

An 11-mile circular walk from Leyburn going to Middleham, East Witton, Coverbridge, Spennithorne, Harmby and back to Leyburn.

Starting at the Tourist Information Centre at The Dales Haven Leyburn, as you face the Market Place, turn right and walk down the road to the parish church turning right at a footpath sign opposite and going over the Railway Line and down some steps and then on a tarmac path, passing bungalows on your left.

A. Point of Interest (See below)

Cross a minor road and go through the gate next to the cattle grid and continue in the same direction over 4 meadows. Half way down the 4th meadow turn left over a way marked stile and head for a farm, walking diagonally right and going over 2 more stiles, before crossing over a lane with the farm buildings on your right.

Go over another stile and then down the hill to the far left corner of the field where there is a hidden stile that goes onto the road. Turn right and carefully walk down the road and cross over to turn left down a lane, which takes you to a water treatment plant.

Go through the gate to the right and forward to go through a small gate next to a large one. Continue for a few steps but turn right before you get to a flat bridge crossing a stream that may be dry. Now walk with the river to your left and go down hill and over a stile and continue in the same direction over a field to come out on the road just before Middleham Bridge.

Carefully cross the bridge and then walk up the side of the road towards Middleham. When you see a ladder stile in between bungalows on the right hand side of the road go over it and then turn left, to the end of the field where you go up the hill, hedge on your left, through stiles, eventually turning left and walking forward with some modern houses to your right.

Turn right and then left through a gate by the playground, this path leads to the Churchyard of Middleham Church. Come out onto the road and walk up the hill, turning right and passing Central Stores to Middleham Castle, which is on the left.

B. Point of Interest (see below).

Walk up a lane to the left of the castle and go through a gate and then continue to go up the hill over a stile by a gate. Walk forward once more with a wall on your left. Eventually you will see a way marked signpost. Turn right and walk above the river Cover with a wood and fence on your left. Before the end of the fence turn left over a stile and then over another. Go down a large meadow then continue downhill with the river still to your left to cross Hello Bridge.

C. Point of Interest (see below)

Turn left and walk for one field with the river to your left. Go uphill right, and through a stile next to a gate where you turn left to go through a gate in a wall. Forward and diagonally right, to the top of a grassy bank, then in the same direction over a meadow to the top corner heading for a row of trees, to cross a hidden footbridge over a tiny stream.

Immediately cross another stile and then forward over a large field with a hedge on your left walk along here for a while and then go through a gate onto a cart track passing East Witton Lodge farm which is on the right.

Go through the gate on the left and then forward with a hedge on your right. Through two more gates and then forward over a marked stile walking with a small plantation to your left and onto West Field Lane which you follow for a while. When you come to a stile on your left go over it and continue passing through 2 more stiles until you come into East Witton.

D. Point of Interest (see below)

Walk down through the village until you see a signpost by the chapel. Turn left here and follow the footpath down the fields, turning right at the very bottom, to walk with the river Cover once more on your left, to come out by Coverbridge.

E. Point of Interest (see below)

Go up the steps and carefully cross the bridge. At the Coverbridge Inn turn right down a minor road, crossing over the river Ure by means of Ulshaw Bridge. Turn left through a gate, immediately after the bridge and walk along the bank of the Ure, which will be on your left for some time, eventually passing through a small gate next to a larger one on your left and turning right to walk with a fence to your right.

Turn right through a swing gate and walk up a narrow path, to come out on the road just before Spennithorne. Turn left and walk towards the Old Horn Inn. With the Inn to your right continue forward on a signed lane, you will pass the village cricket field. Eventually at the end of the lane cross a raised bridge over a stream and continue in the same direction with a hedge to your right passing a pond, at one point the river Ure will be quite close on your left.

At the end of the hedge continue forward and slightly right on a faint path for a few yards, then over a wooden stile and straight ahead over a meadow with a fence on your left. Turn right, up the ancient track of Middleham Lane to eventually come out by the village hall in Harmby.

F. Point of Interest (see below)

Turn left at the road and carefully walk up the road for a few yards, to take a way marked footpath in front of you going forward through several gates on a stoned lane. Straight ahead through 3 fields to a lane, where you turn left downhill, passing Walk Mill on your left. At Craken House Farm turn right and

follow the lane to meet the main A6108 Middleham Road. Cross the road carefully and walk uphill on the road for a few yards, you will see a stile to the left of Long Bank House. Over the stile and forward over 2 fields and over a double gate stile. Cross one more field and then turn right and go up hill heading for St Matthews Church, which is clearly visible straight ahead. When you come to the cattle grid cross through the gate next to it and onto the road and bear slightly right between two bungalows to the tarmac track that you follow, reversing your outward walk back into Leyburn.

Points of Interest

- A. This is the track of the Wensleydale Railway, which closed to passengers in 1954 and re opened in July 2003 between Leeming Bar and Leyburn. The line was extended to Redmire in 2004 and it is hoped one day to restore the rest so that the full 40 miles will eventually run between Northallerton and Garsdale.
- B. Middleham Castle was the home of Richard 111. It was of such importance that it was known as “The Windsor of the North”. Now in ruins it is still worth a visit as there are information boards in the grounds and wooden stairs and platforms where you can safely admire the views from the castle.
- C. Hello Bridge was where many paths crossed in ancient times. Maybe it got its name from travellers greeting one another!
- D. East Witton was almost destroyed by the plague in 1563. At the beginning of the 19th century it was rebuilt by the Earl of Aylesbury, the two lines of houses are set back from the large green which features quoits and an old water pump.
- E. The landlord of the Coverbridge Inn traditionally held the recipe for Wensleydale cheese. Today the Inn is a good place to have a meal or a drink.
- F. Middleham Lane was on one of the old Drovers routes. Cattle and Sheep were driven down from Scotland to feed the growing English cities. There was a ford near here to get across the river to Middleham.