



Walk 11 Gunthorpe **The Unicorn**

Length - 5 miles (7 km). Allow 2 ½ hours.

Terrain - Easy walking on paths and lanes, no stiles.

Route - From the village centre walk down Meadow Lane, cross the railway and continue on the track to the riverside. Follow the track left at the river and in 250 yds turn right through a gate to follow the riverbank all the way to Gunthorpe (2 miles).

The Unicorn is on the left after passing under the road bridge.

Before or after taking refreshment continue by the riverside for another ½ mile to Gunthorpe Lock to view the scenery here, and where there is also a café. If time and energy allow, the riverside path continues for several miles in lovely tranquil surroundings.

Return to Burton Joyce along the riverside path. ¾ mile after passing under the road bridge veer away from the river to follow what is known as Green Lane. This ancient track shortens the return journey back to the village.

Information - The river bank from Burton Joyce to Gunthorpe used to be crowded with anglers every Sunday in the fishing season in the 1950's when matches took place. At the bend was The Sandbanks, where villagers would spend sunny summer weekends bathing in the river.

Where the footpath passes under Gunthorpe Bridge, huge concrete pyramids were erected during World War 2 to prevent enemy tanks passing under in the event of a German invasion. These were eventually removed to allow pedestrian access. Gunthorpe Lock was constructed in 1925. There is a display board at the lock describing the history of river transport.

The village name of Gunthorpe is derived from 'Gulnetorp' (Gunnhild's settlement) in the Domesday Book. Queen Boudicca allegedly defeated the Roman 1X Legion near here. For centuries there was a ferry operating here until the first bridge was constructed in 1875. Framework knitting and agriculture were the main occupations in the village in the 19th century. The river played an important role as a port, coal and timber being the main products unloaded at the wharf.

The origin of an inn by the river crossing is unknown. There was a public house known as The Ferry House that became The Unicorn Ferry House in 1855 before becoming The Unicorn.