

# WANDERER



Distance:

6  
Miles

Time:

2 3/4  
Hours

## SKIPWITH AND ITS COMMON

This fairly short and entirely flat walk is mainly on Skipwith Common but includes a section through the nearby village and surrounding fields. The 650 acre Common is a National Nature Reserve. With its heathland, woodland and remnants of a past airfield it's an unusual place with a remote feel. Despite this, most of the walk is on good paths, many with a firm surface. The walk follows a figure of eight pattern and could be divided into two shorter walks if preferred.

### Directions

**1** Starting from the Sands Lane car park, take the right hand path signed 'anti-clockwise yellow walk' going through a kissing gate into trees. Follow the sometimes indistinct path keeping the road to the right and a fenced open area to the left. Go through another kissing gate and, where the path divides, fork left to meet a track coming in from the road. Go left here with an open field visible through trees to the right. Continue to meet a tarmac track. Here turn right over a cattle grid. Soon, pass allotments and houses to arrive at Skipwith village green and pond.

**2** Follow the main road ahead passing the Drovers Arms pub until the far side of the village hall on the left. Here take the signed permissive path going along the field edge parallel to the road to a stile in the right corner. Across the stile turn sharp left along the hedge with an open field to the right. Continue in the next field with a garden wall, then trees to the left. Where the path forks go left following a fenced path to emerge on the road by the church.

**3** To visit the church, turn right but otherwise go left on the road for 100 metres to take a signed footpath on the right. Go ahead with a wooden fence to the right, then cross a stile to proceed with a hedge to the left. At the next field kink right then left with a hedge to the right. After a plank bridge, over a ditch by an oak tree, go left to a hand gate to enter the common.

**4** Go right on a path marked by blue and yellow bands on a post. At a surfaced track: turn right, but in 100 metres where the track goes half left: keep straight on following blue/yellow markers on a post. The route now continues along the edge of the common with fields to the right. Ignore all ways off to the left following the yellow post markers. When a small open concreted area is reached, cross it to go through a hand gate to follow a narrower path through bracken and trees, but still with fields over to the right. At another kissing gate go ahead to a track. Turn right here but in 150 metres (about 50 metres before gates over the track ahead) find a kissing gate on the left marked by a yellow-banded post. Through the gate go ahead guided by a further post indicating the way through the bracken. Soon reach a track leading to a car park.

**5** Go into the car park and go left to exit on a narrow tarmac track by a large woodpile. Go through a metal kissing gate and cross a concrete area staying with the track until it bends left at a junction. Here there's a choice: either shorten the walk (in which case go left with the track and follow directions from point 6 below) or continue on a kilometre circuit deeper into the common (in which case take the path to the right by a noticeboard and continue as follows). After 150 metres, at a propeller on a plinth by another noticeboard, go sharp left. Soon there's a boardwalk on the right giving access to a viewing area (no through route). The way then bends left eventually returning you to the tarmac track. Here turn sharp right onto the track.

**6** Follow the tree-lined, roughly surfaced track ignoring all ways off. Eventually, you arrive back at the point where the walk diverted off the track to follow the edge of the common (point 4). Keep ahead here following the outward route in the reverse direction for a short distance until a prominent track heads off half right.

**7** Take this sandy, easily followed track that leads more or less straight across the common often with open heathy areas on both sides. After about a kilometre this pleasant way reaches the Sands Lane car park accessed through a gate.

### Getting there

We suggest starting at Sands Lane car park south of Skipwith village. This is about 11 miles from central York. From York take the A19 to Escrick. Here fork left and continue to pass through Skipwith village to find the car park on the right after about half a mile. It is also possible to start the walk from the King Rudding Lane car park (begin at direction point 5) accessed from the A19 at Riccall. A limited bus service (no. 18 from York Merchantgate) runs to Skipwith village (no Sunday service). Alight at the village green and begin the walk from direction point 2.

### Refreshments

The only option is the Drovers Arms in Skipwith village, open lunchtimes Wednesday to Friday and all day Saturday and Sunday.

### What to see

Skipwith Common is a diverse landscape of woodland and open heathland with some marshy areas and ponds. There's a vast range of wildlife including deer and many specialist plants and insects. Ponies, cattle and sheep graze some areas to maintain the open heathland. Part of the site was a World War II airfield, remnants of which remain. Further information on the common and its history can be found on the Friends of Skipwith Common website at [www.friendsofskipwithcommon.org.uk/](http://www.friendsofskipwithcommon.org.uk/). St. Helens church in Skipwith is notable for its ancient tower that is part Saxon in origin. The immaculate gardens of the Queen Anne style house Skipwith Hall, which are occasionally opened for public viewing, can be glimpsed through a gate (direction point 2).

**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.

