

Brackwalks



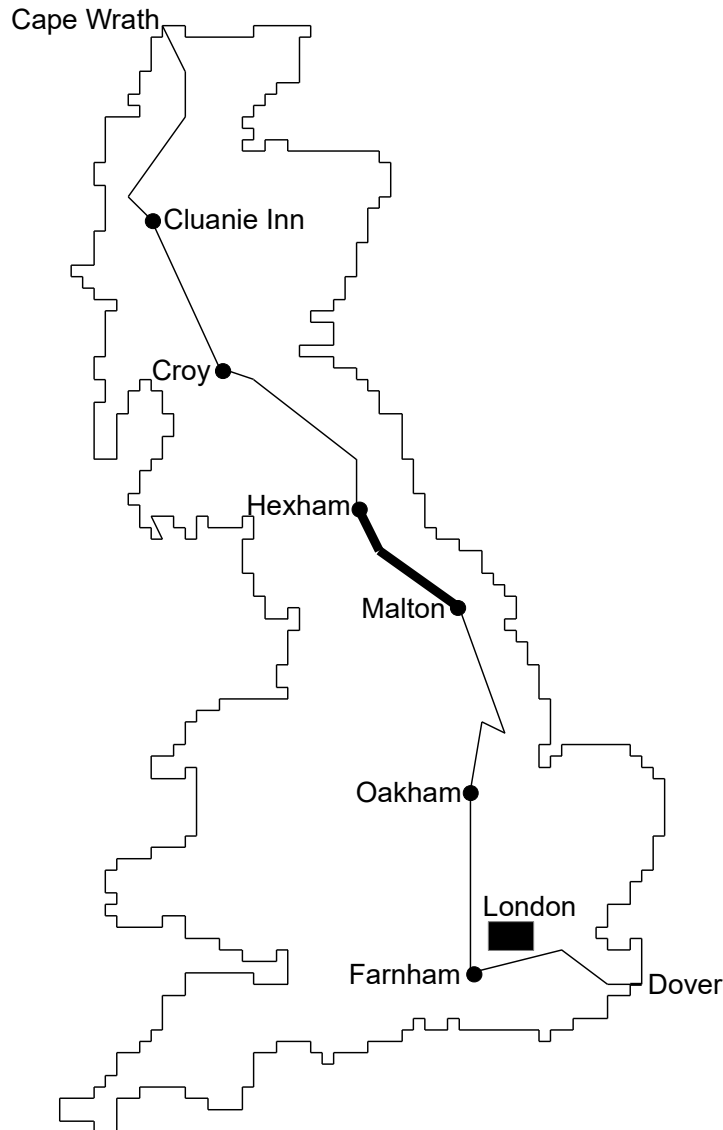
From FORELAND to CAPE

- an end to end walk across Britain from
South Foreland (Dover) to Cape Wrath

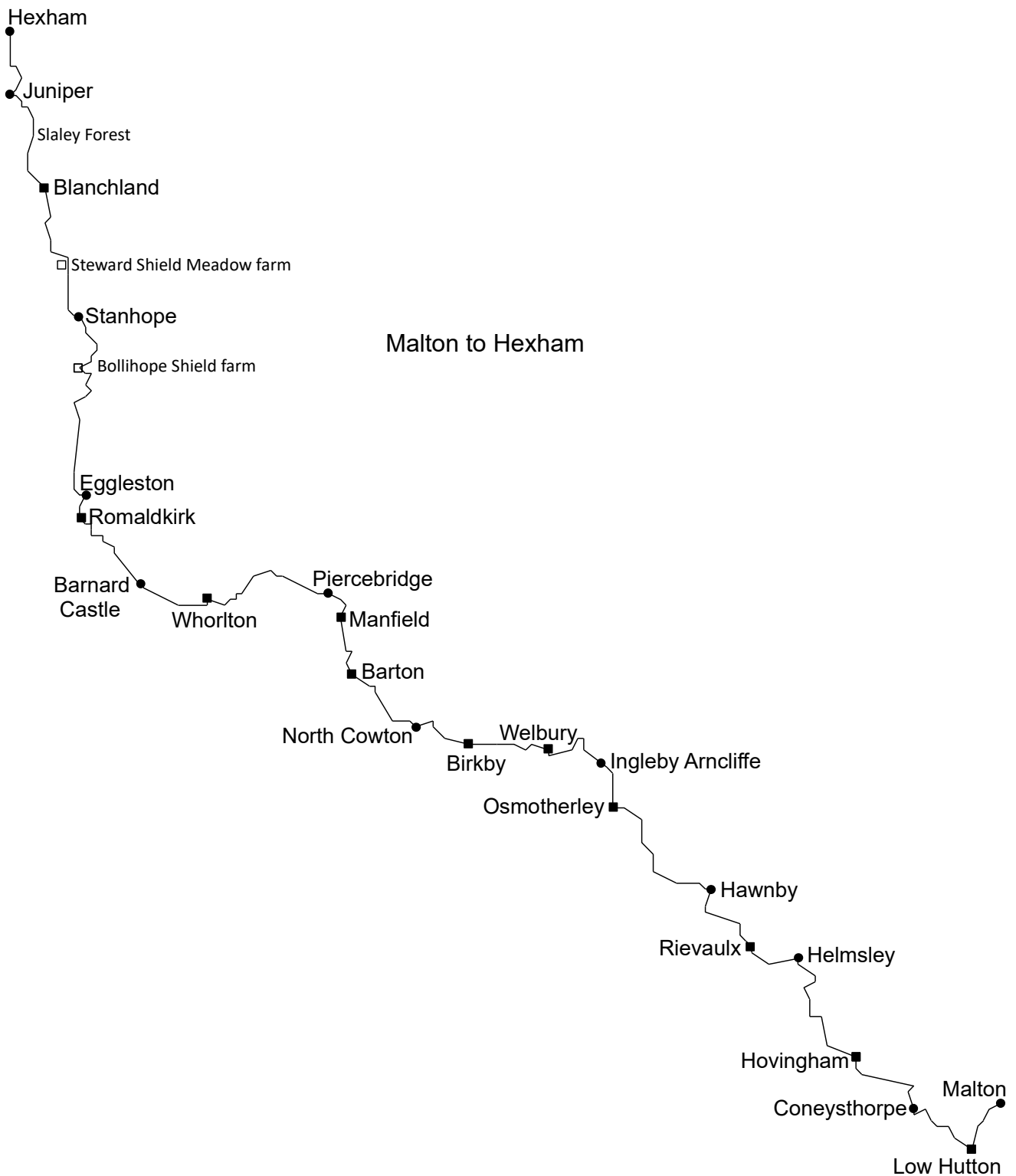
Linda Brackenbury

Disclaimer: All details are given in good faith. However no activity can be completely hazard-free so undertaking any part of this route is done entirely at your own risk and I accept no responsibility for errors, loss or injury however caused.

Part 4 Malton to Hexham (122.2miles)



This is a splendid section, full of contrasts, which makes its way north-westwards across North Yorkshire and County Durham to finish at the southern end of Northumberland. It starts in the market town of Malton, north-east of York, and after following the River Derwent passes through the grounds of the Castle Howard estate to nearby Coneysthorpe. The route then makes its way across the Howardian Hills area of outstanding natural beauty to the small market town of Helmsley. Helmsley marks a change to the start of more rugged countryside with the route crossing the North Yorkshire Moors north-westwards to meet and follow the Cleveland Way into Osmotherley. The National Park is left after Osmotherley with the route then heading through a little walked area of North Yorkshire as it makes for the River Tees where County Durham is entered. A far from dull walk along the Tees to beyond Barnard Castle ensues, before the route takes to the rugged moors both south and north of Stanhope to reach Blanchland just inside Northumberland. It's then just a few miles to the market town of Hexham with its impressive abbey. Both Malton and Hexham have a relatively good rail service, the former is served by trains between Manchester and Scarborough while the latter is on a line connecting Carlisle to Newcastle-upon-Tyne.



