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Ilkley to Burley-in-Wharfedale

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Ilkley train or bus station – (SE 118476). Parking is also available in Ilkley
Ordnance Survey map	OS Explorer 297 – Lower Wharfedale and Washburn Valley
Distance	4.8 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This short walk from Ilkley takes you to within a few feet of the highest point on Ilkley Moor, with 360° views over Lower Wharfedale and Airedale before crossing Burley Moor. Both moors are part of the larger Rombalds Moor area.

The walk has the bonus of providing a lunch opportunity at The Hermit pub at Burley Woodhead. It is also an ideal walk for public transport as it starts from the adjacent rail and bus stations in Ilkley and terminates at Burley-in-Wharfedale railway station. If buses are preferred from Burley, stops are only half a mile away in Burley village centre. If a circular walk back to Ilkley is wanted, a return path along the edge of the moor is available.

The walk passes the Twelve Apostles Bronze Age stone circle and reservoirs on Burley Moor. There is a good chance of seeing assorted wildlife. I saw a heron, curlews and oyster catchers when I did the walk.

The moors are a well visited and well walked area and there are many paths/tracks which this use has created, not all of which are public footpaths as defined by Ordnance Survey.

The walk is generally easy with a bit of a steep climb to get to the top of Ilkley Moor. Much of this is up steps.

Start: Exit the main entrance of either station (SE 118476), cross the road and turn right then first left up Wells Road. Carry on up the road as far as a cattle grid, going through the walkers' gate alongside (SE 118472). Go left immediately and take the path past the boating/paddling pool to the steps. Climb these and continue along the tarmac path.

The tarmac does not last long before the path reverts to standard country footpath type! At a 'Y' junction of paths, take the left fork climbing some rough steps. Ahead of you is the white building of White Wells – head towards this. White Wells is a bath house built by Squire Middleton in the 18th century for the local people, with an interesting plunge pool to see, if it is open (flags flying is a good sign).

On reaching White Wells, pass it on the left then walk along the back of the building. Here you will see a fingerpost for the Millennium Way. Turn left to follow it (SE 118468).

Follow the broad track from this fingerpost and when it divides, the Millennium Way going left, take the right fork, climbing yet more steps above Ilkley Craggs.

Shortly after the top of the steps you reach a crossroads of paths (SE 124464). Go straight on.

Eventually the rough path gives way to erosion prevention Yorkshire Stone paving. Follow this to the crest, passing a rectangular boundary stone on your right known as Lanshaw Lad (SE125452), which marks the boundary between Ilkley and Burley Moors.

Pass another paved path going off to the right and you soon come to the Twelve Apostles stone circle (SE 126451). This is set in a superb vantage point with 360° views over Wharfedale and Airedale. In the distance to the south south-east (162°) is the Emley Moor transmitter and Ferrybridge and Drax power stations can also be seen. To the north east, the white domes of the Menwith Hill "listening station" are clear.

Continue on the path for about 150 yards beyond the stone circle then turn left along a broad track (SE 127450).

You pass above High Lanshaw Dam, the first of a series of three reservoirs on Burley Moor. After passing some large boulders (SE 136449), branch off to the left just before the shooting hut, head downhill following the path towards the middle reservoir, Lower Lanshaw Dam (note you do not go as far as the third which is Carr Bottom Reservoir).

Follow the path by the left of Lower Lanshaw Dam, passing another boundary stone to your left. Do not take the path down the little valley which contains Coldstone Beck and avoid a smaller path going off to the right after a few yards.

Burley-in-Wharfedale village comes into view.

The path forks with a broad grassy track going off to the right. Keep left.

When you get to a crossroads of tracks marked with a post bearing a Millennium Way sign (SE 148451), keep straight ahead but note this point, as if you plan to walk back to Ilkley, the left turn here (or right on your return from the pub) is the moor edge path.

You exit Burley Moor at Burley Woodhead, on to the road by a former school converted into a house. Turn right following the fingerpost direction for "Dalesway Link, Leeds and Ebor Way". The Hermit pub is on the left after 300 yards.

The onward route to Burley station leaves The Hermit car park from its left hand corner (as viewed from the road). There is a fingerpost for “Burley” but this is sometimes obscured by the shrubbery. The start is the drive to a house. Cross the yard and follow the path between a hedge and a fence.

Cross another path (identified by a narrow stile a few yards to the left) (SE 155449) and keep straight on. The path may not be significantly worn and easy to see but just keep to the left of a line of dilapidated concrete fence posts. Enter the trees through a walkers’ gate.

Follow the line of the trees and when they peter out, follow the boundary line down to a white walkers’ gate. The path splits but joins again after a few yards. Cross a small stream then follow the line of stiles to exit into Hag Farm Road. Turn left and follow this to the train station. If you want buses, follow Hag Farm Road to its end and turn right and follow Station Road down to Burley-in Wharfedale village centre.

If you are walking back to Ilkley, from The Hermit, return to the crossroads of paths mentioned above and turn right. Cross Coldstone Beck and climb the other side and stay on the left of the stone wall. Stay on the main path as it follows the edge of the moors until you reach the unmistakable Cow and Calf Rocks.

As you pass above the Cow and Calf Hotel, look out for the large rocks on the right which is where the Cow and Calf Rocks are (SE 130467). Follow the obvious path descending back to Ilkley.

