



Ted's walk 5

A 3 mile circular walk along country lanes and in woodlands

Introduction

The walk grade is Easy – almost flat road, tracks and woodland paths with one kissing gate but no stiles. Allow 1.5 to 2 hours start to finish. The distance is 3 miles (5km).

Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 302, Northallerton & Thirsk, covers the route but a map is included here.

Much of the walk is on or adjacent to low lying ground next to the two Becks so take care after wet weather – appropriate footwear is recommended.

It starts and ends in the Marage long-stay car park, grid reference 429823 (satnav YO7 1AA).

The walk

St James Green & Little Green

Leave the Marage car park heading towards and then crossing over the Millgate road bridge over the Cod Beck. Once over the bridge cross to the other side of the road where the pavements are lowered, turn left and walk to the 30mph sign to turn right following the footpath for about 30 metres to cross over the side road (Waterside). Turn left, then shortly afterwards, right. Cross over to the grassed area called Little Green behind a low level fence with a gap in it to look at the Information Board 9 in the series 'Thirsk Past and Present'. This gives you the very interesting



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history of this area, known locally as Old Thirsk. Several of these Boards will be mentioned in the course of this walk and you may want to do the full walk around all 15 of them on another occasion. A leaflet is available from the Tourist Information office, or online at VisitThirsk.uk/boards.

Ingramgate and its milestone

Look over the Board and then cross over this Little Green to the lower right hand corner where the adjacent road becomes a path alongside the Cod Beck. A high wall can be seen on your left behind which are the gardens of 'The Crescent' – not quite up to the standard of the Bath version but an interesting set of buildings nevertheless.

Walk along this riverside path with the high wall on your left and at the end by the river bridge the path rises to the left up onto the wide road called Ingramgate, next to Ingram House at the end of the Crescent. Follow the footpath you are now on towards the roundabout seen in the distance about 100 metres away.

Before you get to this roundabout notice the very old triangular milestone by the roadside, marked on the left side 'Easingwold 12 miles', on the triangular top 'London 220' and simply 'Thirsk' on the right side. To quote from an article in 'Yorkshire Milestones' by the Yorkshire Group of the Milestone Society about milestones in the Thirsk area:



'The most interesting example is in Thirsk itself, Opposite no 15, Ingramgate, near the Frankland Arms. This depicts, as part of the original casting, on the left (Easingwold) a lamb and its mother, and on the right (Thirsk) a character with a pint of ale. He has been interpreted variously as Tom the Drover or Tom the Tippler, a colourful local character. Under 'Thirsk', in lieu of a mileage figure, is an unidentified symbol, perhaps a bird (or, in the words of Hamlet, "Is it a whale?")'.

Be careful when viewing the milepost from the road side because, although this is the start of the one-way system into Thirsk Market Place, a small amount of traffic may still come from properties near the riverside.

Next you will pass an old GR postbox and the Frankland Arms pub named after the Frankland family of Thirkleby Hall (now demolished). Sir Thomas Frankland, 3rd Baronet, was a former local landowner and MP in the 18th

century. Before the Electoral Reform Act 1834 he could be voted into Parliament by only 45 burgesses who mostly lived in Long Street, Old Thirsk and were paid for this favour!

The Sutton Road

Proceed to the busy White Mare Roundabout (named after a pub which stood on the opposite corner until demolished to widen this road junction). Cross directly over to the Sutton Road via the lowered pavement and bollarded central refuge taking care of the busy traffic coming to and around the roundabout.

Walk along the A170 Sutton Road and you will come to an attractive two storey long building behind a high wall. It is hard to believe that

this apartment block was the old Thirsk Union Workhouse built in 1838 as evidenced by the Blue plaque on the wall just before it turns round into Bellingham Close! The following quote is from our Blue Plaques Trail leaflet available online or for sale in the Tourist Office- this plaque is no. 19 of 20.

'Before the passing of the Poor Law Act of 1834 each parish took responsibility for its own poor, but the system was inefficient. The new Act created 'Unions' grouping parishes together and requiring the provision of a Workhouse to shelter the old and infirm and to house the unemployed in return for work of a menial and repetitive nature designed to deter all but the most desperate from seeking parish assistance. The Thirsk



Union Workhouse served some forty parishes and was planned for 120 paupers but later extended to hold 200 if need be. It was considered the best run in the Northern District. The workhouse system was not abolished until 1929.'

