

Walks Around the Yorkshire Dales

Walk information

Distance: Roughly 13.5 miles.

Height to Climb: 400m (1,300 feet)

Start: SE 047912. There is parking in Redmire to its north end.

Difficulty: Medium. A long walk but straightforward and easy to follow. Riverside can be muddy after rains.

Refreshments: The Bolton Arms at Redmire is a fine place to have a well deserved pint after the walk.

Be Prepared: The route description and sketch map only provide a guide to the walk. You must take out and be able to read a map (O/S Explorer OL30) and in cloudy/misty conditions a compass. You must also wear the correct clothing and footwear for the outdoors. Whilst every effort is made to provide accurate information, walkers head out at their own risk.

Please observe the Countryside Code and park sensibly.

The walk

MANY of the most famous sites of the Yorkshire Dales are clustered in the central section Wensleydale. Bolton Castle, Aysgarth Falls and Preston under Scar are all included in this walk which also passes over moorland and has long stretches of riverside walking. The walk is over 13 miles long so perfect for our longer summer days.

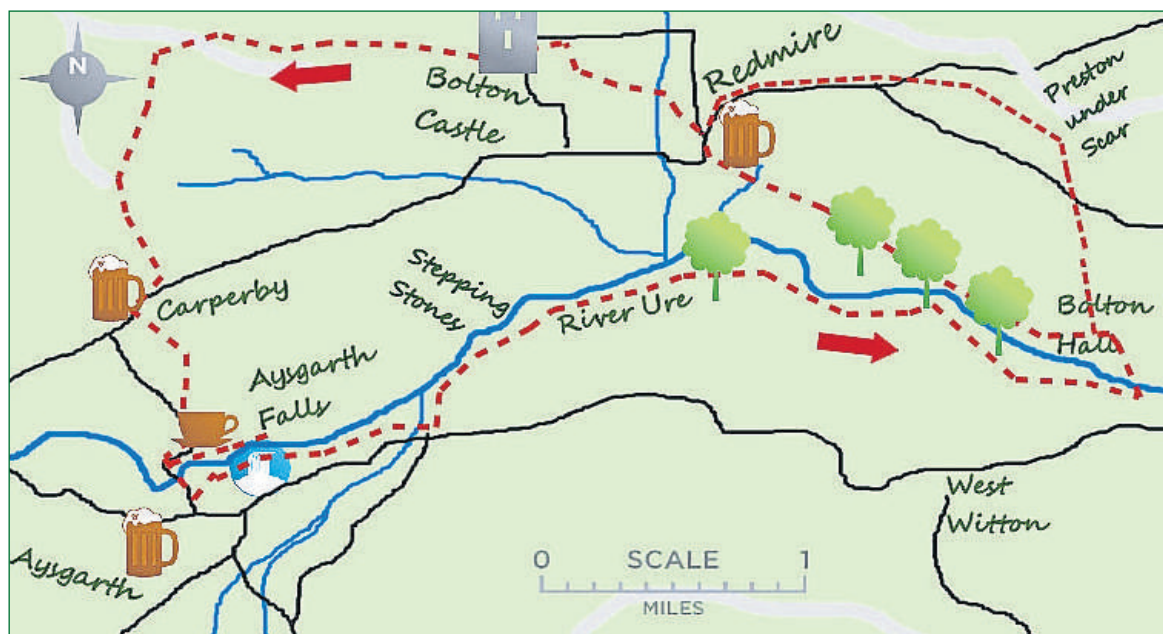
I like to start the walk in the pretty village of Redmire and head across the Hay Meadows towards the village of Castle Bolton. The hay meadows are some of the best in the Dales and offer a great approach to the best preserved castle (Bolton Castle – do not be confused with the village name) in the area. The castle is most famous as the 'prison' of Mary Queen of Scots for six months, but for a prison she did have a great deal of freedom, walking down to the river on a daily basis. It is worth paying the

entrance fee at least for the gardens which are impressive throughout the summer.

However, the walking has hardly started so it is soon time to move. The next section of walking leaves via a gate to the west of the castle car park (follow the farm track to keep your height) and heads initially through fields but soon on to the open moors. The views both up and down Wensleydale are excellent. Where the farm track runs out follow the bridleway as it bends south and starts to drop steeply down towards the village of Caperby. The bridleway turns in to a lane just above the village and enters on its eastern fringes. It is the 2nd lovely village on the walk, take time to explore it just as the real James Herriott (Alf Wight) did on his honeymoon with Helen in November 1941.

I find walking from Caperby to Aysgarth Falls not very satisfying, my best suggestion is to take the road heading south from the west end of the village for 350 metres and then head along the footpath on your right. This drops over some fields and enters the car park and visitor centre at Aysgarth Falls. If you have not visited the falls previously the most interesting circuit is to the east of the road near the visitor centre where there are viewing platforms and some lovely woodland walking. You can also get to the Upper Falls, to the west of the road near the road bridge at the foot of the road. It is a good time to stop, enjoy a packed lunch of pop in to the café for a brew.

