


This walk description is from happyhiker.co.uk

Howsham to Kirkham Priory

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Howsham Bridge (SE 732625)
Ordnance Survey map	OS Explorer 300 - Howardian Hills & Malton
Distance	7.6 miles
Date of Walk	8 August 2018
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This walk is a leisurely circular ramble in the Howardian Hills of North Yorkshire. It starts near the historic Howsham Mill and goes via the sleepy hamlet of Crambe before arriving at Kirkham Priory, where there is an excellent lunch stop available at the Stone Trough pub. There is then a short section of about a mile and a half of road walking before crossing Spy Hill to enjoy the views.

Howsham Mill is an ornate Georgian Gothic edifice on a small island in the River Derwent originally built in 1755, to mill flour for the Howsham Estate. This activity continued until 1947 after which it became derelict. Between 2003 and 2006, the Renewable Heritage Trust restored the mill. It is now used as an environmental education centre and also generates hydroelectricity using an Archimedes screw. This can be seen from the riverside path which my route follows.

Crambe is a quiet hamlet, its main street dominated by the tower of St Michael's Church. There is not much to see here but it is worth a wander, just to experience the tranquillity of the place.

Kirkham Priory is Grade 1 listed and under the care of English Heritage and can be explored by payment of a modest charge. It was an Augustinian Priory until, as with most such places, Henry VIII came along with his wrecking ball! The most impressive part of the site is probably the medieval gatehouse. You get a good view of this in passing, without having to pay!

The walk starts from a rough lay-by adjacent to Howsham Bridge. The easiest way to describe the way there, is to turn east off the A64 dual carriageway for Barton-le-Willows (signposted). In the village, turn right at the give way sign, then continue to follow this road, soon coming to a road sign for Howsham 2 miles. Stay on this road until you reach the river bridge over the River Derwent. There is a yellow Private Fishing sign opposite the lay-by, adjacent to the walkers' gate through which the walk starts. There is a bit more parking immediately across the bridge.

A word of warning. There was a section of footpath badly blocked by brambles. I was able to get through at a cost of scratched legs (it was shorts weather!) but a pair of secateurs would have been handy! The offending section has been reported to North Yorkshire County Council on 26 August 2018 and acknowledgement received but if there is still a problem at the time of your walk you might like to repeat the exercise.

Start: From the parking area (SE 732625), go through the walkers' gate following the fingerpost for "Kirkham Abbey 3 miles". Follow the path alongside the river and through a kissing gate at the end of the first field.

Continue by the river, passing at the other side of the water, Howsham Mill and its Archimedes screw.

Continue to follow the riverside path until you get to another walkers' gate. Here, if you look left, not especially clear in the trees, there is another gate (SE 732631). Go through this and turn right following a yellow arrow and the right hand boundary of the field.

Follow the path to the road. The continuing route is straight across the road. The walkers' gate was somewhat buried in the hedge. This is the section where you might need the secateurs!

On reaching the farm (Crambe Grange), keep straight ahead through two gates.

At the end of the next field, turn right at the corner and through another walkers' gate (SE 727632).

Follow the path into the field and follow the hedge on the right hand side. Part way along the field, there is a gap in the hedge and a fingerpost for "Crambe". Go through the gap and turn left, now following the left boundary of the field.

Keep straight ahead to the railway line which you need to cross with care (SE 727637).

At the end of the first field, cross the access track to Clay Hall. Keep straight ahead, crossing another track to Hilside Farm. Follow the left boundary of the field to arrive at a third very clear broad track (SE 727643) and turn right along it to Crambe hamlet. You will pass a fingerpost for a bridleway on the left to "Whitwell-on-the-Hill ½ mile" but ignore this and continue straight ahead on the main track.

Shortly after going through a gate, turn right on a grassy path to follow the fingerpost for "Crambe ½ mile". The path leads down through a small clump of trees and up a bank at the other side.

At the road, turn right for a look at Crambe, though continuation of the route is left at this point and after going through a gate, there is fingerpost straight ahead for Whitwell-on-the-Hill. However, despite the direction of the arrow, the path is actually from the top right hand corner of the field. Go through the gate here and follow the left hand boundary of the fields as they curve right.

At the road (Onhams Lane), turn right for Kirkham.

As you cross the railway line, you may notice the blue plaque on the signal box. This indicates that the signal box was awarded a National Railway Heritage Award (NRHA) in 2011 for its refurbishment.

Continue along the road, passing and maybe patronising Kirkham Priory and the Stone Trough pub. Continue on the road to the village of Westow, turning right at the 'T' junction and passing the Blacksmith's Arms.

About half a mile after the pub, look out on the right for a broad track, just after a traffic sign warning of oncoming vehicles in the middle of the road and indicated by a fingerpost for "Howsham 2 miles" (SE 755646).

Follow the right hand boundary of the field and over Spy Hill, from where as the name might suggest, there are good views.

Go straight over Spy Hill and down the other side, until you meet a fence. Turn left to follow it.

Go through a gate at the end of the field and turn left along a forest track.

The track divides at a bench. Take the right hand path (SE 746641).

At 'T' junction of paths, turn right.

As you get close to the end of the trees, look out for a walkers' gate on the left. Go through this and follow the path down, to cross a stream by a small lake (SE 742634). Beyond the lake, follow the path to a gate/style in the top right hand corner. Cross the stile and turn left to follow the left hand boundary of the field.

Go through the gap at the end of the field, then turn right to follow the right hand boundary. Go through a number of gates until you join the drive to an attractive bungalow and turn left.

At the road, turn left (SE 737629), through Howsham village and right at the next road junction to return to the parking.