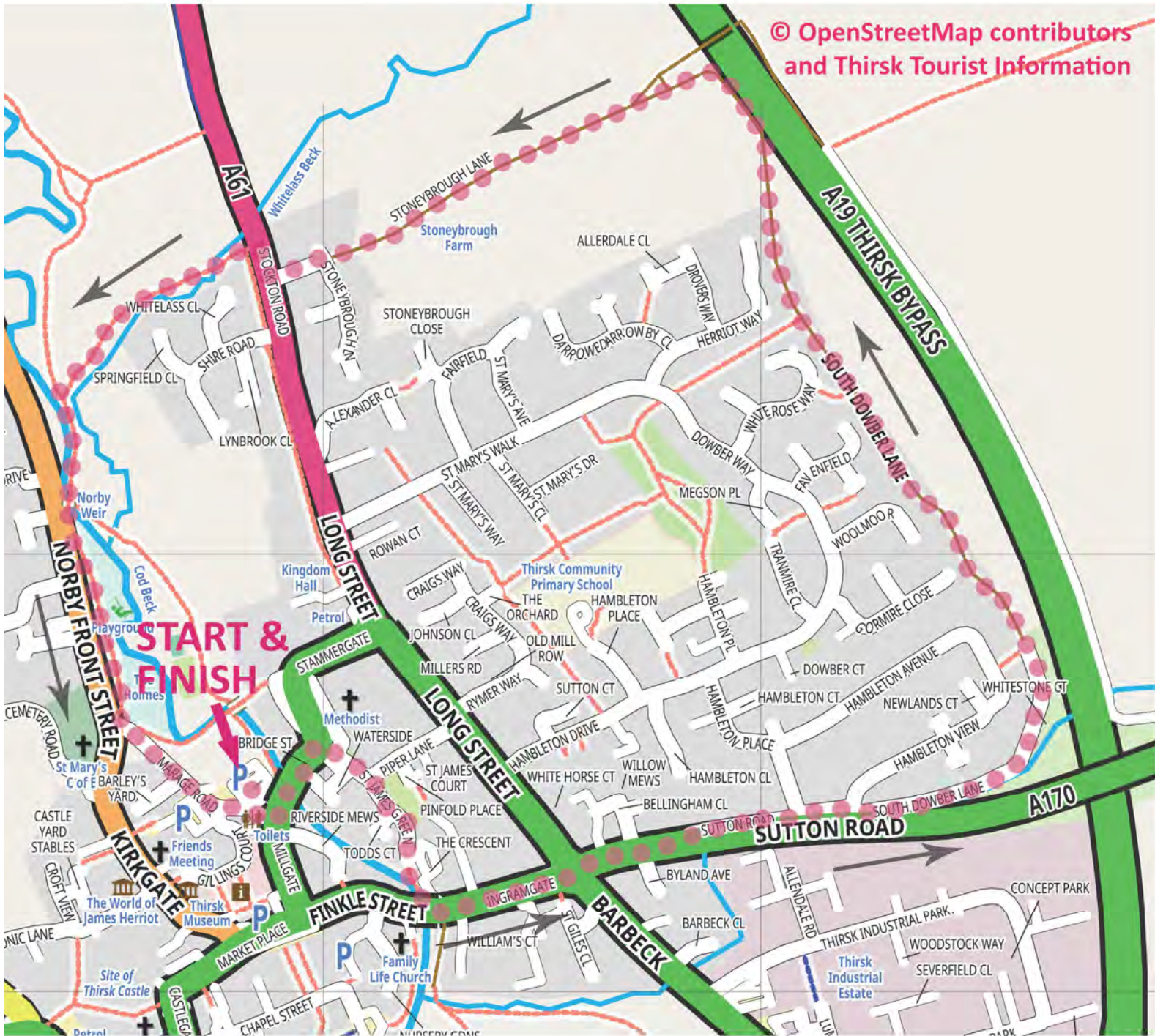
Continuing the walk, keep to the footpath on the left as Sutton Road goes slightly to your left into a quiet parallel road with several houses set back behind a high hedge from the main road. Continue till this meets the Hambleton Place road with a corner shop with the unusual name of 'Best-one By the Way Convenience Store'.