Cross the River Ure at the road bridge and immediately in front of you some steep steps climb through some buildings in to the grounds of St Andrews Church, a grade two listed building set in a large church yard. Pick your way through the gravestones to emerge at its east end for near five miles of excellent riverside walking. At no point in the Dales can you stick so close to a river on a public footpath for so long. There are only two things to disturb the walk; meeting the busy A684 for 100 metres as it crosses Bishopdale Beck and a little further

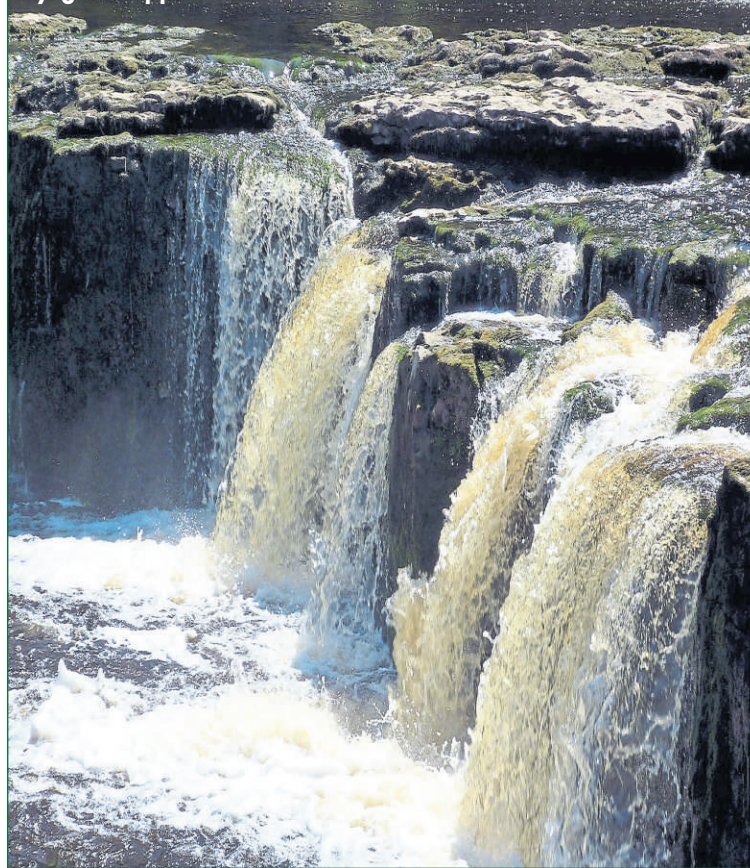


on where you may (and should not) be tempted to shorten the walk by crossing the stepping stones across the Ure. Fortunately the rains had fallen recently when I was last there and any crossing would have been fraught with danger.

The first bridge crossing of the Ure east of Aysgarth is at Bolton Hall, a lovely country house set in its own grounds. Carry on north on the estate road and follow the public right of way till it arrives at the third very attractive Wensleydale village of Preston under Scar, full of history (a centre for lead mining). A footpath heads west through the village and some woodland for three quarters of a mile before emerging at a road, turn left and drop the final half a mile back in to the village of Redmire.

Jonathan Smith runs Where2walk, an outdoor business in the Yorkshire Dales: Jonathan has written his own book, the "Dales 30" which describes the highest mountains in the Dales. He also runs 1 Day Navigation Courses for Beginners and Intermediates. Learn a Skill, Climb a Hill Weekends. To find out more details on any of the above and details of many more walks in the area visit where2walk.co.uk

Aysgarth Upper Falls



Birdwatch By Ian Kerr

AFTER what seems to have been a rather quiet spring for migration the final week of May has certainly turned up trumps with much excitement for those searching out rare species. Light on-shore winds and misty conditions along the coast did the trick with a splendid run of good late migrants, particularly red-backed shrikes and marsh warblers with multiple sightings from coastal areas.

Red-backed shrikes, particularly males with their grey heads, chestnut backs and black masks, are one of the most handsome of regular late spring migrants. They

also tend to be showy and are always a joy to watch as they feed, dropping into the grass for insects and caterpillars from fence-lines, posts and bushes. A male was a big attraction at Cowpen Marsh while in the north, the regular migration hotspot of Holy Island attracted no fewer than three individuals. A male was at the Crooked Lonnen and females were in dunes bushes on the north side of the island. Others females were at Flamborough and Druridge Bay.

Marsh warblers are much more irregular and rare spring visitors to the region but singles were great finds at Skinningrove, Kilmsea, Spurn and Druridge

Pools. Two were on Holy Island, one in the famed Vicarage garden where a male rosefinch was also present, while the other sang for long periods in a hawthorn patch in the dunes a mile away. The song, a bewildering medley of notes, usually given from thick cover, is difficult to describe. But if you take the songs of whitethroats, sedge warblers and reed warblers and throw in one or two other warbling notes, you get the general idea.

Other rarities included an eastern subalpine warbler at Long Nab, Burniston. A singing icterine warbler was at the same locality while another, also singing, was

in the plantation at the Snook on Holy Island. Another spring rarity, a red-breasted flycatcher, was in a willow thicket a short distance away, making it a real purple patch for the island and many birders present over the bank holiday period.

Other rarities included a singing Iberian chiffchaff at Norwood Edge in North Yorkshire, a Blyth's reed warbler in song at Low Newton pool and a rustic bunting on the Farne Islands. Among larger rarities were common cranes at Pickering and Wheldrake Ings and a honey buzzard over Burniston. Among longer term remainers was the

Temminck's stint at Saltholme and glossy ibis at Druridge Bay. White-billed divers are a species more associated with winter so an unseasonal individual close inshore at Whitburn was a surprise.

