



THIRSK WALKS

50p

Past and Present

A guided walk to historic sites in Thirsk and Sowerby



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Introduction

‘Past and Present’ is a walk around Thirsk and Sowerby to enjoy the town and countryside, but also to learn about local history. It takes in sites of historical and environmental interest. The route is circular, flat and approximately three miles long, but it may be shortened.

The 15 information boards extend from the centre of Thirsk. They include the site of Thirsk Castle and a prehistoric burial mound.

Along the route are Blue Plaques about buildings and people of influence who had connections with the area (see separate walk leaflet).

The walk

Thirsk Castle

To begin the walk go to the west of the Market Place (Ripon direction) and enter Castlegate. Take the alley on the right beside Lee’s butchers which leads to the grassy area of Castle Garth, the site where Thirsk Castle once stood and where you will find **boards 1, 2 & 3**.

Go down the slope and turn right, taking the footpath that leads northwards to join Pick’s Lane, named after a Mr. Pick who had a farm opposite the kissing gate. The farm has been redeveloped and houses built on the site.



From board 13: *In medieval times the land would have been cultivated using a wooden plough and a team of oxen. The action of ploughing over the years left furrows where the earth was cut along the length of the land and ridges where the soil heaped up beside the furrows. Evidence of ridge and furrow farming can still be seen today.*

Kirkgate

To use the alternative route, which is quieter, but rather narrow in places, follow the public footpath through Croft View, opposite the kissing gate.

For the main route turn right and go down Pick's Lane to enter Kirkgate. Opposite the junction is the site of Rhodes Brewery, now converted into flats. It was one of two breweries that existed in the street. Thirsk Museum is to the right. Thomas Lord, famous for founding Lord's Cricket Ground in London, was born there.

Both routes lead into Kirkgate. At the northern end of the street is the Parish Church built in the Perpendicular style and dedicated to

Saint Mary. Other buildings of interest are the World of James Herriot where Alf Wight (his real name), the famous vet and author, had his surgery and Thirsk Hall, the home of the Lords of the Manor. Walk towards the church and cross the road.

The Holmes

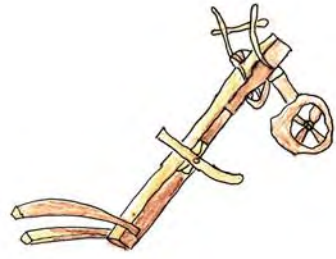
Take the footpath to the left that runs parallel to the main road and is left of the river. Walk for about 300 yards (275 metres) to get to **board 4** positioned near the sluice gate.

Board 5 is nearby, located on the Holmes. Retrace your steps to the eastern end of the church and walk along Marage Road to find **board 6** which is near the Moated Site.



From board 15: *The development of turnpike roads in the mid-eighteenth century made coach travel much easier. Stagecoaches were a popular mode of transport and Thirsk derived great prosperity as a stopping place for coaches. There were three coaching houses of which two – The Golden Fleece and The Three Tuns – still stand today.*

THIRSA Past Present SOWERBY



Heritage Sites

- 1 Castle Garth
- 2 Castle Garth
- 3 Castle Garth
- 4 Sluice Gate
- 5 The Holmes
- 6 Moated Site
- 7 Mill Gardens
- 8 St. James Green
- 9 Little Green
- 10 Canal Wharf
- 11 Pudding Pie Hill
- 12 Pack Horse Bridge
- 13 The Flatts
- 14 Market Place
- 15 Market Place

KEY

-  Main Route
-  Alternative Routes

MAP NOT TO SCALE

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Millgate

Continue along Marage Road to reach Millgate. Cross the road and immediately to the left is **board 7** which is located in Mill Gardens. It gives information about the workings and site of the former mill.

Old Thirsk

Cross the bridge to enter Bridge Street. This leads to Saint James' Green and the adjoining Little Green on the right. These areas are the original site of the town and you will find **boards 8 & 9** here.

