

Hole of Horcum Walk

Discover Skelton Tower and Levisham Moor

Visit my website for full details: <https://www.paulbeal.com/hole-of-horcum-walk>

Introduction to the Walk

This circular walk starts at the North York Moors National Park car park at Saltergate. It drops into the vast bowl of the Hole of Horcum via Low Horcum and its much-photographed stone-walled barn, crosses the valley to a footbridge, and climbs through the tree-lined ravine of Dundale Griff. From there, it follows Limpsey Gate Lane into Levisham, continues along Braygate Lane onto open moorland, and heads for Skelton Tower above Newton Dale. The route then tracks north-east across Levisham Bottoms beneath West Side Brow, with wide views over the moors and the North Yorkshire Moors Railway in the valley below.

Highlights of the Walk

Highlights include the first sweeping view into the amphitheatre from the path near the A169, the landmark barn at Low Horcum, and the steady climb through Dundale Griff. Levisham offers the Horseshoe Inn and St John the Baptist Church with its record of rectors. Out on the moor, the outlook opens towards Cropton Forest and Newton Dale, and from Skelton Tower you can watch the North Yorkshire Moors Railway winding through the valley alongside Pickering Beck, with woodlands banded across the slopes.

The Hole of Horcum, often called the 'Devil's Punchbowl', is a huge bowl-shaped depression, roughly three-quarters of a mile across and about 120 metres deep. It formed through spring-sapping, where water from underground springs eroded the rock over thousands of years.

Visit <https://www.paulbeal.com/hole-of-horcum-walk> for further details.

Additional Information

- **Distance:** 7¾ miles (12½ kilometres).
- **Duration:** Approximately 3¾ hours (excluding stops and breaks).
- **Difficulty:** Moderate. Mostly steady gradients with two short, steeper sections: the climb through Dundale Griff and the final pull back to Saltergate. Suitable for regular walkers with a reasonable level of fitness.
- **Trail Conditions:** A mix of gravel paths, grassy moorland tracks, firm stone or tarmac lanes, and some narrower earth paths. In wet weather, these paths can be muddy and slippery, especially in the valley bottom and through Dundale Griff. Surfaces are uneven in places. Navigation is straightforward in clear conditions.
- **Recommended Map:** OS Explorer OL27 – North York Moors Eastern Area.
- **Parking:** North York Moors National Park car park at Saltergate, beside the A169 at the top of Saltergate Brow.
 - **Google Maps Link:** <https://maps.app.goo.gl/CD8MtiCYAAUYiUWn6>
 - **What3Words:** ///performed.tastings.melt

Support My Work

If you've found these directions helpful or enjoyed this walk, please consider making a £2 donation to support what I do. Your contribution helps me create more free walking guides like this one.

You can donate by visiting <https://buymeacoffee.com/paulbeal> or by scanning the QR code.

Thank you for your support!

Paul Beal



Step-by-Step Directions

To begin your Hole of Horcum walk, park at the North York Moors National Park car park at **Saltergate (1)**. This car park sits beside the A169 Whitby to Pickering road, right at the top of Saltergate Brow. From here, leave the car park, cross the road, and turn right to walk along the gravel path. As the path bends close to the **A169 (2)**, you'll soon reach an information board welcoming you to Levisham Moor.

At this point, turn left and follow the footpath downhill into the Hole of Horcum. You'll pass through open landscape, eventually arriving at **Low Horcum (3)**. Here, pass the stone barn and continue straight across the meadowland, being careful not to take any steep paths leading uphill to your left. At the end of the meadow, go through a gate, entering a wooded area. Keep to the path along a dry stone wall as it continues through the valley, gradually descending toward the valley floor.

