



Ted's walk 3

A 3 mile village & field walk – Sowerby, with Pudding Pie Hill

Introduction

This is a circular village and field walk from Thirsk town centre to Sowerby village, Packhorse Bridge at World's End, Pudding Pie Hill and back. It starts from Marage long stay car park, national grid reference 429823 (satnav YO7 1AA).

The distance is 3.3 miles (5.3km). Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 302, Northallerton & Thirsk, covers the walk but a map is included here. The walk grade is Easy – almost flat road and field paths with several kissing gates but no stiles. Allow up to 2 hours from start to finish.

The walk

To Sowerby village

Leave the Marage car and coach park and walk to the bridge over Cod Beck, crossing the busy one-way street (Millgate) into Riverside Mews. Here you will find the 'Thirsk Past & Present' Board no. 7 which explains the history of the Mill which used to be on this site. (A walks booklet with map, describing all 15 boards is also available for sale at 50p in the Information Centre).

Walk along Riverside Mews till the end of the houses and turn right



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Thorpe House

through the car park of the 'Little 3' Bar and Bistro (it is a public footpath), then through the archway onto Finkle Street. Cross over, go left and then turn right at the end of the shops into the Nursery Gardens long stay car park. Go through it and on the far right enter a passageway into the bottom end of Chapel Street. (You will find the reason for name at the end of the walk). Go straight ahead up Chapel St for about 50m and, after a short terrace of new houses, turn left into another passageway signed 'Villa Place' high on the wall with a Public Footpath sign below it. Come out onto Sowerby Flatts recreation area with the Leisure Centre and football pitches on your left where the path becomes a combined cycle track and footway. Walk the full length of this path across Sowerby Flatts. Once you have passed the football pitches on the left, you may spot the

undulating lie of the land which is all that remains of the medieval ridge and furrow method of ploughing. This is further explained on History Board 13 on the left, just at the end of the footpath and cycleway. This board also mentions Thorpe House opposite where the Warner sisters lived many years ago – one of the sisters was immortalised as 'Mrs Pumphrey' with her spoilt Pekinese Tricky Woo in the James Herriot books, films and long running television series.

Front Street

Turn left along the higher pavement. You are now in the very old Sowerby village where the rich merchants of Thirsk chose to live rather than be over the shop in the Market Place. Proceed along the footpath past the Warner's field on the left which the wealthy sisters purchased to preserve their view of the Hambleton Hills

to the east. This was left to a local charity to care for in perpetuity and is popular with dog walkers heading for the open fields beyond. Continue on this path past some houses on the left and then a row of houses on the right which were converted from an old primary school. After the Parish Church Hall turn right and go down on to the footpath alongside Sowerby Front Street, then turn left. At this point, start to notice first on the left, and then on both sides of the road, the variety in styles and ages of the houses and the avenue of lime trees planted in 1887 to celebrate the jubilee of Queen Victoria. Next on the left is St. Oswald's Church where you can go into the graveyard on the southern side of the church to see its Norman doorway. The door itself has embedded studs reading 1680. The church is worth a visit if it is open. In spring the graveyard and street verges are covered with snowdrops, then crocuses followed by daffodils. Continue to study the houses, including the Elizabethan Manor House next to the footpath with separate farm buildings and dovecote well set back just after the church on the left. Walk down either side of Main Street till you reach Gravel Hole Lane on the right which goes between the half-timbered Elizabethan farm house and the Crown and Anchor pub. Go along Gravel Hole Lane on the right hand side. It has no footpath to start with and then one begins in front of the newer housing. Cross

