps: OS Landranger 113 and OS Explorer 283

Parking: Numerous car parks throughout the town - please check for parking tariffs. Limited parking at the Riverhead.

Terrain: Along footpaths and bridleways, can be muddy at times.
Some roadside walking, all on level ground.

Refreshments: Cafes and pubs in Louth, with the Woolpack pub at the Riverhead
A tearoom and farm shop near Alvingham (½ mile from the walk).

Toilets: Public toilets on Eastgate, behind the New Market Hall and at the Bus Station on Church Street.

Stiles: A few. Many are stock proof and therefore maybe difficult for some dogs.



Tourist Information - Tel: 01507 609289
Email: louthinfo@e-linsey.gov.uk
Website: www.visitlincolnshire.com

LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

For bus services to Louth contact Traveline on 0870 608 2 608 or www.traveline.org.uk

Tourist Information Centre, New Market Hall, off Cornmarket, Louth

Whilst there are two churches in one churchyard at Alvingham, the smaller of the two, St Mary's has an unusual history and setting, being a mile from its parish of North Cockerington. St Mary's is no longer used for worship but is managed by the Churches' Conservation Trust.

St Adalvald's is the only church in the country dedicated to the saint who later became Bishop of Lindisfarne. The present church dates from the 12th century although it is thought that an earlier Saxon church stood in its place before being destroyed, possibly by Viking invaders.

Look out for moorhens on the canal - without webbed feet they are clumsy swimmers.



4 Continue along the towpath to join the road at High Bridge. At the road turn right, leaving the canal, past the houses. At the end of the road, turn right onto the bridleway.

5 Continue along the bridleway as it crosses fields and ditches until you meet a road and continue straight ahead. After the road first bends to the right then left, turn right along a footpath. Follow this along the edge of Green Dike until you join another road.

6 Turn right then left on to Meadow Lane at the next road junction through North Cockerington village. Just past the public phone box, turn right down a footpath. At Chapel Lane, walk straight across to join another footpath. Follow this to rejoin the towpath, turn left and retrace your steps back to Louth.

Adjacent to the churches is the site of Alvingham Priory (no public access). It was founded by Hugh de Scotney (1184 - 1254) for the Gilbertine order and closed in 1538 under Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries Act.

B From the churchyard, walk through the farmyard and past the water mill on your right. Follow the road straight on.

The present day Alvingham Mill dates from the 17th century. The machinery was installed in 1782 when the building was extended. However, there is evidence that this site has been used for mills previously, with a mill recorded here in the Domesday Book of 1086.

C Where the village road joins the main road, follow the bend to the left and walk carefully alongside the road until you pass over the canal. Turn right to join the towpath near Lark Farm and retrace your steps to Louth, keeping the canal on your right.

Near North Cockerington, the remains of the medieval settlement of Cockerington village can be seen as 'tumps and burms' within the fields. The origin of the name Cockerington means a 'farmstead by a stream called Cocker' which is a Celtic river name - perhaps an earlier name for the River Lud.

Key
 - - - 8 1/2 mile Route
 - - - 6 mile Route

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POINTS OF INTEREST

The Riverhead area has much evidence of life from the 18th and 19th centuries when this was a busy and important part of the town. At the heart is the Navigation Warehouse, an old wool warehouse built in the 1770s. On the edge of the Warehouse's decking is a weather vane - part of the Louth Art Trail. This stands high above the water, gently rotating with the changing winds, reminding us of the role of this vital element in navigation. There is a small seating area near the warehouse, again part of the Louth Art Trail. Constructed of English oak and steel, the designs echo the boats and bridges of the canal.



Navigation Warehouse

Navigation Locks

The locks of the canal are unique in that no two locks are of the same dimensions and that six of the eight locks are of barrel sided construction.

These had four bays on each side with wooden ties where they met, designed to strengthen them against the pressure of the surrounding land. Very little remains of the Top or Town Lock (now replaced by the Tilting Weir) or of Keddington Lock. Ticklepenny and Willows Lock are in a better state of repair, with the barrel shaped sides still visible. Little is left of Salter Fen Lock, except the upper sill where the first set of gates would have been hung. Alvingham Lock and its adjacent wharf are in fair condition, but again the gates have been removed.

Milestones

In 2000, with only two of the original canal milestones left, the Louth Navigation Trust financed and organised the installation of 10 new stones between Louth and Tetney Lock. One of the remaining stones can be seen by the footbridge at Alvingham.



THE ROUTE

The route is marked with a boat logo.

1 From Navigation Warehouse, where the River Louth enters the canal, follow the canal away from Louth town centre, cross the canal at the first weir, continuing along the towpath.

At Keddington Lock you will see the remains of the top sill, where the upper set of lock gates hung. The remainder of the lock walls have been replaced by gabions (wire baskets filled with bricks) to prevent the banks from falling in. A footbridge leads across the field towards Keddington and St Margaret's Church.

St Margaret's Church dates from Norman times but is now sadly redundant. Members of the Ticklepenny family, who Ticklepenny Lock was named after, were farmers, lock keepers and toll collectors in the area, are buried in the churchyard.

2 Continue along the towpath through a field where the River Louth runs on your right to Ticklepenny Lock.



Ticklepenny Lock

Ticklepenny Lock is still in reasonable condition after having been repaired by the Louth Navigation Trust in 1996. There used to be a wooden swing bridge here which has now been replaced by one made of concrete. In the early 1930s a sheep wash was built alongside the lock and this can be seen amongst the trees on the left hand side.

3 Cross the road to follow the towpath. Go past farm buildings and the sewage works on your right. Continue along until you come to Lock Form at Alvingham lock, where a tributary of the River Louth runs under the canal, by way of a brick syphon, to feed Alvingham Mill. Cross the road to follow the towpath.

FOR THE SHORTER WALK

4 At the junction with two other footpaths, turn left off the canal for a chance to explore the village of Alvingham. (There is a farm shop and tea room about 1/5 mile through the village.)