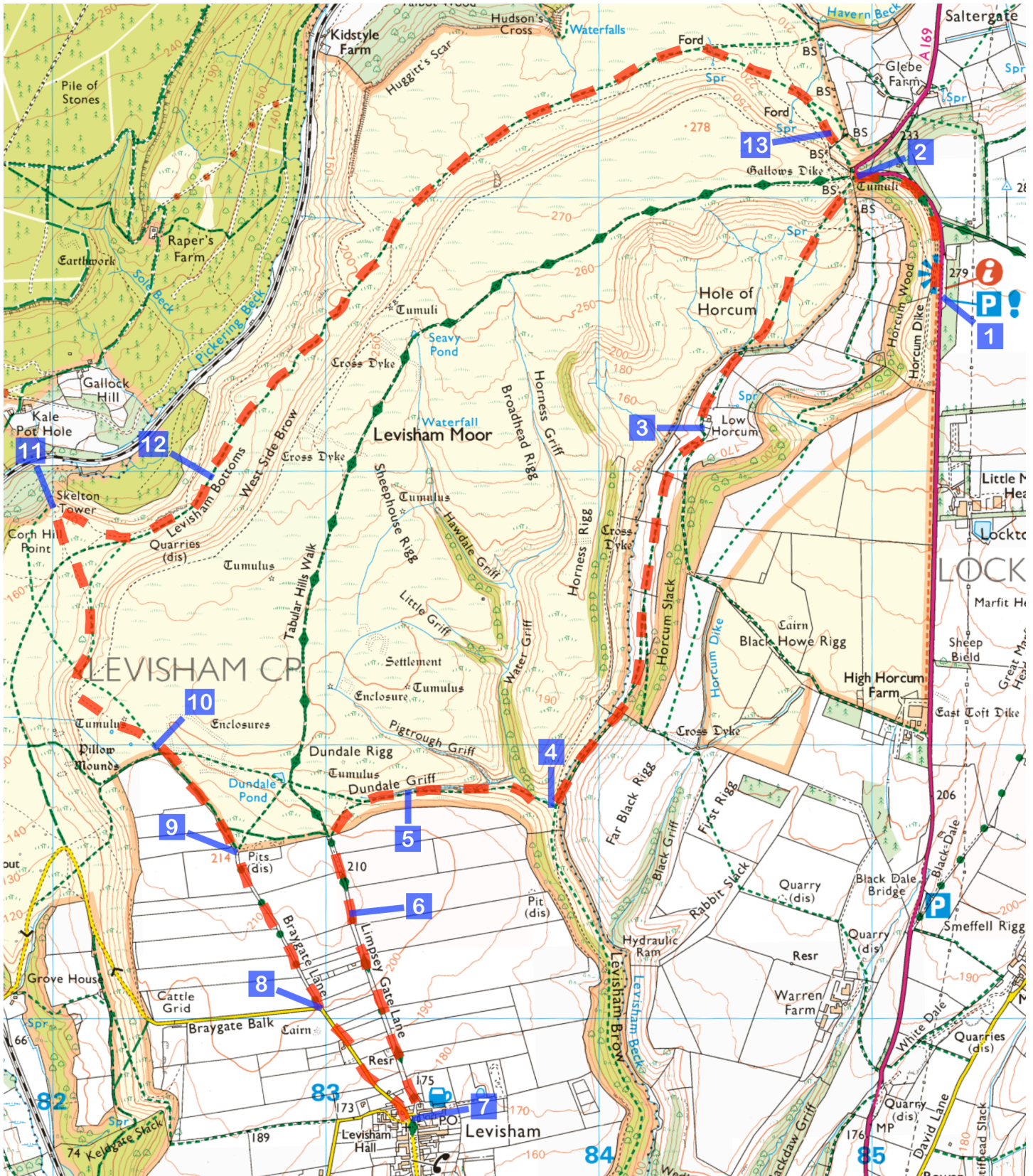
Soon, the path leads you down to a small stream, where you'll cross via a footbridge. Just beyond the footbridge, **you'll come to a junction (4)**. Take the right-hand path and begin the uphill trek through the narrow ravine of **Dundale Griff (5)**. At the top, the trail splits; take the left fork, which leads onto a wider stone track. Follow this track, signposted towards Newton upon Rawcliffe. The track then broadens into a tarmac lane called **Limpsey Gate Lane (6)**, guiding you towards the **village of Levisham (7)** after roughly two-thirds of a mile.

Once in Levisham, take some time to explore the village. When ready to continue, face the Horseshoe Inn, then take the road to the left of the pub, signposted to Levisham Station. This road, called Braygate Lane, marks the halfway point of your Hole of Horcum walk. After about a third of a mile, as the road curves left towards the station, continue straight ahead along the **narrower country lane (8)**. Walk for just under half a mile until you **reach a gate (9)**, which opens onto open moorland.

Proceed along the bridleway beside a dry stone wall for about a third of a mile. As the wall ends, follow the **grassy path straight ahead (10)** across the moorland. The path gradually ascends before leading you down towards **Skelton Tower (11)**. Upon reaching Skelton Tower, turn right and take the grassy path heading east, with the steep valley slopes to your left. Follow this trail as it curves north-east all the way across **Levisham Bottoms (12)**, with the imposing slopes of West Side Brow rising to your right.

Continue along this path for approximately two miles, enjoying the sweeping moorland views. Eventually, the **path ascends steeply (13)**, bringing you back to the A169 and the information board you encountered at the start of your walk. From here, retrace your steps along the gravel path back to the car park, completing your 8-mile Hole of Horcum walk through the stunning landscapes of the North York Moors.

Map of the Walk



Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database rights 2025