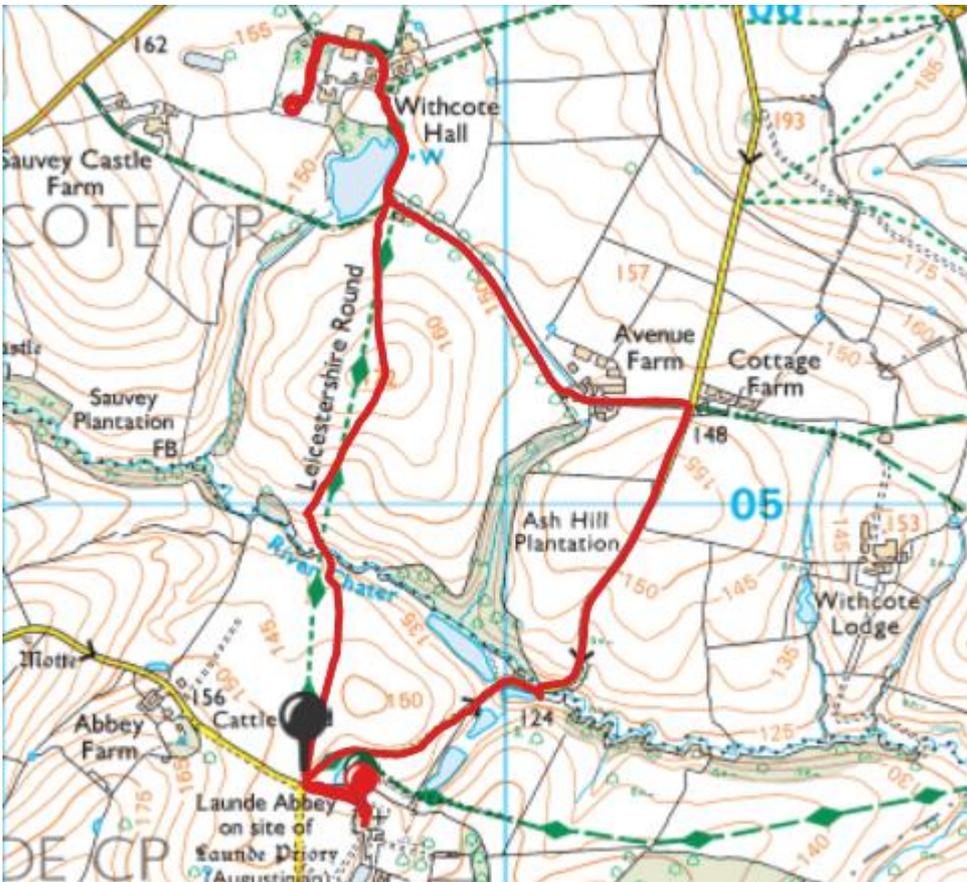


Walk 1 Launde — Withcote Hall — Launde Lakes — Launde

(Circular - 3 Miles – 1½ hours)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 233

Start SK797043



From the front of Launde Abbey facing the fields leave by the gate on the right, follow the driveway to the crossroads and join the Leicestershire Round at the cattle grid. Turn right over the cattle grid and, heading north, cross the large open field climbing slightly uphill keeping left of the electricity pole. Do not head toward the immediate hill top but keep it to your right hand until you see the yellow

footpath marker in the valley below.

Descend to the yellow post, drop down into the valley and cross the concrete foot bridge with rails and climb up the other side of the valley to a stile, marked with a footpath sign. Green woodpeckers and redstarts (in late spring) have been seen from here. The whole Chater valley is a site of special scientific interest on account of its wildlife. Continue heading north to brow of the hill from where you get an excellent view of the surrounding countryside. Head down towards the lake of Withcote Hall, visible through the trees, turn right and head toward the barn. At the barn you have the option to visit Withcote Chapel (now in the care of the Churches Preservation Trust) or to turn right and continue with the walk.

If you decide to visit Withcote Chapel (and you are strongly recommended to do so) continue straight on keeping the lake to your left hand and follow the farm track to the farm buildings. Keep on the track and pass between farm buildings and bear left around the bend. After 50 meters bear left at the junction and left again onto the drive that leads to

Walk 1 Launde — Withcote Hall — Launde Lakes — Launde

the front of Withcote Hall. Cross in front of Withcote Hall and turn right at the hedge passing through the metal gate to enter the grounds of Withcote Chapel. The Chapel is always open but please remember to close the doors and the screen to keep inquisitive wildlife out. When you have concluded your visit to the Chapel retrace your steps to the barn by the lake and turn left through the gate to enter the avenue of lime trees.

At the end of the avenue of trees, pass through the gate by Avenue Farm (on your left hand) and note the old farm machinery in the front garden, keep straight ahead. The footpath turns into a metalled road and leads to a crossroads by Cottage Farm.

If you would like a longer walk continue straight ahead keeping the horse gallops on your right hand as the path leads gently uphill. You are now on Launde Abbey Walk 2. Please refer to that guide for further instructions.

The short route returns to Launde Abbey by turning right at Cottage Farm crossroads continuing up the gentle rise from where you will see Launde Abbey in the not too far distance. The road drops downhill to a bridge over a stream. Once over the bridge you can either continue along the road or else pass through the gate on your left hand side and follow the path in the same direction as the road but on the other side of the hedge.

On your left are the three 'Launde lakes', these are similar to the type of lakes that would have originally been built by the monks of the Launde Augustinian Priory, founded in 1125 by Richard Basset and his wife Matilda and dedicated to the memory of St. John the Baptist. They were used for fish farming an essential part of the monk's diet. These (restored?) lakes date back to 1970 and were built by a local farmer.

The route back to Launde Abbey by the road is straightforward, walk on until you reach the cattle grid at the start of the walk then retrace your steps to the Abbey.

If you take the route inside the field, walk with the hedge on your right and the lower lake on your left. Cross one of the dams between the first lake and the second or the second and the third and follow the path up the small escarpment turning right toward the Abbey. Follow this path keeping the lakes on your right hand until you reach what look like an old air-raid shelter. It is in fact the ice-house built to provide ice to the Abbey all year around.

After passing the ice house and the third lake, the path joins another from your left and you turn right to re-join the road. Turn left and walk on until you reach the cattle grid at the start of the walk then retrace your steps to the Abbey.

Don't rush, enjoy your walk and look forward to a nice cup of tea when you return!