

Walks Aysgarth Falls & Carperby

WALK INFORMATION

Distance: 7.2 km (4.5 miles)
Time: 2-3 hours
Maps: Ordnance Survey Explorer OL30 – always carry an OS map on your walk
Parking: National Park pay & display car park at Aysgarth Falls
Refreshments: Aysgarth Falls and Carperby

How to get there: Follow the A684 through Wensleydale towards Hawes then, at the Aysgarth Falls Hotel, take the turning that leads steeply down over Yore Bridge (Upper Falls) and then round to the National Park car park.

Terrain: Woodland paths, field paths, farm tracks, country lanes. Farmland, numerous stiles and some small stream crossings.

Caution: Take care crossing the roads. You may encounter cattle along this walk – give them a wide berth and avoid completely if accompanied by a dog. Some boggy ground.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Aysgarth Falls are set in a beautiful wooded gorge and are easily accessible with a fine view of the Upper Falls from the ancient Yore Bridge that spans the river. From Aysgarth Falls, a path leads through Freeholders' Wood and then St Joseph's Wood.

Beyond this woodland we cross and re-cross the route of the former Wensleydale Railway, which once connected the Settle to Carlisle line at Garsdale Head with the main North East line at Northallerton. Work began on the Wensleydale Railway in 1848, although it took a full thirty years to complete the line in its entirety. This railway provided a vital link across the heart of England for almost a century, bringing a pulse of life to remote communities as well as offering one of the most scenic journeys in the country.

THE WALK

1 From the National Park Centre at Aysgarth Falls, walk back to the entrance to the car park (use



the footpath on the right-hand side of the road) then, at the car park entrance, follow the road-side path to the right to soon cross the road (take care) through the gates opposite that lead into Freeholders' Wood. After the gates you come immediately to a fork in the path – take the left-hand path (signpost 'Castle Bolton'), and follow this meandering through the woods, through a clearing (fencing) to reach a fork where you bear right (signpost) then on to reach a crossroads of paths where you carry straight on to reach a gate at the end of Freeholders' Wood (after 350 metres), with St Joseph's Wood ahead. Head through the gate and follow the clear path straight on through the woodland for 350 metres to reach a small tunnel beneath the old railway line.

2 Head through the tunnel beneath the railway line, then follow the track ahead curving to the right then, where the track bends left (by the corner of a small wood on your left), turn off this track to the right (signpost). Walk straight on across the field, passing a large tree, for 200 metres to reach a small wall-gate. Head through the gate and walk for a further 200 metres through young trees to join a track beside a gate

(and old railway line). Head to the right along the track for 50 metres then left through a small gate that leads out onto a field, after which head right across the middle of the field to reach a small gate in the wall on the opposite side, marked by a signpost. Head through the gate, and bear slightly left across the middle of the field for 350 metres (Bolton Castle in the distance) down to reach a wall-stile (signpost), with High Thoresby Farm ahead.

3 Do NOT head through this wall-stile, but turn left before it (signpost 'Carperby'), and walk straight on alongside the wall on your right for 250 metres to reach a gate that then leads through a small tunnel beneath the old railway line (if this is flooded, then bypass it by walking to the left over the old railway line embankment). After the railway tunnel, carry straight on for a further 400 metres alongside the wall on your right (passing a barn) to join a single-track road. Turn right along the road and through a gate across the road then take the path that branches off to the right across the field (signpost), walking parallel with the road on your left (and only very gradually moving away from the road) for 150 metres to

reach a small wall-gate across your path (50 metres down from the road). After the wall-gate, head straight on (bearing very slightly right) dropping down the bank into a shallow valley (passing a spring at the bottom of this valley), then continue in the same direction to reach a gate in the far right corner of the field. Head through the gate and walk along the rough track for 25 metres then turn left at the wall corner on your left (signpost), and walk across the field (small stream to your left) to reach a wall-stile just to the right of a gate, by the entrance to the sewage works. After the stile, follow the path straight on with the wall (and sewage works) on your left, over a fence then carry straight on across three more wall-stiles (narrow fields) then turn right at the path junction (signpost) and walk up the narrow field to reach a gate at the top that leads onto the road opposite the Wheatsheaf Hotel at Carperby.

