

TWO EASY TO FOLLOW WALKS AROUND ACKWORTH AND HESSLE

1) From the car park go through the metal stile and turn left along the Dando Way. Follow this track crossing two roads.

2) Before the underpass, take the path on the right, go through stile and turn right along the road. Then turn first right through what was Poplar Farm, it is now a new housing estate. Follow this lane to a gate and stile at Constitution Hill Farm.

3) Cross stile by the farm buildings and turn left down the hill, keeping the wall on your left. At the end of the field cross the stile and two bridges over the streams and follow the paving stones to Hessle Common Lane.

4) Turn right past Hessle Hall. Follow this track past the large oak trees; ignore the stile and gate to your right until you reach Hessle Farm.

5) At the farm keep to the tarmac track, then leave the road to turn right alongside the farm outbuilding wall and cross the stile (look for the public footpath sign). After a few metres, cross a second stile.

For shorter route of 2 ½ miles:

Turn right alongside the field boundary. Follow points 6-8.

For longer route of 4 ½ miles:

Follow the grassy track between the fields, heading towards Ackworth church on the horizon. Follow points 9-14.

6) Follow the path straight ahead over the next two fields, as far as the farm buildings. Then turn right towards the farm and then immediately left past the telegraph pole, following the path by the hedge.

7) At the end of the hedgerow, cross the bridge over the River Went. Follow the path on

left to main track on right. At the track turn left towards the concrete fencing posts.

8) At end of fence turn right. At the road, cross over and fork left onto the Dando Way to return to the car park.

9) At stream follow the path to the right and go over the bridge on the left. Bear right, crossing the wooden stile in the fence 50 metres on the right. Turn left following the path in the middle of the field up the hill. (Notice Ackworth Old Hall on your left.)

10) Cross stile at top and turn right along Purston Lane into High Ackworth. Turn right at the village green (by the cross) and go down a small snicket by the almshouses. Follow this path to a cul-de-sac. Turn right up the road, following round to the left. Go down the footpath between the houses (Nos. 45 & 47).

11) At the back of the houses continue straight ahead across the field towards the stone stile in the wall. Continue over the next field (you should be able to see this well used footpath defined in the crops).

12) Go over the stone stile by the houses, cross the road diagonally to the footpath on your right into the playing field. Follow the field boundary on the left, crossing three stiles.

13) At the third stile, head towards the bridge over the River Went. At the farm track turn sharp right towards the farmyard (this is the official right of way!). Go through the farmyard and cross the stile ahead of you. Follow this track to the road.

14) At the road turn left, going past the play area on your right and continue for about ¼ mile until you reach a footpath and cycle route sign pointing right along Dando Way. Follow this until you reach the bridge. Go under then turn left into car park at Bell Lane.

Points of Interest

A Car Park

You are now standing on the disused Ackworth Moor Top quarry, where sandstone was first extracted over 100 years ago.

B The Dando Way

Originally Brackenhill Light Railway built in 1879, coal was transported along here from Hemsworth Colliery until the 1950's. This section is now a pathway re-named after Tom Dando (1919-1982), a local councillor who fought for many changes in Ackworth including the proposal for a bypass.

C Brackenhill Quarries

Once covered in bracken, quarrying began here over 360 years ago in 1629 when Charles I granted quarrying rights to tenants to take stone for use within the Manor. However, this hard coarse-grained sandstone (known locally as Ackworth Rock) was not only good building material but could be used for grindstones and scythe stones and by the 1800's it was exported worldwide. Many of the houses you pass are built from rock from this quarry (including Nostell Priory, on the horizon). A silica carbonide substitute (carborundum) has replaced the rock in recent years. However, stone from Brackenhill is still used in the restoration of churches.

D Constitution Hill

So called perhaps because people have been taking their constitutional walks here for the last century! Notice the small sandstone quarries on the hillside, which have been levelled.

E Hesse Hall

This manor house was built in 1641. Look for the date above the door with figure 4 reversed. Like many old buildings this one is believed to be haunted!

F Hesse

Mentioned in the Domesday Book, this once thriving village lay on the main route between Doncaster and Wakefield when it was home to six ironsmiths, perhaps the largest group in Yorkshire. By the 1600's other industries had grown, like tanning and fellmongering (trading in hides). When the new Wakefield to Doncaster Road was constructed the village became isolated. Today it's quiet lanes are a haven for wildlife.

G Hesse Common Lane

Look out for wildflowers in summer along the hedgerow bottom. You will probably see harebells, poppies and ox-eye daisies among others.

H Ackworth Old Hall

Built in the early 1600's as a manor house on the Nostell Priory Estate, it replaced an

earlier building dating from 1311. The Hall was once owned by James I, who sold it in 1628 for £384! It is said to be haunted by highwayman John Nevison who used to hide in a compartment above the door. He was captured and hanged in 1684.

I Ackworth Church

A church was first recorded here in 875AD, dedicated to Saint Cuthbert; this one was built in the 1850's. Look in the graveyard to find the stone of local notoriety, John Gulley, prize fighter, convict and local MP in the early 1800's.

J Ackworth Cross

This stone or preaching cross was erected in memory of a monk from Nostell Priory (Fr. Thomas Balne) who preached here in the 1400's. Sadly, on a pilgrimage to Rome he died of the plague. It is said that mourners insisted his coffin was opened on the way back to the Priory and the plague was unleashed on the town. (The cross was removed after the Reformation.)

K High Ackworth

Ackworth (meaning dwelling (worth) near an oak (ake)) dates back to the Domesday Book. Today the old village is a Conservation Area. The Manor had several owners including Henry de Lacy, Henry I and Charles I. In 1698 Ackworth was sold to Richard Lowther. In the 1700's Mary Lowther founded the Almshouses and school for the 'poor', elderly and children of Ackworth. Ackworth has a wild past, having been a place of battles and plagues. In 1488 local villagers were defeated in a civil battle when they refused to pay extra taxes to pay for the French War. In the 1600's, a second outbreak of the plague forced villagers to leave money for food stores outside the village.

L Ackworth Quaker School

This famous school is only a few yards off the main walk route. Originally built as a hospital in 1757 by Thomas Conran and his friends, including famous people such as Gainsborough, Hogarth and Handel who helped to raise money. It was used to house orphaned and abandoned children. The building was later bought by the Society of Friends to be used as a school.

M Water Mill

A water mill once stood here having been built in 1435, together with a dam, which was drained 20 years ago. The dam was fed by Mill Canal (N) which ran from the River Went. Local villagers would have to pay to have their corn ground here.