

“ The imposing ruins of Middleham Castle, once home of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, before he became King Richard III, are worth viewing ”

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, Yorkist and future King Richard III (1452-1485), once lived in the imposing Norman Castle which still dominates Middleham. Its towering bulk remains a true memorial to the master masons who erected it more than eight centuries ago.

Middleham, the Newmarket of the North, is the centre of a bloodstock breeding area with a dozen or so trainers handling hundreds of potentially top-class racehorses.

About a mile (1.6km) beyond Middleham towards Leyburn, the road crosses the River Ure by an imposing iron girder bridge, which was built by public subscription in 1850, replacing a suspension bridge which collapsed in 1831 after only two years' use. Below the town, in Swaledale, the River Ure, which is now joined by the Cover, widens as it reaches the broad acres of the Vale of York. The dale's character becomes more wooded in its flatter, lower reaches. About 3 miles (4.8 km) from Middleham along the Masham Road, you will find the ruins of Jervaulx Abbey. During the life of this abbey, the Cistercian monks who lived there became famous for their cheese, a forerunner of Wensleydale, but made from ewes' milk.

Middleham



Middleham square

Route instructions

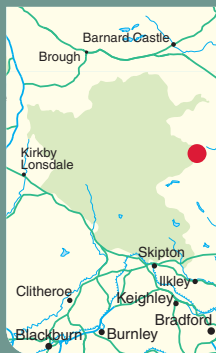
A From the market square, follow the lane on the left of the castle southwards into open fields. Keep the boundary wall on your right beyond the house at the lane end. $\frac{3}{4}$ mile (1.2km)

1 The imposing ruins of the Norman castle are worth viewing from within and also from the lane end. Richard III (1452-1485), having reigned for only two years, lost not only his horse and the Battle of Bosworth, but also the Crown of England in 1485, and his successor, Henry Tudor, had no wish to own Middleham. Along with the unhappy memories of his rival, it was abandoned and languished for 161 years. However, because it retained its obvious

potential as a fortress, Cromwell's troops made it untenable in 1646, during the Civil War. Its ruins later became a free quarry for ready-dressed stones and many of the older houses in the town are probably built from materials taken from the castle. The castle is now in the care of English Heritage.

Another feature in the town is St Alkelda's Well, the martyred Saxon princess who died at the hands of the Danes rather than renounce her Christian beliefs. It is her name to which the parish church is dedicated. In the market place and near the Swine Cross, there is a ring where bulls were once tied for the

Plan your walk



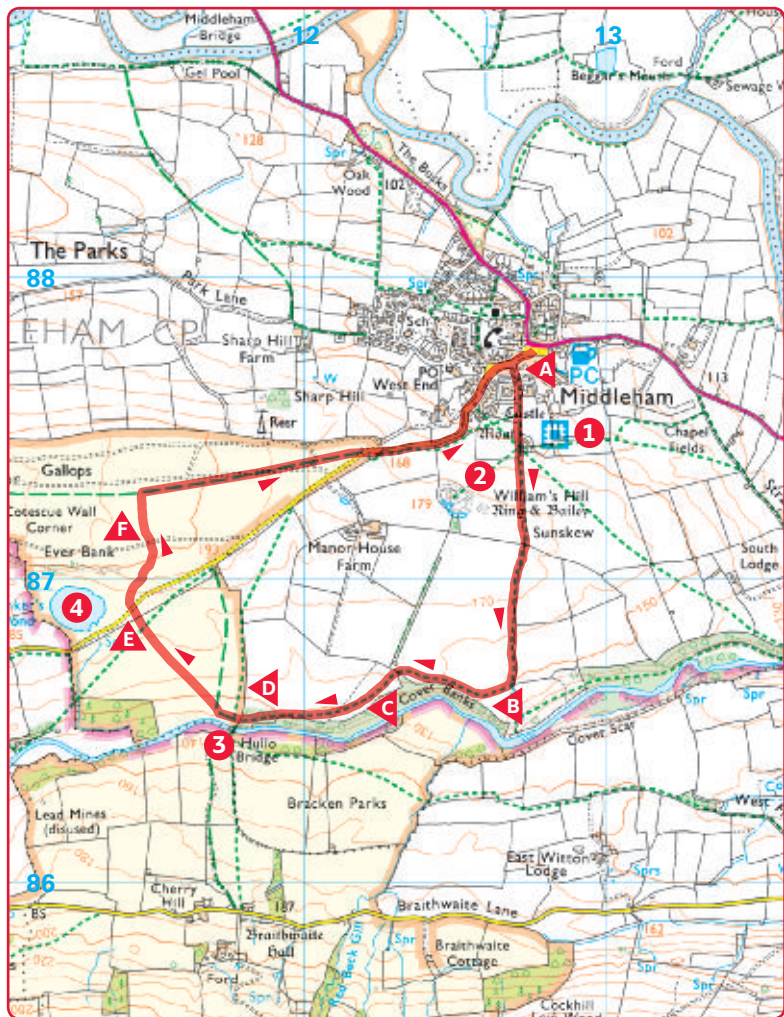
DISTANCE: 2½ miles (4km)

TIME: 1¼ hours

START/END: SE127877
To join the walk, park near the market square in Middleham

TERRAIN: Easy

MAPS:
OS Explorer 302;
OS Landranger 99



cruel sport of bull-baiting. During his training to become a knight, Richard met and married Anne, the daughter of Richard Neville who was better known as Warwick the Kingmaker. Through Anne, he became owner of Middleham and

spent many happy hours indulging in the royal sport of hunting game throughout the Dales. Edward, Richard's only legitimate son, was born in Middleham but died aged 12. His room can be seen in the castle ruins. King Richard, since his portrayal

Middleham

by Shakespeare in Richard III, has been looked upon as an evil king but recent research sees him otherwise. It is in this light that we can think of him as a lover of the Dales, especially Coverdale and his beloved Middleham Castle.

2 A mound which tops the rising field on the right predates the castle and is the earth base of an earlier timber fortification which was abandoned when the main castle was built.

B Bear right towards the trees lining deep-cut Coverdale. Follow the woodland boundary fence as far as a clump of pine trees. ¼ mile (400m)

C Climb two stiles at the edge of the wood. Bear half-left, downhill across the next field. ½ mile (800m)

D Walk down to an old, but well-built bridge. Do not cross the river but turn right, away from the bridge and climb along a well-defined cart track. ½ mile (800m)

3 Hullo Bridge. Its stone arch dates back to the times when it was used by heavier traffic than cattle or the occasional tractor and probably carried a coach road south across Coverdale to the interesting 17th century farmhouse of Braithewaite Hall. Parts of the two riverside fields south of Hullo Bridge are available for picnicking or strolling under the 'Countryside Stewardship' scheme.

E Follow the track up to the unfenced Coverdale road. Cross the road and follow red posts up to walk on the pathless grassy swathe of Middleham Moor. ¼ mile (400m)

4 The attractive pond on the left is a popular picnic spot. Horses can often be seen being exercised on the nearby common.

F Cross the moor, then bear right, back towards the road. Turn left and follow the road into Middleham. 1 mile (1.6km)



Middleham from the Tower