



Walk: Gargrave to East Marton - ~ 8 miles circular

Parking: Free parking in Gargrave, North Street and West Street

Rail: There are infrequent Northern Rail trains to Gargrave.

Bus: There is a bus stop in Gargrave by the river with a number of operators.

Food and Drink: There are a number of pubs and tea shops and a Co-Op for groceries.

Gargrave: From the railway station turn left onto the road and walk into town, cross the bridge over the River Aire. By the bridge is the town's bus stop and public toilets. From the bus stop cross the road and take the side road along side the Dalesman Café. The West Street car park is down here and a little further on is the North Street carpark. Walk past the carpark and uphill to Highland Bridge #171. At the bridge turn left and join the towpath.

Right next to the bridge is Highland Lock, number 32 on the canal. This walk will take us up hill and towards Liverpool which a nearby milepost tells us is 93 miles away. This is a busy spot with hireboats passing through the lock; there are also permanent moorings here and plenty of walkers and cyclists. We soon come to Anchor Bridge #170 and Anchor Lock with the Anchor Inn on the farside. The ground paddles of Anchor Lock are boxed and have fixed handles which are wound in a horizontal motion to raise the screw inside. They are angled to make them easier to wind. When these paddles are raised water is let out of the lock.



The bank is quite high above the canal here as we approach Scarland lock. Scarland House used to be in the field next to the towpath, but there is no sign of it now. From Stegneck Bridge #169 you can see the Stegneck Lock, Priest Home Railway bridge #168A and Priest Holme Changeline bridge #168.

As we cross the Priest Holme Aqueduct the railway viaduct crosses the River Aire. Canals may have been replaced by railways but the railways relied on the engineering knowledge learnt building the canals.



At a changeline bridge the towpath swaps sides. At Priest Holme Changeline bridge the towpath curves around similar to the "snake bridges" on the Macclesfield Canal. Here however there is no towpath on the other side and walkers have to take care when walking along the road. While keeping an eye out for traffic, have a look over the stone wall for the next milepost 92 miles from Liverpool.

After some moored boats we come to the Bottom Lock of a flight of six: the Bank Newton locks. At the bottom lock is the lock house; look for the date 1791 and the initials of the Leeds Liverpool Canal Company. The next lock, Carpenters Lock is by the old canal company carpenters yard. Here they made the lock gates etc. Every canal employee was entitled to a free coffin which was also made here by the company carpenters.

Notice the ground paddles on these locks, cloughs or jack cloughs (pronounced like plough). These simple levers are lifted up to open the sluice. Two bridges on and we come to the next milepost, just 91 miles to Liverpool.



The canal now takes on a serpentine aspect. In the early days of canal building canals followed the contours around valleys. Later geography was ignored by such engineering feats as the Burnley Embankment. Keep your eyes on the TV mast, it will take a while to get to it! Looking across the valley you can see the canal and boats making their winding way along. It's a real zig-zag. Along the way is milepost 90, missing its plaques. Note the wooden roller to keep the towrope and boat on track on the tight bend.

After the canal straightens out past Langber Bridge #163 it enters a tree lined cutting. At Williamson Bridge #162 the Pennine Way crosses the canal. It is worth walking a bit further on to the next bridge which is one of the most photographed features of this canal: the Double Arched Bridge # 161. Try to decide whether this is a single bridge with two arches or one bridge built on top of an older one. Through the bridge is the last of today's mileposts 89 miles to Liverpool 38½ miles to Leeds.



Return to Williamson Bridge. Leave the towpath and follow the track up to the right. The track runs along the top of the canal cutting but the Pennine Way takes a turn to the right over a stile.



To follow the Pennine Way you have to have good eyesight, a good sense of direction and a bit of luck. The Way is marked by yellow arrows on stiles. Walkers have to find the stile with the arrow, cross over into the field and then walk across hoping to find another stile on the opposite side. There is only one field which has a direction post in the middle. In some fields you can see a change in the grass where people have walked across in others you just have to trust you are going the right way! The fields are home to sheep and cows so keep dogs on a lead. The way crosses a small stream at one point, look out for fish! It is only towards the end of the walk, when the path comes downhill, that you get a view across to Gargrave. After the post you can follow the tracks down to the road which crosses the railway line and brings you down to the town.

Walking through town you'll see St. Andrew's Church. This church was the only one of seven which survived an attack by the Scottish. The Church was spared due to its name, the people of Gargrave weren't so lucky. Carry on through town and you will be back at Gargrave Bridge over the River Aire.