Stage 40: Malton to Coneysthorpe 8.2miles, ascent 218metres (710ft), descent 175metres (570ft). Explorer 300 (Howardian Hills); Landranger 100 (Malton).

Malton has good transport connections and it is assumed that walkers starting this section will be able to reach it by lunchtime so allowing the afternoon for the relatively easy walk to Coneysthorpe. Although Coneysthorpe is almost due west of Malton, there are no paths in

this direction; it's surprisingly difficult to find a walking route to get out of Malton westwards, unless one is prepared to brave busy roads. So the route takes to the riverside path along the River Derwent which goes almost south-westwards before turning south. The river is left (and the route finally turns north-westwards) to pass through Low Hutton village and after crossing the A64 continues on into and through the grounds of the Castle Howard estate. Coneysthorpe is a small unspoilt picturesque village without a shop or inn although it does have accommodation.

Route: From meeting the road at the end of the last section, turn left for the station and right for the town of Malton. However, the stage continues opposite left down Riverside View. Keep right to pass right of a children's playground and reach an embankment which is followed. On reaching a fence, descend to the grass track to the right and follow it leftwards. The track soon becomes a field path which runs close to the River Derwent. Continue by the river and eventually pass under the railway line. Shortly after, cross the river by a walkers' suspension bridge (SE 766 677) and veer right on a track which becomes a lane into Low Hutton village. Keep right at the war memorial to reach a T-junction (near the telephone box) and go right then immediately left, signed for York. Follow the 'major' road through High Hutton to the A64 (4.4miles).

Take bridleway opposite left. After passing through a short stretch of rough ground to a gate, take the descending track beyond to meet an access track. Turn right and immediately after passing a cottage, turn left on a signed bridleway. Pass the cottage buildings and continue along a right hedge on a grass track. Swap hedge sides at a hedge gap and follow the left hedge to and beyond the field corner. A short distance after the corner, look for a bridleway signed off left over a plank bridge (743 695). In the field entered, follow the right hedge (towards buildings) and continue westwards by the right hedge in the next field to reach High Gaterley. Go straight on, signed to Low Gaterley.

At Low Gaterley, keep left and the access track becomes a surfaced lane. Follow the lane (south-of-west) up the side of a wood for a short distance until there's a sign off right onto a good track signed to Coneysthorpe (732 694); the Centenary Way is rejoined here. The track shortly leads to the back of Low Gaterley farm and at a cross-track by a large barn, turn left as directed; Castle Howard's Mausoleum is visible on the hill to the left. Keep to the main (good) track and pass through the farm buildings of Bog Hall to reach a signed track/path junction just afterwards. Take the good track (westwards) signed to Coneysthorpe. Turn off the track at a sign to Coneysthorpe (719 706) to take a half-right trodden grassy way which soon meets an estate track. Turn right here; there are views behind of Castle Howard and views left of Great Lake. Follow the track to a walkers' exit gate onto a road. Turn left briefly, then right passing the village green of Coneysthorpe.

Stage 41: Coneysthorpe to Helmsley 14.3miles, ascent 425metres (1380ft), descent 425metres (1380ft). Explorer 300 (Howardian Hills), OL26 (North York Moors – West); Landranger 100 (Malton).

This is a good, relatively easy walk. From Coneysthorpe it follows the Centenary Way as it ascends and then follows the wooded ridge running along the Howardian Hills; these are not high hills being only around 100metres (320ft). When the Ebor Way is met, this is taken and the route descends into the delightfully quaint estate village of Hovingham; it is a village well used to catering for large numbers of visitors while still retaining its communal identity. The stage continues along the Ebor Way through farmland before ascending to skirt round Oswaldkirk village. There's then further farmland before a path beside the River Rye leads via a disused railway line into the small market town of

Helmsley where there is much accommodation and a good range of shops.

Route: The Centenary Way leaves Coneysthorpe from the back left of the village green. Take the signed track ahead and quickly branch left, as directed. Descend to cross a stream and almost immediately veer right into an ascending between-hedges track which continues heading northwards towards a wood. When the track enters the wood, it immediately meets a track. Turn left briefly and then right as signed and ascend on a clear wide track through the wood. At the top of the ridge meet a track and turn left, signed to Slingsby Bank. The track follows the top of the ridge and meets a road. The track continues opposite (signed) and follows the ridge, with a wood to the left. Go straight on at a cross-track, signed for Hovingham and similarly at the next signed cross-track. At the next signed cross-track (having a sign right to Wath), go straight on signed Centenary Way and descend the ridge to a gate onto open ground. Cross this open ground along the right fence and shortly cross a brook. Go straight ahead and almost immediately pass through a walkers' gate and ascend through a shrubby area to shortly reach an unsigned grass cross-track. Go straight on until a major track junction having a track opposite and a major track to the left and right. Here leave the Centenary Way which turns left and join the Ebor Way by turning right (bridleway sign). Follow bridleway signs or signposts to Hovingham. The track leaves the forest and continues as a good farm track through fields to meet a lane. Turn right towards Hovingham and shortly take a tarmac path cut-off left to meet a B-road. Turn left through lovely, classy Hovingham village (5.3miles).

Pass two pubs and immediately after passing a tea-room on the left (excellent), turn left on a bridge over the brook and go left on the lane. Follow the lane by the brook but then take the lane off right at a Rights of Way sign. When the lane shortly finishes, turn half-left on an Ebor Way signed bridleway which very shortly reaches a cross-track. Go straight on (signed) along a good track and later when the track forks, turn right as signed. The track soon curves left (signed). Continue past a house keeping to the major track to reach a lane in the small village of Cawton. Turn left for 1/3mile and turn off right at an Ebor Way sign to Oswaldkirk. The track leads into a field where the field side is followed to a gate. Beyond, follow the right hedge (sign) and continue round the corner (sign) to a bridge over a brook. Cross as directed and follow the good track beyond along the right hedge. The track steadily improves and the large village of Oswaldkirk is visible half-left. Eventually the track turns left towards a large farm. Follow it left but before the farm, turn right on its ascending concrete access drive (signed) and meet a B-road (9miles).

Turn left for 1/2mile and at a B-road junction, turn right at an Ebor Way sign to Sproxton. Follow the surfaced access drive of West Newton Grange until it turns sharp right and here go straight on as signed along a left hedge. When the field boundary turns left, turn left with it (sign) following the left fence to its end then turn right (sign) along the left hedge. Cross a ditch and continue down the left hedge to the field corner. Turn right here as signed to continue along the left hedge and soon turn left to a walkers' gate. Through, turn left as signed along a ditch to a walkers' gate and beyond continue to follow the ditch to a farm gate. The right of way follows the left field boundary round two sides of the field, passing the edge of a wood, to a walkers' gate in the far top corner. Pass through and continue along the edge of the wood to meet a good track. Turn left and keep left to come out of the wood.

Shortly after, with the buildings of Sproxton ahead, turn right at an Ebor Way sign (to Helmsley) onto a farm track. When the track turns left into a farm, go straight on and shortly turn left through a farm gate (sign). Turn right along the right boundary to a bridleway sign when go half-left descending on a wide grassy strip to a gate (and re-meet

the wood edge). Through, follow the left hedge down one side to a walkers' gate and beyond go right as directed to another walkers' gate. Through, follow the right fence to a bridleway/path sign and go half-right to shortly cross a substantial footbridge over the River Rye. Over, turn left and follow the path along the river to meet a track. Turn left as signed and shortly when the track curves right, turn off left onto a grass track which keeps with the river. Follow the track until a path fork; the bridge of a disused railway line is to the right. The riverside path used by the Ebor Way can flood when it's very wet so although not an official right of way, join the railway line at this point (but see note below) and follow it towards Helmsley; it is clearly walked! The disused line enters fields where the left hedge is followed. The line becomes enclosed and continues along an embankment. Ignore an Ebor Way sign off right and continue along the embankment to a signed track junction. Go straight on, signed Helmsley ¼mile. The track becomes a lane (Sawmill Lane) and meets Station Road. Turn left to the A170 and turn right to shortly reach Helmsley's square Market Place at the centre of the town.