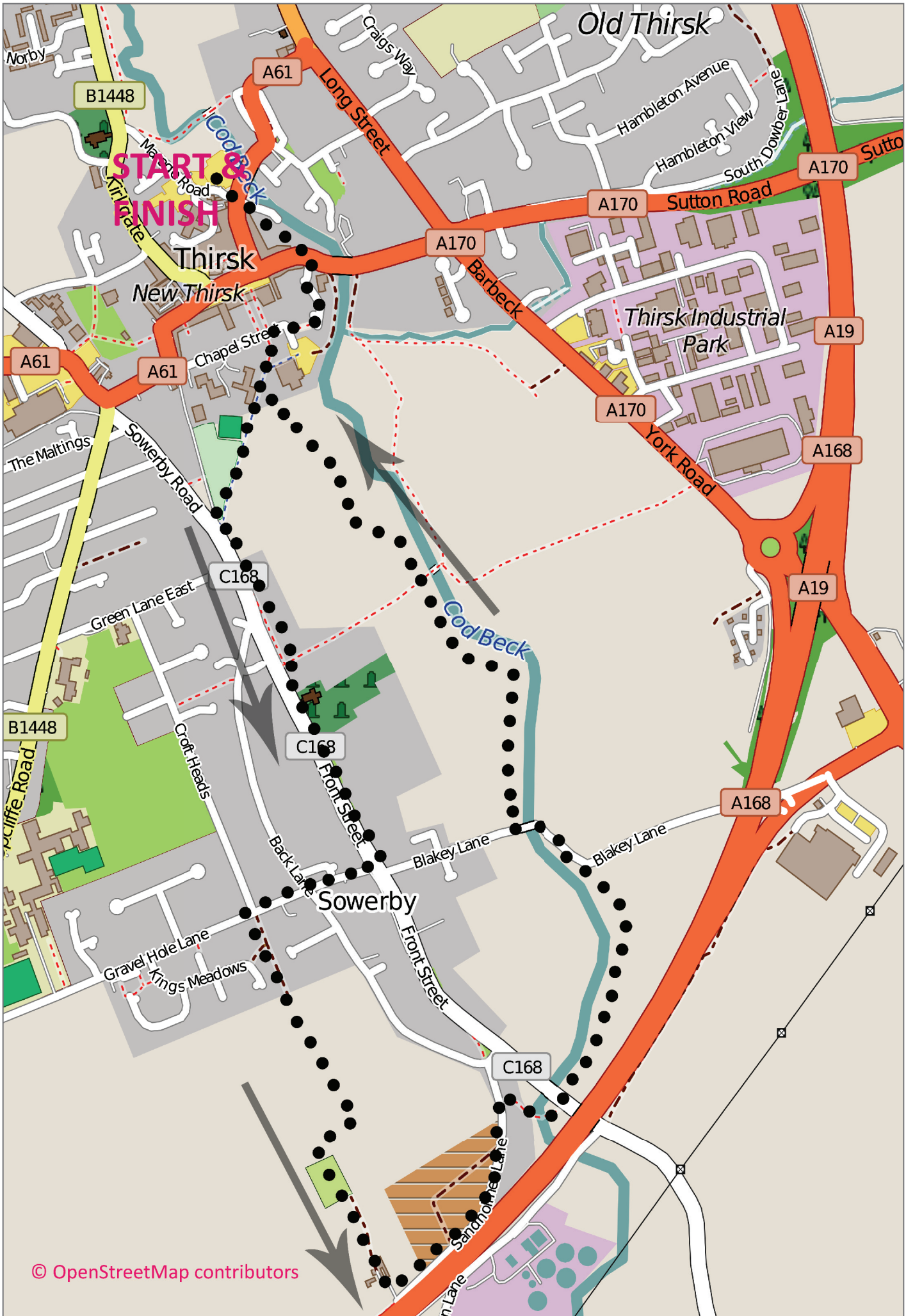
over Back Lane and look for the next turning left after about 100 metres which is a farm track (known locally as Donkey Lane but not marked as such).

Out into the country

Walk along Donkey Lane for about half a mile alongside a field hedge on the left until you reach the pig farm where you must turn right then shortly left between the pig farm and the small caravan site and storage depot. This narrow path gets a bit overgrown in summer but is always passable. After about 100 metres you come out onto a tarmac lane where you turn left between the pig farm and then allotments on your left and the Thirsk A168 bypass high on your right – this is Sandholme Lane which you will walk along for about 400 metres.

