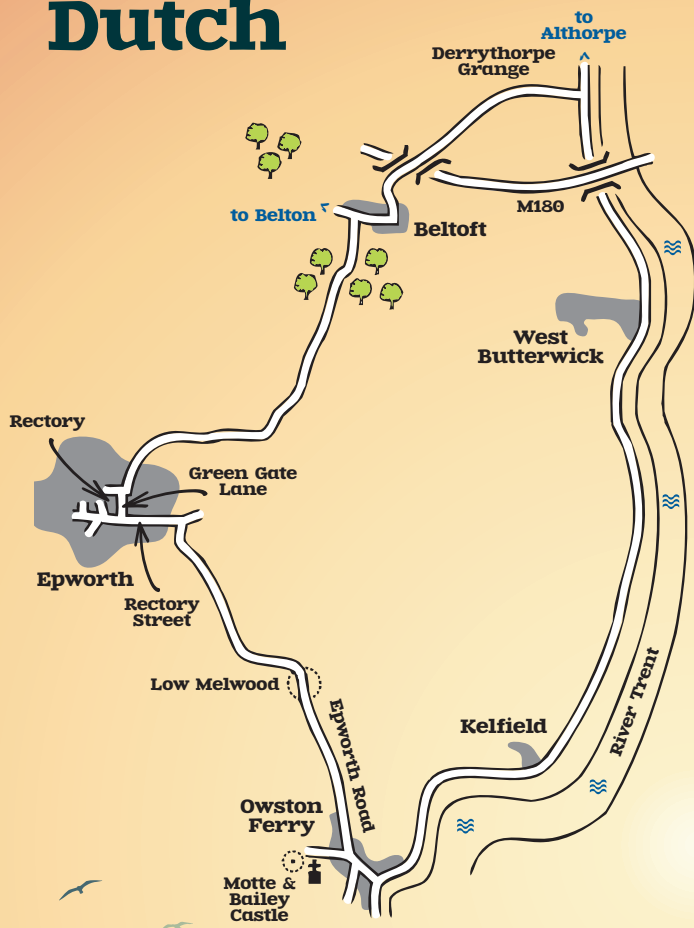


13 miles | 21 km

cycle route

9

Going Dutch



RIDE WELL

Start - Beltoft

Description

This circular cycle ride takes in many of the sights of the historic Isle of Axholme, through peaceful countryside to Epworth, home of the Wesleys, visiting Owston Ferry and West Butterwick on the Trent. The Isle of Axholme is rich in history. Once marsh and fenland, it was drained by the Dutch in 1626 by order of Charles I. Cornelius Vermuyden and his Dutch associates met with much opposition from the locals who saw the destruction of their way of life. There was great controversy over the distribution of the new land, causing much conflict with the commoners.

Attractions

The Old Rectory at Epworth, site of Axholme Priory at Low Melwood and a fine example of Dutch architecture at Kelfield.

Traffic Levels

Moderate, apart from the villages.



13 miles | 21 km cycle route

9

The small village of Beltoft, just south of the M180 has an old pinfold where once straying or unclaimed stock were penned. As you leave the village, ride north taking the quiet road over the motorway reaching the Trent Bank at Derrythorpe Grange. The route turns south with good views of the rising ground of the Isle to the west.

The rich farming landscape around West Butterwick is some of the most productive in eastern England, claimed from fen and marsh. On the Trentside are the remains of the brick tower of an old windmill dating from 1824. Towards the river stands Butterwick House of severe Grecian design built around 1833.

In years gone by the Trentside villages were renowned for their huge number of superstitions, particularly about death. They would not have an odd number in a funeral party in case the dead called for a companion. If someone attracted your attention by waving a shovel, you had to throw a handful of earth in his or her direction, or soon you would be buried. Today most of these superstitions are forgotten.



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The small hamlet of Kelfield has an impressive roadside house of Dutch architecture with the date 1689, influenced by the settlers who came to drain the region.

The quiet Trentside stretch brings you to the large village of Owston Ferry with its small market square, village museum and smithy (1859). Close to the parish church of St. Martin is the site of a Norman motte and bailey castle. In 1952, a farmer ploughing nearby uncovered a hoard of 120 Roman coins.

Owston Ferry was a thriving small port before the coming of the railways and the steam packet 'SS Caledonian' ran between Hull and Gainsborough from about 1815 onwards. During the 1880s there were four boatyards on this stretch of the River Trent.

Leave the village on the Epworth road, with an easy climb onto the rising ground. Here, the landscape changes with more hedgerows and trees rewarding you with superb views east to the Trent and the town of Scunthorpe. Low Melwood has a medieval monastic site, Axholme Priory, founded in 1397 on an older religious site.

Just before reaching Epworth's famous Old Rectory, follow Green Gate Lane north to return to the village of Beltoft.

It is well worth taking a short detour into Epworth, birthplace of John Wesley, the founder of world Methodism in the 18th century. Today Epworth is a thriving market town with much to offer the visitor. The Wesley Tail (leaflets available at the Heritage Centre in the town) gives the visitor a self-guided tour. Each September, Epworth hosts the 'Festival of the Plough', a celebration of ploughing with horses, steam and vintage tractors.

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.