Note: the alternative to the scramble up to join the disused railway line to Helmsley is to pass under the railway bridge and immediately turn left (signed) on a path. Follow the bottom of the railway embankment and join the field path mentioned above.

Stage 42: Helmsley to Hawnby 9.4miles, ascent 557metres (1810ft), descent 449metres (1460ft). Explorer OL26 (North York Moors – West); Landranger 100 (Malton).

The North York Moors National Park is entered at Helmsley and crossed north-westwards to exit just after the moorland village of Osmotherley. The Cleveland Way takes a circuitous route to reach Osmotherley so a more direct route is taken and as Osmotherley is too far to make in a single stage, the small village of Hawnby is used as the stopping point for this stage. It's a fine walk, leaving the Cleveland Way at Rievaulx to follow a good track above Rye Dale. Beyond Rye Dale, the route heads westwards to Murton Grange before turning north on lesser used paths to reach the small farming village of Hawnby which nevertheless has both a tea room and an inn providing meals and accommodation.

Route: Leave the Market Place by the lane top left and quickly meet a road (with Helmsley's Parish Church on the right). Turn right and following signs to the Long Stay car park turn left into 'Cleveland Way' road, also signed 'footpath to Rievaulx Abbey'. Shortly when the road ends, go straight on along a good track signed Cleveland Way. Follow the track to a walkers gate then go left followed by right as signed. Follow the obvious path/track to an access drive and take the signed track continuation opposite. Go straight on at a cross-track to descend from the ridge to the valley floor. Turn left (sign) to take the path parallel to a lane. Join the lane when the path ends and just before the bridge turn right on a lane signed to Rievaulx Abbey, so leaving the Cleveland Way. Follow the lane past the Abbey and ascend but turn off left just after Rievaulx's church on a rough ascending lane which soon becomes a track. Ascend to a track fork after ¼mile and go left (through an open iron farm gate). The track descends to a substantial stone bridge across the River Rye (SE 570 856) (4miles).

Over Bow Bridge, follow the track as it turns right and ascends to meet a good track. Turn right (signed Public Bridleway). There are spectacular views from this track and the abbey can be seen if looking back. Descend then ascend on the track which at times is a rough lane. After a level section, the track descends to Tylas Farm. Here, follow the directional bridleway sign left through a gate (opposite the first of its buildings). Continue on the rough lane and at a fork, branch right through a waymarked gate to stay on the lane and ascend to Barnclose Farm.

Here, curve left round the bungalow to a waymarked gate and take the obvious ascending grass farm track which meets and follows the right fence to a sign post. Turn right as directed to stay with the right fence and then along an old tree line. At the end of the tree line, don't take the field gate but continue to follow the right fence and then a right fence with a broken down wall to a signed bridle gate on the right (562 874). Through, go half-left away from the wall to very shortly meet a track near a track bend. Go left (i.e. straight on) to a marker post. Go half-right as directed (keeping right of a farm building) and soon meet a track with a marker post indicating a bridleway fork. Go left on this on a gently ascending grass track (do not enter the wood). The track reaches a field gate but instead of taking it, continue along the right fence for a short distance to another field gate (waymarked). Pass through and follow the track along the right fence to a field gate. Through the path passes along the edge of a wood (which is on the left). Beyond the wood, a more major track is met. Turn right here (i.e. straight on) along Ox Pasture Lane and follow it out onto a lane (7.5miles).

Turn right, shortly pass the buildings of Murton Grange on the left and soon afterwards reach a T-junction. Take the bridleway track opposite which descends the hillside half-left. At a marker post after ¼mile, leave the track. Go half-right for a few metres then do a hairpin right turn onto a descending track which parallels the track taken above. After descending, the track contours and when Dale Town farm is seen on the left at the bottom of the field, turn left and follow the line of the left field edge to reach the farm (536 886).

Here, pass through the signed walkers' gate into the farm grounds and follow the bridleway signs to pass left of a barn and through a farmyard area to a field gate. Through, bear half-left onto a grass farm track and almost immediately, on the far-end of a left curve, look right for a waymarked field gate at the bottom of a steep grass slope. Make your way to this as best you can and through the gate, ascend steeply following the line of the left field boundary to a bridle gate. Through, follow the right fence to a field gate and then follow left boundaries straight ahead crossing a good farm access drive. Continue ahead by the left boundary (following bridleway signs) and very shortly after crossing another good farm access track, pass through a field gate on the right and follow the bridleway sign to Hawnbly which points along the left fence (with Sunnybank Farm above on the left).

On reaching a field gate on the left bearing both a bridleway and footpath sign, pass through and immediately turn right following the right fence to a stile. Over turn right as directed along the right edge of the field, until a sign indicates that the path curves right over a ditch crossing and then turns left (signed) down the field edge to a stile. Over, go ahead down the left edge before curving left past a marker post to a field gate. Through, follow the path through woodland to a waymarked walkers' gate and follow the River Rye to a footbridge. Cross Dalicar Bridge and meet the lane beyond. There's a tearoom with a small shop about ⅓mile to the right but the way continues on the footpath opposite left. After climbing the bank, go half-left to find a stile which is to the left of the field gate and to the right of the road sign, and reach a lane. Hawnbly's inn is about ⅓mile to the right (providing meals and accommodation) but the route continues down the lane to the left.

Stage 43: Hawnbly to Ingleby Arncliffe 12miles, ascent 572metres (1860ft), descent 652metres (2120ft). Explorer OL26 (North York Moors - West); Landranger 100 (Malton), 99 (Northallerton), 93 (Middlesbrough).

This is an excellent high moorland walk. From Hawnbly, a good track continuation of the 'No Through Road' past Arden Hall is taken which eventually meets the Cleveland Way national trail. The Cleveland Way is then followed through the sizeable village of

Osmotherley (tea shops and accommodation) into Arncliffe Wood. Here, at a conspicuous fork, the Cleveland Way is left for Wainwright's Coast to Coast route which descends through the wood to Ingleby Cross and on to nearby Ingleby Arncliffe. The inn at Ingleby Cross offers accommodation and food and there is further accommodation in Ingleby Arncliffe.

Route: From emerging on the lane, go left and ignore the lane off left after a few metres, in order to go straight on, signed 'Unsuitable for Motors'. When the lane swings right to go to imposing Arden Hall, go straight on, signed to Kepwick and ascend a good unsurfaced forest road onto open hillside. Continue on the good track, ignoring a signed bridleway off left. After the ascent finishes, the track becomes a wonderful traverse across the moors of North Yorkshire. Eventually when it meets the Cleveland Way (3.8miles), join the Cleveland Way by turning right, signed to Osmotherley.

Keep on the main track which follows a left wall. After crossing a cattle grid, fork left as directed to pick up the left wall again. There are good views left over the Vale of York on this section. Eventually the track descends steeply and ignoring turn-offs, continue straight on to meet a lane at a corner. Immediately turn left on a track with a Cleveland Way sign to Osmotherley. The paved path down leads to a footbridge across a stream. Beyond, turn left on a track which passes to the right of a small reservoir and continue on this access track, ascending to meet a lane. Turn left briefly and then go right on a track (Cleveland Way sign). Ascend and ignore the entry to White House farm to go straight on briefly then take a stile on the left (signed) onto White House's drive. Take the drive but just before the house go half-right on a signed path. Follow the trodden path to a gate and then descend on a mucky path by the right fence to a farm track. Take the path opposite, cross a footbridge then ascend through trees to a walkers' gate. Beyond, follow the enclosed path to a lane and take the ginnel opposite to arrive at the road junction in the centre of Osmotherley (8.9miles).

