

## STEPPING OUT

### A series of walks in the East Leake area.

Public footpaths, bridleways and byways are known as rights-of-way. Each of the rights of way in each parish is given an official number and it is very useful if you can refer to this number in any contact you have with the officers at the County Council. In East Leake Parish the numbers go from 1 to 25 but, because of an error in the numbering, there are two number 19's and two number 25's. In this series this year I have set out to describe walks that will take you along every yard of all 27 paths in East Leake parish.

So far since January I covered one to fourteen. I have also included numbers 16 and 18, both number 19's, numbers 21, 24 and one of the 25's. So this month it is the turn of bridleway number 15. And that presents a problem.

This bridleway is a short length running along the northern boundary of the parish, completely detached and remote from any other path in East Leake parish. It is however part of a well used bridleway that runs from Gotham to Bunny. Most of this bridleway is in either Gotham or Bunny and it comes into East Leake parish for just a single field length of about 200 yards.

I will describe the whole bridleway starting at Gotham to the point where the bridleway meets the road on Bunny Lane. You then have the options of either returning to East Leake via footpath 11(a) and byway 11 described in July or alternatively completing a circular walk back to Gotham across Gotham Moor.

You will start from Gotham by the church and if you intend doing the circular walk you can plan your route back from the map in the case by the seats near the north wall of the churchyard. Your return journey will take you along Bunny footpath 8 and Gotham footpaths 7 and 15.

#### **Bridleway Gotham to Bunny Lane – including East leake bridleway number 15.**

The length of the whole bridleway is 2½ miles. You should add another 2½ miles either for the circular walk back to Gotham or for the walk over the hill back to East Leake.

From the church walk down Moor Lane – but don't forget to plan your return route from the map in the case if you are doing the circular walk.

Moor Lane follows a slight bend to the right and then turns a right angled bend to the left. About 200m after this bend you take a metalled road to the right. This is Gotham bridleway number 9. About 300m along this road there is a junction. Number 9 goes more or less straight on through a gate and you continue by bearing left along the road that is now bridleway number 8. After another bend to the left you will be walking alongside what seems to a well wooded stretch of land on your right. It is actually

the route an old disused railway line that connected the Gypsum works at Gotham with the Great Central Railway.

After about 600m the bridleway leaves the road and turns right to cross the route of the old railway. It then turns left again to follow a field edge path. (At this point the road continues, not as a right-of-way, to Gotham Moor Farm.) Having left the road, you continue along the field edge bridleway turning right at the field corner. Then about 150m down this path you turn left over a bridleway bridge and this brings you into East Leake parish and bridleway number 15! The ditch over which the bridge passes is the parish boundary.

Bridlway 15 takes you through the next field which is pasture and then just as you get to the railway embankment the bridleway turns left and crosses the parish boundary again back into Gotham.

You immediately turn right and under the railway bridge and you are on Gotham bridleway number 17. The next hedge you meet on your left, after Welldale Farm, is the parish boundary between Gotham and Bunny and the bridleway continues as Bunny bridleway number 9 for another 600m until it meets the road.

If you are returning to East Leake, you turn right along the road and in about 300m you will find footpath 11(a) on your left across an arable field. This joins with byway 11 that takes you aver the hill back to East leake.

If you are doing the circular route back to Gotham once you reach the road, you turn left along a footpath at right angles to the road (Bunny footpath 8). This will eventually bring you to the edge of Fairham brook which you follow in a north westerly direction until you come to a well marked fourways junction of paths. You take the second path on the left across an arable field (almost due west). This is a continuation of Bunny footpath number 8. It then becomes Gotham footpath number 7 at the parish boundary. It goes under the railway bridge and turns right to run alongside the railway. You then turn left to join footpath number 15 back to Gotham.

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