Arncliffe to Litton

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Old village pump at Arncliffe (SD 932718). On street parking.
Ordnance Survey map	OL 30 Yorkshire dales – Northern and Central area
Distance	7.6 miles
Date of Walk	29 July 2016
Traffic light rating	🟡 🟢 🟡

Introduction: This walk from Arncliffe tales you up to the ridge, Old Cote Moor Top, between Littondale and Wharfedale. It affords super views to Buckden Pike and beyond in one direction and to Pen-y-ghent, with its distinctive profile, in the other.

After passing some interesting weather eroded rocks and the trig. point on Firth Fell, it descends to the pretty village of Litton where refreshments can be obtained at the Queens Arms.

The return path is along the picturesque Littondale, following the River Skirfare. This route crosses the river via some substantial stepping stones but if the river is in spate, it would be advisable to cross over the bridge in Litton and follow the south side riverside path from there back to Arncliffe.

Those of you with long memories may recall that the Yorkshire Dales village of Arncliffe was made famous in the early days of the TV series Emmerdale, when its pub the Falcon Inn was used as a film set. The pub is on the village green.

The walk itself is easy to navigate. There is quite a steep climb to the ridge and a descent to Litton hence the amber traffic lights.

The walk starts from the old village pump in Arncliffe. To get to Arncliffe, turn off the B6160 Threshfield to Kettlewell road on a sharp bend, where signposted. Can also be approached from Malham Tarn. Parking on street.

Start: Head north from the village pump, taking the lane between the cottages. Follow it along and turn left briefly at the road and over the bridge across the River Skirfare.

Almost immediately, turn right through a slit stile on to a footpath, following the fingerpost for "Kettlewell $2^1/_3$ miles" (SD 932720).

Follow the path along by the river, over a tarmac lane and through another stile following the fingerpost for "Kettlewell 2¼ miles".

The path now starts to climb to Park Scar, passing through trees and involving a tiny scramble over some limestone rocks (SD 938721).

After going through a gate, the path starts to level out, crossing moorland. Shortly after going through a kissing gate, look out for a broad grassy path through the

heather on the left, leading to a fingerpost (SD 942721). The fingerpost is a little difficult to spot and simply says "Footpath". Continue beyond it in the same direction as you approached.

As you approach the summit, pass through two gated step stiles. After the second, you are on the ridge top and you start to get views down into Wharfedale. Turn left to follow the ridge wall (SD 952722).

Continue to follow the wall along the ridge, crossing a path which runs from Arncliffe to Starbotton.

At SD 933743, where the wall runs to a corner, cross a ladder stile. From here, you need to head about 30 ° left of your approaching line of travel (295° magnetic). I give this detail because when I did the walk, the path was not immediately clear. However, it soon becomes obvious. It leads to another wall, where you turn right to follow it.

At SD 926748, you reach the trig. point on Firth Fell.

Less than two hundred yards beyond the trig. point is a walkers' gate (SD925749). Go through this and follow the path which is initially paved with flagstones. Follow the obvious path down to Litton which becomes a green, walled track before passing straight through a farmyard. Follow the farm drive to Litton, where it emerges next to the Queens Arms where excellent food/beer was to be had.

The route continues left along the road for only seventy-five yards or so before turning right to follow the fingerpost for "River Skirfare Ford Crossing" (SD 908740) (there are stepping stones).

Cross a grassy walled track and continue ahead down to the river and cross via the stepping stones. Once across, turn left to follow the clear path back to Arncliffe.