Turn right (north) and continue past the 30mph sign to a Cleveland Way signed track off left. After passing houses it becomes unsurfaced. Ignore a track off right to Lady's Chapel and at the next track junction go right through a gate (Cleveland Way sign). Take the lower track along the left hedge and after passing through a gate, follow a clear track through a field to a gate into a wood. Just after entering the wood, fork left on a forest track, signed Coast to Coast; the Cleveland Way forks right. The forest track soon meets another forest track. Turn left as directed and shortly after branch right. Keep to the major track and eventually pass the entrance to Park House B&B. Continue to a track T-junction and turn left to meet a lane. Turn right and follow the lane to meet a main road. Cross to the lane opposite and shortly reach the cross-road at Ingleby Cross with the Blue Bell Inn on the corner. Go straight on to where there is a lane off right signed 'Ingleby Arncliffe village only' and this marks the end of the stage.

Stage 44: Ingleby Arncliffe to North Cowton 13.8miles, ascent 258metres (840ft), descent 289metres (940ft). Explorer OL26 (North York Moors - West), 304 (Darlington); Landranger 93 (Middlesbrough).

The Vale of Mowbray is to the north of the Vale of York and both vales comprise low lying, fertile farmland. The eastern edge of the Vale of Mowbray is marked by the Hambleton Hills forming the western escarpment of the North York Moors while the Yorkshire Dales signals its western extremity. This stage and the next traverse the Vale of Mowbray using paths, bridleways and quiet lanes linking the small, quiet villages in this area to reach the boundary with County Durham at Piercebridge on the River Tees.

It is not a well walked area, sitting as it does outside the North York Moors and also not on the Coast to Coast route. Fearing that paths were likely to be iffy, the approach has been to take bridleways where possible; these proved to be both passable and in the main signed. However, paths attempted have been more problematic especially one from Deighton village through Mill Hill Farm which was neither passable on the ground or waymarked; the only sign of its existence is confined to the OS maps and there seems little enthusiasm to open it up in order that the map corresponds to what can be done on the ground. The direction in this stage is predominantly just north-of-west and apart from an inn at East Cowton towards the stage end, there are no facilities passed in any of the other villages. North Cowton has a B&B and so makes a good stopping point.

Route: Ignore the lane off right to 'Ingleby Arncliffe village only' and continue for a few metres then turn right (Coast to Coast sign) to meet the busy, fast A19. Cross to the track opposite, to the left of the petrol station. Follow it past buildings and go straight on (not left) through a gate (not signed) onto a good track. Turn left off the farm track (don't go past the pylon) onto another good track and it becomes a signed bridleway. Eventually a house on the left is passed and immediately after, turn left on a signed path through woodland. When a house is met follow the directional sign half-right to meet the house's access track and follow it out to the right to reach a road. Turn left for East Rounton village but shortly turn off left on a lane signed to Welbury.

Follow the lane to a T-junction and turn right briefly then turn off left through a gate on a signed bridleway. Follow the right fence/hedge to a bridle gate just beyond the field corner, then follow the left field edge as directed. Through the next gate, go right then left up the right fence to a substation and meet a farm access drive just beyond. Go straight ahead on the drive. There is a footpath short cut that starts shortly from the drive but involves crossing the fast and busy railway line carrying trans-pennine trains. So it is safer to follow the farm drive to the road, turning right and then taking the first right into Welbury village immediately after a level crossing. However, if you wish to take the footpath shortcut, from the farm drive turn off right over a small plank and stile. In the field entered, go a quarter-left to a stile. Over, continue in the same direction to a stile with a footbridge over a ditch. Continue a quarter-left to a stile onto the railway and cross with great care to an awkward stile. Over, go a quarter-left to a white walkers' gate (just to the left of the white house) and go forward to follow the house's access drive out onto a lane. Turn right into Welbury (5.1miles).

Pass the Duke of Wellington inn and continue past the derestriction sign to a right bend. Go straight on here along an unsurfaced bridleway, named Mankin Lane on the map. Follow the between-hedges bridleway to a track T-junction and turn left on a bridleway signed to Blind Lane. When the hedge ends, go straight on as directed to a bridle gate. Beyond, follow the right fence to a stile off right. Over, follow the directional sign along the left fence and then go a quarter-right (as signed) to find a stile at the far end of the field, to the right of Deighton's church. Cross a small piece of ground to a stile (which can be a quagmire) and then go forward to meet a lane.

The map shows a path leaving from opposite the church to Mill Hill Farm but there's no sign of it. This makes it necessary to reach the A167 by road, albeit a quiet lane. So take the lane opposite right signed to Salutation Farm and follow this to where it meets the A167 at Salutation Farm (NZ 353 026) (8.8miles). Go right briefly then turn off left onto a good farm track (bridleway sign). When the track turns left, go straight on ascending along a grass track to the right of a tree line. Pass through a gate and go just right of straight ahead descending to planking across a stream. Pass through a walkers' gate and up the

the left hedge, curving left at the end to a walkers' gate. Beyond, go straight on (westwards) along the left hedge to a signed gate on the left at the field end. Then go through the farm gate immediately ahead and out onto a lane. Turn right through (tiny) Birkby, pass under the railway line and continue on the lane to East Cowton village.

At a T-junction in East Cowton, turn left (signed for N Cowton). Pass the (welcoming) Beeswing Inn and continue on the road towards North Cowton, passing to the right of East Cowton's church. Ignore the first footpath off right with a cemetery just beyond. Just after the road bends left, turn off right on a signed footpath track. Follow the track up to a track junction just before Cackleberry Farm. Turn left here on a signed footpath up a field along the right hedge to a footbridge. Across, go ahead to resume along the right hedge in a westerly direction. A left hedge follows. Turn left at the bottom of the field (sign) and follow signs directing walkers through a concrete yard, keeping left of all farm buildings, and finally curving right to a stile by a farm gate onto a B-road. The path continues over the stile opposite left and follows the right fence to a 'stile'. Over, the path follows the right fence to a stile onto an enclosed path. At its end cross a stile and follow the tarmac path to a pavement which is followed meet Hollywell Lane at a triangular junction in North Cowton. The route continues by turning right but the main part of the village lies straight ahead across the triangular junction.

Stage 45: North Cowton to Piercebridge 11.1miles, ascent 200metres (650ft), descent 203metres (660ft). Explorer 304 (Darlington); Landranger 93 (Middlesbrough).

This stage continues the crossing of low lying farmland as it makes its way north-westwards and then north to Piercebridge (which is about 5miles west of the centre of Darlington). Again the choice is to use bridleways in preference to footpaths wherever possible. However from North Cowton, only footpaths leave in the desired direction and of the two footpaths, one is completely impassable so the other is used. As the described path also wouldn't win a prize, lane walking may be a preferable alternative and the distance involved is about the same. Fortunately, after the first path from North Cowton, the path/bridleway situation is noticeably better on the remainder of this stage.

The route heads for the sizeable village of Barton which boasts a village shop and after crossing over the A1(M), the route turns northwards on good bridleways leading to the smaller village of Manfield; its Crown Inn is unlikely to be open on a weekday when you pass. After Manfield, it's a short distance to reach the River Tees and then take the path leading to Piercebridge which has accommodation.

Route: From the triangular road junction in North Cowton, turn right and take the first signed footpath off left, just after Holywell Farm. In the field entered, go half-right to a fence and follow the fence to the right to a stile on the left. Over, turn right and follow the right field edge to a waymarked gate. Through, go a quarter-left on a cut crop path to a stile. Over, go a quarter-left to a stone ladder stile leading to a crossing of a disused railway line; this can be overgrown so it may be necessary to fight your way down to the line and then up using the stone steps provided to reach a good cart track. The track along the right hedge is taken past a wooden chalet onto a lane. Turn left. After 0.6mile there's a lane off left to North Cowton which is where the footpath route and the lane alternative meet; for the lane alternative continue on the lane through the village to a T-junction. From the meet up point go straight on (footpath route) or turn left (lane alternative) signed for Richmond. Shortly after, ignore a signed footpath off right and carry on to a small bungalow on the right.

