

## CITY OF LINCOLN VISITOR ATTRACTIONS WALKING GUIDE - 2 SELF-GUIDED WALKS

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A brief history: Lincoln was founded by the Romans in 48AD on a Celtic settlement. Fifty years later, Lincoln was one of the finest cities in Europe. The Viking conquest was in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, then the Normans arrived within two years of the 1066 Norman conquest. During the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries wool and cloth were the most important trades at Lincoln's inland port at the Brayford Pool, reached from the sea on the east by the River Witham, and from the west by the Fosdyke Navigation canal. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries Lincoln became an important centre for engineering - during the First World War the tank was secretly invented here.

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### WALKING TOUR OF MAIN ATTRACTIONS

1¼ hours without making detours or entering any buildings

**This walk starts and ends at the Visitor Information Centre, postcode LN1 3AA, on the corner of Castle Hill (also known as Castle Square) and Bailgate, but you can join the circular walk anywhere along its route, including from the station (see note near the end of the walk for the route from the station to the joining point).**

With your back to the Visitor Information Centre, a **Tudor half-timbered merchant's house** built in 1543, turn left to go east towards the Cathedral, taking time to read both sides of the information board ahead on the left.

Walk through the arched 14<sup>th</sup> century **Exchequergate**. Exchequergate was part of the walled defences built to give security to the residents of the Close, the 40-acre site of the Cathedral and neighbouring streets.

You are now facing the magnificent Norman west front of the **Cathedral** dating from 1072. The remainder of the Norman Cathedral was brought down by a fire in 1141 and an earthquake in 1185. The Cathedral is mainly 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century, and is considered by many to be the finest Gothic building in Europe. Its presence is felt, physically and spiritually, throughout the city and the county. Inside, high up in the Angel Choir, is the mischievous Lincoln Imp, now the symbol of the city.

Retrace your steps through Exchequergate and see immediately on the right **St Mary Magdalene**, an interesting 13<sup>th</sup> century church.

Straight ahead, at the west end of the square, you will see the imposing **Castle**, built from 1068 by William the Conqueror on the site of the Roman fortress. Walk to the entrance to the Castle and look through the archway. Straight ahead you will see the Crown Court (still in use). The buildings to the left are the former prison, built in 1787 and extended in 1847.

If you take a detour from this walking tour, you can walk round the **walls** and up the **towers** of the Castle. You can view Lincoln's famous **Magna Carta**, one of only four surviving copies sealed by King John at Runnymede in 1215. The 1217 **Charter of the Forest** is also here to view. You can see the **prison**, which used the 'separate system' of solitary confinement, wrongly thought to give rehabilitation through penance and reflection. The '**separate system**' **prison chapel** is the only one remaining in the world. As hooded prisoners were sent along the pews, high partitions closed between each one in turn so they could not see each other and could only see the preacher. You can try it out yourself, which is a chilling experience not to be missed!

Walk back to the Visitor Information Centre. Turn left to go north along Bailgate for **specialist shops and restaurants**, as far as Westgate, the second road on the left. On the Bailgate road you will see the **line of circular setts** marking the position of a **Roman colonnade**.

Turn left into Westgate (see information board on the corner) to go into the mini-park known as **St Paul-in-the-Bail**. This was the site of the very first Roman fortress, and later part of the **Roman forum**. You can see a **Roman well** here. From the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards this site was used for a succession of churches. (See information boards.)

Leave St Paul-in-the-Bail to turn left into St Paul's Lane with the **castle walls** on your right, then turn left again into Gordon Road, then right into Bailgate to walk back to Castle Hill.

Now go south downhill on the famous **Steep Hill**, passing **historic buildings, specialist shops and restaurants**. After a short distance the road gets narrower. This is the site of the **Roman south gate** leaving the Upper City – you can see part of its wall in the building on your right here. At this point you leave the very large area still known today as the **Bail** - the original walled Roman Upper City, which later became the Norman outer bailey to the Castle.

