

Lunchtime Walks

Walk 4 - Castle Hills

Most of the walks round County Hall are pavement walks; this is one of the few that get us off the roads and onto the grass, even if only for a short distance.

This walk also shows that the people who drew the maps for us have never actually been on the walks!

Parts of this route can get muddy in Winter (and much of a typical English summer as well), but should be OK in dry weather. You might also encounter nettles and stiles if you go for the rough route!

This walk is slightly longer (allow about 35 to 40 minutes) but does have a short cut that can also be used if it's too muddy or wet. It starts with another way to the Applegarth for those of you wanting to go shopping (see walk 3), or you can use one of the routes described on that sheet to start.

To start, leave County Hall, cross Racecourse Lane and go through the Courthouse Grounds into l'Especk Street. Turn left into Hatfield Road and right on South Parade. Cross at the pelican crossing and go straight ahead through the cut to the right of the Dentists into Alverton Lane.

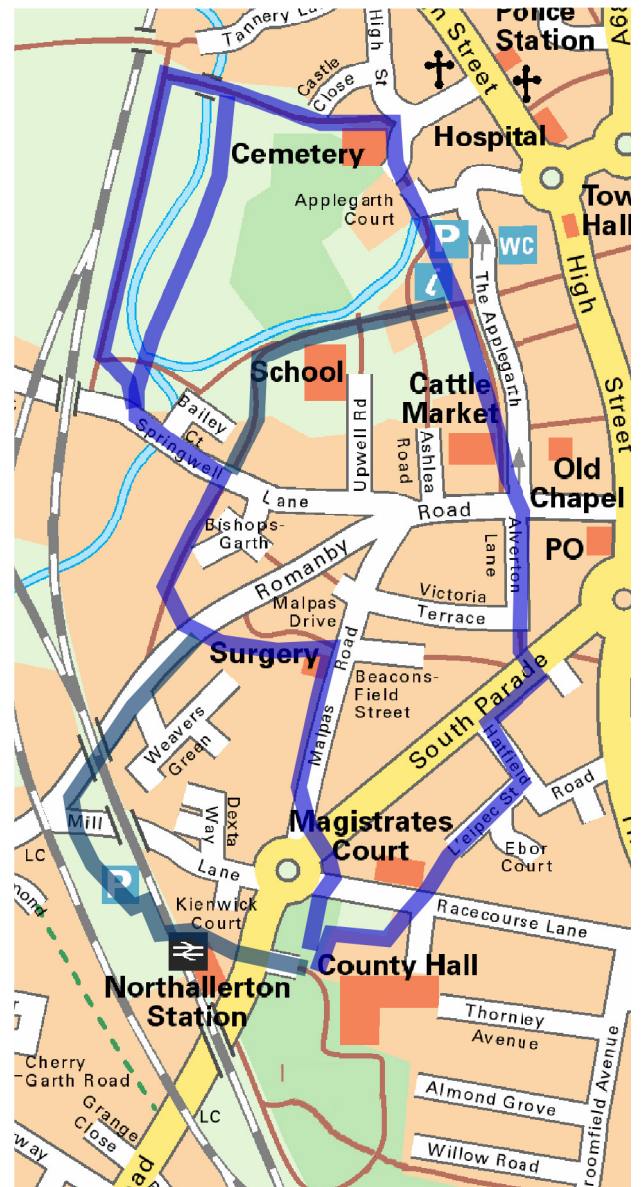
From the raised footpath here there are excellent views of the Mart car park with the Scout hut beyond. Odd pieces of farm machinery appear abandoned in this car park, often for weeks at a time - probably bought at auction by some farmer who suddenly realizes they can't get it home...

Cross Romanby Road and follow Applegarth before bearing left along the footpath under the shadow of the Mart. If you are going through the footpath to the Tickle Toby, stay on the road; for Barkers Arcade or to continue this walk, follow the footpath.

As you approach the 'crossroads' near Barkers, look out for the Millennium Fountain, unveiled in 2005 by William Hague and vandalised within four days. If the weather is wet or you are short of time, turn left at the crossroads (see details later), otherwise head straight on.

At the Tourist Information kiosk, continue straight ahead between the parked cars along the marked footpath to reach the bridge over Sun Beck.

