

Barrowden and Wakerley Woods

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factfile

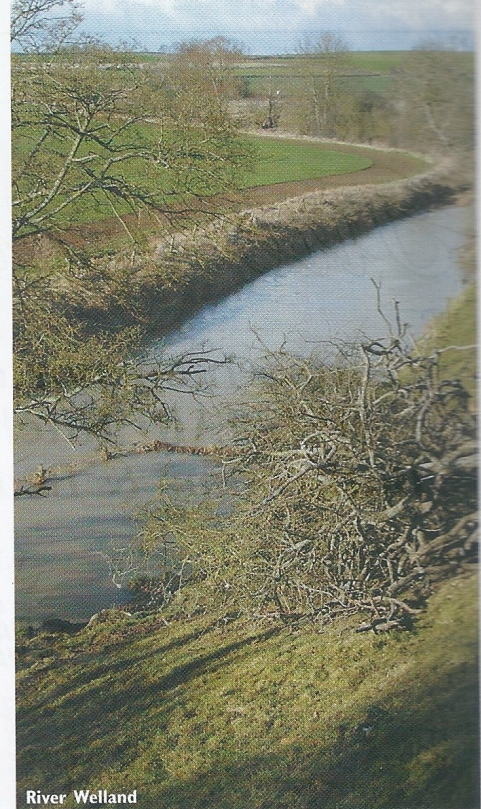
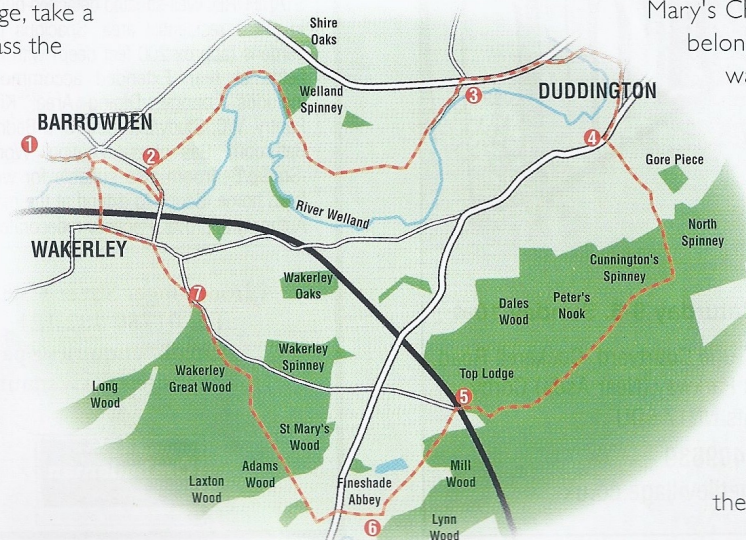
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| Distance | 9 miles |
| Typical time | 3.5 hours |
| OS map | Explorer 234 (always walk with an OS map) |
| Start & finish | Barrowden Village, on the green |
| Terrain | Slightly undulating, generally good under foot with no ploughed fields |
| Stiles | About six |
| Getting there | Along the A43, 3 miles W of Duddington |
| Refreshments | The Exeter Arms at Barrowden (Tel: 01572 747247) is a lovely pub. The day we went it was cold but very sunny and we sat on the terrace looking at the splendid view. Micro beers are brewed in the barn behind the pub, and they serve good food. The Royal Oak at Duddington (Tel: 01780 444267) is another pub serving good food and could make an early watering stop for the less serious walker. Alas, the pub at Wakerley is now closed. |

I find I keep coming back to Barrowden and the Welland Valley because it offers some of the best walking in the region and a lovely village green and pub to finish at. The woods are particularly rich in wildlife at this time of year.

Directions

1. Park on the road outside the Exeter Arms in Barrowden. Head east for two hundred yards, then right at a mini-green and then left across a field; follow the path across the meadows to Wakerley Bridge, then turn left up the road for a couple of hundred yards.
2. Turn right at the footpath sign, on a path between two fields towards the river. Follow the river north, through a beautiful spinney and then join a farm track that takes you in to Tixover.
3. Before you reach the main road, there is a cul-de sac on the right which you should join; after a while it runs parallel with the road, then becomes a footpath and leads into Duddington. Cross the bridge, take a right at the next junction and pass the Royal Oak on your left. Take the footpath along the main road and just after the cemetery turn left up a track into the woods.
4. You have now joined The Jurassic Way. After just over a mile, leave it and take a track to the right heading south-west towards Top Lodge. The track becomes a metalled road and then crosses over a disused railway line.

5. Immediately over this bridge, there is a path to the left heading down towards Fineshade Abbey; the path goes to the left of the abbey, and then down to the stream where there is a small crossing.
6. Once over this bridge, head due west and cross the main road; traverse two small fields and then take a right along the Jurassic Way into Wakerley Great Wood; head through the car park to the road; the road soon takes a sharp right.
7. Very soon after this bend there is a gap in the hedge on the left and some steps up into a field; you get a great view of Wakerley Church from here, which the path skirts on the left.
8. The path soon comes out in Wakerley; turn left down the village street and after a few hundred yards a path sets off on the right down a track back to Barrowden. Follow this under the disused railway line, across the river and soon you are back where you set out from.



River Welland



The Mill at Duddington

Points of interest

Barrowden

My favourite Rutland village. Today there are about 400 inhabitants, a mixture of locals, artists attracted by the setting and commuters looking for peace and quiet.

Duddington

Duddington was recorded as Dodintone in the Domesday Book. The village stands on a low terrace above the River Welland. The green in the centre of the village was originally much larger, extending south as far as the Manor House and west to St Mary's Church. The Manor House has belonged to the Jackson family since it was built in the late 17th Century, and extended during the 18th and 19th Centuries.

Wakerley Woods

Wakerley Great Wood is an historic ancient woodland, containing rich and diverse archaeological remains. The oldest features are two rare Bronze Age cairns. The wood is gradually being reverted to native broadleaf woodland under the 'Ancient Woodland Project'.