

The Parks Trust Self-Guided Walks: The Great Linford Lakes

Walk revised by Peter Burrett, Tuesday 4th June 2013

Start point

Off the main Newport Pagnell to Wolverton Road, between Saxon Street and the Black Horse pub at Great Linford, there is a free car park at Stonepit Field Park.

Walk overview

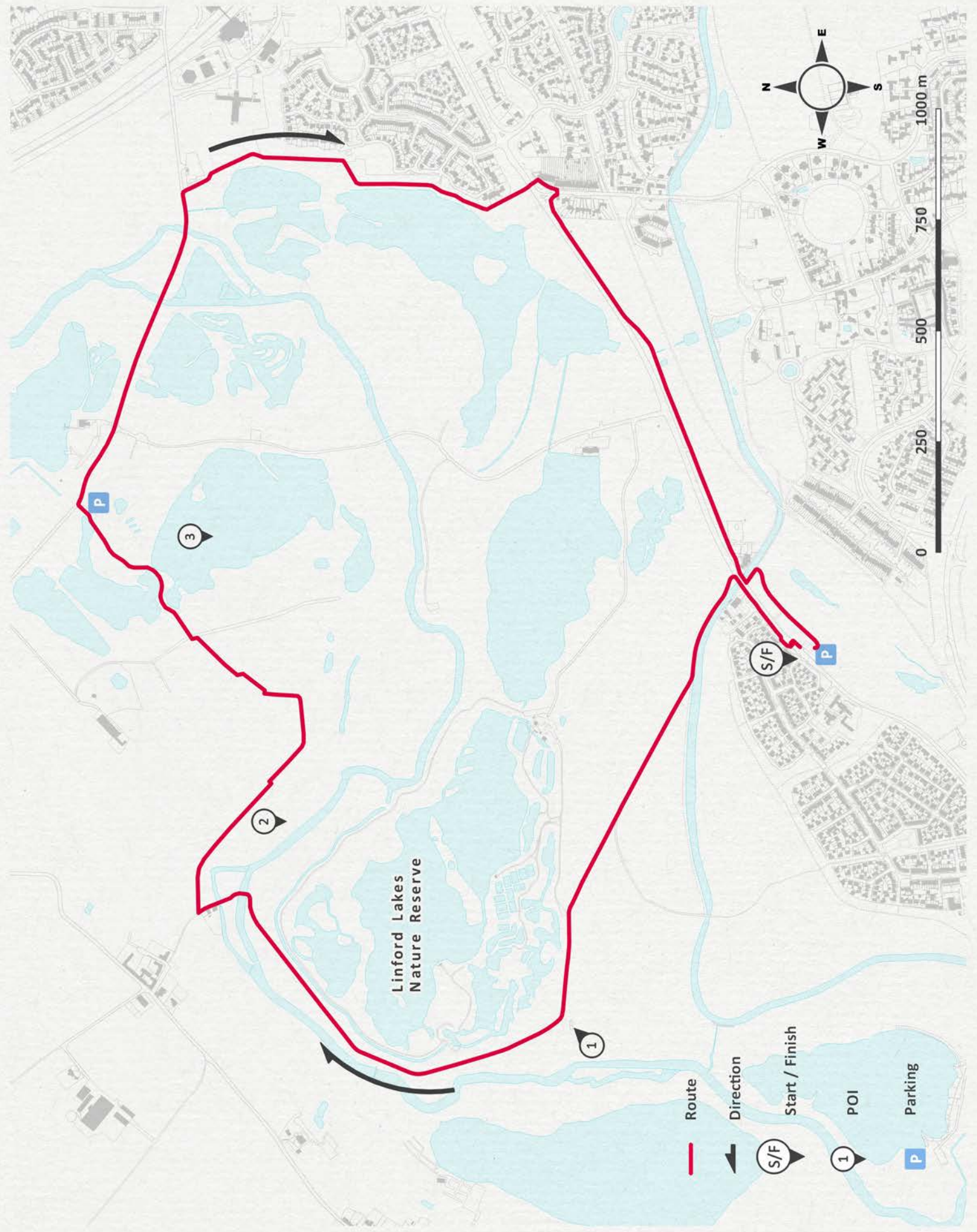
This is a circular walk, along a short stretch of canal towpath and a long farm track, across fields and through woodland, some of it quite boggy. Throughout the walk you will pass the various old gravel pits now known as the Great Linford fishing lakes.