If you try to follow the map for the next part you will get lost! In reality it's easy - cross the footbridge and go straight ahead, up the footpath, cross the Cemetery entrance, left of the Oddfellows and straight on to the footbridge over Willow Beck. Turn left either just before or just after this bridge - the former can be muddy, but the latter has stiles (and can also be muddy in wet weather). In general, if the first of these looks too muddy to follow, backtrack to the Applegarth and follow the shortcut described later.



If you have crossed the bridge and turned left, you will find a stile; cross this and head diagonally up the slope to another stile in the middle of the fence. Once across this, head toward the right (top) side and follow the path between the fence and the stream - look out for thistles, mud, nettles and the occasional horse round here. You may also be surprised by a train passing just the other side of the fence - this is the passenger line from Middlesbrough climbing to join the main line near the station. As the path bends left and drops, either cross the stile to the road or cross the bridge then walk out onto the road

If you turned left before the bridge, you won't need any directions - just follow the path through the grass and look around while I describe what you are seeing. To your right is 'Castle Hills', a very old ring work with a bailey (wooden stockade) dating from the middle ages. This was seriously damaged by the Victorian railway engineers who cut through the hill and used the material in the embankments which are so prominent in Northallerton. To your left are the remains of another motte and bailey, and closer to the cemetery are the remains of the Bishops Palace, dating from when Northallerton was a bishopric of Durham.

If it is wet and you have taken the shortcut from the Applegarth, follow the path to the right of the old school, and take either of the paths beyond - all will bring you out onto the same road.

When you reach the end of any of these paths, you will be in Springwell Lane. Turn left and walk past the old Yorkshire Timber yard which is currently a building site, then right up the footpath immediately after. This path is affected by the building works, so may be a little rough underfoot

Follow this narrow path, watching out for tree roots and low branches, go up the steps, and eventually emerge into Romanby Road just opposite Weavers Green. Again, do not try to follow the map here, as they have Weavers Green about 200 yards down the road - it really is straight ahead! (If following this route in reverse, the footpath is to the right of the new estate, just off the roundabout.)

If you are pressed for time, cut diagonally along the footpath into Weavers Green, then straight through to Malpas Road and turn right back to County Hall; if you have a couple of minutes spare, turn right along Romanby Road towards the railway bridge. As you walk, look to your left, past the home to see the abutment of the old coal sidings. You can see these from a different angle shortly.

Go under the railway bridge, looking out to see where it has been extended over the years, and at the end cross Mill Lane and enter the railway car park. Follow the ramp up, and at the top go up onto the platform. Straight ahead, you can see the top of the old coal sidings, now used for inspection and maintenance vehicles. Follow the platform towards the waiting room. (You can also head diagonally across the lower car park and ascend the steps to get up to the platform, if you prefer.) Behind the waiting room, head down the ramp to the subway, to come out of the station opposite County Hall.

This leaflet is one of a series describing short walks around County Hall, taking about half an hour. The target is to get people out of the office at lunch time, to improve health, reduce stress and generally make people feel better - but mainly to be enjoyable.

Obviously some people walk faster than others, but the latest medical advice is that to be beneficial you should just be able to hold a conversation without running out of breath. The government also advise us to take at least half an hour's exercise at least three times a week, so even if you already do some exercise each week, a lunchtime walk will still benefit your heart.

Always start exercise gently, warm up the muscles with a few stretches, and stretch again at the end. Always take the first and last five minutes of the walk more gently, and stride out in the middle. If you have any medical conditions which may be affected by walking, please consult your doctor before following this route.

Watch out for hazards as you walk - we try to highlight any known problems but you will need to take care when crossing roads, and look out for steps and kerbs, mud or wet grass, and in winter for ice and slippery surfaces.

Walking for Health

This leaflet is created by Hambleton Strollers, an organisation funded by NYCC and Hambleton District along with the local PCTs, and part of the government led 'Walking for Health Initiative'.

For more information, please contact John Brookes or Rita Laverick in County Hall, or e-mail strollers@hambleton.gov.uk



This is a dynamic document - if you have any comments, additions, corrections or other suggestions please feel free to e-mail them to myself, john.brookes@northyorks.gov.uk

