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Lothersdale Loop

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Triangular parking area on road at east end of Lothersdale (SD 961460)
Ordnance Survey map	OL 21 South Pennines
Distance	12 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: I call this the Lothersdale Loop because it is nicely alliterative and because it is a loop! The walk takes in Lothersdale, Pinhaw Beacon, Thornton-in-Craven, a stretch of the Leeds Liverpool Canal and Earby. It is an easy walk through pleasant countryside with a spell of moderate ascent out of Earby.

Lothersdale is one of those places that is almost a myth. It is not somewhere you go through on the way to anywhere else and the chances are that if you arrive in Lothersdale, that's where you are going. It is not that easy to find. It is a tranquil untouched by time sort of place. According to the oracle of Wikipedia, no house in the village is connected to mains water. This has had the effect of limiting the amount of development that has taken place.

Unfortunately on the day I did the walk, the weather did not live up to the BBC promise so I must apologise for the relatively poor photos but hopefully they will whet your appetite for what could be!

The most straightforward way to get to Lothersdale is from the A629 Keighley to Skipton Road. Turn off at the roundabout on to the B6172. At the A6068 Colne Road turn right. Pass all the shops than at a mini roundabout, turn right on to Wheatlands Lane. A "through traffic" sign further on directs you on to Park Road. This becomes Lothersdale Road. Follow the road signs to Lothersdale.

As you descend into the village just after a left hand bend, look out for a large triangular shaped lay-by with a bench. This is the best place to park.

Start: Walk down towards the village and just past the village hall, look out for a finger post on the right indicating Public Footpath Pennine Way, White Hill Lane $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile (SD 959460). Take this path which leads via a walled lane to a gateway and turn left signed Pennine Way (the walk actually follows the Pennine Way as far as the Leeds Liverpool Canal).

Follow the fence line up the hill and then a wall on the left crossing a small stile on the way. Continue following the Pennine Way signs crossing a minor road (SD

957469) on to a concrete farm track. Where this bends left, continue straight on through a gate.

Follow the wall on your left on to open moorland passing some grouse butts. At the junction of paths on the moor where there is a wooden post with a “dogs not permitted” sign, follow the main track straight ahead to the trig point at Pinhaw Beacon (SD 944472).

From the trig point, take one of the paths ahead (they meet a few yards on). The track turns right at the corner of a wall still following Pennine Way signs and leads to a road. Carry straight on down the road until the Pennine Way bears off to the left signposted Thornton in Craven 1 ½ miles.

Over the next ladder stile keep to the wall on the right and ignore the path which forks off to the left and at first glance appears to be the main track. Follow the wall down until the Pennine Way turns right over a narrow single plank bridge then turns left to follow the wall now on your left. The wall runs out in a large grassy field. Head slightly left following the route of the power lines and through a kissing gate at the bottom of the field (SD 919484) by Brown House Farm. Turn right and follow the farm lane until it exits into a minor road. Turn left under the old railway bridge.

Climb the lane but as you come into Thornton-in-Craven, look out for the Pennine Way finger post on the right. The path climbs the grassy banking. Cross the main road and go up Cam Lane.

Stay on Cam Lane past some cottages and farm buildings. The Pennine Way turns right (SD909495) just after a newish barn – a sign indicates that the lane ahead (which you are leaving) is private to Langber Farm **ONLY!**

Follow the footpath to the canal (SD 906504) where you turn left leaving the Pennine Way which goes right. Walk along the canal until you reach the road and turn left (SD 898493). About 250 yards along the road is a finger post on the left indicating your route to Church Road ½ mile.

You will soon see the tower of St Mary’s Church. Head for it and go through a metal gate in the church grounds wall. Pass by the church tower. To the right in the churchyard is an unusual small round stone building. This is a covered well going back to Saxon times and is worth a look. The building itself dates from 1764.

Leave the church yard by the gate into the main road. Across the road, a fingerpost indicates the continuation of the walk. Cross the field to [Thornton Hall Farm](#). In summer this is a country park where you can feed animals etc. Cross the car park and follow the footpath to Earby avoiding the very busy with lorries main road.

Exit on to the main A56. Almost opposite is School Lane (SD 906470). Follow this down. Cross the beck and follow the road round between the factory buildings under the overhead “corridor” between two of them and at the mini roundabout, take the

second exit, Water Street. There is now a fairly lengthy trudge along this street and Stoney Bank Road which it becomes.

Follow the road which is more or less straight and quite steep for about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile until it turns a sharp right hand bend. This is the tricky bit. On the bend to the left, is a short lane leading to some cottages (SD 916464). There is an easily missed small green footpath sign on the lamp post. Take this lane for about 50 yards, ignore the gateway and footpath indicators ahead of you and turn right up a steeply sloping concrete path. Although it looks as though you are going into someone's private property, pass in front of the house. Just past the house, bear right and the path continues up the hill on an enclosed track with a fence on the left and a stone wall on the right.

As the path opens into a steep field continue up just passing the end of a wall which juts into the field. There is a narrow stile in the stone wall straight ahead at the top. Beyond this, the path becomes a sunken lane bearing slightly to the right. The lane opens out into rough pasture through a gate. Keep straight ahead keeping a stone wall to your right and ignore the ladder stile immediately on the right.

Stay on the obvious track heading towards the radio mast. At the top of the next field turn right then almost immediately left. This takes you to a road where you turn left towards the mast (SD 933459). Just before the mast, turn right where indicated by a public footpath finger post (SD 935461).

At a very scruffy farm, bear slightly left and go through a gap in the collapsed wall. Go down the hill, under the power lines towards the left hand side of the next farm. Over a stone step stile in the wall next to the farm then turn immediately right. Diagonally across the next field there is a stile in the wall (or gate if you prefer). Over the stile, turn right and head down towards the road.

Across the road turn right then immediately left through the farm gate. Follow the lane down past the old barn. The track zig-zags through the farm before turning right and passing an unusual barn with what looks like a church tower. Exit into the lane and turn left.

At the next junction by the gateway to Raygill Fisheries (SD 949461), turn left and follow the road back into Lothersdale.

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