

Quorn Walks – No.2

Buddon Lane, Woodhouse and Woodthorpe

This is two of the set of six

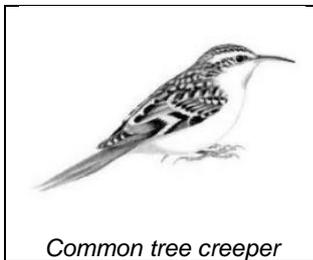
7 km (4.5 miles)

Pubs and café at start and end.

Terrain: Part paved; part uneven with mud in wet weather.

Bus stops: Farley Way, Quorndon Fox, The Cross (No. 2,127,154) and at regular intervals along Meeting Street and Chaveney Road and at Beumanor Hall (No.154).

From **Quorn Cross**, set off along Meeting Street and Chaveney Road (both described in Walk 5) for about 750 metres until the latter takes a sharp right while we carry straight on along Buddon Lane following the public right of way – bridleway sign.



The plantation of tall trees on the left means that in spring this walk is accompanied by a chorus of bird song and offers a good chance to see woodland birds such as *woodpeckers*, *nuthatch* and *tree creepers*. At the end of the paved road, a few directions are needed: go forward across a field into the rather eerie cutting with tall thorn bushes, choosing the lower or upper path depending on the conditions.

In spring, look out for the *wood anemones* on the upper path and in autumn for *redwing* and *fieldfare* (winter visitors from Northern Europe) attracted to the harvest of hawthorn berries.

After passing under the **Great Central Railway** bridge (**Checkpoint 1 on the map**), the path turns sharp right and offers a view across the field to **Quorn & Woodhouse Station**.

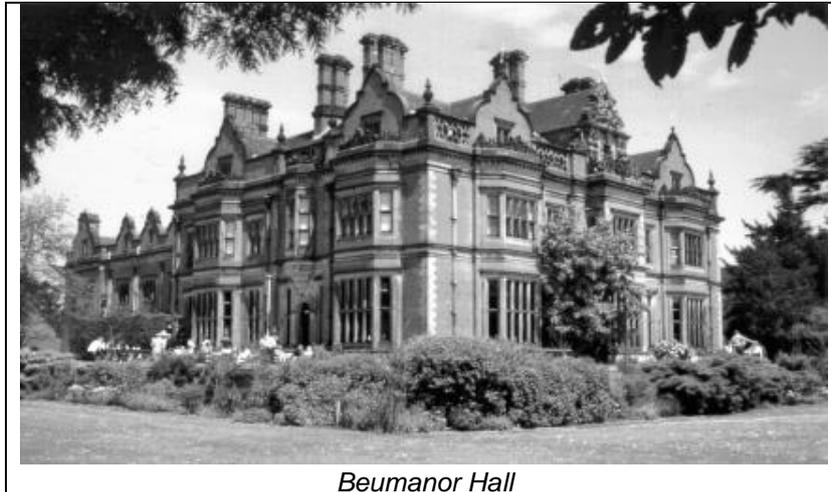


A Class B1 heading a 1959 Manchester bound service as it passes through Quorn & Woodhouse Station. The island platform and goods yard layout design are typical of the GCR

This was the last London-bound mainline to be constructed opening in 1889. The closure of the station in 1963 theoretically broke the original GCR contract with the local Farnham family, who granted the company permission to build on the condition that this station would stay open 'forever'! Nowadays, this forms the longest stretch of preserved mainline in the country.

Follow the path along the field hedge and at the end of the field, turn left. In the distance you can see the village of **Woodhouse Eaves** at the edge of Charnwood Forest ('eaves' meaning 'edge of'). Just before the Thatched Cottage, turn right into **Woodhouse**, older than Woodhouse Eaves but many of whose original houses on the main road were replaced in the mid-1800s by the carefully designed cottages of local stone and slate we see today.

Turning right at the main road (**Checkpoint 2**), we pass first an **old spring** on the left, where the water used to emerge from the Bulls Head, and which was erected in 1859 by the Herrick family, long time owners of Beaumanor Hall. The last old house on the right is clearly older than most, evidenced by the rise in the carriageway since it was built. The **Beaumanor** estate, created in the 13th century, was once Charnwood's largest hunting park, incorporating Beacon Hill and including Richard II amongst its hunters and was bought by the Herricks around 1600. The present building dates from 1847.



Beaumanor Hall

During the second world war Beaumanor was used by an important signals unit that intercepted German transmissions before passing them to Bletchley Park for deciphering. After being empty for many years, it was bought by Leicestershire County Council, who since the 1970's has run it as a conference, education, wedding and events centre.

After the entrance to Beaumanor, take the public right of way path signposted to the left at the 'chevrons'. After crossing Poultney Brook into the second field, the public path is shown on maps as diverging to the right, but on the ground as skirting the left of the field a more practical route. To the right lies **Whatoff Lodge** a working farm. In the next field, aim towards the far right-hand corner until the yellow way marker becomes visible. In the last field, the target is just to the left of the tall university tower building. This route gives us a view of the southernmost tentacles of the Loughborough urbanisation that all but engulfs **Woodthorpe**. This old hamlet suffered a double blow to its isolation in 2003 with the opening of the A6006 Terry Yardley Way and approval for a new housing development on its doorstep.

The lane onto which we turn right (**Checkpoint 3**) has plenty of wildlife interest: breeding *yellowhammers* and *whitethroats*, singing *skylarks* over the fields, lots of colourful *red campion* along the ditch sides and attractive butterflies such as *orange-tip* and *gatekeeper*. On route



through Woodthorpe itself look out for the old and literally out of place Quorndon/Woodthorpe parish boundary marker: the boundary in question is actually several hundred metres to the south. Our path back to Quorn takes us across the fields to the right at the public right of way signpost and back over the Great Central Railway bridge which itself in the brickwork joints of the right-hand parapet: *black spleenwort*, *wall-rue* and *rusty-back* may be seen. Following the path we pass 'One Ash' on our left, a small country house and grounds. The house was built in 1894 by Lerner Sugden for W. Wright the mill owner. Where Poultney Brook joins us again, keep to the path ahead rather than the track to the left which was once part of the old Woodthorpe Road. Between the brook and the Woodhouse Road ahead, lies a small herb rich meadow offering an excellent site for up to 20 species of butterfly and uncommon wildflowers such as *betony* and *musk mallow*. At **(Checkpoint 4)**, we have a choice: diagonally across to the right we can follow the public right of way towards Caves Field and then left across the **Tom Longs** water meadow a site leased by the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. A display board provides information about the wildlife that can be seen here. OR turn left and then right at the traffic lights and follow the main road. For items of interest along either route, see Walk 5.

Quorn Walk Map 2

