



War of the Roses: Lead, Towton & Saxton

- Start point: The Crooked Billet Inn on the B1217 (Saxton, Tadcaster LS24 9QN).
- Distance: approx. 14.7km
- Route: Circular

Always follow current UK government guidelines for COVID-19 (www.gov.uk/coronavirus) when enjoying these walks and check the most up to date advice before setting off. Please plan ahead as sites, public transport links and facilities (public houses, car parks, ect.) may be closed or have restrictions.

Appropriately enough, this walk begins with the opportunity to explore around the atmospheric church of St Mary's, Lead, known as 'The Ramblers' Church' after it was rescued by a group of walkers in 1931. This tiny church dates from the 11th century, though there may have been an earlier church on the site.

The walk then proceeds around the villages of Towton and Saxton, site of the infamous battle during the Wars of the Roses in 1461. It is thought to have been the largest loss of life in battle ever on English soil and the waters of Cock Beck – which you will cross twice during the walk – were said to have run red with blood.

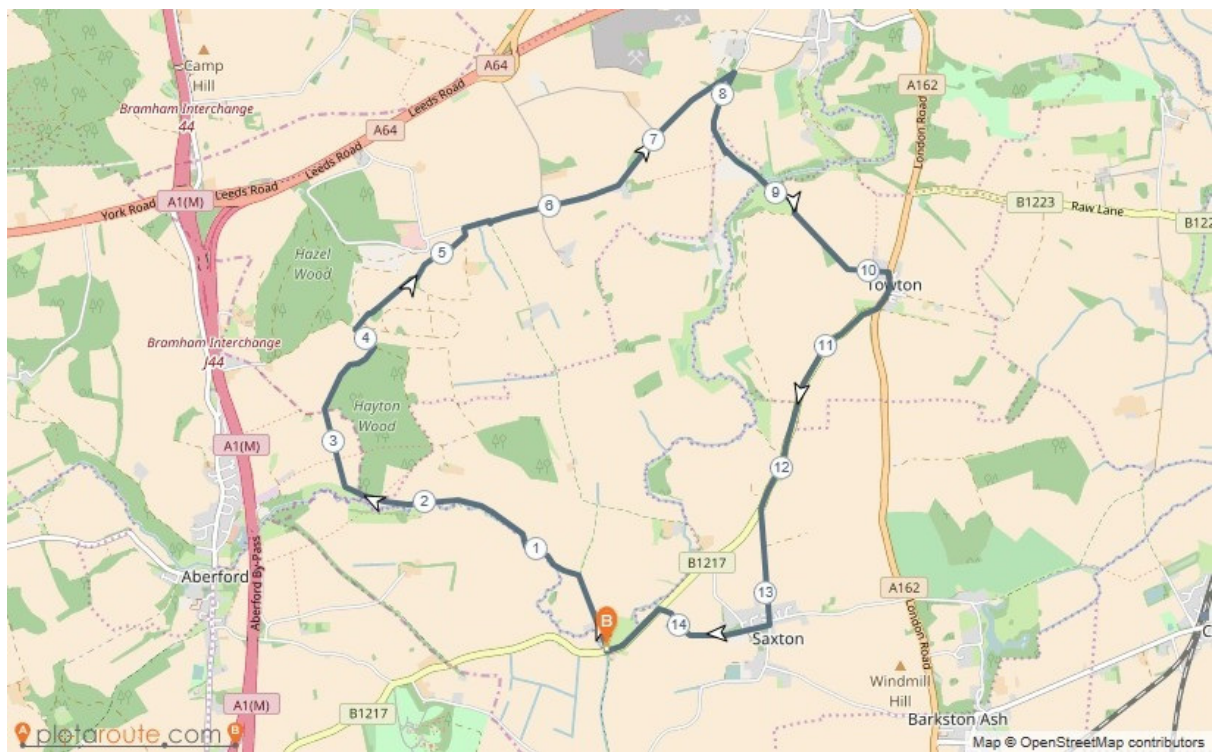


Directions

1. With The Crooked Billet Inn at your back, follow the footpath over the stone bridge to cross Cock Beck. **St Mary's Church** is on your right.
2. After exploring outside the church, return to the footpath skirting the boundary of Lead Hall and follow it northwest. At a fork (grid ref SE 46162 37290), turn left to follow a smaller path along the bottom of a field to re-join Cock Beck on your left.
3. Follow the footpath for approx. 2km, passing the lower end of Hayton Wood on your right. After crossing a fence, take the right hand fork and continue to follow the footpath along the field boundary, heading northwest.
4. When you reach the end of the field, another path joins from the left. Continue to follow the footpath round to the right, following the edge of the field with Hayton Wood on your immediate right.
5. On reaching a T-junction with a wide footpath, turn left. After a short distance, look out for a turn on the right to follow a small path across the racecourse.
6. At the other side, cross over the wide path to continue along the footpath through a small copse of trees. Continue heading northeast, crossing the racecourse again and passing through a second copse of trees.
7. Continue to follow the path, with Hazelwood Castle on your left, until it meets a wide footpath. Turn left and soon after, at the T-junction, turn right onto Chantry Lane.

8. Follow Chantry Lane for 2.4km until it meets a footpath known as Old London Road (grid ref SE 47289 41138) and take a sharp right.
9. Follow the footpath, keeping left at the fork. Shortly after this, you will enter woods and cross Cock Beck again. Follow Old London Road into Towton, turning right onto the A162 with The Rockingham Arms pub on your right.
10. Follow the road south through the town, and as you exit Towton, turn right onto the B1217.
11. Walk along the B1217, looking out for the Towton Battlefield Trail, which runs alongside the road, on the right hand side. After 1.6km, turn left onto Cotchers Lane and follow this south into the village of Saxton.
12. Cotchers Lane becomes Main Street, and shortly afterwards, turn left onto Dam Lane. Follow this until it reaches the T-junction with the B1217.
13. Turn left and walk 0.5km along the B1217 to return to The Crooked Billet Inn.

Route map



For a detailed route map, go to: <https://www.plotaroute.com/route/415650>

All of CCT's resources are free, but as a registered charity we rely on donations and are grateful for any support to care for this national heritage for the enjoyment of all. If you enjoyed this walk, please consider donating to CCT at visitchurches.org.uk/donate