

Access Opportunities on the Defence Estate

Catterick North Yorkshire



A walk across heather moorland & steep sided gills around the beautiful River Swale, on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales.

There are two walk options.

Option 1: Complete circuit from/to Downholme

Distance: 12-14 miles (19.2 to 22.4km)

Duration: 6-7 hours

Grade: ▲▲▲▲

Option 2: Linear walk from Downholme to Grinton

Distance: 6½ miles (10.4km)

Duration: 3-4 hours

Grade: ▲▲

OS map sheet(s)

OS Landranger Sheets 98 and 99 (1:50,000)

OS Outdoor Leisure Sheet 30 (1:25,000)

Starting Grid Reference: GR 112 989

Site description / history

The area's military history dates from as far back as 1798. Later, General Lord Baden-Powell, based in Richmond from 1908 to 1910, was tasked by the War Office to establish a military Training Area in the north of England, and he chose Catterick. Its status as a permanent training centre was secured in 1921 and a period of intensive building followed. The land comprising the current Training Area was acquired between 1921 and 1985.

In conjunction with military training, Catterick Training Area is predominantly used for extensive livestock grazing, while the better in-bye land is farmed more intensively for hay, silage and arable crops. The lower farming intensity associated with the needs of military training has preserved much of archaeological and nature conservation interest. There are many sites of archaeological importance including 36 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 1,223 hectares designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Most of this walk is also within the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Walk description

The walk starts by the junction of the A6108 and B6270 near to Downholme Bridge **A** (GR 107 985). Take the public footpath through the fields above

the B6270 cross a stile and head southeast. As the path is indistinct, aim to the right of the church. Go through the churchyard and cross the road to another stile and head along the stream to Downholme Village (GR 114 979). Passing the Bolton Arms Public House **B**, cross the A6108 and follow the rough lane for a mile, over a small footbridge in a hidden valley. At the end, turn right and proceed down the tarmac road until you reach the wood on the left. At the start of the wood, climb a stile on the left **C** (GR 096 974) into the fields. After a stiff climb of about 300m, turn right (GR 096 972). Follow this wall closely, keeping it on your right until, after passing through a gate, you reach the 'surprise' view over Ellerton Scar into Swaledale, near to a standing stone **D** (GR 089 979). Follow the edge but drop down right after Ellerton Scar Clump to pick up the wall again. Follow this for just over a mile passing through Juniper Gill Wood (GR 078 965), until you reach a new fence that descends along a small ridge above Hag's Gill **E** (GR 066 964). Cross the fence and climb up alongside it until you reach the road, and the edge of the MOD Estate. Continue along this road for about 1 mile (1.6km). Beyond a cattle grid climb over a ladder stile **F** (GR 055 967). Head down towards Grinton Church. A path becomes clear just above a gill, and then winds its way through a series of charming little stiles to reach the village of Grinton **G** (GR 048 983).



Options to finish route

At Grinton there are two options to return to Downholme Bridge **I** and Downholme **B**.

Option 1:

The harder walker can continue by the circular route returning along the River Swale Valley via Marrick **H** (GR 076 981) and on to Downholme Bridge **I**, part of which follows the long distance coast to coast route. From Downholme Bridge **I** (GR 113 992) follow the A6108 back to the start of the walk.

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Option 2:

For those choosing the linear walk, it is possible to catch a bus back to Downholme Bridge.

Points of interest

- Along Ellerton Scar, there are excellent views of the abandoned Ellerton Priory (Cistercian) and Marrick Priory (Benedictine).
- Evidence of former lead mining activity.
- Excellent views of the surrounding moors - designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (Lovely Seat - Stainton Moor) and part of the North Pennine Moors Special Protection Area.

Restrictions / access times

The walk is accessible at all times including when the red flags are flying because you will be walking on a safe route. Do not leave the route of the public right of way across the Training Area. Byelaws and access details are displayed at several points along the route.

Safety

The walk passes through a Range Danger Area where unexploded ordnance might be found. Do not stray from the paths and do not touch any metal objects.

How to get there

For information on local public transport call traveline on 0870 608 2608 or www.traveline.org.uk.

Local facilities

Roadside parking is available at various points along the Richmond-Reeth Road, close to the start of the walk A.

Useful contact details

Information about activity on the range can be obtained from the Range Officer on 01748 875502. Outside normal hours, contact the guardhouse on 01748 875542. Tourist information can be obtained from the Richmond Tourist Information Centre on 01748 850252 or the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority on 0870 166 6333.

