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## Markington Circular

<b>Starting point and OS Grid reference</b>	Markington War Memorial Institute car park (SE 288651)
<b>Ordnance Survey map</b>	OS Explorer 299 – Ripon and Boroughbridge or OS Explorer 298 - Nidderdale
<b>Distance</b>	8.5 miles
<b>Date of Walk</b>	18 March 2015
<b>Traffic light rating</b>	

**Introduction:** This walk from Markington, between Harrogate and Ripon is a leisurely amble in pleasant if unremarkable countryside. However “unremarkable” does not mean boring because there are two significant points of interest, namely Markenfield Hall and How Hill Tower. The walk is on easy to follow paths/tracks with some road walking but on very quiet lanes. The walk could easily be extended to take in Fountains Abbey if desired.

Markenfield Hall is a little known and rare moated medieval farmhouse which has survived largely unspoiled as a private house and working farm since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Its isolation probably contributes to its survival, as a turnpike act of 1777 diverted the main road away from it and it was largely forgotten. Its water filled moat still survives.

A Hall is mentioned on the site in the 1086 Domesday Book. It has had a colourful history too involved to go into here.

The Hall is open to the public on only a few days each year and if you can time your walk to coincide, you could be in for a rare treat. I have looked round in the past and it is truly memorable. Please remember it is a private house so you will need to leave your muddy boots/rucksacks as directed by the owners.

For more information about the opening dates and history, see [www.markenfield.com](http://www.markenfield.com).

*NB my photos of Markenfield Hall were taken on different days.*

How Hill Tower sits on the site of the Chapel of Saint Michael de Monte, which was originally built about 1200 and was given by Robert de Sartis to Fountains Abbey. It was repaired or rebuilt between 1494 and 1526 by Abbot Marmaduke Huby. The tower itself was built by John Aislabie between 1718 and 1723 as part of the first phase of the garden at Studley Park. Fragments of the ruined chapel were incorporated. It was used as a gaming house 1737-8.

There is an inscription on the south face which reads SOL DEO HONOR MH ET GLORIA. On line translation services translate this as “God The Glory and Honour MH” – MH perhaps referring to an individual. If any Latin scholars know better, please let me know.

The tower is built on a small hill in otherwise fairly flat countryside so there are 360° views from the top – or would be on a clear day. I was not so lucky!

There are no facilities during the walk. There is a picnic table and a bench as indicated in the directions, where you could enjoy a picnic.

There are two pubs in Markington, the Yorkshire Hussar Inn and the Cross Keys Inn but check opening times before relying on them.

The walk starts from the attractive village of Markington. There is a car park at the Markington War Memorial Institute, next to the sports field. To get to Markington, turn west off the A61 between Harrogate and Ripon at Wormald Green where signposted.

You could begin the walk by just crossing the sports field and picking up the walk where marked # but then you would miss the heads!

**Start:** From the car park (SE 288651), turn right and walk along the road. Just after the primary school, turn right at the road junction for “Fountains Abbey 2½ miles”. Cross the stream and then turn right on a broad track following the public footpath sign. Watch out for the heads.

On arriving at the sports field, continue straight ahead, following the left of the field. At the top of the football field, climb some steps (#). There is a post at the top with a yellow footpath arrow indicating the way. Keep to the right of a hedge straight ahead.

In the next field, follow the path which is initially to the left of the power lines. Follow the path to the road.

At the road (SE292658), keep straight ahead along it, ignoring a path off to the left. Follow the road to a cross roads then branch off left on to a broad track, a few feet **after** the left turn at the cross roads (SE 294662). Don't turn left at the cross roads themselves.

When the broad track narrows to footpath width, turn right over a stile to follow the direction of a yellow footpath arrow across the middle of the field. Markenfield Hall soon appears in the distance. Follow the obvious path to it.

At the barns at Markenfield Hall (SE 294673), turn right and at the end of the last barn, turn left through a metal gate, again following the yellow footpath arrow. The path runs up the right hand side of the property and if you peer over the wall, you can see the moat.

On arriving at the corner of a wood, turn left, then over a stile and left again.

Continue past the next farm (Bland Close on the OS map) until you reach the drive to it. Turn left along it.

Just as the drive crests a slight rise, turn left just before a picnic table, to follow the public bridleway fingerpost (SE 295685).

The relatively rough track gives way to tarmac. How Hill Tower is visible on the hill top ahead. Follow this quiet lane for a further mile and turn left at the 'T' junction (SE 277670). Within a matter of yards, turn right through a walkers' gate on to the National Trust permissive path to the tower. It initially heads towards the trees before curving right to the tower.

From the tower, retrace your steps to the road and turn right. You now follow the road for about three quarters of a mile, passing the left turn for Wormald Green and Markington.

Immediately after passing a bungalow on the left, turn left on the broad track, following the public bridleway sign (SE 273659).

Follow the bridleway along the edge of the trees and go through the gateway just beyond the trees to follow the right hand boundary of the field. When you get to the buildings of Haddockstones Grange, go to the right of the stone barn.

At the road, go straight across along the broad track opposite, passing a bench. Stay on this clear track and at the end of the band of trees on the right, turn left. Follow the track to a 'T' junction of tracks. Turn right then immediately left to follow the left hand boundary of the field.

As you approach the buildings of High Cayton, look out for a gap in the hedge just before the power lines and turn left (SE 286643). After the next power pole, turn left again along a pretty obvious track. It leads to a gate and through this, follow the somewhat threadbare hedge on the left. At the end of the field turn right and go through the gateway on the left, marked with a blue arrow.

Follow the clear route through the yard at Hinks Hall.

When the track joins a road, turn right along it and follow it round to the main street through Markington. Turn right back to the car park.

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