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Helmsley Walk (Circular)

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Helmsley – Pay and display car park on Cleveland Way (SE 610838)
Ordnance Survey map	North York Moors – Western Area
Distance	12.3 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This walk from Helmsley explores Ryedale and the high plateau of Rievaulx Moor before dropping down Ash Dale back to Helmsley. There is some road walking along quiet lanes and some areas which can be muddy after rain so gaiters are recommended.

Helmsley is an attractive market town on the A170 Thirsk to Scarborough road. It has a ruined castle and a famous walled garden. Not far away is Rievaulx Abbey and indeed, there is the option to divert from this walk via the Abbey should you wish to visit it – see sketch map.

There are various places to park in Helmsley but it can get congested and most will probably use the pay and display car park on Cleveland Way (off Church Street) which is where this walk begins.

The walk starts off using the Cleveland Way long distance footpath and Ash Dale is part of the Tabular Hills walk, another long distance footpath which starts at Scalby Mills near Scarborough and ends at Helmsley.

There are no refreshment opportunities en route, though plenty in Helmsley at the end.

Start: From the car park (SE 610838), return to Cleveland Way and turn left. You are now actually on the Cleveland Way footpath and its markers will guide you to Ryedale. You will see a fingerpost indicating Rievaulx 2¼ miles.

When the path forks, the left hand leg signposted to Helmsley Walled Garden, keep straight ahead and also at a subsequent crossroads of tracks. Keep following the Cleveland Way signs through the trees until you reach a road and turn left (SE 580841).

As you reach the bridge over the River Rye (SE 575843), there is the option to turn right to visit Rievaulx Abbey. You could then continue past the abbey and rejoin this walk (see sketch map). Otherwise, continue along the road and at the next junction, turn right for “Cold Kirby 4 miles and Old Byland 2 miles”, crossing the bridge at Ashberry Farm (SE 571845), at which point you leave the Cleveland Way.

You can either stay on the road or, after about $\frac{1}{3}$ mile, there is the option to turn off left on to a footpath across the fields. You need to follow it to return to the road further on and it does not actually save you anything. It is a matter of preference.

Either turn left on reaching the road again (or if remaining on the road), continue until you see the signs on the right for Barnclose Farm and Tylas Farm and turn off here (SE 566855).

Follow the tarmac track downhill until it joins another track. Turn left, passing a public bridleway sign.

On joining another broad track, turn right, ignoring the footpath and yellow marker straight ahead.

At Tylas Farm, continue to follow the main track as it goes left and then at the fork go right to continue to Barnclose Farm.

At Barnclose Farm, go through the yard and through a gate at the far side where you turn sharp right. The path stays parallel with the valley.

Keep straight ahead for 2/300 yards then bear left towards the trees. There is a stile and yellow footpath markers in the corner of the field by the trees but these are not easy to see until you are closer to them. Cross the stile and keep straight ahead.

At the next corner of the field cross the stile and go right to continue to follow the line of the trees. Ignore a major looking track going off left through the trees. On the horizon in the distance to the right you can see the Bilsdale transmitter mast.

Join a broad track and turn right (SE 559878). Just before Shaken Bridge Farm bear right off the broad track on a footpath diversion following the fingerpost for Shaken Bridge and after a short descent, go left through a walkers' gate. At the drive to Shaken Bridge Farm, turn right.

At the road, turn right and walk along it for just over 1 mile until you reach the B1257 at SE 572870. Turn left and walk along the broad verge for no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ mile before turning right to Oscar Park Farm.

Go through the farm and straight ahead for a short distance then head right descending a little valley and up the other side. Head for the gate in the top right hand corner of the field and after going through it, follow the right hand fence.

You now enter the plantation (SE 579881). As a managed woodland, reliable permanent directions are difficult, as logging tracks sometimes change, so bear this in mind but in relation to the day I did the walk, go into the trees, ignoring the track immediately on the right and follow the main track as it curves gently right. Ignore a track on the left.

At a 'T' junction of tracks, go left and on meeting another broad track, turn right. Keep straight ahead, ignoring another track on the right you come to almost immediately.

You will soon see your route off the main track to the left, marked by a yellow footpath arrow on a post. Do not miss this otherwise things get very confusing and very muddy!

Follow the footpath through the trees, ignoring any logging tracks which cross your path. Eventually, it drops steeply down to a stream (SE 591880) and up steps at the other side. Follow the path through the trees and after crossing a broad forestry track, there is a walkers' gate where you turn left following the yellow arrow and leave the trees.

At the next stile, cross and turn right again following the yellow arrow. You reach the road (SE 598876) which runs up to Baxton Farm and turn right for 3/400 yards. Turn left off the road at a public footpath fingerpost.

Descend into Ashdale, a reasonably open dale lined by trees and with a broad track. At a three-way fingerpost by a bench, turn right for "Helmsley 2 miles".

After about 1½ miles, as the trees on the right peter out, turn right where a three-way fingerpost indicates "Helmsley ½ mile". Helmsley is now visible.

Follow the yellow arrows as they zig-zag the path around the edge of the fields, coming out in Warwick Place. At the road junction, turn right and follow Canons Garth Lane. Turn right at the next road junction by All Saints Church then first left on to Cleveland Way where you started.

