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## Middleham to East Witton

<b>Starting point and OS Grid reference</b>	Market place, Middleham (SE 128878)
<b>Ordnance Survey map</b>	OL30 – Yorkshire Dales Northern & Central & OS Explorer 302 – Northallerton & Thirsk
<b>Distance</b>	5.8 miles
<b>Date of Walk</b>	23 August 2024
<b>Traffic light rating</b>	

**Introduction:** This easy, circular walk from Middleham takes you to the lovely village of East Witton. In parts of the walk, you follow the course of the River Cover, a tributary to the more major River Ure. There are great views on the walk, not least as you leave Middleham.

Middleham is the centre of racehorse country and is famous for its massive 12th Century castle, the childhood home of Richard III. It is greatly out of proportion to the relatively small village. It is in the care of English Heritage.

The village has an attractive cobbled centre and Georgian houses and cars can be parked free in the market square and on the main street. Public toilets and a selection of cafes/pubs are available both at Middleham and, as a bonus, there are two further pubs on the walk at East Witton and Cover Bridge.

East Witton is a gorgeous village with attractive cottages around a very long village green on which are a couple of taps once supplying the water supply. At one time, the village had its own racecourse and even coal mines nearby! At the end of the village is the Blue Lion pub, a former coaching inn (good beer!). The green has a number of benches should you want a picnic spot.

A short distance from East Witton, you will pass the Cover Bridge Inn, which also serves good beer. Yes; I sampled both!

The walk starts from the cobbled market square in Middleham. To get there, take the A6108 from either Leyburn to the west or Ripon to the east and follow the signs.

**Start:** From the market place, walk up the main street, in the direction of the tourist sign for Middleham Castle.

Just past Central Stores, turn left up a narrow cobbled street passing Castle Keep Tea Room.

Walk past the castle and continue ahead on the broad track.

Go through a gate into a field and keep straight ahead following the right hand boundary.

Over the brow of the hill, keep straight ahead gently dropping towards the river.

When the path divides (SE 127867), branch right and as you get to the trees, bear right to follow their boundary.

Shortly before the end of the trees, turn left over a stile marked with a yellow footpath arrow through the trees.

Almost immediately, cross a second stile and follow the well worn track downhill. Cross a stile with blue arrows and turn left passing a bench and cross the bridge (SE118865) (Hullo Bridge).

The path follows the direction of the river initially then branches right up a bank, where you cross a stile and turn left.

Cross another stile and bear slightly right, to reach the far right hand corner of the field, to cross a footbridge. (Note: This bridge had suffered damage caused by a fallen tree, which had both blocked it and squashed the sides inwards, necessitating some 'mountaineering'. If you find it repaired, I would appreciate being advised so I can remove this note).

Go over a stile after the bridge and turn left.

Continue following this obvious path, eventually to another stile and walk along by fir trees with a wall on the right.

Go through a gated step stile and keep straight ahead.

At a stone barn, keep ahead to the end of the next field and then turn right to the road, where you turn left into East Witton (SE 140860)..

East Witton has a very long village green with a road down each side of it. Keep to the left one. The continuation of the route is about half way along this road on the left, next to the old Wesleyan Chapel, indicated by a fingerpost for "Cover Bridge" but if you want to visit the pub (Blue Lion), it is at the end of the village green on the left.

Follow the path through the fields down to the river and turn right to follow it (SE 142867).

At the road, turn left over the river bridge then left again, passing the Cover Bridge Inn. Immediately after a bungalow next to the pub, turn left through a slit stile.

The path now follows the course of the river for just over half a mile. After crossing two stiles in quick succession, follow the path to the end of the next field, where you turn right for a few yards before turning left (SE 137868).

Follow the boundary of the trees to the end of the field then from the corner, bear right in the next field.

Cross a stile and bear right to the opposite corner. The path is well worn and you should by now have sight of at least the flagpole at Middleham Castle.

Go through a walkers' gate and turn right along the path you followed past the castle on the outward journey, to return to the centre of Middleham.

