

# WALKING WITH THE WANDERER

Kirkham Gorge  
& Welburn

Time: 2½ hours  
Distance: 5¼ miles

Starting from Kirkham Priory, this varied walk passes through the most scenic section of the Kirkham Gorge, where the River Derwent flows through the Howardian Hills. It then weaves through a mix of woodland and fields on the edge of the Castle Howard Estate, returning to the start through the stone-built village of Welburn.

## GETTING THERE

The recommended starting point, if driving, is Kirkham Priory, where there is limited off-road free parking adjacent to the Priory entrance. Kirkham is 12½ miles from York, using the A64 and turning right at the top of Whitwell Hill. It would also be possible to start from Welburn (Direction Point 6) and Whitwell (Direction Point 7). The public transport option is Coastliner buses 840 and 843, which depart twice hourly (hourly

on Sunday) from York Railway Station and Stonebow. It is best to alight and start from Crambeck (Direction Point 3) to avoid crossing the A64 three times.

## IS THIS WALK FOR ME?

The busy and fast A64 must be crossed twice on this route. Take great care, using only the refuge island at Crambeck, and the crossing via the crash barrier gap at Whitwell. Some of the walk traverses moderately undulating terrain, but there are no long

climbs. Most paths are clearly waymarked. In winter, some mud is likely, especially at Direction Points 1 and 2. There are no stiles. The footpath descent back into the valley approaching Kirkham (Direction Point 8) is short, but steep and challenging - this can be avoided by remaining on the road.

## REFRESHMENTS

The only options are in Welburn. The Crown & Cushion is open daily from midday, while the highly

recommended Dogh bakery, deli and café is open daily until 5.00pm.

## WHAT TO SEE

The ruins of Kirkham Priory are a free-to-view site open daily. The wooded Kirkham Gorge is rich in wildlife. Welburn is one of the Howardian Hills' best situated and most attractive stone-built villages. The walk out of the village affords good views over Castle Howard and the wider countryside.

**1/** Starting from the parking area at Kirkham Priory, turn left, crossing the river and railway. Immediately after the level crossing, take the signed footpath on the right, following the clear path over the grass field, close to the right-hand boundary. Keep on this obvious path over more fields, going through several gateways. Reaching woodland, go through the gate into the trees, crossing

a footbridge, a boardwalk and another footbridge. After this, keep ahead on the woodland edge until you reach a tarmac drive.

**2/** Turn right for 50 metres, then take a signed path left into woodland. Stay on this path as it climbs the hillside, then levels out. Turn left at the gate giving access to Crambeck, walking beside a hedge for a short distance. At the gap, go through, turning left but

then almost immediately right at the wall end (large conifer to the left). Go left on the tarmac drive, passing houses to the right to reach the A64.

**3/** Cross at the island and turn right on the roadside footway for a short distance, to take the signed footpath at the wood edge (if arriving by bus, walk ahead on the footway for a short distance). Keep between the trees and the large field until reaching a metal gate. From here, the route can be obscured by ploughing and crops, but go through the gate, heading slightly left of the pylon towards trees, which soon become visible. Over this large field, keep more or less ahead with a hedge to the left.

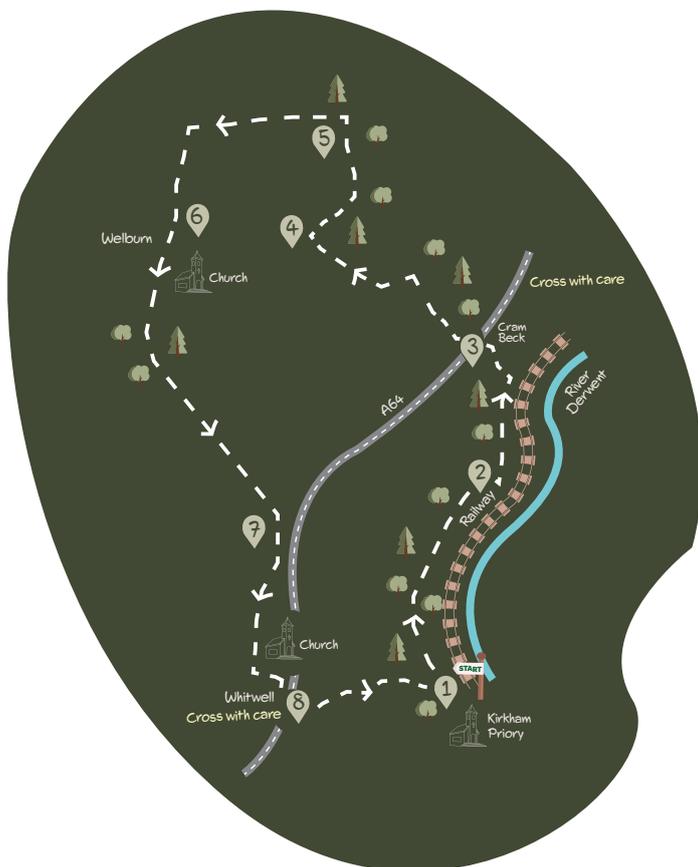
**4/** At a crossing track, turn right (blue waymarks), keeping right as the way forks. In 200 metres, ignore a path left, but soon after this, at a further signed junction, keep left with a hedge to the right. Go through a gate into trees, passing the veteran oak tree (noticeboard).

**5/** Immediately after crossing a stream, at an unsigned path junction, go left, still in trees, on a narrow path that can be a little overgrown. Emerging into the open, keep ahead with a hedge at the left. After about 700 metres, you'll reach a path crossroads. Turn left on the clear track, continuing to the street in Welburn village. For refreshment opportunities at the pub or café, turn right.

**6/** To continue the walk, cross slightly to the left and take Church Lane opposite (signed village hall). Where the tarmac ends at the church, keep ahead on the obvious track uphill over the open field. At the top, keep left between the ornamental gateposts. Follow the track through the trees to continue straight ahead between hedges, ignoring a footpath right. Eventually, you'll reach a tarmac road with the A64 ahead.

**7/** Turn right on the very quiet road, continuing to the church in Whitwell. At the end of the churchyard, take the signed path left, through gates to the dual carriageway.

**8/** Turn right on the footway towards the bus shelter (go left for a short distance if arriving by bus). The crossing point is before the shelter at a gap in the crash barrier. Over the road, take the footway right beside it to the road junction. Turn left down this road, continuing to a crossroads. Here, for an adventurous descent, go through the wooden gate immediately ahead (to avoid this difficult path stay on the road). Keep to the left in the grassy clearing, going into the trees (footpath post) and snaking steeply down on an indistinct path. Nearing the bottom, another marker post confirms the route. At the road turn right, and continue to the level crossing (if starting from Whitwell or Welburn turn left on the signed path before the level crossing and continue from Direction Point 1).



## 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 compilation. Neither the walk author nor Your Local Link can accept any responsibility for errors or omissions.