Continue in the same direction southwards from the Little Green along the path that leads beside the

river. Note the Victorian houses of The Crescent on the left.

Sowerby Flatts

On reaching Ingramgate cross the road and follow the footpath through the garage premises to **board 10** sited near Canal Wharf.

Follow the grass footpath beside the river. It can be muddy at times. Note that part of the river was straightened in preparation for a canal system.

Take note of the fields on the opposite side of the river which show evidence of the 'ridge and furrow' method of ploughing.

At Lock Bridge there is a choice of routes.



From board 6: *The moated site is situated near a possible crossing point, a ford. The site dates from either the 13th or 14th century and consists of a small level area which lies a few feet above water level and is surrounded by a ditch or moat which can still be seen in wet weather or flood. On it was a homestead or possibly a small manor house, occupied by a burgess or free landowner.*

To use the alternative and shorter route take the right hand footpath across the bridge to cross Sowerby Flatts to get to board 13.

For the main route continue southwards along the path. This follows the river and may be rather muddy after rain. There is much wildlife in the area and kingfishers are often seen.

Bronze age burial mound

Cross the road at Blakey Bridge and make the short detour to **board 11** at Pudding Pie Hill. This is an ancient burial mound, at least 2,500 years old, which is clearly visible from the bridge.



From board 12: *The Pack Horse Bridge formed part of the transport network, providing a link between the Drovers' Road and the larger towns to the west of Thirsk and Sowerby.*

World's End

Return to the main path which crosses pasture land and terminates near World's End Bridge. Cross the road for the Pack Horse Bridge and **board 12**.

Walk over the bridge and take the right hand path which follows a green lane to join Back Lane. The house on the right was once the notable World's End public house.

Sowerby

Turn right and go down the gentle slope to join Front Street, the main street of Sowerby. Turn left and walk up the street.

Notice the timber-framed house on the left at the junction with Gravel Hole Lane and the large houses on either side of the street built by the prosperous business people of the town. Also note the three Regency houses on the right with steps up to the entrance over the basement.

Just before the church on the right is an ancient house called Manor Farm. A building has been on this site since 1304. Note the splendid dovecote in Manor Farm field.

Detour to see St Oswald's Church, dating from about 1140, with its Norman door on the south side.

Continue up the street to find **board 13** which is on the right near the The Flatts. There is a choice of routes from here.

Westgate

For the main route, follow the footpath to the left of the playground to reach Westgate. To the left is the Ritz Cinema, the Town Hall and a little further along, situated in the former Courthouse, the Rural Arts Centre. Return to the cinema, turn left into Castlegate, walk the length of the street and re-enter the Market Place. Here **boards 14 & 15** are located near to Thirsk Tourist Information.

Town End

The alternative route continues along Sowerby Road. On the left are several large detached houses built in the 19th century. Opposite is a row of terraced houses which was known as 'Blue Row', built by a local landowner who expected the tenants to support his political leanings.

At the end of the road is the busy junction of Town End. To the left was the site of Thirsk Town Maltings. Work ceased in 1966 and the area was used for housing. On the land now occupied by Tesco was the end of the Leeds to Thirsk railway line, a goods depot and coal yard. Next to it was the firm of Bamlett's which was famous for producing agricultural machinery. It closed in 1985.

To return to the Market Place go down Westgate to enter Castlegate or cross over the Castle Garth to enter the Market Place and find boards 14 & 15 in the middle.

www.VisitThirsk.org.uk

has everything you want to know about Thirsk:

What's On, Weather, James Herriot, Maps, History, Walks, Accessible places, Children welcome, Dogs welcome, Clubs & societies, Hotels, Bed & Breakfasts, Caravanning, Camping, Restaurants, Inns, Cafés, Shops, Services, Museums and Visitor Attractions.

This second edition was produced by Thirsk Tourist Information, a group of over 30 volunteers who run the Tourist Information Centre in the middle of Thirsk Market Place.

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 **Thirsk Tourist Information**