

TADCASTER AND HEALAUGH PRIORY

A 5.5 mile moderate walk mainly easy-going on level farm tracks. There are 3 stiles and there is one short hill towards the beginning of the walk.

Start point: Tadcaster Bus Station, behind Britannia Inn, Commercial Street, Tadcaster. LS24 8AA

Tadcaster is the last town on the River Wharfe before it joins the River Ouse about 10 miles (16 km) downstream and is twinned with Saint Chély d'Apcher in France. The town was founded by the Romans, who named it Calcaria from the Latin word for lime, reflecting the importance of the area's limestone geology as a natural resource for quarrying, an industry which continues today and has contributed to many notable buildings including York Minster. Calcaria was an important staging post on the road to Eboracum (York), which grew up at the river crossing. The suffix of the Anglo-Saxon name Tadcaster is derived from the borrowed Latin word castra meaning 'fort', although the Saxons used it for any walled Roman settlement. Tadcaster is mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as the place where King Harold assembled his army prior to entry into York and subsequently on to the Battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066. The original river crossing was probably a simple ford near the present site of St Mary's Church, soon followed by a wooden bridge. Around 1240, the first stone bridge was constructed close by, possibly from stone once again reclaimed from the castle. In 1642 the Battle of Tadcaster, an incident during the English Civil War, took place on and around Tadcaster Bridge between Sir Thomas Fairfax's Parliamentary forces and the Earl of Newcastle's Royalist army.

Tadcaster has long been associated with the brewing industry due to the quality and accessibility of the local water rich in lime sulphate. Today it is second in importance only to Burton upon Trent as an English brewing centre. Only three breweries have survived into the present day, The Tower Brewery (Coors, formerly Bass), John Smith's and Samuel Smith's Old Brewery, which is also the oldest brewery in Yorkshire and the only remaining independent brewery in Tadcaster. A quarter of a mile above the Wharfe Bridge an imposing viaduct of eleven arches spans the River Wharfe. This was built as part of the projected Leeds to York railway promoted by the industrialist George Hudson through the York and North Midland Railway. The construction of the line was authorised in 1846. It was to run from Copmanthorpe to Cross Gates, joining the Church Fenton to Harrogate railway line between Tadcaster and Stutton. The collapse of railway investment in 1849 led to the line being abandoned after the viaduct had been constructed.



The walk: From the bus station car park, turn left to cross the main road turning right away from the river and turning immediately first left towards Sainsbury's Supermarket. Continue along this road passing the supermarket on your right to turn left at Mill House to follow the river towards the viaduct. Continue under the viaduct and following the river until eventually the path swings away to the right, away from the river. At the top of the path, turn left over a stile and walk diagonally left up to a stile in the top left hand corner of the field, by a stone wall, to emerge at a road.

On reaching the road, cross over to the footpath and turn left continuing along the road for about ¼ a mile passing the Healaugh Manor Farm (west) on your left and just as the manor house comes into view, turn right along a track. Continue along this track for about ½ a mile and at the end, turn left to follow yet another wide farm track. Continue following this track for one mile to Healaugh Manor Farm (east).



Healough Priory was a Medieval Augustinian priory or hermitage founded in 1218 and dissolved in 1535. Parts of this monastic work were incorporated into subsequent buildings, named Manor House Farm. The buildings incorporate architectural features dating from the late fourteenth century, with alterations through to the twentieth century. Healough Manor Farms, incorporating remains of Healough Priory, comprise three detached ranges: (i) Manor Farm West, a two-storey brick building of mid 19th century date. The front elevation is faced with stone from the priory including carved and incised stones and a complete incised grave slab above the doorway. (ii) Manor Farm East is a two-storey ashlar building of the 14th century under a battlemented parapet, though this only remains on the west front. Re-roofed in the 19th century. (iii). A large stone building of the late 14th century, although the south and east walls have been built up in brick.



On reaching the farm, carry on straight forward along the farm track, ignoring the private road to your left, to pass old outbuildings on your right. Continue now for a further ½ a mile and at a junction of two tracks, ignore the one off to your left and continue forward through a gate. Ignore all way-marker signs to your left and right until, after a further ½ a mile you come to a gate at the end of the track. At this point, turn right through a gate into a field and head for the bottom right hand corner to a gateway into the next field. Go through the gateway and bear left across the next field to a stile and bridge to cross a small stream.



After crossing the footbridge, bear left towards the corner of a wood. On reaching the wood, bear left and then right to follow the edge of the field and on reaching a way-marker, turn left to go left across the bottom corner of a field to cross a ditch into the next field. From this point bear left, towards trees and on entering the next field, go slightly right towards three trees in the middle of the field. Follow the path to pass the trees and at the third tree, turn right towards another solitary tree and then straight forward towards a hedge. On reaching the hedge, turn left to walk down the top side of the field to emerge on to a farm track where you turn right. Now, continue along this wide farm track and as you reach houses, continue straight forward, ignoring the track to your right, eventually arriving back on to a road. Go immediately across the road and through a gateway following a path leading to steps at the end of the viaduct. Go down the steps and at the bottom turn left to re-trace your steps back into Tadcaster.