The Romans had an **Upper City** and also a **Lower City**, both walled and gated. You are now entering the Roman Lower City. You will walk slightly to the east of the line of the original **Roman Ermine Street**. The original street was completely straight and included several flights of steps.

At the point where five roads meet, on your left you will see the 12<sup>th</sup> century **Norman House** (see information board on other side of road). With the half-timbered 15<sup>th</sup> century former **Harlequin Inn** on your right, continue down Steep Hill. Don't worry, you won't have to climb Steep Hill on your way back later – you will return by the more gentle Michaelgate.

You will reach the **Steep Hill rail** erected in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to block the road below in order to prevent further episodes of a coach and four horses being driven down the hill at speed for a wager by eccentric Lincoln MP Colonel Sibthorp!

Where Steep Hill becomes The Strait, on the right you will see **Jew's Court and Jew's House**, both dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Jew's Court is home to a synagogue, the oldest in Britain. (See information board on opposite corner.)

Turn left here into Danes Terrace to view the architecture of the new archaeology museum **The Collection**, and just past it, the 1927 **Usher Gallery**, notable for paintings by Peter de Wint, antique watches and Tennyson memorabilia. Walk in a circle starting to the right of the gallery to view the gardens and sculptures. Before the Usher Gallery was built, the grounds were already a 'pleasure garden' known as **Temple Gardens**, named after the temple to Niobe which was constructed at the top of the hill when the gardens were laid out by Joseph Moore in 1834. Part of the Roman ditch (moat) is here and part of the Roman wall is near the temple. (See information board in north-west corner of gardens.) Look back uphill from the gardens to see the vineyard, The Old Palace and its chapel, the Medieval Bishops' Palace and the Cathedral.

Return to The Strait and continue into the pedestrianised High Street. You are now walking on the actual straight line of the **Roman Ermine Street** - can you hear the footsteps of the Roman legionaries? At this point you are entering one of the two main **High Street shopping areas**.

After crossing a road, you will see on the wall of the fourth building on your left a plaque denoting that this was the site of a **Roman temple to Mercury** and that nearby was the site of the **Moot Stone**, the meeting place of the Danish burghwurmoot which governed after the Viking invasion in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

Ahead of you, built on the **site of the old Roman gateway out of the Lower City**, you will see a stone arch known as the **Stonebow**, with the **Guildhall** above it. The Guildhall was used from the 13<sup>th</sup> century by the city's council, was rebuilt in 1520, and holds many items of regalia, including the sword presented by King Richard II in 1387. The Mayor's Parlour is within the Guildhall. The city prison was in the east wing until 1809. The room you see above the arch is still used for meetings of the City of Lincoln Council, who are summoned by the 1371 mote bell on the roof. Meetings are held round the original meeting table – a very wide table so that no sword drawn in anger could reach right the way across it! Go through the Stonebow.

For shopping you are surrounded by High Street shops, and you can take a detour from the walk to go into the **Waterside three-level shopping centre** coming up shortly on your left. If you take a further shopping-related detour you can continue down the High Street over the crossroads and visit the next big **shopping centre, St. Mark's**, on the right.

*If you are joining the walk from Lincoln railway station, turn left from the station, then turn right to cross the road at the lights to go north, straight on up the High Street until you reach the High Bridge Café on your left. At this point turn round so you are facing back the way you came, and join the circular walking route below.*

Without taking any detours, ahead of you on your right you will see the splendid **half-timbered 16<sup>th</sup> century High Bridge Café** sitting on top of the bridge over the River Witham. The High Bridge (built 1160) is a Norman vaulted structure, the oldest bridge in the country to still carry buildings.

Glance along the river to the left and you will see the striking **modern statue Empowerment** spanning the water, and you should spot narrowboats and swans.