Immediately after the bungalow, turn right on a signed bridleway. Follow the access track to a fork (with a 10mph sign) and go straight on (left of the access tracks) into a field. Go straight on as signed to a signed bridle gate gap, then it's straight on along a field headland, turning left at the field bottom to follow the right fence for a short distance. Immediately after a hedge off right, turn right through a signed bridle gate gap and then follow the right hedge north-northwestwards. Pass through a field gate gap and take the farm track straight on. This shortly passes to the right of a bungalow and then meets a good concrete access track. Turn left then right along this concrete track. Almost immediately after the next right turn of the track, turn left (passing to the left of a white house, Home Farm) and follow the access track through imposing stone pillars out onto a road (NZ 252 072).

Turn left for a short distance then turn right on a signed footpath onto the access drive of Moor Farm. When the drive turns right, go straight on along the left hedge briefly and take a half-right grass strip to a stile. The right of way continues in the same direction to the top left field corner but if the field has crops, it's probably easier to follow the left field edge round two sides to the corner, in which case you will be following a ditch along the second side. In the field corner, the ditch water flows into a more major ditch which runs at right angles to the minor ditch. Cross the minor ditch in the field corner and cross into a field so as to follow a right hedge which runs west-northwestwards alongside the major ditch. Continue on along the right hedge and catch a rare sighting of a waymark just before a farm access drive. The path continues opposite left through a gateway and then resumes along the right hedge for two fields. In the subsequent field, go straight on as directed to meet a grass track, turn left for a brief distance on this then veer right to a visible stile in the left hedge. Over, go straight on round the field along the left edge to find a stile by the farm gate onto a lane. Turn right into Barton. Ignore a lane off right to proceed down Marygate, cross a ford by a footbridge and continue up to a T-junction with a busy road (5.5miles).

Turn right, pass the Post Office cum Village Stores and turn left up Church Lane. Soon cross the A1(M) and about 360metres further on, turn right on a signed bridleway passing an estate lodge. Follow the surfaced estate lane to its end at Brettanby Farm. Go straight ahead to the left of the farmhouse and shortly afterwards turn left on a good farm track between farm buildings and a barn. Beyond, continue straight on along the good farm track and at the end of the second field, turn off right on a farm track beside the left hedge. At the field end, follow the track as it swings left. Continue on the track to pass through the farm buildings of Grunton Farm and meet a track. Turn left and follow the track which becomes a lane. Continue northwards along Cottagers Lane to the village of Manfield. Ignore a lane off left to keep moving northwards and reach a cross-road in the village centre (9miles).

Here, go straight on past the Crown Inn and follow the lane right and then left. The lane becomes a good cart track and is followed to a Private Road sign when turn left through a farm gate onto an enclosed grass track. Pass through a waymarked field gate and follow the right hedge as directed across two fields with the River Tees visible below on the right. Go through a field gate and follow a grass track which curves right descending. The right of way descends to Holme House Farm and then turns left to pass through the left of two white gates and out onto the farm's access drive. Go straight ahead to pass right of Holme House and then turn left on its access drive to meet a B-road. Turn right and cross the bridge over the Tees into Piercebridge in County Durham.

Stage 46: Piercebridge to Barnard Castle 12.7miles, ascent 388metres (1260ft), descent 280metres (910ft). Explorer 304 (Darlington), OL31 (North Pennines); Landranger 93 (Middlesbrough), 92 (Barnard Castle).

This is an excellent walk largely following the well-signed Teesdale Way (TW) to Barnard Castle. The TW is however left for a shorter alternative path into the pleasant village of Whorlton (inn) with the TW rejoined shortly after. The stage also passes through Gainford village which has a tearoom. Any expectation of a dull, flat riverside walk is quickly dispelled as there are many ups and downs, with the path sometimes deviating some distance from the river particularly after Whorlton when the path swaps to the river's south side. This plus stepping stones to cross a side stream adds up to a thoroughly unusual and varied river walk. Enjoy! Barnard Castle is a market town and is also home to the Bowes Museum with its collections of fine and decorative art. As such it makes a good centre for visitors to the area and has a range of shops and accommodation for its visitors.

Route: Having crossed the bridge over the River Tees into Piercebridge, immediately turn left on a signed path; the Teesdale Way (TW) sign is a dipper bird on a stone surrounded by water. Follow the enclosed path onto an enclosed lane. The lane becomes a good enclosed track which turns right at the end of a building to a walkers' gate. The enclosed track continues beyond (sign) to a walkers' gate. Through continue along the obvious well trodden path with the River Tees down below on the left. The path follows the Tees closely but then cuts across a curve in the river before returning to it for a short distance. It then leaves the Tees to pass to the right of trees and after turning left to cross them enters a field. Cross the fields on the trodden path then turn right to the main A67 road and turn left (pavement) into Gainford village

Take the first left past The Lord Nelson pub and take the No Entry street passing the Post Office and the Laurels Tearoom. At the War Memorial curve left and continue up to the main road. Turn left out of the village and immediately before a bend sign, turn left on a signed path. Follow a lovely path by the river then at the Spa Bowl turn right up steps to the main road (3.5miles); the bowl with its natural mineral spring is a reminder of Gainford's Victorian history as a spa village. Turn left on the main road, pass a layby then pass a milestone and then turn left on a signed footpath. Just as the path appears blocked, turn right down steps (sign) to the river. Turn right and follow the obvious path along the river. After ascending, ignore a lane to the right and continue straight on descending steeply on a gravel path. Continue on the path to meet a B-road.

The path continues opposite. Continue until a left turn over a plank bridge and after by the left field edge. The path turns right up into a field then follows the left edge to a lane (effectively cutting across the field). Turn left for a short distance, passing chalets then turn right into a field at a TW sign and follow the left field edge. On reaching a farm track, leave the TW by taking the stile opposite right (NZ 130 153). Make for the large field gap opposite by passing the telegraph pole and then converge on the old right field boundary to find a marker post on a grass track which follows the old boundary to the field gap. Don't go through the gap but turn right up the left hedge. Pass through a gate and follow the track along the left hedge to Low Barn farm. Pass through a farm gate and go straight ahead to pass left of the farmhouse and continue westwards on the good farm track. A mile after Low Barn ignore a track off left and curve right to cross a bridge and ascend up to a road junction in the village of Whorlton (8miles).

Turn left, pass its inn and continue to a steep hill sign. A few metres beyond, turn right on a signed footpath and descend on steps to the elegant Whorlton Suspension Bridge across the Tees; the toll house on the north side lists charges that were formerly applied although

these were abolished in 1914. Cross and shortly turn right into a field (TW sign). Go half-left across the field to a wall corner and continue in the same direction to a field gate (sign). Through, cross a rough farm track and go ahead along the left wall. Pass through a gate, pass left of West Thorpe (ruin) and continue along the right wall. When the wall ends, curve left then right round the perimeter of a wood. Beyond, curve left briefly and then turn right over a stile on a signed path with a Mortham Tower sign on the adjoining farm gate. Follow the left hedge until a farm gate with a stone step stile is reached. Beyond, go a quarter-right (as signed) to shortly meet a drive and turn right on this descending to cross a side burn of the Tees by Dairy Bridge. The drive turns right straight after and having reached the Tees, follows the river to a road.

