

Title: Scenic Country Walk, Complete with Indy's Rickety Bridge

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A STROLL WITH STU

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Scenic country walk, complete with Indy's rickety bridge

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Lowland walks are fraught with problems in summer-time – triflidesque bracken and brambles for instance – but they have their compensations too with lots of wildlife on show and ice cream vans never too far away in a handy village. I took the Moorsbus along the A172 beyond Stokesley and walked along the lane leading to the pretty village of Carlton-in-Cleveland.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

My sister used to live here and I went to see if her old cottage still sported the name plaque I painted 45 years ago.

Not surprisingly, it had long since departed in a skip because, to be honest, it wasn't very good (suspect my sister binned it herself after I'd gone home).

About 100 yards after the pub, follow a footpath sign on the left of the road. This quickly takes you into a field with a couple of friendly steeds and heads east for about eight miles to Battersby Junction.

I won't detail every stile. The path essentially follows a reasonably straight line, with a few minor deviations at field boundaries. If you find yourself walking directly towards or away from the hills for more than 50 yards, you've gone the wrong way.

After a mile or so, including that British oddity of a plastic bag of dog poo tied to a hawthorn bush, a collapsed tree hides a stile leading over a ditch, then it's left through the branches towards a rickety footbridge straight from the set of Indiana Jones.

This is beautiful British countryside. Swaying fields of wheat, bordered by hedgerows alive with butterflies and bees and heavy with sloe, blackberry and rosehip, small areas of woodland affording an occasional glimpse of deer, swallows swooping and diving in their

pursuit of insects and the North York Moors rising steeply away to their heathery tops. Truly gorgeous.

After passing woods on your left, you'll notice that the landowner round here has submitted an application for "obstructive grouch of the year". (He is hammered into oblivion by a farmer nearer Ingleby Greenhow, who is international class – but more of him later).

In this instance, some sparewire blocks the path, but a quick detour round the other side of the hedge and a balletic leap over a rusty gate, takes you to a stile that drops you down on to a wide track.

Turn left, then quickly right to rejoin your easterly route which, after a couple of footbridges, takes you on to a grass path adjacent to the pretty village of Kirkby. At a road, a path continues straight on past some old barns/sheds and a bit of graffiti saying "Work or starve – it's not an option".

Musing on the notion that local politicians must have cut their printing budget, continue on to drop onto the road in the comely village of Great Broughton.

Walk on to the crossroads and turn right, passing both the Jet Miners and Bay Horse pubs then after another half

mile as you leave the village past Broughton Grange, take a wide track on the left.

At the end of the track, it's a quick left-right in a field of grain which was making some peculiar crackling noises as if they'd invented self-popping corn.

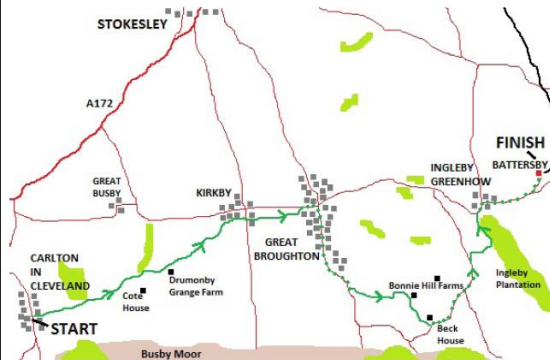
Now it starts getting a bit Bear Grylls. Soon, dog-leg through a fence and at the end of that field cross a bramble-wrapped stile and head south (towards the hills). You've been left an inch or two to walk on, so it's easier to follow the tyre tracks of whatever machine planted the wheat in the first place, towards some woods.

Ahead of them, turn left following power lines to a farm where you can go right on a wide track to reach Beck House.

It is here that path obstruction has been taken to Olympian heights. A curious 8ft crop of rash-inducing toxicity, blocks the way to Bonnie Hill Farm, so go onto the road and turn left. Successive opportunities to approach the said farms are obstructed by a fermenting pile of farmyard sludge and a sign warning off "unauthorised people", including a pictogram of a man with a red line drawn



Bee on a thistle and left, St Andrew's Church, Ingleby Greenhow



A map of this month's walk



Bean fields



Carlton-in-Cleveland

through him.

I do hope the landowner has constructive dialogue with the North Yorkshire County Council's footpaths officer, whom I have invited to pop round for a chat.

Stay on the road, which

turns sharp left, then take the 2nd signed path straight on as it bears left again.

Cross over to the trees, then left again and soon into the woods and over a beck to emerge into St Hilda's Churchyard, a stunning Nor-

man church in the village of Ingleby Greenhow.

Turn right on the main road and with a lovely walk completed, depart for your favourite Esk Valley watering holes from Battersby station, found half a mile further on.