Just before the High Bridge café go down the narrow steps on the right called **The Glory Hole** and through the passageway at the end. Walk along and notice the **inscriptions** on both sides of the bridge you will walk under. You will now have a view of the attractive **Brayford Pool** (in previous centuries an inland port and centre for trading, but now a marina) and the vibrant **Brayford Waterfront**. The **university** is to your left on the other side of the pool.

For a detour you can walk all the way round the Brayford Pool, viewing the university architecture at closer quarters, or take a **boat trip**.

Without taking a detour, walk a little way along the Brayford Waterfront and turn right up Lucy Tower Street. Turn left into Newland, then first right into Orchard Street. Walk past the City of Lincoln Council's offices on your right, then walk through the car park on the right to see part of the **Roman Lower City west gate and Lower City wall**. (See information board.)

Rejoin the road and turn right into West Parade. Cross to the police station where you will see the very steep path called Motherby Hill, which follows the line of the **Roman Lower City wall**. (See information board.) Continue past the police station and into Motherby Lane ahead.

At the crossroads turn left up Hungate, then turn second right into Michaelgate to climb towards the Cathedral. On the right you will see a large **ultra-modern house**, then, near the end of the road on the right, the half-timbered 16<sup>th</sup> century **crooked house**. At the junction go left up Steep Hill the short distance to Castle Hill, to end your circular walk back at the Visitor Information Centre.

## WALKING TOUR OF EVEN MORE ATTRACTIONS

1¼ hours without making detours or entering any buildings

*This second walk starts and ends at the Visitor Information Centre, postcode LN1 3AA, on the corner of Castle Hill (also known as Castle Square) and Bailgate, but you can join the circular walk anywhere along its route.*

With your back to the Visitor Information Centre, cross the square to walk south, downhill on **Steep Hill**. After a short distance, take the first road on the right, to go west along Wordsworth Street.

On your left you will see the former Lincoln Theological College, now named in honour of its most famous graduate, **Chad Varah** (1911-2007), a Lincolnshire-born priest whose experiences in his Lincoln parish inspired him to found the **Samaritans** in 1953.

Turn round to admire the façade of the impressive **Norman House** behind you on Steep Hill.

At the end of Wordsworth Street go straight on into Drury Lane. With the **castle walls** on your right, turn right into Union Road.

Now known as **Hilton House**, the large house on the right corner was built in 1814 as a home for landscape painter **Peter de Wint** (1784-1849) (see his work in the Usher Gallery) and his brother-in-law, Lincoln-born portrait and history painter **William Hilton** (1786-1839). Note the house's lodge just past the entrance gates.

On the left corner you will see a statue to **Edward Parker Charlesworth**, the doctor who pioneered a new system of sympathetic and rehabilitative treatment for mental health on this site at The Lawn Hospital from its opening in 1819. You will shortly reach **The Lawn** on your left. The hospital is now used as offices and for performances and functions, whereas the nurses' home to the right of the entrance has become a hotel. The eight acres of grounds are now used as a park and children's play area, with a selection of shops and a cafe.

From the entrance, walk to the far left to see the impressive façade of The Lawn as viewed from its original sweeping access drive by the statue. Continue walking in a circle until you come to the charming **John Dawber Garden**. Go through the wrought iron gate to stroll through this small walled garden. Return to the main entrance of The Lawn. As you leave you will see on the other side of the road the **west gate of the castle** set within its massive walls.

Turn left to the roundabout. Come back another day to bear left at the roundabout, up Burton Road, to spend time looking round the **Museum of Lincolnshire Life** and **Ellis windmill**. To continue your walk, turn right at the roundabout into Westgate.

On your left is the castle-like **Westgate Water Tower**, built in order to provide clean water at last after a typhoid epidemic in the city in 1904, while on your right are the huge **castle walls**.

Just before the Castle Hotel, turn left down West Bight to view at the back of the hotel the **Mint Wall**, part of the **outer wall of the Roman forum's basilica**. (See information board.) Walk along the footpath, turning right at the end to join Chapel Lane. At the end of the road you will reach the **Newport Arch** on your left. (See information board.)