However, don't go on the road but turn right on a TW signed path. When the path enters a field, go ahead as directed along the right edge. At a path fork, branch right (TW sign) and descend to cross a side stream on stepping stones. Thereafter the path follows the line of the river closely. At a path branch, fork right to keep with the river. As a castellated bridge is approached, the path turns back and zig zags up to the road. Turn right over castellated Abbey Bridge. Immediately over, turn left on the TW path. Enter a field and follow the field edge, parallel to the river. The path goes left of wooden fencing and then the iron fencing of a sewage works. At the end of the sewage works, go half-right (leaving the TW) on a trodden path to a walkers' gate. Beyond, continue in the same direction (half-left) on a trodden path passing the corner of a rugby pitch and continuing on to a farm gate in the far right corner of the field; the large building visible on the right is the Bowes Museum. Through the farm gate, turn right on a track to meet a road. Turn left on Newgate and meet a main road with the Market Place at the junction. The shopping centre is to the right.

Stage 47: Barnard Castle to Eggleston 7.5miles, ascent 372metres (1210ft), descent 274metres (890ft). Explorer OL31 (North Pennines); Landranger 92 (Barnard Castle).

It's too far to reach Stanhope in a single stage, so Eggleston makes an appropriate intermediate stopping point being the last place with accommodation between Barnard Castle and Stanhope; it also has an inn (Three Tuns) for an evening meal. This is a relatively short section allowing a morning to be spent in Barnard Castle where the Bowes Museum is worth a look. The north-west route to Eggleston continues along the Teesdale Way and here there is a choice as a route is provided on both sides of river. The south side was chosen as it goes close to the village of Cotherstone and runs through Romalldkirk with its welcoming Rose & Crown hotel; the route on the north side of the Tees passes through no hamlets or villages. Again the route is highly enjoyable and varied but note that the path needs care in places and some fording is required.

Route: Turn right at the circular Market Place, pass the shops and when the road turns sharp right, turn left on a path signed to the riverside and Cotherstone (immediately after the Methodist Church). Descend to the river and follow it right briefly to a footbridge across the Tees. Cross to the south side of the river and on reaching the road, turn right on a signed footpath. Follow the access drive over a cattle grid and beyond, ascend past a house turning off right at a TW sign just after. Follow the trodden path branching left up steps just before an imposing arch of a railway viaduct. The steps lead to a disused railway line. Cross the line to a stile opposite left. Over, follow the right fence for a short distance with the Tees visible a long way below. Swap sides at a signed stile following the left boundary to a stile on the left out onto Towler Hill's farm drive and turn right.

Very shortly turn off left on a farm track (sign) and follow the track along the right fence. When the fence ends, turn right down the right hedge (sign) turning left at the end of the

field to continue along the right fence (sign). Continue along the right fence to a walkers' gate and through descend to cross a small stream then ascend to a walkers' gate into a field. Here, follow the right fence to the corner and turn left to continue along the right fence to a farm gate with a walkers' gate. Through, follow the right fence to a walkers' gate into a wood. Descend through the wood on a clear path to a stile. Then go ahead on a trodden path, cross a stream by a small stone slab and continue ahead to a signpost. Go left up a grass track as directed and having climbed, keep to the top of the bank, parallel to the left fence. After a stile, it's the right fence that's followed to a farm gate by a stone barn. Through, curve right to a stile. Over, go ahead along the right fence and then the right wall (with Cooper House visible ahead).

At a stone pen, go half-left as directed to a walkers' gate (to the left of the house grounds) then turn right down the right wall (with the farmhouse to the right) to a walkers' gate. Through, go down the field along the right fence and carry straight on to a marker post when the fence turns. From the post curve gently right then left to a stile with a footbridge. Beyond, go a quarter-right on trodden grass to meet and follow the right fence, with the Tees just beyond. Cross a stile, go up stone steps and continue on a good track through an old quarry, with the Tees below. The track continues ascending on the stones of an old cart track and meets a good farm track at the top of the bank. Turn right (sign) for a short distance until the track curves left when go right immediately after a barrier and follow the ledge track at the top of the bank to a walkers' gate (sign). Continue on the ledge path along the left hedge/fence. Pass through a walkers' gate and cross an access drive to the path continuation opposite. The path reaches a farm gate with a stile (sign). Over, turn right past farm sheds to a signed farm gate. After, leave the track very shortly when it turns left to go straight on down wooden steps down the bank to a tarmac track at the bottom. Go right for a few metres on the tarmac and then turn left to a footbridge of the River Balder which flows into the Tees.

On the other side of the bridge, turn right on a path along the Tees. Ignore a footbridge over the Tees to continue along its south side and soon the path curves up left to a stile (sign). Over, the path goes a quarter-right to meet a stile in the right fence and beyond turn left along the left fence to descend to stepping posts across Wilden Beck. Beyond, cross a stile and continue along the right fence for a short distance to a path fork. Fork left, uphill, on a trodden way towards a stone building but then veer half-right to a gap at the end of its wall onto a short enclosed track. At the track end, enter a field and go ahead parallel to the right boundary and keeping left of Wodencroft's farmhouse reach a farm gate with signs to its left. Don't go through but turn right through a gate and pass down the left fence to a gravel drive.

Go down the drive and pass to the right of a barn (signs). Cross a stile and follow the right fence to a farm gate. Through, follow the right wall to a farm gate (TW sign) and take the path down to and along the river (Tees). The path becomes quite difficult and requires care as it passes over rocks, crosses a stream then ascends to an undulating narrow path partway up the river bank. After crossing a brook, pass the end of a wall and continue along a wider track by the river to a signed stile by a farm gate. Follow a right wall then a grass track, veering left to the buildings of Low Garth. Pass down the left side of buildings to a signed stone step stile and take the farm track beyond. Just after the track curves left, go half-right up the bank to a signed walkers' gate. Through go a quarter-left to a walkers' gate and then continue in the same quarter-left direction to a signed farm gate onto an enclosed track which emerges in the village of Romaldkirk (5.7miles).

Go straight ahead (towards the church) to meet a more major road. The Rose & Crown is

to the left but the Teesdale Way turns right down a 'No Through Road'. Shortly turn off left at a TW sign onto an enclosed track which descends to cross Beer Beck on a plank bridge then turns right by a left wall to a signed stile on the left into a field. Cross the field a quarter-right towards a telegraph pole, to find a stone stile in the left wall of the field (to the right of the pole position). Over (sign), turn right to follow the right edge (although the trodden path cuts the corner) to a stile. Over, follow the right edge on a trodden path which then makes for the left of a small house and out onto a B-road. Turn right over Eggleston Bridge. Ascend and at a 'Give Way' sign turn left on a pavement to meet a B-road (signed to Middleton-in-Teesdale). Turn left and take the first right to meet a B-road; the Three Tuns Inn is to the left as the B-road is approached. The route turns left on the B-road but turn right for Eggleston's B&B.

Stage 48: Eggleston to Stanhope 12.9miles, ascent 603metres (1960ft), descent 652metres (2120ft). Explorer OL31 (North Pennines); Landranger 92 (Barnard Castle).

This is a moorland walk from Eggleston in Teesdale to Stanhope in Weardale. Most of this and the following stage is through the North Pennines area of outstanding natural beauty. This is a rugged, high uplands area, where there are more hardy sheep than passing walkers; paths away from supported routes may well be unwalked, unsigned and in a poor state of maintenance or impassable. The Teesdale Way is followed initially but left for a path up on to the moorland of Eggleston Common. The Explorer map shows a track following the line of the B-road over to Stanhope for some of the way and the plan was to use this; the track is not shown on the Landranger map. There is an intermittent track on the ground but route finding here is not a problem as the B-road is normally in sight, being rarely more than 125metres away. The B-road is eventually left for a good track through an old quarry area to the Bollihope Valley. From here paths ascend to meet the Weardale Way (WW) which is followed into Stanhope.

Only the most up-to-date maps show the revised route for the Weardale Way arising from quarry workings which have affected the original route. The WW can be more aptly described as the Weary Way since there is a lack of signing and what signing there is is sometimes misleading. In addition, some of the route appears overgrown from lack of use and some of the paths are in poor condition. So the route requires careful attention to the map and directions plus care during walking; 5-figure grid readings from my GPS are given where helpful to aid navigation. Stanhope can be clearly viewed from meeting the WW but getting there is a long process. Stanhope has accommodation and quite a good Co-op shop.

