

14 miles | 22 km

cycle route

2

Abbey & Airfields

 **RIDE STEADY**

Start - Goxhill railway station

Description

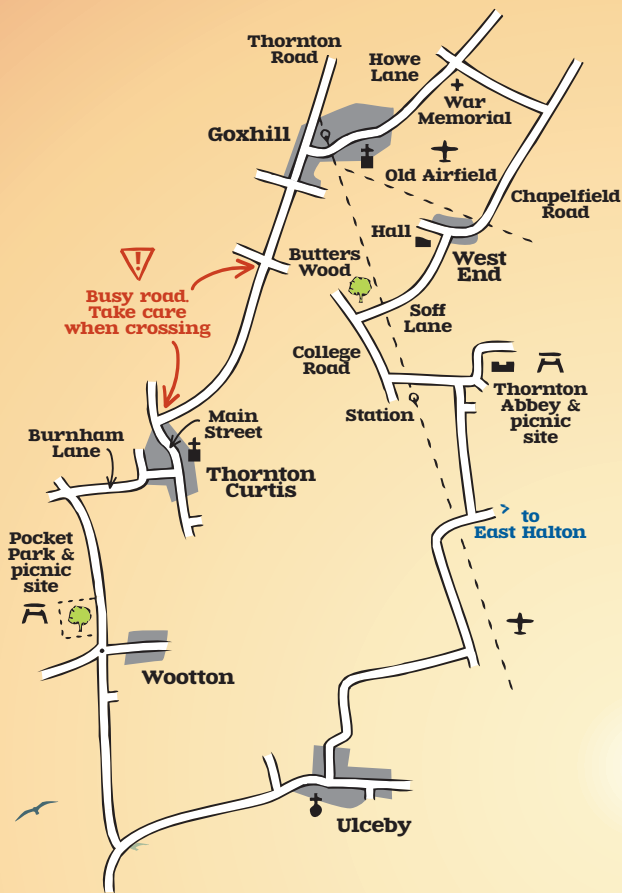
A circular cycle ride from the lowlands of the Humber marshes up to the gentle lower slopes of the northern Wolds, passing through mainly open countryside and pleasant villages.

Attractions

Thornton Abbey

Traffic Levels

Low, except around Wootton and Ulceby.



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Our starting point, Goxhill, was once a major centre for market gardening. During the Middle Ages a small port existed at Goxhill Haven. On the edge of the village the route runs north- easterly long Howe Lane, skirting the site of Goxhill Airfield. Built for bomber operations during the Second World War, it was soon found to be too close to Hull, a target for much of the Luftwaffe's attention in 1941/1942. Hull's extensive defences included balloons moored on barges in the Humber, effectively blocking the flight path into Goxhill. As a result the airfield became a training base for the American Air Force.

Cross the now abandoned Goxhill to Immingham light railway, passing through South End to turn south along Soff Lane. The unusually named Butters Wood on the corner is one of many local coverts planted in the last century for fox hunting.

With its unusually long platform, Thornton Abbey Station, was once a busy halt for the many day trippers who came to see the impressive remains of this Augustinian monastery.

Founded in 1139, Thornton Abbey was one of the wealthiest houses of its order. Henry VIII stayed here with Katherine Howard shortly after its dissolution, but now the ruined Chapter House and great church are a stark reminder of the centuries of destruction following the closure in 1539. The Abbey is the focus of many tales of supernatural happenings such as the ghostly canon, buried alive at a table with a book, pen and ink.

English Heritage opens the 14th century gatehouse, looming over the landscape, on certain Sundays. The Abbey ruins and farm walks are always open, with no admission charge.

Leaving the Abbey, cycle southwards to turn off west, crossing the railway line to follow the shallow valley of the Skitter Beck.

To the east lies North Killingholme Airfield, a major wartime bomber base. On the far side of the oil refineries is Killingholme Creek, where some of the Pilgrim Fathers left for the New World in 1608.

Secluded back lanes, through mainly arable countryside bring you to the village of Ulceby with its fine-spined church and handsome farmhouses. Turn west along the High Street.

Here as the gentle slope of the chalk Wolds merges into the low marsh, is an intensive farming landscape with only a few scattered small woodlands to break the pattern of low-hedged fields. Much of the surrounding land is part of the Brocklesby Estate of the Earl of Yarborough, the largest in Lincolnshire.

Approximately 1.5km beyond Ulceby turn north along a slightly busier road toward Wootton.

It is worth taking a short detour into the attractive village of Wootton with its traditional village pond. In years gone by it was a popular local ice-skating venue!

A perfect place to rest is Wootton's imaginative "pocket park" created on the site of an old chalk quarry, with woodland planting, meadow and a picnic area. Turn east towards Thornton Curtis, past roadside verges rich with wild flowers.

Thornton Curtis has a fine old church set back from the main street with a unique Norman font, one of the finest in the country.

Immediately out of the village turn east to Goxhill, descending back onto the flat marsh. At the first road junction cross College Road, continuing straight ahead to Goxhill.

The grades for cycle rides - **ride easy**, **ride steady**, **ride well** and **ride strong** have been developed by British Cycling to help cyclists to decide whether a particular route is appropriate for their ability and experience.

The routes shown on the N Lincs map have been designed and approved by North Lincolnshire Council and the colour grading system serves only as a guide as to the terrain, duration and nature of the ride.