Worlds End

Continue past the allotments and then half a dozen houses and bungalows on the right till you reach a small triangular grassed area with a footpath finger post pointing sharp right which you follow, alongside a house called "World's End" converted from the pub of that name which stood there. On the right, opposite the house, at the edge of the grass triangle, is a stone engraved "Parish of Sowerby Manorial Seat". This was erected by Sowerby Parish Council to indicate that this small plot of land is all that remains of the lands which





used to go with the title Lord of the Manor of Sowerby, currently held by a local Sowerby resident. Proceed down the pleasant grassed lane till you reach the 17th century Grade 2 listed Packhorse Bridge over Cod Beck (river). Cross over the Beck and walk to the road where you will find History Board no. 12 explaining the origins of Packhorse Bridge.

Pudding Pie Hill

Go over the road to the kissing gate and cross the field to the Beck again. Go through another kissing gate into the next field where you eventually see on the right, almost adjacent to the bypass, 'Pudding Pie Hill'. This is a bronze age burial mound or bowl barrow dated between 2400-1500 BC. It was last excavated in 1853 by Lady Frankland Russell the then owner of the land – no doubt with the help of

some servants! Three male skeletons were found, one, a very tall warrior, who had been buried with his sword and shield. The sword handle and shield boss are now in York Museum. Further information will be found when you reach Blakey Lane, on History Board no. 11 but first you have to negotiate a path through the field to the Lane which can be muddy in winter and above head height in vegetation in the summer. Fortunately the path is well used by local walkers so always passable.

Read the information board when you reach it and then continue following the path close to the Beck. It is best not to exit the field by the new kissing gate immediately by the board as Blakey Lane has no footpath at this point. In about 50 metres you reach another historic, listed bridge used by many vehicles as a short cut to

the A19. This very narrow Blakey Lane Bridge has suffered frequent damage in recent years due to drivers attempting to take very large vehicles over it to avoid the long way round to Sowerby through Thirsk town centre. Fortunately the County Council have always repaired it because it is a listed structure.

Back to Thirsk

Cross over the bridge to the kissing gate on the right hand side and start walking alongside the western side of the Beck. *It is also possible to walk along the eastern side of the Beck from the other side of the bridge but this is a less interesting field path.*

The Western side is a very well used path on a bank above the beck which acts as flood defence. It can be quite muddy and slippery after rain and the path is very undulating. Pass through two fields and kissing gates until you reach Lock Bridge on your right. This is part of an ill-fated 18th century scheme, which ran out of money, to turn Cod Beck into a canal from its

junction with the River Swale. The path from the other side of the beck re-joins at this bridge.

Keep to the side of Cod Beck and shortly you will see a curve in the stream with a sandbank on your side occupied by the nests of dozens of darting sand martins in the early summer. The path rises away from the Beck up to another kissing gate and into the area of football pitches you saw at the start of the walk.

Head for the left side of the Leisure Centre and return to Chapel St. For a quick return to your starting point simply retrace your outward path through the Nursery Gardens car park, across Finkle Street and through the Little Three Bistro car park and then Riverside Mews.

There is a small but interesting diversion to a little known Thirsk attraction, which is recommended.

Sensory Garden

Just before reaching Finkle Street, turn right across the front and round the side of the former Thirsk Library, now the Family Life Church, through its car park towards and onto the front of the apartments which face onto the Cod Beck. Between the apartments and the Cod Beck, is a recently created sensory garden for blind and partially sighted people. This is located on the site of the old Salem Chapel and its graveyard which is why the road to the Leisure





Centre is called Chapel Street (see Page 2). There is a memorial to all those buried here as well as some of the old gravestones. The large square black planters have quotations on brass plaques related to the four seasons and the specially created metal railings have animal and bird sculptures in them. The shrubs have been specially chosen for their strong scents and tactile nature.

Return to your starting point as above through the Little Three car park and along Riverside Mews.



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has everything you want to
know about Thirsk:

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James Herriot, Maps, History,
Walks, Accessible places,
Children welcome,
Dogs welcome,
Clubs & societies, Hotels,
Bed & Breakfasts, Caravanning,
Camping, Restaurants, Inns,
Cafés, Shops, Services, Museums
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