

North York Moors Walk

Explore Whisper Dales and Broxa Forest

Visit my website for full details: <https://www.paulbeal.com/north-york-moors-walk>

Introduction to the Walk

If you're looking for a rewarding day out in the North York Moors, this route is well worth exploring. It's a scenic circular walk beginning in the village of Hackness, about six miles west of Scarborough. The route heads out along quiet country lanes towards Low Dales and Whisper Dales, before climbing gradually into Broxa Forest. Along the way you'll enjoy peaceful valleys, woodland tracks, and open countryside, with highlights including Barns Cliff End and its far-reaching views over Harwood Dale. The walk loops back via High Dales and Lowdales Farm, finishing where it started in Hackness.

Highlights of the Walk

Highlights of the walk include the tranquil bridleways through Low Dales and Whisper Dales, following Whisperdales Beck as it winds through grassy valley meadows. In Broxa Forest you'll find unusual growths known as Witch's Broom on some of the trees, before reaching Barns Cliff End with its spectacular views over Harwood Dale and beyond. The return leg passes through High Dales, along quiet country lanes, and back into Hackness, where you can round off the day with a look at the village church.

Hackness sits within the North York Moors National Park and has a long and fascinating history. The village was first recorded in the early 8th century as the site of a double monastery, and today one of its most prominent landmarks is St Peter's Church, a Grade I listed building with origins in the 11th century. The church grounds contain fragments of the Anglo-Saxon Hackness Cross, while nearby Hackness Hall, built in the 1790s and restored after a fire in 1910, remains an elegant country house with landscaped gardens.

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Additional Information

- **Distance:** 8¼ miles (13¼ kilometres).
- **Duration:** Approximately 3¾ hours (excluding stops and breaks).
- **Difficulty:** Moderate. The route is mostly straightforward, following quiet lanes, farm tracks, grassy valleys, and forest paths. The climb through Broxa Forest is a little steep, but it is steady and manageable for most walkers with a reasonable level of fitness.
- **Trail Conditions:** Well-defined bridleways, woodland tracks, and country lanes. The road near Lowdales Farm can flood, but there is an easy alternative path around the water along the edge of the adjacent field.
- **Recommended Map:** OS Explorer OL27 – North York Moors Eastern Area.
- **Parking:** Roadside parking in Hackness opposite the village school, close to the road bridge over Lowdales Beck.
 - **Google Maps Link:** <https://maps.app.goo.gl/gkvAx9SzdSzRSHed8>
 - **What3Words:** ///fortnight.intruding.breathy

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Thank you for your support!

Paul Beal



Step-by-Step Directions

Begin your North York Moors walk in the charming **village of Hackness (1)**, located about six miles west of Scarborough. Roadside parking is available near the village school, with a convenient spot opposite the school, close to the road bridge that spans Lowdales Beck. Once parked, cross the bridge and turn right onto a quiet tarmac lane, signposted for Low Dales and High Dales. The lane meanders through peaceful countryside, with the Hackness and Scarborough Tennis Club on your right. Traffic is rare, making this an enjoyable and tranquil start to your walk.

Continue along the lane for approximately a mile until you reach a **wooden footbridge on your right (2)**. This section of the road is prone to flooding, so if conditions are dry, proceed along the tarmac to Lowdales Farm. If the road is submerged, take the public footpath running parallel to the right-hand side of the road, following the edge of a farmer's field. Upon reaching **Lowdales Farm (3)**, the lane bends left, but your route continues straight ahead, following the signpost for Whisperdales. Pass the farm on your right, cross two wooden footbridges, and walk past Lowdales Cottage on your left. Beyond this point, the path opens into the beautiful, **grassy valley of Low Dales (4)**.

Follow the northern route along the bridleway through Low Dales for about three-quarters of a mile, keeping Whisperdales Beck on your left. As you continue, the valley gradually transitions into **Whisper Dales (5)**, another scenic highlight of your North York Moors walk. The bridleway draws closer to the beck before leading you north for another half-mile, following the blue bridleway markers. Walk past Whisper Hill Farm on your left, then begin your **ascent into Broxa Forest (6)** as the track leaves the open valley behind. The climb is gradual, and after about half a mile, the path begins to level out.

At the **T-junction near the top (7)**, turn left just before reaching the main road. If you fancy a break, you can cross the road to a car park viewpoint, where a bench offers a stunning panorama over Harwood Dale. Otherwise, continue west along the broad forest track for about a mile until you reach Ward Hill. Here, **the main track veers left (8)**, but your route continues straight ahead, passing through a barrier onto a wide grassy track. Be cautious not to take the steep bridleway descending Ward Hill, as it leads in the wrong direction.

After another two-thirds of a mile, the track bends left at **Barns Cliff End (9)**, where you'll be rewarded with spectacular views—one of the true highlights of this North York Moors walk. Continue south for another third of a mile until the track narrows slightly. Watch for a **woodland track on your left (10)**, which leads back into Broxa Forest. Follow this track for about a quarter of a mile, arriving at a **crossroads (11)**. Here, turn right, then almost immediately turn left onto a narrow footpath that winds through the woods.

As you walk, you'll notice a steep-sided valley on your left. When the path forks, take the left-hand branch, which descends into High Dales. Pass through a gate and **emerge into open countryside (12)**. Follow the path downhill alongside a fence, joining a stony track near **Highdales Farm (13)**, which will be on your right. The route continues south through the valley, eventually merging with a tarmac lane near the farm at **Newgate Gills (14)**, which sits on your left.

Stay on this **quiet country lane (15)** for just over two-thirds of a mile, bringing you back to Lowdales Farm, where you passed earlier in the walk. From here, retrace your steps along the familiar road for just over a mile, making your way back to Hackness, where your North York Moors walk concludes.

Map of the Walk

