

Walks around Coxwold

Snever Observatory and Byland Abbey



Approximate distance: 8.5 miles
Total ascent: 1092 feet
Time: about 5 hours

Start: Coxwold Village Hall, Byland Road, Coxwold. Postcode: YO61 4BB
Starting at: SE 535 772
Distance: Approximately 8.5 miles
Grade: Moderate
Walk time: About 5 hours
Parking: Village Hall car park. A donation of £2 would be welcome
Refreshments: Byland Abbey Tea Rooms, Coxwold Tea Rooms, Fauconberg Arms

This varied walk crosses rolling farmland and climbs up from the village of Oldstead, with its Michelin-starred pub and restaurant the Black Swan, to Mount Snever Observatory from which superb views of the Vale of York are to be had. It then descends to Byland Abbey and swings back to Coxwold. There are fine views of the Coxwold Gilling Gap and much of Yorkshire and numerous points of interest. It is not always well marked at gates and junctions.

Directions

Letters refer to waypoints on the map.

1. From the Village Hall (SE 53625 77300) go towards the centre of the village and turn right up the hill past the Almshouses, Fauconberg Arms, Church and Shandy Hall, and turn right into a field immediately after Shandy Hall.
2. Cross the field diagonally and up left, and across to a gate (SE 52798 77597). Turn right along the tarred road to Oldstead. This is a lovely, quiet country road wending through farms and trees with good views east and west. Admire the old hedgerows and well-kept fields.
3. On reaching The Black Swan (SE 53050 79882) **A** in Oldstead village bear left and continue through the village and go down the hill: when the main road bends to the left (SE 53015 80454) turn right and follow the twists to Cockerdale.
4. On reaching a sitting bench bear right (SE 5311 8054) on to a forestry road and then turn sharp right and keep on the forestry track for a mile ignoring a sign-post pointing up through the trees to the Observatory.
5. The forestry track undulates and then climbs steadily: turn sharp left at the junction (SE 5415 8000). Continue up the slope noticing the ruins of Mount Snever House (SE 5407 8020) **B** that was lived in 1850-1890.

Letters refer to waypoints on the map.

6. At the top of the hill paths cross (SE 5407 8050): a track goes sharply right, (which you will follow later at Step 7) but you keep going straight on until you come to a gate and a wall (SE 5406 8050). At the wall turn left and follow the path keeping a wall on your right then turn left and glide through the trees to the Observatory (SE 53714 80453) **C** built in 1838, and appreciate the superb view.
7. Do not take the path going steeply down but find a small path heading roughly east along the ridge edge: this takes you to the crossroads (SE 5407 8050) mentioned at 6. Take the forestry track, follow it loyally and at a fork bear right. This quiet path takes you all the way down to Wass in about 20 minutes.
8. On reaching a white house and tarmac (SE 55298 79430) take a right turn following a green sign-post. This takes you through some young woodland, across and down a field to Byland Abbey **D**.
9. On reaching the main road (SE 55008 79067) follow it past the Abbey, and when the road ascends turn right through a gate (SE 54800 78787). Head west over farm fields and on reaching Cams Head Farm, **E** turn left and descend though a wood, cross a stream (SE 53475 78709) and reach a large flat field; keep to the left and then turn left across a small footbridge.
10. Cross another footbridge (SE 53020 78425) and follow the path and signposts to reach “Town Pastures” which is the big field you entered at Shandy Hall at stage 2 above. However, now head diagonally down and left and then follow the path back to the Village Hall.

Points of Interest and further information:

- ❖ Byland Abbey
- ❖ Mount Snever Observatory
- ❖ Coxwold City...church, Shandy Hall, Tea Rooms, Pub and more