Route: Pass the Three Tuns Inn and at the B-road met turn left. Shortly turn off left on Balmer Lane (a 'No Through Road'). Pass Balmer Farm then at the street name sign of South Terrace, branch left at a Teesdale Way sign onto a path along a right wall. When the wall turns go half-right to a stile (sign) and beyond follow the path along the hillside which descends to a walkers' gate (to the left of a house). This leads onto an access track which is followed down to a lane. Take the 'Unsuitable for Motors' rough lane opposite (pass the entrance to Bendholm Caravan Park). Descend, fording the stream at the bottom (or use the footbridge on the right) and continue on the main track which bends left. Ignore a footpath signed off right which isn't do-able and shortly reach a footbridge on the left spanning Eggleston Burn. The burn is then followed to rejoin the lane on the other side of a ford and the rough lane is ascended to a minor road.

Leave the Teesdale Way here by turning right. Shortly cross Eggleston Burn on the weak (for cars) bridge and immediately turn left on a signed path. Follow the (discernible) main

path which follows the line of the burn. Initially high above the burn, the path drops and after crossing a wall continues by the burn (intermittent path) and ascends to a stile. Over, take the stile immediately right, leaving the burn. In the field entered go half-left, ascending (no path). After crossing a small side stream, continue in the same direction to a small dip and beyond, pick up a grass track and come close to a top fence which is followed leftwards. Contour following the line of the right fence to reach a field gate and through continue contouring along the right fence. Immediately past a barn, turn right through a field gate and take the track up the field (with a fence on the right). Pass through the gate ahead and continue along the track to exit onto the B-road to Stanhope (NY 990 258) (1.7miles).

Turn left and shortly cross a cattle grid. Just after, go half-right to a grass track which runs parallel to the road and turn left on this. The track goes due north, involves rough and boggy walking and is not always obvious but is never far from the B-road. The track passes left of a field and later just after passing to the right of a sheepfold, the track becomes gravelled. When the gravel track curves left, continue straight on along the moorland track. Cross a gravel track and continue ahead northwards eventually losing height to converge on the B-road at the start of a left curve (995 294). Turn right and just after the left bend, turn off half-right to a track which follows a groove in the hillside. Turn left on this; it goes just east-of-north as it gently diverges from the road. After reaching the track top, continue in the same direction to re-emerge on the B-road at another left curve (997 306). Turn right for 260metres to just beyond the left curve and turn off half-right on a signed footpath (996 309); the sign is shortly after a track goes off right. The footpath follows a groove in the hillside north-northwest; the map suggests it's part of a Roman Road. Maintain the same direction on the descent as the ascent and re-meet the B-road at a path sign just before yet another left bend (993 316). Turn right and pass a sign at the road summit announcing the transition from Teesdale to Weardale.

Start to descend but shortly turn off right on an excellent stone track (991 321). Follow the track which passes above two reservoirs to meet a more major track. Turn left and follow the excellent and wide track through a disused quarry and on along the Howden Burn. Eventually the track becomes a lane, passes some houses and turns left to a minor road in the Bollihope Valley (8.4miles). Turn left and after nearly ½mile turn right down the access drive of Bollihope Shield Farm. Twist right round its farmhouse and immediately left to an unsigned farm gate leading on to an ascending half-right grass track up the open hillside. Follow the track which becomes a path north-eastwards to meet a good stone cart track where a path crosses it (NZ 00528 35573). Turn left on the signed northwards path which is discernible on the ground. At the path summit, Stanhope can be seen half-left ahead. Continue northwards descending and just after the summit when the path branches, take the right fork (east-of-north) to a wall turn (00556 36293) where the Weardale Way is joined (10.2miles).

From the wall turn, follow the right wall down and very shortly pass through a signed walkers' gate. Go half-left as directed across a large field to a ladder stile in the bottom field corner; if stuck, head for the power lines. Over, ignore the WW sign pointing half-left, instead turn left down the left boundary and about halfway down the field, look for a well hidden walkers gate on the left (there's wooden fencing around a hole to the right). Pass through to the other side of the wall and immediately turn right along the right boundary of a rough and uneven path. Follow the path down with care (if stuck keep close to the right boundary). Just before reaching a fallen tree, look on the right for a well disguised stile. Over follow the left field boundary to a field gate with a stile just to its left. Through the gate, take the track straight ahead towards ruins. Pass through a gate and meet a track.

Turn right to a gate but don't go through. Instead turn left along the right fence to a stile and enter the field on the right. Turn left along the left fence to a ladder stile just to the right of the corner. In the large field entered, go a quarter-right to a gap in the tree line and cross Cow Burn; there's a waymark on the other side. Continue in the same direction to a wall turn with a field gate and stile just to its right. Over, head a quarter-right to a field gate (no discernible path and need to wade through rough, long pasture). Take the track beyond the gate with relief and cross a gravel track to the farm track ahead. Pass to the right of Parson Byers farm, cross its access track and take the gate (or stile) opposite. Go half-right across the field following the line of the telegraph poles to a stile onto a lane.

Turn left and when the lane shortly swings right, continue straight on through a caravan park keeping to its main access. Finally when Hazel Corner is signed off on the left, go ahead through a gate onto a good woodland path with the River Wear below on the right. When a field is entered, follow the left boundary to steps over the Weardale heritage railway line. Over, follow left boundaries to a stile out onto a lane which is followed to shortly reach a footbridge over the River Wear. Over the footbridge, turn right on the riverside promenade and follow it when it bears left to meet the main road in the centre of Stanhope.

Stage 49: Stanhope to Juniper 16.2miles, ascent 689metres (2240ft), descent 757metres (2460ft). Explorer 307 (Consett), OL43 (Hadrian's Wall); Landranger 92 (Barnard Castle), 87 (Hexham).

This is a walk of two distinct parts. The route starts by following the Stanhope Burn northwards and again the paths on the map appears not well walked on the ground. Things improve when the disused railway from Rookhope (formerly used to transport ironstone) is reached; at around 480metres (1560ft) this high level line across bleak moorland is now part of a much used coast to coast cycle route. After a stretch on the railway line and then on the road that descends Dead Friar's Bank, a good bridleway leads into the charming estate village of Blanchland (tearoom), just inside Northumberland; Dead Friar's Bank is said to be named as bells from Blanchland Abbey enabled a Scottish raiding party lost on the bank in the mist to locate and plunder the abbey killing several monks.

There's a noticeable difference in the standard of path signing and maintenance having entered Northumberland and Blanchland marks the halfway point of this stage. Blanchland is a (small) delightful estate village (well worth a look); it's full of olde worlde (listed) cottages built from the stone remains of its 12th century abbey and its inn, the Lord Crewe Arms, also dates from this time. Beyond Blanchland, a path and a good moorland track lead into Slaley Forest. Beyond, the moors are left for well-managed farmland with paths and tracks leading to the hamlet of Juniper where there's B&B accommodation.

Route: Retrace your steps along the riverside promenade but instead of crossing the footbridge continue to meet a lane. Turn right to shortly meet the main road through Stanhope. Turn left, shortly cross the Stanhope Burn and immediately after turn right on a signed footpath along the burn (NY 990 393). Follow the track as it curves left still by the burn. It continues as an enclosed path away from the burn and enters a wood on a good trodden path. The path descends to a footbridge (986 404) across Stanhope Burn and then ascends the steep steps ahead to meet a rough lane. Turn left. Keep to the east side of Stanhope Burn through quarry buildings and just after the last building on the right, turn off right on a wide stony track. Ascend to a field gate and through follow the track to where it curves right. Leave it here for a grass track off left which contours the hillside. The path

deteriorates but is clear. Ignore a track up the hillside to continue contouring northwards following the line of Stanhope Burn.

