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Fridaythorpe Walk

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Fridaythorpe village – on street parking by the village pond.
Ordnance Survey map	OS Explorer Map 294 - Market Weighton & Yorkshire Wolds Central
Distance	8.8 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This is a circular walk in the Yorkshire Wolds exploring some of the unusual dry valleys sculpted by glaciers. This is useful country in which to walk after heavy rain because it overlies chalk and so drains quickly. The never ending rain in the latter part of 2012 caused me to look for somewhere which would not be ankle deep in mud for a change and the Wolds delivered. The walk does not go near any rivers/streams, which are in short supply hereabouts. Indeed, the shortage of water caused a “battle” in 1826 between Fridaythorpe and the neighbouring village of Fimber. An information board by the village pond tells you all about this and other historical facts.

The walk begins in Fridaythorpe a quiet unassuming sort of place with an attractive village pond and tiny 12th Century Norman church of St Mary’s. Fridaythorpe is the highest village in the Yorkshire Wolds at 561 ft (171m). Part way round the walk is an option to visit the village of Huggate. The walk follows The Wolds Way in some sections. Fridaythorpe lies on the A166 between Driffield and York.

There are plenty of gentle ups and downs as we traverse the dry valleys (or dales) but they are all a gradual process and so I have graded the walk with all green traffic lights.

Refreshments are available at The Wolds Inn at Huggate (check opening times).

Start: With your back to the village pond, turn left and walk along the main street. At the mill complex, turn left following the fingerpost “Wolds Way” and “Thixendale 3¾ miles”.

After crossing the access road to the mill and weighbridge, the track continues straight ahead following the left hand boundary of the large field, at the end of which, turn right through a metal kissing gate signed for Brubber Dale (SE 883570).

Follow the path as it descends to bottom of the dale then turn right to the gate and fingerpost visible in the corner and continue to follow the Wolds Way sign.

There is a long gentle climb out of the dale to a kissing gate. Go straight ahead initially then follow the track as it curves round to the left. It soon turns sharp left to a farm but go straight ahead here passing under the powerlines.

Cross a road (SE 848593) and continue straight ahead following the Wolds Way sign.

The track goes through a gate then curves left briefly along the top of Thixen Dale before descending to the valley floor. You will see a spiral art installation "Time & Flow" created by Chris Drury which you walk past. Now leaving the Wolds Way, follow the dale round to the left passing the artwork and following the yellow arrows (ignore the blue arrows at this point).

After a short stint along the dale floor, go over a stile and left following the yellow arrows and continuing along the dale. At a 'T' junction of dales, go left into Pluckham Dale and follow the path as it swings right to the trees, following their edge initially then, after going through the trees, the track emerges at a large field. Turn right to the main road (A166) and turn left (SE 850575).

Walk along the road (there are reasonable verges) for about half a mile then at the cross roads, turn right following the direction of the road sign for Huggate. No more than 15/20 yards from the junction, turn left off the road on to the footpath across the field indicated by a fingerpost.

The path follows the right hand side of the hedge then crosses a tarmac drive to Wold House Farm. Keep straight ahead.

The path passes between a fence and a hedge then after going through a five bar gate, descends into Horse Dale. At the bottom, turn left, then go immediately right through a walkers gate and climb the dale at the other side up the obvious track.

At the top of the dale, turn left, and walk along for a short distance. This is a particularly attractive dale with perfect curves but do not get carried away and miss the gate on the right hand side with a yellow arrow (SE 870562).

You join a metalled track and turn left along it returning to the Wolds Way which essentially we now follow all the way back to Fridaythorpe. As you get to a farm (Glebe Farm), where there are a pair of brick built cottages, bear right (indicated by a yellow arrow and acorn sign before the cottages). The path goes round the farm to rejoin the tarmac track where you turn right (SE 878559).

Look out for a kissing gate on the right hand side with a yellow arrow and fingerpost. This footpath leads to the village of Huggate – you will see the church spire. It is up to you whether you want to take this ¼ mile diversion. There is not a great deal to see apart from the rather nice 12th Century St Mary's church (another one!) with an impressive stained glass window. If you walk through the village to the crossroads and turn left, there is the Wolds Inn. If you do, note that as the footpath exits into the road, almost opposite the church (you need to go right then left to see it), the continuation of our main route is to the left down the road.

If you ignore Huggate, remain on the tarmac drive from Glebe Farm and at the road, turn left (SE 881557).

Continue along the road passing a fingerpost indicating the Wolds Way and Fridaythorpe 2½ miles. Also pass a sign for Northfield Farm.

As the road bends right, take the footpath off to the left marked with a fingerpost for the Wolds Way and Public Bridleway (SE 885567). The path follows the right hand side of the hedge.

You pass an unusual curved seat, created by artist and furniture maker Angus Ross, at SE 883 571, overlooking Horse Dale and follow the track down into the dale. Head right.

You come to a five bar gate on the left which continues the Wolds Way (there is a fingerpost) along the valley floor for about half a mile (at a fork in the valley, keep right) before the path starts to climb. Go through a walkers gate and continue straight ahead.

At the main road in Fridaythorpe, turn right then left at the bend and pub Farmers Arms to return to your car.

