

Walk 5 Launde — Launde Big Wood — Oxey Crossroads — Launde

(Circular 3.46 Miles – 1 hour 45 minutes)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 233

Start SK797043



CLIMB the road south toward Loddington. **Cross over** the cattle grid, **pass** the entrance to Hill Farm on the right. **Continue** on the level until the road begins to descend. **TURN RIGHT** at the footpath sign (Spot Height 179) and follow the farm road downhill until you cross the brook and reach the pond on your right. You will see that the farm road turns right and continues to the cottage.

DO NOT turn right but **continue straight on** up the hill across the field keeping the hedge to your right hand. **Pass** the entrance to Launde Wood (on your right) and continue through the gateway to the crest of the hill. (If you have time you might like to explore Launde Wood, the track will exit back onto this walk about 100m further on. Note: there is no through route through these woods; both the entrance and the exit join this walk).

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Keep the hedge to your right hand as you descend to meet a minor road. **TURN RIGHT** and walk along the road until you meet the Oxey Crossroads. **TURN RIGHT** at the crossroads signpost 'Launde 1' and continue along this road past Broom's Farm (on your left) until you reach Launde Crossroads.

On the horizon beyond Broom Farm you will see Robin-a-Tiptoe hill. Myth has it that Robin was a poor and hungry serf who stole a sheep to feed his starving family. He was caught and hung from the tree that stood on the top of the hill. Fortunately (for him) the lynch mob used a new hemp rope and it stretched so that the tip of Robin's toes touched the ground and next morning the villagers found him alive on his gallows. It was taken as a sign of God's forgiveness and he was freed to live out the rest of his life. The hill was for after know as 'Robin-a-Tiptoe' Hill.

TURN RIGHT at Launde Crossroads (first junction since joining this road) and follow the road up and down hill past Abbey Farm, over the cattle grid and back to Launde Abbey. As you walk along this road you will catch a glimpse of Withcote Hall* on your left hand side. You might also recognise the stonework of the original buildings at Abbey Farm, it probably was recycled from the ruins of the original Augustinian priory of 1119.

After you have crossed the cattle grid, photographers might like to leave the road and walk over the field of Launde Park to snap better pictures of the Abbey nestling in the beautiful dell at the foot of the hill. Make a bee-line for the tea room, you deserve a nice hot cuppa!

* For a close up view of Withcote Hall see Walk 1 and take the opportunity to visit Withcote Chapel now in the hands of the Churches Preservation Trust and open daily for visitors.

Note: For your safety, when walking on roads ALWAYS walk on the right hand side so that you face oncoming traffic. If you can see it you can get out of the way! You have right of way over traffic but to insist on it might leave you dead right!