The Newport Arch is the **northern gateway from the Roman Upper City** and the only Roman gateway in Britain still used by traffic. As the original Roman road is buried 2.4 metres below the present road, the arch has much less headroom now than in Roman times. The **Roman Ermine Street** continued in a straight line

through the arch northwards all the way to the Humber. Go through the Newport Arch to see on your left the base of the **Roman north gate tower**.

Go back through the arch and turn left to walk along East Bight to view part of the **Roman wall** and the site of the **Roman reservoir**. (See information board.) This narrow lane follows the line of the Roman wall.

At the end of East Bight turn left into Eastgate. In the forecourt of the Lincoln Hotel are the ruins of the **Roman Bastion, part of the Roman Upper City east gate**. (See information board.)

Cross the road and go down the steps into the Cathedral grounds, passing the statue to one of Lincolnshire's favourite sons, poet **Alfred, Lord Tennyson** (1809-1892), together with his faithful dog.

Walk under the flying buttresses supporting the circular **Chapter House** of the Cathedral. In the road to your left you will notice the **Priorygate arch**, an 1816 structure built to replace a medieval gate of the **Cathedral Close** walled defences.

Join the road near the arch and turn right to pass **Georgian and medieval houses**. Note the plaque on **6 Minster Yard** to **composer William Byrd** who lived there while he was Cathedral organist from 1563 to 1572.

Near the end of the road on the left at **3 Pottergate** you will see a plaque to Lincoln-born **mathematician and philosopher George Boole** (1815-1864), the father of modern algebra (Boolean algebra), who founded a school in this house.

You will reach the **Pottergate arch**, an original gate built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century as part of the Cathedral Close defences. Note the garderobe (toilet) high up on the far side. (See information board.) Turn left uphill north on Wragby Road.

If you have time for a 30-minute detour from the walk, you can take a promenade in Victorian gardener Edward Milner's beautiful 22-acre park, the **Arboretum**. To reach it, continue up Wragby Road as far as the pedestrian crossing lights. Cross the road and walk into Upper Lindum Street opposite. At the T-junction turn left into Lindum Terrace, and you will find the way into the Arboretum ahead on the other side of the road. A favourite with children, the arboretum has a play area (at the east end near the road), a maze, fountains, lakes, a bandstand and the famous lion statue.

If you do not take the detour to the Arboretum, continue up Wragby Road and take the first road on the left, Winnowsty Lane, to view part of the **Cathedral Close wall and a tower**. At the end of Winnowsty Lane turn left into Greetwell Gate leading to Eastgate, then left again and through the Priorygate arch.

At the mini-roundabout turn right, then left into Greestone Place. Go straight ahead to the end of the cul-de-sac to view the **tithe barn** (1440) on the right. (See information board.) Nearby are the Greestone Stairs. At the top of these steps is one of the small **medieval gates to the Cathedral Close** – a postern or back gate. It is said that a ghost appears on the steps from time to time – so be alert!

Return back up Greestone Place, and turn left at the first corner. You will pass the private entrance to **Vicars' Court** - behind the door are the peaceful **medieval lodgings round a green** built in the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century to house 25 of the Cathedral clergy.

Walk down the drive ahead through the two archways. On your left is the ruined 12<sup>th</sup> century **Medieval Bishops' Palace**. The medieval bishops of Lincoln administered England's largest diocese stretching from the Humber to the Thames – only the monarch equalled their wealth and power. There is even a vineyard in the grounds! At the end of the drive is **The Old Palace**, the more recent former home of the bishops of Lincoln.

Walk up the hillside path to your right, and through the passage, turning left to walk beside the Cathedral and through Exchequergate into Castle Hill, to end your circular walk back at the Visitor Information Centre ahead on the right.

Diana Glew, 2013, revised 2018

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