

North Yorkshire walks

Castley to Almscliff Crag

About the walk

A picturesque 7 mile circular walk in an unspoilt area north of the River Wharfe. The walk will appeal to those who appreciate wide panoramas and leaving the crowds behind.



Walk overview

Distance: 7 miles (11.2 km)

Time: 3 - 3.5 hours

Stiles: 20 **Gates:** 15

Terrain: Mostly gentle inclines, some uneven surfaces

Map: OS Explorer 297
(Lower Wharfedale & Valley)

Local facilities: Pub in North Rigton. No shops.

Photo Credit: Liz Brown

Points of interest

The Wharfedale Viaduct was completed in 1849 and was the work of the Leeds & Thirsk Railway Company.

Some believe that rocks at Almscliff Crag were held sacred in ancient days and used in Druidical rites and ceremonies – one historian derives the name from the Celtic AL (a rock or cliff) and MIAS (an altar) – the altar cliff.

The Climbing Corydalis, with its creamy white, two lipped flowers can be spotted between June and September spreading around the edges of Riffa Wood.

This circular walk is produced by North Yorkshire County Council. Find more walks and rides on our website www.northyorks.gov.uk/walking. We welcome any feedback about this walk, contact details can be found on the back page.

Route description

1. Approach Castley from your parking spot by the River Wharfe. Follow the road as it curves to the **L**. Find a stile on the **R** immediately after Bank House Farm. Enter a narrow path with wire fencing on both sides by passing under a low hanging post. The path runs parallel with the railway embankment then passes underneath. Now keep the embankment on the **L** side and head in a north easterly direction, crossing a beck at the point where there is a stile over the adjacent fence, then uphill in the same direction. Turn **R** onto Wescoe Hill Lane towards Weeton. St Barnabas' Church is certainly worth closer inspection; this involves a 600m deviation onto Gallogate Lane.

2. Continue into the village of Weeton, passing cottages before turning **L** along Weeton Lane, signposted to Huby. After approximately 200m turn **R** onto a footpath at the side of Croft House, continue along the field edge, turn **L** onto Back Lane.

3. Follow the lane to the end, then pass over a wooden stile and continue in a north easterly direction with the hedgerow immediately on the **R**. Follow the hedgerow towards the willow trees and pass through a kissing gate (may be obscured by an overhanging willow tree). Maintain a line towards a solitary tree, in the middle of the field. Beyond the tree look for a sleeper bridge (may be hidden by vegetation during summer).

4. After the bridge, cross a narrow field to a stile and gate. Proceed along a clear path, with trees on both sides. At the end of the field follow its boundary to the **L**, over a protected, electrified fence, into a small wood. At the end of the small wood, pass over the hurdle by the stone wall east of Kent House Farm and continue up to the farm access track over the railway to join the A658 (Harrogate Road).

5. Carefully cross this busy road to the pedestrian footway. Bear to the **R** for a short distance then turn **L** through a kissing gate and take the signposted footpath diagonally across what is known as Mawking Hill towards the lane at the outskirts of North Rigton. Through another kissing gate, turn **L** towards the village. At the T-junction turn **L** onto Crag Lane (signposted to Stainburn), but a small diversion can be made into the village and the Square and Compass Inn.





Route description continued

6. Walk up Crag Lane and shortly past the 30mph signs, go over the stile and take the well-used footpath towards Almscliff Crag. Cut diagonally across the first field to a stile, then keep to the **L** of the stone wall. Head towards the coarse gritstone rocks, keeping to the field boundaries and passing through three stone squeeze stiles.

7. The path skirts the northern edge of the Crag and can be clearly seen as it runs along the side of a field to join Merrybank Lane near a sharp bend. Turn **L** and walk approximately 800 metres along the lane passing Banks Farm. Take the next **R** onto the farm access drive signed 'Lower Bank Farm'. Proceed, bearing **R** at the signpost adjacent to the first house. Pass through a gate and into the open field. Keep to the side of this, until you reach a metal, way marked gate leading to a pond. Do NOT proceed through the gate; instead follow the boundary wall away to the **L**.

8. Walk alongside the woodland called Bailey's Whins and pass through a metal gate at one corner of it. Again keeping the wood on the **R**, drop down and follow its edge as the route heads towards Bogridge Farm.

9. Pass through the metal gate to the farm, but instead of entering the farmyard, take the way marked gate immediately to the **R**, around the back of the farmhouse. Keeping the hedge boundary on the **L**, continue to the next gate. Pass through then leave the bridleway, turning **L** to follow the waymarked footpath across two fields to the northern corner of Riffa Wood.

10. After crossing a stile, proceed along the wood's boundary. Pass a small gate and continue for approximately 100 metres to enter the woods over a stile. Follow the narrow track through the woods to reach a gate (barred but with a gap to get through) near Riffa Manor. Follow the access track towards the main road and turn **L**. After approximately 450m, as the road starts to curve away, cross over and follow the signposted access track towards Brocklands Farm. As the track turns towards the buildings, go through the gate on the **L**, then through a gate immediately ahead (towards the wind turbines). Follow the boundary hedge to the **R** until reaching a gap. Pass through this and walk to the bottom of the field to find a stile in the far corner. Finally joining the access track for Ings Farm which leads back to the original starting point on Castley Lane.

How to get there...

By Car: Castley is near Otley (4.5 miles) and Harrogate (7.5 miles). Castley Lane postcode LS21 2QB.

Parking: On street parking by the riverbank on Castley Lane.

Public transport: Bus 737 Harrogate to Bradford stops along A658.

Contact us

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Our Customer Service Centre is open Monday to
Friday 8.00am - 5.30pm (closed weekends and
bank holidays). Tel: **01609 780 780**

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www.northyorks.gov.uk/paths or you can
access all North Yorkshire County Council
information online at: www.northyorks.gov.uk

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another language or format such as
Braille, large print or audio, please ask
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Always follow *The Countryside Code*

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Keep dogs under close control
- Prevent uncontrolled moorland fires
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Consider other people