

# Airton & Malham Circular

The walk starts in Airton – if you use Satnav to get to Airton, postcode BD24 4AE should work. If you prefer paper maps SD90235921 is a good starting point, whilst What3Words users will find the start via “crown.manager.summaries”.

Having parked, head downhill past the Quaker Meeting house toward Airton Mill and the bridge over the River Aire. Follow Calton Lane as it bends right and then left and heads uphill into Calton.

The road now levels out and the main route turns right – signed for Winterburn and Hetton – but we carry straight on along Kell Syke Lane until this too veers right, at which point we take the track on the left to access the track / path up onto the moors.

We cross a small footbridge over Foss Gill – only really necessary in times of high rainfall - and come to a pair of metal gates with the track continuing uphill beyond. Once past the gates, the track heads steeply uphill taking a somewhat zig-zag route to make the incline more manageable. Our general direction of travel is North, and the track is clear and obvious as we head onto Calton Moor.

The track soon branches – we take left rather than heading right and down to the woodland. Our route is now relentlessly - though reasonably gently – uphill, and in a straight line along a clear, and very useable path.

A path from Hanlith via Hanlith Moor joins from the left – our return route takes us through Hanlith much later on, so if a shorter route is required this is an option – although having done almost all the climbing by now, carrying on to Malham seems more attractive.

Ahead of us we see the peak of the hill – we are heading for the gate to the left of the peak but keep a look out for the Trig point at 414m. Our climbing is now done, so this is a good place to pause for a break before heading on along the lane which veers left and takes us down to a minor road (Hawthornes Lane / Gordale Lane) which heads to Malham.

As we follow the road, we see it head steeply uphill – the path we need is signposted to Janet’s Foss, and it’s on the left before the steep section.

We now follow the gorge down toward the flat meadow land outside Malham. As the village comes into view, we follow the obvious and well-trodden path to the National Park Centre – a good place to take a break.

The second part of the walk is much easier than the first, and is quite flat. Essentially we simply follow the River Aire downstream along the Pennine Way back to Airton.

We start by heading left out of the Visitor Centre as if going back the way we came into Malham. We notice a stile into the field next to the road and this is the Pennine way – we take this with the river Aire on our left at this stage, taking well maintained stiles through drystone walls at field boundaries.

We continue downstream, still with the river on our left until we come to a bridge at Hanlith – here we cross the river using the road bridge and pick up the Pennine Way again, now with the river on the right of the path.

We press on keeping the river on our right and avoiding the temptation to follow farm tracks on the left as we head back down into Airton. We know we are at Airton, because we see the mill that we passed at the start of the walk.

This mill originally a corn mill is also a housing development now.

We take the stile up onto the road and cross the bridge to return to our starting point.

- **Total distance 14.7 km (9.1 miles)**
- **Total Ascent 541 m**
- **Moderate walk**