4 Turn right along the road for 100 metres then take the road turning off to the left (information sign) and follow this lane for 100 metres to reach a small triangular green, where you carry straight on along the lane up out of the village. Follow this lane rising up, then levelling out (lane becomes a track) where you carry on for 300 metres passing two barns to reach the foot of the steep bank (Yorkshire Water sign), where you branch off to the left along a rough grassy track through a metal gate (at the foot of this steep bank). After the gate, follow the wide path straight on alongside the wall on your left heading along the foot of the steep bank (Ponderledge Scar) for 650 metres to reach a fork in the track, where you head left for a few paces to quickly reach a gate to your left. Head through the gate and walk down along the long narrow field along the farm track, through a gate across the track then continue down the narrow field along the track for 175 metres then, as you reach the brow of a bank, head left over a stile. After the stile, bear right towards the far bottom field corner to reach a stile over a wall beside a gate, which leads onto a long narrow field. Cross the stile and walk down alongside

the wall on your right to reach a gate at the bottom of the narrow field, then walk straight on through the farmyard (large barns) to quickly reach a farm track, where you head through the gate ahead, down along the narrow grassy field/track then pass between the houses to emerge onto a track at the western end of Carperby, which you follow to the left onto the village green.

5 Walk across the village green, passing the stepped Market Cross, 50 metres after which (opposite the bus shelter) turn right along a driveway in between the houses (signpost 'Low Lane End'), and follow this to soon reach a gate that leads out onto a field. Bear left across the field and through a large gap in the wall to your left (signpost), after which walk straight on across the narrow field to reach a squeeze-stile. Do NOT head through this squeeze-stile, but turn right and follow the wall on your left down the narrow field to join Low Lane. Turn right along Low Lane to soon reach a T-junction with a road.

6 Turn left along the road and follow it for 40 metres then, on the bend, take the path on the right (signpost 'Aysgarth'). After the stile, walk straight on across the field alongside the wall/road on your left to reach a wall-stile, after which carry straight on bearing very slightly right away from the road, heading down across the field (passing just to the right of a circular clump of trees enclosed by railings on a knoll) and down a grassy gully to reach a stile that leads into woodland at the bottom of the field. Follow the path over the old railway line, and down back into the car park at Aysgarth Falls.

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Birdwatch Ian Kerr

IT may be high summer as far as we are concerned with many of us yet to enjoy our holidays, but for many of our birds autumn has already arrived. Over the past fortnight or so the first returning Arctic waders have appeared along the coast. Numbers are now rising by the day.

There's an old saying that the birdwatcher's autumn begins on August 1 and it's certainly true. Bar-tailed godwit, knot, golden plover, sanderling and large numbers of dunlin, curlew, redshank and ringed plovers are all on the move, enlivening beaches, rocky and muddy areas, ponds and coastal fields

August provides a very narrow window to see some species still

in their gloriously bright breeding plumage. These include the godwits and knots in shades of orange and red and golden plover in glossy gold, black and white. It's the one time of year for us when knot live up to their American name of "red knot." All will now quickly fade into their much more familiar winter dress of sober browns and greys.

They aren't the only species on the move. Among the waders, whimbrel, slightly smaller cousins of our familiar curlews, have been passing southwards along the coast in good numbers. Their far-carrying trilling calls are often the first indication of their presence. Whenever I hear them I'm reminded of a hilarious incident involving

the crew of a local fishing boat. While busy hauling their creels, the skipper scrabbled under his waterproofs to reach his mobile phone. He was baffled to find no indication of a missing call or text. His two crewmen, straight-faced during the incident, took delight in telling him that what he'd heard was a trilling whimbrel overhead. He still hasn't heard the last of it!

Many seabirds are also dispersing from breeding colonies. The number of guillemots, razorbills and puffins (pictured) are dwindling rapidly as they return to an oceanic life and the numbers of migrating terns attending traditional roosts are increasing.

Among smaller species, willow warblers and chiffchaffs are also drifting southwards on the first stage of their migration, which will take them to Africa and the Mediterranean respectively. We are also at the peak migration period for sedge warblers, after their noisy breeding season in reedbeds and similar damper areas.

Swifts are among the latest arrivals in spring and the earliest to leave us. Most have already departed and will soon be gracing African skies. However, many pairs of swallows and house martins are still extremely busy raising second broods and will be with us for several more weeks.