The walking is easy, although some sections can be extremely muddy and robust walking footwear is recommended.

Distances & times

Circular walk; Car park – Haversham Mill – Little Linford Road – Black Horse pub – car park = 4.1 miles, 120 minutes. Allow additional time for refreshments at the Black Horse, open all day from noon for food.





The circular walk

Stonepit Field is named after the now disused limestone quarry which once occupied the site. In 2008 the Parks Trust drained and landscaped the area to create a reserve for diverse wildlife, including birds, newts and a wildflower meadow.

From the car park, turn right onto Wolverton Road, across a pelican crossing to the Oakridge Park housing development. The footpath takes you over the Grand Union Canal on the opposite side of the road to the Black Horse pub.

Turn immediately left down a tarmac lane alongside the canal. This is the Black Horse mooring site for narrow boats. After about 250 metres, turn right off the towpath onto a concrete track leading over a cattle grid. You will see a "private farmland" sign, indicating that you must stick to the track.

The track traverse's extensive grassland. To your right, partly hidden by trees, you get a view of Blackhorse Lake, and to your left, in the distance, a footpath bridge crosses the Grand Union Canal. Just beyond a disused livestock pen on your right, you come to the dramatic ruins of St Peter's Church, Stanton Low, which dates from the 12th century, and was used for worship until the 1920s. Later, the chancel arch was removed to St James' at New Bradwell, and St Peter's fell into disrepair.



Continue along the farm track as it bends to the right, running alongside a wooded wildlife reserve belonging to the Hanson Environmental Study Centre, to which there is no public access. On this walk, we saw a heron and buzzards, and heard a distant cuckoo.

The River Ouse is to your left across a meadow, but invisible from the track at this point. Across the Ouse on Haversham Lake you will see a host of small sailing boats around the Haversham Sailing Club building. To your right is Stantonbury Lake, adjoining the Hanson wildlife reserve and frequented by a myriad of wildfowl.

Pass a bridge carrying a pipeline across the Ouse on your left, before finally reaching a footbridge over the river at Haversham Mill. There was a mill recorded on this site in the Domesday Book of 1086, but the current building is now a private residence. Once past the mill, go through a gate then turn immediately right at a public footpath sign.

Cross a field of grass, go through a five bar gate into another pasture (which will be very muddy in wet conditions), then follow a gentle gradient uphill, keeping the fence line on your left. There are good views from this point, across the Great Linford Lakes (viewpoint symbol on map).

Climb a stile in the fence into an arable field. The public footpath should traverse this field to another stile that you will see in a fence on the opposite side. The official path is due to be restored, but for now reach the second stile by walking around the field edge to avoid damaging crops.

Once over the second stile, turn left through sparse woodland, still on the marked footpath. You pass an elevated barn owl box. Crossing a third stile takes you into a large field complex divided into paddocks. At time of doing the walk, the footpath was blocked by a line of tape which we had to crawl under. This will hopefully be a temporary obstacle. Climbing three further stiles in quick succession brings you to an area of dense woods.

The next few hundred metres can be VERY muddy and requires appropriate footwear. A path straight ahead takes you into thick tree cover. There are fishing lakes to your left and right. When you reach a "private keep out" sign, turn immediately left. Finally, you reach a grassy car park off Little Linford Lane.

Turn right onto Little Linford Lane, taking care as there are no footpaths. You will cross two bridges over different strands of the River Ouse. A short distance after the second bridge, take a sign posted public bridleway to your right. Continue on this path, ignoring a gated alternative to your right.



The bridleway passes between hedgerows and through glades before turning sharp left through a gate where it hugs the edge of the Redhouse Park housing development to your left, and Redhouse Lake to your right.

When you reach the Newport Pagnell-Wolverton road again, cross over and turn right. On the opposite side of the road, you pass the entrance to the Hanson Environmental Study Centre and the Great Linford Lakes clubhouse and fishery.

Take the slip road leading up to the Black Horse pub. Cross over the Grand Union Canal bridge, turn left down the towpath for a short distance then right to follow a grass pathway back to the Stonepit Field Park car park.

