

A Visit to Historic Sicklinghall

About 4 miles (2 hours), with things to look at on the way.

This route can be boggy in wet weather, so please note the markings on the attached map, B = boggy and VB = very boggy. I'd hate anyone to slip over, but the walk is actually less boggy than some of the Probus walks carried out in the last few years. The route is marked with bold red dots, and an alternative to avoid some bog is marked in red dashes.

This is a walk best enjoyed when it's not raining. Recommend boots or wellies, one or two walking sticks, warm clothing, and (if it's sunny) sunglasses. A stile can be avoided by walking further up Sicklinghall main street and joining another track, also avoiding a small stretch of bog.

Arrive in Spofforth via the A661 Harrogate to Wetherby road or from Follifoot or Pannal via minor roads. Park in the vicinity of Spofforth Castle and walk south-east towards the centre of the village past the village hall etc.

After joining the A661 you see the Castle pub on the right and continue south-east towards Wetherby. About 400m beyond the pub, you come to the vicinity of the disused Harrogate (Brunswick) to Church Fenton railway line, with a station built in 1853.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spofforth_railway_station

http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/c/church_fenton/index.shtml

Housing has been built since the 1960's when the line was closed, and the line route is now a cycle track to Wetherby. The Station Inn still exists by the side of the road.

Walkers will find Spofforth Hall on the right hand side some 400m or so further along the road, and we enter the driveway to this, before branching right to join the very muddy farm track going south-west. This track is boggy and wet in some areas due to traffic from people, horses, and occasional tractors, and because you will be walking on track edges and grass at times, you really do need to support your stability by using a stick. Past a tractor entrance into a Christmas Tree field, the track becomes relatively dry. This area is a game-bird rearing area and you'll see feeding stations in the Christmas Tree plantations, and cover crops in some of the fields. Continuing south (ish) you go through the Royal Oak plantation to a T junction where you bear right in the direction of Sicklinghall.

Here you pass the old Stockeld walled garden WG at your left and then come to Stockeld Lodge, where you might see a manikin in the window, wearing a mop cap and period clothes.

Arriving into Sicklinghall, we pass the village pond and village hall on the right, before coming to the old Methodist chapel, which has been converted into a house. In the

centre of the village we see an old agricultural feature - a disused pinfold for housing stray animals. The pinfold is now a neat and productive vegetable garden. Here we also find St Mary Immaculate RC church, built in 1845 with funding from Stockeld Park's Catholic family (the Middeltons - note original spelling). This church area also had a Presbytery, Monastery, and Convent.

<https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101315567-church-of-st-mary-immaculate-rc-with-presbytery-and-former-monastery-attached-sicklinghall#.X989QTRxfIV>

Stockeld itself was founded by the Stokeld family after the Norman Conquest.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stockeld_Park

A little further on, we cross the road at the Scotts Arms pub and walk through their carpark to follow the path northwards, passing a paddock with Shetland ponies and crossing a stile into very wet grassland. Here the short path is supposed to go along the edge of the field but someone has laid thin boards across the bog and you can walk across the field to the obvious route onward.

You could get a bit wet here!

Continue north to Whin Lane Farm and along Whin Lane, probably passing other walkers and horse riders on the way. At the end of Whin Lane, turn right to the Furmard Hill quarry area and then you're back at Wetherby Road near the disused railway, and not far from your car.

Walk route courtesy of HGRA.