

Masham to Hackfall

7¼ OR 8½ MILES
3½ OR 4 HOURS
MODERATE WITH SHORT, STEEP SECTIONS

1 START

From Masham market place, go down Millgate, pass school on left (L) and cross cattle grid. Follow Ripon Rowel Walk waymarks and pass through metal gate with water-treatment works on L. Continue with river on L, and after shallow steps into woods bear right (R) to follow tributary river to road bridge. Turn L and L again down green lane to rejoin River Ure.

2 1½ MILES

Continue along path, taking care over narrow footbridge and along eroded riverbank. Once over two old stiles, cross meadow to R of two large oaks. On hillside to R is Nutwith Cote Farm, an

18th-century manor house that was previously owned by the monks of Fountains Abbey. Look out for an earlier row of stone beehives along one side and the remains of a dovecote on top of the hill. Cross another stile and follow path on higher ground up from river's edge. Go through estate woodland (may be muddy), climbing hill as path bends to R. Pass through kissing gate, cross small stream and turn L for 100 metres across meadow to enter Hackfall via kissing gate.

3 3 MILES

Bear L and follow signposts up to Limehouse Hill viewpoint – at top turn round to see view back along the river

with Masham church spire in distance. Take care down steps and turn R at river to pass through stone gate piers. From the seat at Sandbed Hut Turner painted the view of Mowbray Castle in 1816. Bear L at fork to follow narrow riverside path. On river bend look up to see Fisher's Hall on R and then approach the octagonal folly by taking steps (or path) after 100 metres.

4 3½ MILES

For extension through Hackfall, incorporating steep steps up to Mowbray Castle, return down steps (or path) and turn R. Cross small streams and, after approximately ½ mile, climb steep steps on R with care. Follow high path to Mowbray Castle to enjoy excellent views of The Ruin and Masham church. Continue on and, as path bends L and levels off, turn R on narrow path just before small stream crosses main path (easy to miss). Go down to Alum Springs and carefully cross the weir using stepped stones over to Kent's Seat. Turn R and after 100 metres turn L to rejoin main route. From Fisher's Hall continue up hill. Do not cross stream; instead turn L to climb back up to the top. At fork bear L to explore Alum Springs and Kent's Seat. Retrace steps back to main route.

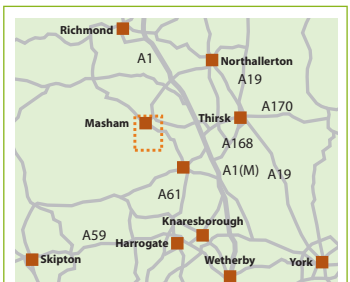
5 3¼ MILES

Continue up hill. At next junction turn R and follow path to The Ruin, built as an eye-catching folly and used by William Aislabie as a banqueting house with its extensive views across the Vale of York. It is now let as a Landmark Trust property and access is restricted before 11am and after 3pm, although there is an alternative route around. Continue along path, pass through two kissing gates and turn L to car park. Cross road, turn L and immediately R into woodland. Follow track up to junction and turn R down to road. Turn L on wide grassy common, staying parallel with road, and follow minor road to L leading down to Roomer Farm.

6 5¼ MILES

After approximately ½ mile follow footpath sign to cross stile to R. Follow footpath diagonally across five grass fields with a view of the turret of Swinton Park to L. After crossing sixth stile and narrow footbridge, follow field-edge path to L. After 150 metres, bear L just past two large sycamore trees to climb ladder stile in front of main gates of Swinton Park. This building dates from the late 1600s, was extended and

castellated during the Georgian and Victorian eras, and is now a luxury country-house hotel. Turn R on road, taking care where it crosses the river. Pass golf course with clubhouse on L. At T-junction turn L into Thorpe Road, take next R down Chapman Lane and back to the market place.



TERRAIN

Riverside, meadow and woodland paths with two short road sections. There are 10 stiles and the route can be wet and muddy in places, especially through Nutwith Cote Wood.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Bus stop in Masham market place. Nearest mainline train station is at Northallerton with a station at Bedale on the Wensleydale Railway. For information on train and bus services call Traveline on 0871 200 2233 (www.traveline.org.uk).

For details of coach services contact National Express on 0871 781 8181 (www.nationalexpress.com).

PARKING

Masham market place (grid reference SE225807), suggested donation 50p.

The Woodland Trust's Hackfall car park (grid reference SE231775).

REFRESHMENTS

Pubs, cafés and restaurants in Masham. Refreshments available at the Black Sheep Brewery and Theakston's Brewery visitor centres in Masham (follow signposts).

ACCOMMODATION AND TOURIST INFORMATION

Mashamshire Community Office, Little Market Place, Masham HG4 4DY (grid reference SE225808; telephone 01765 680200). Open 10am–3pm Monday to Saturday (except Thursday 10am–1pm). Walk leaflets available. Go to www.visitmasham.com
 Public toilets round back of community office open 8am–8pm.
 Nearest youth hostels are less than 20 miles away in Kettlewell, Grinton and Osmotherley (telephone 01629 592700 or visit www.yha.org.uk).

The Landmark Trust lets out The Ruin at Hackfall all year round. Visit www.landmarktrust.org.uk

MAPS

Ordnance Survey Explorer 298 & 302; Landranger 99

OTHER WOODS TO VISIT

See the Our Woods section on the Trust's website at woodlandtrust.org.uk or the Exploring Woodland guide for Yorkshire and the North-east.