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Caldberg and Witton Moors

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Car park at Gollinglith Foot (SE 154810)
Ordnance Survey map	OL 30 – Yorkshire Dales – Northern and Central Areas OS Explorer 302 – Northallerton and Thirsk
Distance	11.9 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This walk circumnavigates Caldberg and Witton Moors above Wensleydale. It may be regarded as a test of navigational skills as there are few fingerposts or other significant markers. Many of the paths cross moorland and as this is obviously a little walked route, there is scant evidence of some of the paths on the ground, even though they are marked on the Ordnance Survey map. Some of the paths are not public footpaths as such but cross Open Access land and are marked on the OS maps as black dotted paths.

The route falls off the eastern edge of the Yorkshire Dales Northern and Central map so for full coverage, you need the OS Explorer 302 – Northallerton and Thirsk map too (1:25000 scale maps).

The walk may be most attractive in late summer, due to the large expanses of heather which would be in flower. However, this moorland is clearly an actively managed grouse shooting area so there may be restrictions during the grouse season. Also, later in the summer, tall bracken may make route finding difficult.

The management involves periodic burning of the heather and this seems to have resulted in paths migrating somewhat.

The walk starts at the delightfully named Gollinglith Foot. To get there, turn west off the A6108 at Masham signposted for Fearby and Healey. After passing through the hamlet of Healy, go right at a fork signposted Colsterdale. After just over a mile, park at some rough parking on the left by a phone box.

Start: Turn left out of the car park (SE 154810) and walk along the road for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile ignoring a track and a little rough parking on the right after $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. Turn right off the road by an old metal gate where blue arrows indicate a public bridleway (SE 143814).

Join a broad grassy track from the right and turn left.

After going through a gate (SE 141816), after only a few yards, fork off to the left on a faint track through the heather. This is very difficult to spot, even though it is shown as a public bridleway on the OS map. As a little used track, this is quite overgrown and the best guide is that it runs more or less parallel with Birk Gill in the little valley below on the left. As long as you follow this principle and do not actually descend

into the valley, you will be more or less on track. The faint path appears and disappears along the way.

The path descends to Brown Beck (SE 136821) where there is a post with a white top, one of a series which seem to mark the course of the beck - not your route! Climb the bank at the far side. Further on you cross another small stream.

Continue across the heather, still parallel with Birks Gill, look out for a thin post with a white top on the near horizon at SE 103830 (see photo) but this is a fairly flimsy affair and I cannot vouch for its permanency. Keep straight ahead and no more than about 150 yards beyond here, reach a clear broad track at SE 102831. Turn left.

Follow this track as it swings in a clockwise arc and follow it all the way to the outskirts of the hamlet of Caldberg (SE 094850).

As you reach it, turn right on another broad track, keeping the wall on your left. Pass and ignore the broad track on the right to Ings Farm and continue straight ahead, through a gate passing a barn on the left.

As the track branches left to a farm, continue straight ahead through a gateway then fork right (Se 102854) to the right hand boundary of the field and follow it round to a gate (SE 103853). Go through this and turn left.

Look out for a broad ascending grassy track on the right after 100 yards or so and stay on this as it climbs the moor. As the path starts to level out, it runs parallel with a little valley on the left hand side, along which runs a wall.

Climb over a plain wire fence (this is easiest done at a fencepost where a bracing strut provides a step). The path across the moor is now virtually invisible. As you come in sight of a small rounded hill topped by trees, you should see the makings of a green grassy track over to the right. You cross a line of wooden grouse butts.

Look out for the remains of a stone building by some mining remains and head for that. Beyond this the broad track is obvious.

On reaching a broad track which goes left to some trees, turn right. Now stay on this track without deviating, passing, at SE 147838, the track to a shooting box on the horizon to the right.

Pass a wood on the left and go straight ahead through a gateway. There are good views ahead towards the North Yorkshire Moors.

Pass the entrance to Moor Cote Farm (SE 163838) and no more than 50 yards further on, turn right on to a faint grassy path as you get to the trees. There is a drainpipe covered with gravel to aid passage across a gully. At the top of the ridge, head along the little valley and take the track rising out of it on the right.

After a short shallow climb, the track swings round to the left, passing a heap of discarded stones. Follow this track to a small mound with what could be a rough stone cairn on its top. Circle round this to the left, passing a subterranean stone construction. You should be walking parallel with a derelict stone wall to your left.

As the wall comes across to meet you, head towards the gate at the end of the trees (SE 134830). Go through it and turn right to follow the wall along the obvious path passing the Tranmire boundary stone (SE160827). There are now some marker posts which lead the way.

Reach a gate where a yellow arrow indicates you bear left. Head diagonally towards the trees (SE 156819) and go through the gateway, turning right to follow the track along by the wood.

Follow the marker arrows as the path heads downhill and under some power lines, then enters a wood through a gate. It swings right through the trees before exiting through a gate. Go left and follow the clear track to where you parked the car.

