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## Sandsend Circular Via Mulgrave Castle

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Starting point and OS Grid reference | East Row car park, Sandsend (NZ 862125)   |
| Ordnance Survey map                  | OL27 North York Moors – Eastern Area  |
| Distance                             | 7.2 miles   |
| Date of Walk                         | 18 October 2015   |
| Traffic light rating                 |  |

**Introduction:** This walk from Sandsend is unusual in that it is restricted to three days a week; Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday. It is also closed during May. The route passes through Mulgrave Woods, part of the Mulgrave Estate which is private. Access is on a “permissive” basis.

Note that when going through Mulgrave Woods, there are many paths and not a lot of direction signs. A golden rule to follow this route is that if you are faced with having to cross a footbridge in the woods, you have taken a wrong turn and you should backtrack. There are some distinctly unpleasant and potentially risky paths!

The place a bridge would have been useful and where there is none is the point where you have to cross a stream via a ford. If there has been heavy rain, this could well be uncrossable.

The bonus of the walk however is that hidden within the woods is the quite extensive ruin of Mulgrave castle. First built in 1214, it provided the home for several successive families. It served as a prison for captives of King John. It became a garrison for Royalists during the English Civil War and not surprisingly, was dismantled/blown up in 1647 on the orders of Cromwell’s Parliament. A castle was subsequently rebuilt towards the end of that century and passed to the Phipps family in 1743, where ownership still lies.

Repairs were started in 1995 to preserve what was left and were completed in 1999 but I suspect preserving the ruins will now be something of a “Forth Bridge” affair.

Ruined as the castle is, it still makes for an interesting visit. It has a commanding view across the valley.

Beyond Mulgrave Woods and Castle, the route circles through pleasant countryside via the village of Lythe and then to the coast.

A final mile and a half along the coast takes you past the remains of old alum works which were in use from 1605 to 1871. The path goes through the centre of the works and there are various paths you can use to explore them. Alum is a chemical which was used to fix dyes and preserve leather.

The walk starts from the East Row car park. This is just off the A174 by the bridge in Sandsend, as opposed to the larger, pay and display car park further north along the

A174. However, should the East Row car park be full, it is not too far back to walk from the large car park and you will gain that distance back at the end of the walk. East Row is part of the Mulgrave Estate and there may be a charge depending on when you go or if the staff turn up! I was lucky!

**# Note:** "Permissive" in this sense merely means the landowner grants public access on paths which are not Rights of Way. As long as you access on the allowed days, you do not need to seek special permission.

**Start:** From the back of the car park (NZ 862125), take the tarmac lane. Note the sign which advises that the route is only open to the public Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday but not at all during May.

Eventually, the tarmac gives way to a stony track. When it divides by an old wooden shed, go left, staying on the more main track.

When it splits again, keep left. Just for reference, note there is a white painted footbridge over the stream at this point but you do not cross it. You join a track coming from the right a little further on.

At the next fork, keep right and at the next, turn left where there is a small sign pointing to "The Old Castle" and a bench.

A few yards further on, there are some rough steps on the right which you climb to get to the castle ruins. There is an information board about the castle. To gain access to the interior of the castle walls, follow the track clockwise around the walls.

On exiting the castle (NZ 840116), turn right and immediately left, following the gravel track. This rejoins the track you would have been on if you had not climbed the rough steps. Turn right at this junction, ignoring the other track which goes off to the right.

After a few yards, the track splits. Keep right following the gravel track. However when it splits again and the gravel track turns right, then descends steeply, here you keep left along a muddier track.

This leads to a walkers' gate, with a two way fingerpost (NZ 831116). Follow the right pointer.

The path leads down to a ford which you have to paddle across (NZ 831117). Obviously if this is in serious spate after heavy rain, do not attempt the crossing as there is a potential drop to the right.

After fifty yards or so, pass a ruined cottage.

Follow the path as it curves left, ignoring any turns off through gates. Eventually, you walk along the left hand boundary of a field, then a final section of path, badly intruded upon by nettles and blackthorn when I did the walk, before arriving at a road by High Leas Farm (NZ 829120). Turn right along the road.

Opposite the main entrance to the farmyard, turn left indicated by an old metal footpath sign (NZ 829121).

After a short gentle climb, cross a wooden stile and continue in the same direction. The track of the path across the field should be obvious.

The path exits on to a road where there is a handy bench for a lunch stop (NZ 826125), with pleasant views across the valley, to the south west. Turn right along the road.

Immediately past the first house on the right, turn right to follow the direction indicated by an old metal footpath sign.

Cross a couple of stiles, following yellow arrows and enter the trees. The route passes through this short band of trees, then turns left to follow the perimeter of the plantation. There are good views along here over Mulgrave Woods to the moors beyond and further along, great view over Whitby.

There is a bench with views over Mulgrave Castle and the valley below which would make another nice lunch stop.

Continue to follow the well way marked route, crossing a broad track, via walkers' gates at each side. Walk clockwise round the sports field to exit on to the road past the clubhouse (NZ 844131). Turn right along the road through the village of Lythe.

Just past the fire station and a cottage named "The Coppers", turn left through a walkers' gate by an old metal footpath sign (NZ 848131). Follow the left hand edge of the field initially but at the corner, bear right at about 45° to a five bar gate. Go through this to follow the track indicated by a blue bridleway arrow, between the hedges.

The track curves gently, before going through some trees, to a kissing gate. Through this, climb some steps and continue in the same direction to the farm (NZ 847142). The path is to the left of the farm, indicated by a yellow arrow.

Stay on the main track through the farmyard. As the track bends sharply left, turn right to follow the left hand boundary of a field.

At the end of the field, turn left to follow the left hand boundary of another field.

You arrive on the coastal path/Cleveland Way by a three way fingerpost (NZ 850145). Turn right for "Sandsend 1½ miles".

The path descends some steep steps to Deepgrove Wyke. These can be very slippy so take care!

The path joins the old railway track, just be the old tunnel (blocked off). Turn left along the old railway. As you get almost to the outskirts of Sandsend, the onward route along the old railway is blocked by Mulgrave Estate gates. Branch off left here along the clear footpath into Sandsend.

