

Walks Masham and the River Burn

Walk information

Distance: 5 km / 3.1 miles

Time: Allow 2 hours

Map: OS Sheets 298 & 302

Parking: Masham Market Place

Refreshments: Plenty of choice at Masham

Terrain: Riverside, woodland and field paths. A couple of road crossings and several stiles.

How to get there: Masham lies along the A6108 between Ripon and Middleham.

Caution: Take care walking along the riverbanks and crossing the roads. Beware of golf balls when walking across the golf course. I encountered cows, calves and horses along this walk – always give animals a wide berth and avoid if accompanied by a dog.

Points of interest

MASHAM (pronounced 'mass-um') is famous for its large Market Place (one of the largest in the country), ancient church and two breweries. St Mary's Church dates back to Anglo-Saxon times, and boasts a fine Norman doorway and a large 8th Century preaching cross in the churchyard.

This walk follows the rivers Ure and then Burn through lovely countryside, passing stone sculptures along the way. Known as the Masham Leaves, these were produced in the 1990s by designer Alain Ayers.

The walk

1 From the centre of Masham Market Place, head down to St Mary's Church in the bottom corner of the Market Place, and follow the path through the churchyard passing to the right of

the tower and then skirting around the church (passing the main entrance) then, at the east end of the church, follow the clear path straight on across the churchyard to reach a kissing-gate in the fence along the edge of the churchyard. After the kissing-gate, turn left alongside the fence/churchyard and through a gate across your path, after which drop down the bank across the field to reach another gate that leads onto a track. Turn right along the track for 100 metres to reach a fork, where you follow the right-hand track to quickly reach another fork where you follow the left-hand track - follow this on to reach a gate across the track at the entrance to the sewage works. Head through the gate and follow the enclosed track straight on (River Ure to your left). After 250 metres then hedge on your right ends - carry straight on along the clear riverside path (caution: keep away from the riverbank) for 750 metres until you move away from the River Ure and quickly come to a waymarker where you

follow the path to the left down into woodland (steps). Follow the clear path straight on through the trees, with the River Burn on your left, to reach the road beside Low Burn Bridge.

2 Turn left over the bridge then immediately right through a small gate out onto a field (caution: horses). Walk straight on along the edge of the field, with woodland and the River Burn on your right, for 275 metres then up a small bank and over a stile. After the stile, turn right alongside the fence for 30 metres then cross back over the fence (step-across stile with piping) and follow the clear path down the wooded riverbank then follow this clear path alongside the river heading through woodland (golf course to your left) for 500 metres

to reach a gate almost at the end of the woods. Head through the gate and walk straight on along the edge of the golf course (warning: beware of golf balls) to reach a stile at the end of the golf course that leads onto a road beside another road bridge across the River Burn.

3 Turn right along the road over the bridge, and follow it bending round to the right then, after 50

metres, take the lane to the left back on yourself slightly (signpost) into the Golf Club (sign). Follow this track straight on to soon reach a crossroads of lanes (clubhouse across to your left), where you turn right along the lane across the golf course (warning: golf balls). Follow this on across the golf course at the end of which, as the lane rises up through woodland towards a house, take the path up the wooded bank to the right (waymarker) and over a stile. After the stile, walk straight on across the long field, passing a stone sculpture, to reach a stile beside a gate at the far end of the field. After the stile/gate, turn left along the edge of the field and through an old hedgerow (by a very large ash tree and water trough), after which head diagonally to the right across the field (heading towards the large silos and industrial units of Jamesons Feeds) to reach the corner of the hedgerow on the opposite side of the field, and follow this hedge round to the left (with the hedge on the left) then straight on (towards Jamesons Feeds) to reach a stile beside a gate that leads onto an enclosed track.

4 Turn right along the track, which quickly becomes a metalled lane beside Jamesons Feeds (caution: vehicles) on your left - follow this straight on for 250 metres to join a road on a bend on the outskirts of Masham. Turn right along Westholme Road and follow this into Masham, passing Theakston's Brewery to reach a T-junction with the main road, where you turn left back into the centre of Masham.

Mark Reid
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Birdwatch By Ian Kerr

Large numbers of pink-footed and barnacle geese have been moving through the region, many helped along on their migration by the recent run of strong north westerly winds.

Both species, moving down from breeding grounds in Iceland, must have found these tail winds gave an easy passage across the North Atlantic into Scotland and then onwards through local skies.

I counted around pinkfeet 2,500 passing high overhead in one day but also heard others still moving at night. Most were in groups of up to 100, travelling in classic v-formations and, as usual, first

detectable by their constant calls. Most passed down the coast at around 1,000 feet and seemed to be following exactly the same line southwards. It was almost as if there was a motorway up there which only they could see. The exceptions were a couple of groups pushed out to sea by the winds. They had to turn back from the horizon and really struggle straight into the wind for the safety of land. One or two, probably exhausted juveniles, dropped on to the sea to rest.

Most of these pinkfeet will probably end up wintering in East Anglia where the rich stubble of sugar beet is the big attraction.

However, around 4,000 now regularly winter around Druridge Bay with similar numbers roosting at Lindisfarne and flying out to graze inland pastures.

The main run of barnacle geese, which also breed in Scandinavia, started over the weekend. They really are the most attractive of geese with smart black, white and grey plumages. Most of them will quickly move across to their main wintering haunts around the Solway although a small population, usually 300 or 400, have in recent years taken to settling around Budle Bay where they'll remain until next spring.

These huge movements of common geese occasionally produced surprises and this latest influx was no exception. With the barnacle flocks came two cackling geese, one of the North American races of our familiar feral Canada geese. They are exceptionally rare in Britain and may have tagged along with the barnacles from Iceland. They caused much excitement as they lingered around at Budle Bay.

The slackening winds over the weekend prompted another small arrival of eastern and northern warblers. Barred warblers were at Whitburn and Druridge Pools where a Cetti's

warbler was another great find. More yellow-browed warblers arrived with sightings at localities including Hartlepool Headland, the South Gare, Hendon, Seaburn, Hunmanby Gap and Filey. In Northumberland on Tuesday, juvenile red-necked phalaropes were at Druridge Pools and briefly at Grindon Lough.