Cross over, still walking parallel to the Sutton Road crossing another side road but aiming for the road below the A170 embankment and passing the street sign to Whitestone Court. It is better to use the narrow pathway between the houses and the hedge rather than the road, for about 100 metres till it swings round to the left with houses still on your left and a block of flats on your right. Eventually the tarmac road ends and becomes a shady woodland path.

Into the woods

As you walk along this path several paths come in to join it from the housing on the left. This shady woodland path feels quite peaceful in spite of the traffic noise from the adjacent A19 trunk road, behind the hedgerow on the right. Gradually the

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footpath veers away from the main road and fields appear between it and the busy road. Judging by the many gates and paths through to these fields they are a regular playground for local children.

Stoneybrough Lane

After the housing on the left ends, open countryside appears but shortly the path becomes a concrete section lane veering to the left into Stoneybrough Lane. A similar lane joins from the right.

If you want a short diversion you can go right up this farm lane to where it crosses the A19 road on a bridge from which you can see the Hambleton Hill escarpment in the distance.

Returning to the walk, Stoneybrough Lane continues for about 200 metres with fields on either side until you reach Stoneybrough Farm on the left.

Next on the right are a series of very derelict farm buildings which are not part of Stoneybrough Farm but belong to a neighbouring landowner. Then the Lane becomes an estate road briefly before it reaches the busy Stockton Road going north out of Thirsk.

You need to cross directly over this road to the pavement on the other side and turn right. You will see a lower parallel path on the other side of the downward sloping grass verge. You can go directly down to this path if the grass is not too long or continue

Path by Whitelass Beck





Reproduction of original Old Map showing original features

for a short distance till a sloping path goes down sharply left to the only kissing gate on this walk.

Whitelass Beck

The gate takes you into a shady woodland path which meanders for about 300 metres criss-crossing the little Whitelass Beck several times. The path can be muddy in places. Eventually the path rises slightly to join another path opposite a bench provided by Thirsk Rotary Club.

Bear left along this path which is now running parallel to the Cod Beck on your right and cross some muddy ground over a small wooden footbridge. Keep on this path till it reaches another longer, narrow metal footbridge over the Cod Beck at



Map of current street plan as it is today for comparison

Norby Weir – after rainy weather this can be quite an impressive waterfall.

You are going to bear left into the open parkland but before you do so, look to your right near the busy Northallerton road.

There you will see an old sluice gate which used to divert water into a leet, firstly for the Marage lake in front of Thirsk Hall and St Mary's Church and secondly for the former Rymers Mill (across the road from the car park where you started this walk).

Look to the left near the road and you will see our Past and Present history board 4 explaining fully how the sluice gate was used in the later part of the 19th and earlier part of the 20th century.

The Holmes, Marage & Rymer's Mill

The two maps show what the area looked like in former times and how it is now. These are reproduced with permission from an essay 'The Story of the Millrace at Thirsk' by local amateur historian David Bradley.

The parkland you are entering on the left of the bridge and alongside the Cod Beck, is called The Holmes. The meaning of this is:

either – *'an islet, especially in a river or near a mainland'*

or – *'a piece of flat ground by a river which is submerged in times of flood'*.

The latter applies in this case as the Cod Beck which, in spite of its name, is officially a river.

Following the path through the park you will pass a children's playground on the left and, as is often the case, in riverside areas, you will see many willow trees, some very old.

As St Mary's Church comes into view on the right of the road in the distance, you will come across our 'Past and Present' Board 5 on the left of the path, which explains that this area was originally a willow garth where the willow withies were gathered for basket making. Apparently there are four types of

willow in this area – White, Crack, Weeping and Osier.

The Board also mentions the origins of the name 'Marage'. You will come to Marage Road shortly which you cross over. As you do, look behind the road sign where there is a walled off area surrounding apartments which are on the site of the former Marage area of water shown on the old OS Map on the previous page.

Turn left along Marage Road to find Past and Present Board 6 which is over the other side of Marage Road looking over the Moated Site.

This moated site, also known as the burgess enclosure, lies inside a bend of the Cod Beck and is one of several in the area. It is situated near a possible crossing point, a ford, which is thought to have existed between the east end of the parish church and the northern area of St. James's Green.

Continue back to the Coach and Car Park where you started. Before leaving you could cross over the Millgate one way road by the Public Conveniences into Riverside Mews and Mill Gardens where you will find Past and Present Board 7 explaining about the Rymers Mill which was formerly on the site and fed by water from the sluice gate and leet mentioned earlier in this leaflet.