

# WANDERER

## WALKS FROM THE BAR WALLS - A MONK BAR CIRCULAR

Distance:

5  
Miles

Time:

2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> / 3  
Hours

Sometimes it makes a refreshing change to go for a walk not too far from home and so this month's walk is a gentle stroll beginning at the Bar (city) Walls. Starting from Monk Bar (or Walmgate Bar if you prefer) it crosses the surprisingly remote feeling Walmgate Stray before cutting across a corner of the University campus to Heslington. It then takes a little known path through trees to head into one of York's most underappreciated green spaces, Hull Road Park. From there it's greenery almost all the way, first through St Nicholas Fields nature reserve and then the cycleway to Huntington Road. A quiet back alley provides a traffic free route back to the start. The entire route is about five and a half miles. It's particularly suitable for winter as much of it is on, or can be modified to keep on, hard surfaces.

### Directions

**1** Starting from Monk Bar ascend the steps on the opposite side of the road to the Minster onto the walls heading east in the direction of Layerthorpe/Peasholme Green. Where the wall ends head right down Peasholme Green turning off after the Black Swan and Hiscox building then turning left again. Follow the road (diversions may operate here as building work progresses) to find the pedestrian/bike bridge over the river Foss. Cross the bridge and turn L along Navigation Road following the 658 cycle route sign to Foss Islands Road. Turn right and shortly after, at the signpost "City Walls (Red Tower)" turn right to walk past the Red Tower and again ascend onto the walls. Follow along to Walmgate Bar, where you leave the wall to exit the bar and cross at the traffic lights to walk down the south (Rook and Gaskell pub) side of Lawrence Street.

**2** Just before the James Street traffic lights turn down the alley alongside the railings of St Lawrence's church to the right. Continue ignoring access roads, to reach Heslington Road. Cross and turn left uphill. Pass Fairfax House and then, after no. 103, turn right to go through metal, then wooden, gates with a wall to the left. Continue in same direction uphill then downhill, eventually with allotments to the right. When the path meets a tarmac cycle track turn left, still with the wall on your left. Just before the track enters the university campus turn right onto a grass path.

**3** Keeping the university buildings on your left behind the hedge follow the grass path (in wet conditions it's possible to go onto the university campus and follow a parallel paved

cycle track). Continue through a metal gate, still on the grass path which now veers slightly left. Go through a hedge gap then head towards left corner of an open grassy area. At the tarmac track turn left through metal gate (the paved cycle track emerges here if you have taken it).

**4** Follow the cycle track (signed Heslington) with sports buildings on your left. Continue along the roadside footpath towards the village centre but at the start of a long brick wall on your left turn left down Spring Lane (public footpath). When you come to the main university campus at a bridge turn right (do not cross bridge) following the lakeside path towards Heslington Hall. As you approach the Hall locate a pedestrian gap in the wall to its left. Go through this to emerge onto the road.

**5** Go over the road following the Yoractive Trail sign to cross a grassed area aiming to the left of the church. In the far left corner continue on the Yoractive Trail with the church now on your right. At a crossing road go straight ahead along a narrow path which soon veers left. Keep on the path through the trees, passing an electricity substation (if this path is muddy you can divert to the parallel road on the right). When you come to a cycle track go right to pass through a barrier onto the parallel road where you turn left. Continue down the road to the traffic lights at Hull Road.

**6** Cross over to go down Tang Hall Lane opposite soon passing a shop and surgery. Immediately after the beck bridge turn left into Hull Road Park, following the path along the beck. Keep on through the park following the water to find the exit on the far side onto Melrosegate.

### Getting there

The recommended starting point is Monk Bar but it's also possible to begin and end at Walmgate Bar if preferred. Both are easily accessible from the city centre. Please note the Bar Walls close at dusk. They are also closed on Christmas Day and during icy or snowy weather.

**7** Cross the road going slightly to the right to take the path leading into St Nicholas Fields. Follow the path along the beck, crossing a wider track to go through blue barriers into the nature reserve. Go past the play area on your right, keeping to the tarmac path and ignoring other paths off. Eventually you will emerge at the main cycle track by blue barriers and a St Nicholas Fields sign. Turn left here. Keep on the cycle track until it forks where you go right signed "Heworth". At the road turn right but in 20 metres at Hallfield Road take the signed "Foss Islands Path".

**8** Follow the cycle track under a concrete bridge with a high wall to your right then going under a further metal bridge. Ignore tracks off until a metal bridge across the river Foss and road. At the far side of the bridge turn left down through barriers then left and right into White Cross Gardens. Turn left at a T junction then left at mini roundabout to come to the main (Huntington) road where you turn right (if confused here generally heading left should bring you to Huntington Road).

**9** After some iron railings turn right down an easily missed and very narrow path between walls. Cross the end of the street and continue on the walled path which widens into a back lane, Grove Terrace Lane. Continue crossing several streets going ahead at all points, eventually passing a large car park on your right. At the end of the carpark turn left to emerge onto a grassy area with Monk Bar opposite to the left.

### What to see

The walk traverses one of the lesser frequented sections of the city walls. Points of interest include an ice house just after Monk Bar, Red Tower, recently rejuvenated by a community project and Walmgate Bar, the only gateway still with its barbican. The grounds of The Retreat passed, to the left on the first stretch of Walmgate Stray, contain many fine trees and other features and have recently been added to the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Walmgate Stray itself has a sense of wildness despite its proximity to the University and city. It's usually possible to spot a wide range of waterfowl on the University lake. The woodland belt leading to Hull Road makes for a pleasant walk as does the stroll through Hull Road Park. St Nicholas Fields is a natural oasis which can be explored further if desired.

### Refreshments

Apart from the numerous options in the city centre there are two pubs just off route in Heslington's main street. There are also refreshment facilities accessible by the public on the university campus. At the time of writing there's a café open Mon-Fri in Hull Road Park.

**DISCLAIMER:** Walks are undertaken at your own risk. Due care must be taken in following the walk, particularly after poor weather. Whilst every care is taken in compiling the description changes may have occurred since publication. Neither the walk author nor Your Local Link can accept any responsibility for errors or omissions.

