

Gargrave & Eshton

We start from the (free) North Street car park in the centre of Gargrave. If you are approaching from the Skipton side, turn right into North Street at the Old Swan, or if you are coming from Settle, then turn left opposite the public toilets on the A65. The car park is about 100m from either turn. The OS grid reference for paper map users is SD93185430. If you are using Satnav to get there then try North Street Gargrave, or BD23 3RL, or if you have access to What-3-Words, the tag is **february.cyclones.trousers**.

The walk heads out of the carpark and then up West Street – this is the minor road up to the canal opposite the Village Hall. We reach the canal after no more than 50m - We press on up the lane – passing Alison Wiffen ceramics on the left – and then looking for the road to veer right. As it does so, we take the track that leaves the road on the bend – our route is therefore straight on. We are now on Mark House Lane – part of the Pennine Way- you may notice a helpful yellow sign indicating this.

We carry on climbing very gently as we walk up Mark House Lane, passing the grand entrance gates to Gargrave House on the left. As we continue, the minor lane that we are following bends left and then right and then runs alongside a wooded area known as Mark Plantation – the trees are on our right and open farmland is to the left. We continue until we see a stile on the right at the end of the woodland. As you would expect for the Pennine Way, its clearly signposted.

The stile gives us access to a meadow, and we continue Northwest crossing a series of stiles as we climb Harrows Hill. This is still the Pennine Way, so the path is well used, and the route is clear. At the top of this rise we find ourselves at a gate at the corner of a stand of trees. Strictly speaking, the path is over a stile 20m to the left of the gate, but clearly more people use the gate and then head left toward a second gate in the fence opposite – we are in effect cutting the corner off the field and heading to the midpoint of the opposite side. From here we continue North, keeping to the left of the field boundary until we reach a third gate.

From here the Pennine Way continues North toward Airton. We follow it for about 100 m, and then meet another path coming up from Mark House Lane via a disused quarry. The two paths intersect creating a crossroads at which we head sharp right.

We now start heading downhill toward Throstle Nest farm – we are aiming for a stile just to the left of the trees which are themselves somewhat to the right of the farm. From there we continue downhill to another stile onto a track. At this point the right of way is across the next field, but at the time of our walk, there was a cow and very young calf in that meadow, with a suggested diversion up the lane to the farmhouse and then right to reconnect with the right of way. This is well signposted and clearly explained and gives us a view of the rather attractive farm that we would otherwise miss.

As the path and the farm lane come back together, there is an orchard to the right, and a pleasant area of grass which is a good place to take a quick break before continuing down the track to a road, where we head right along the road for a while. Care is needed here – this is a well used road.

Fortunately, we are not on the road for long and soon arrive at Eshton – to head sharp left along Winterburn Lane - St Helens House is on our left and Eshton House our right. We continue along this lane passing New Laithe on the left – noting a rather lovely sundial set in the wall, featuring the latitude and longitude engraved into the mounting stone.

We soon arrive at St Helens Well (on the left) and continue to cross Eshton Beck at a stone bridge. We follow the road round for a while and soon have the impressive Friars Head clearly visible ahead. Our walk heads sharp right and away from the hall 100m after the bridge, but feel free to walk a little further down the road get a good view before returning to the walk: The hall can be seen from the roadside without disturbing the owners but is NOT open to the public.

We leave the road not long after the bridge at a clearly signed path on the right which nearly doubles back, so that we are now heading South. The track we are now on comes round the edge of a wooded mound, where over to the left we see what appears to be a lime kiln.

With our back to the kiln, we see a rather fine house ahead, and we head down to the gate at the left of the house to pick up a track along the front and down to Brockabank Bridge – crossing Eshton Beck again.

Over the bridge the lane continues uphill, and we look for a path leaving on the left – its well signposted and heads through a field that belongs to a residential centre called Play Away.

The path comes up to the road - and then continues opposite, heading across fields to a woodland called Gamsbers Wood. The path through the wood is behind a wrought iron kissing gate, and from there runs South skirting a large house before emerging on a hillside with a great view down over Gargrave and to Sharp Haw over to the left.

From here the path is clear and heads down to the Eshton Road from Gargrave, through livestock fields that on the day of our walk showed a strong crop of fungi.

When we arrive at the road we turn left, and then after no more than 20m right onto Ray Bridge Lane, which as the name suggests leads to Ray Bridge – over the canal.

We take a right turn when we get to the canal and follow the towpath back past a lock and further bridge, continuing until we get to the bridge where we started the walk. From there a left turn and short stroll downhill takes us back to the carpark.

- **Total distance 10.2 km (6.3 miles)**
- **Total ascent 170 m**
- **Easy walk**