Just past a farm on the hillside across the burn, the path forks. Descend to the burn and follow it until further progress is blocked and it's necessary to climb 'inland' to proceed further. Make your way above the burn and then descend to a side burn of Stanhope Burn named East Whitely Burn which has to be crossed. This is quite hard walking but avoids having to ford Stanhope Burn to the west side and then having to ford back to the east side again. Having crossed the East Whitely Burn (988 426), follow the east side of Stanhope Burn for a short distance to just before some huts and turn right on a good track with a foundation. Ascend and take the first branch left off it and follow a contouring moorland track which runs parallel to the burn below on the left. The track eventually descends to cross another side burn named West Whitely Burn (983 431); there's an old rudimentary stone bridge just to the right.

Over, pass through the waymarked field gate and follow the farm track then the left wall up a long field (away from the burn) to a signed farm gate on the left near the top of the field. Through, follow the track (parallel to the right wall) towards Steward Shield Meadow farm. Pass through a gate on the right at the end of the field and beyond, follow the farm track to the farm's access track and turn right on this, passing through the farm's entrance gate (the right of way keeps to the right of the farm). The access drive twists as it ascends to lessen the gradient. Cross a cattle grid and keep going. Turn left off the drive at a small waymark post onto a multi-user track along a disused railway which served the mines in the area (984 444) (4.2miles); this track is reached before the farm's access drive meets the road.

Follow the track which is mostly a path to meet a wide gravel track and turn right to meet a road at a corner (972 453). Go left and walk north on the road. Eventually cross a cattle grid and beyond, ignore the first bridleway signed off right but very shortly afterwards take the second bridleway off right (964 476); the turn off is $1\frac{2}{3}$ miles from where the old railway track met the road. Follow the good, gently ascending track (with a foundation) to a track T-junction and turn left (bridleway sign). Descend by the right fence to a walkers' gate. Pass through and continue northwards along the right fence to a field gate. Enter a field and again keep with the right fence still descending; Derwent Reservoir can be seen by looking half-right. At the bottom of the field pass through a gate onto a lane. Go straight on (right) and when a road is met, turn left into Blanchland, leaving County Durham for Northumberland.

Pass the courtyard and reach a road junction with the welcoming tearoom in the old school opposite (9.1miles). Pass to the left of the tearoom and take the first lane right but immediately turn off left on a signed path. The track twists right then left into a wood. At a three-way path junction, take the leftmost path and ascend north-northwest on a clear path parallel to the left wall. At the next waymark keep left as indicated and ascend to meet a track. Turn left and when a notice indicates no public access, turn right a few metres to a path fork. Go left here and follow the left fence. The path curves left to a field gate and take the grass track beyond curving right along the front of a house to a field gate. Through, turn left passing the buildings of Shildon to reach a good track.

Turn right. When the track curves right to turn into Pennypie House, go through a gate on the left and turn right on a good moorland track which initially is along the right wall (sign). Keep to the major track which goes northwards towards Slaley Forest and enters it at a field gate with a byway sign. When the forest track soon meets a track, turn left to maintain the northwards direction. Ignore turn offs to continue northwards and the track becomes a

lane. Eventually descend a long hill and near the bottom on a right curve go left on a signed footpath. Follow the trodden path, which goes generally west-northwestwards, branching left at any forks to find a marker post marking the descent through denser forest to a lane and turn left; if the footpath is missed, continue on the lane and take the first lane turn off left.

Follow the lane as it turns right to Middle Dukesfield. Here turn left on a signed footpath to Dukesfield Hall; this is the hall's access track. At Dukesfield Hall farm (B&B) keep left of the farm buildings, cross a stream and shortly after the track forks. Turn right on a good descending farm track and part way down, the track meets and follows Hall Burn. Follow the track all the way down to meet a good forest track which follows Devil's Water (which Hall Burn flows into). Turn right to shortly meet a road. Turn left crossing Devil's Water and ascend, taking the first road off right which is signed for Juniper. Follow the lane to Rowley Burn. Cross and immediately take a signed footpath off right. Follow the trodden path by the burn to a walkers' gate. Through, go up the steps (sign) and pass along an enclosed path to a walkers' gate. Beyond, go half-left across a field to a stile then follow the well trodden path along a right boundary to meet an access track. Turn left and steeply ascend to the lane through Juniper. Turn right to the next footpath signed off left.

Stage 50: Juniper to Hexham 4.1miles, ascent 160metres (520ft), descent 246metres (800ft). Explorer OL43 (Hadrian's Wall); Landranger 87 (Hexham).

This is a short but good stage offering walkers the option of returning home the same day, exploring the large touristy market town of Hexham with its abbey, or continuing with the next stage of the walk which is another short section. This is a stage largely using paths crossing farmland apart from a short section through (open access) Letah Wood where the wood entry is via a permissive path provided by Newbiggin Home Farm. From the wood, the route descends to cross West Dipton Burn before ascending the hill overlooking Hexham. It's then downhill all the way using paths which finish just short of Hexham's Market Place.

Route: In Juniper take the signed footpath left (just before Dene House B&B) and follow the enclosed path into a field. Go up the left hedge to a gate on the left then straight ahead along the right hedge to a walkers' gate at the left of the house. Turn right directly in front of the house then left through a walkers' gate at the end of the house. In the field entered go up one side by the left hedge to a kissing gate out onto a lane. Take the track opposite right (sign), go straight on at a track junction (waymark) and then left (sign). Follow the enclosed wide strip to a field gate into a field and go ahead for three fields along the right fence. In the next field go half-left as signed to a field gate in the diagonal opposite corner. Through, follow the right fence to a stile and over, look round the left hedge corner to see the (visible) gate into Letah Wood.

However, from the stile the right of way goes half-left to meet a farm track. From here, turn left on the (permissive) farm track to the walkers' gate into the wood. Beyond, soon cross a stile and follow a good path through the wood, parallel to the brook on the left. The path ascends and at a path fork take the left branch and descend to where a side stream joins the brook. Ford here and just across leave the wood by a gap exit point onto a track. Turn right, follow the ascending track to Hill Road (lane) and take the stile opposite right signed to Hexham. (If the permissive access path is no longer in force, turn right on the farm track met, follow it as it becomes enclosed, keep straight on past the storage buildings of Newbiggin Home Farm and out onto a lane, then turn left for ¼mile and take the first turn off left onto Hill Road for ⅓mile to a stile off right signed to Hexham.)

The field exit gate for the footpath to Hexham can be viewed half-left below but the trodden path to it twists to ease the gradient, starting by going three-quarters left. Through the exit gate, the path continues along the right fence alongside Dipton Burn to a footbridge. Cross the burn here and once over, take the walkers' gate opposite left (sign). The path leaves the burn, passing to the right of Hole House, crosses a footbridge and enters a wood. Ascend steeply on a clear path through the wood and exit the top of the wood via a walkers' gate into a field (sign). The path runs northwards all the way into Hexham and follows the right field edge for three fields (still ascending) to a ladder stile where the side swaps. The left edge is now followed for two fields (still ascending) to a lane marking the top.

The path continues opposite, descending along the left edge of three fields to reach a field gate onto a road. Turn right, pass a road off right (to Juniper) and then Elvaston Road off left. Immediately after, pass through a narrow gap in the left stone wall and follow the enclosed tarmac path down to a street. Turn left to very shortly meet a road and turn right to shortly meet the main road. Cross to Beaumont Street opposite, soon pass Hexham Abbey and reach the Market Place.

The main shopping area is off to the right. However for the train station or to continue on the next stage of the walk, keep right in the Market Place and go opposite right (down the left of the Edinburgh Woollen shop) following the sign to Tourist Information. After passing through an ancient archway join a road (Hallgate) which curves right then left descending to Wentworth Car Park. Pass to the right of the car park on a tarmac track which continues across a road to meet a major road (by the Station Inn). Turn left and Hexham's railway station is soon on the right.