

Walk 5

The Diamond Inn to Kirkley

(circular 9 miles)

BW = bridle way SO = straight on FB = foot bridge
 FP = foot path TR = turn right TL = turn left
 SP = sign post

Exit the field by another ladder stile, pass the tennis courts and onto a garden path. TL and pause for refreshment in any of the numerous bowers with seats. Continue and note the walled garden L, the obelisk on the hill R, before passing derelict stone sheds and some dwellings to reach the road.

Plants are sold to the public from the walled gardens and gardeners will find much to interest them if they have time to look around.

According to the eroded Latin inscription on the Obelisk it was erected by Newton Ogle in MDCCLXXXVIII (1788) to commemorate the centenary of the Glorious Revolution when William and Mary were invited to take the throne and James II, the Catholic King, was deposed. Newton Ogle was a Dean in the Church of England.



Obelisk



The Bridleway next to the golf course

NB This walk crosses the Pont by stepping stones; an interesting challenge to some or a complete turn-off for others.

START at the Diamond Inn and follow the directions for the beginning of walk 3. At Mayfair House on Prestwick Carr turn L and walk on the track up to the sentry box where there is a white flag pole. If there is a red flag flying there is shooting practice at the rifle range to the L and the person on duty will phone the base to stop firing and allow you to pass. You have a right of way but just make sure it's safe.

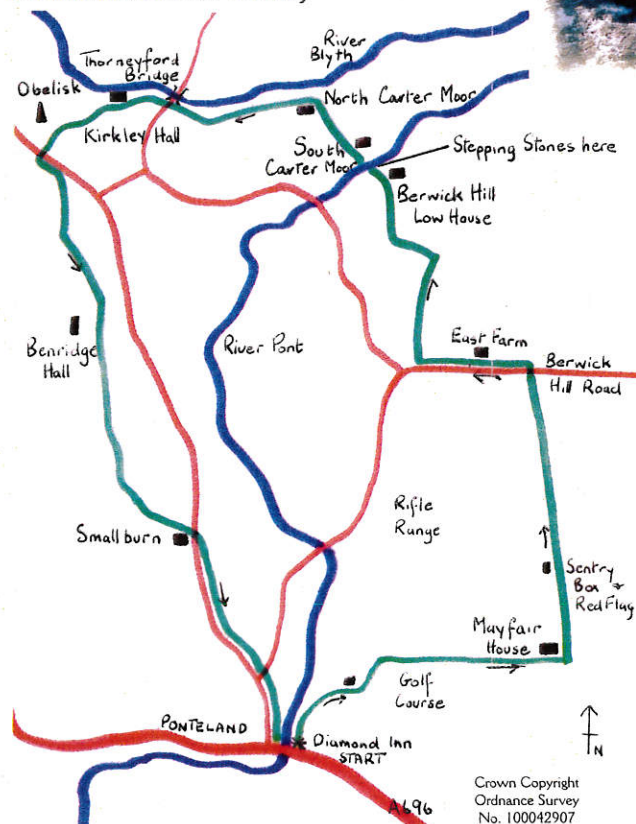
TL on the road for a short distance to find the SP on R for Ponteland 1 3/4 miles. The return to Ponteland is walking almost due south and crossing fields and burns on the way. Cross three fields and then two plank bridges and enter a pasture by the gate. On the right is Benridge Hall which has a red-brick façade. In architectural terms it is Flemish bond brick which is rare for Northumberland. In the next cultivated field walk around the edge then strike out south to the next field boundary and trees. Cross the plank bridge and walk up to the farm buildings. Pass straight over the yard to a stile and the track contours around the East Coldcoats Farm conversions. When the track peters out at a field intersection bear L and keep the fence and drainage channel on the R till the next stile is reached in the corner. The chimneys and buildings ahead are part of the Police HQ. Cross into a pasture and go diagonally L to the road at the farm conversions and new builds at Smallburn. There is a footpath along the road to return to Ponteland, about one mile.

If for any reason, flood, ice or infirmity, the stepping stones cannot be negotiated, it is possible to TL at Berwick Hill Low House onto the road then R past Cornyhaugh farm and use the track R at Kirkley Mill to rejoin the route at South Carter Moor. The river Pont joins the Blyth just downstream from the stepping stones and flows into the sea at the Port of Blyth.



Stepping Stones over the Pont

Diamond Inn to Kirkley



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At South Carter Moor farm keep to the left of the buildings and join a broad track still heading north with the next farm in view, North Carter Moor. Keep to the R of these farm buildings, turn L around the back and through a field gate straight ahead. TL, find the stile and follow direction arrows over 3 fields till the road is reached at Thorneyford Bridge. Cross the road and enter the Kirkley Hall estate.

In 1612 the Ogle family bought the Manor House and a large tract of land in Kirkley and eventually controlled an estate of more than 7 000 acres. Most of this was sold off in 1922 and marked the end of the Ogles as a significant local family. In 1929 the Hall was destroyed by fire but rebuilt in 1930 and the estate was bought by the County Council in 1948. Kirkley Farm Institute was then formed and later became part of the Northumberland College in 2000.



Kirkley Hall



Millennium Oak Tree

The track bears left and then through a gate. There are various brick-built farm buildings on the R and then sheds and hemmels and the estate road reaches a small roundabout. There is a Millennium Oak

planted here. Turn towards the clock tower and look through the arch to find a magnificent 300 year old Cedar of Lebanon! It is said that a house was built on this site in 1764 around the Cedar tree which was then reported to be about a hundred years old. Go to the L in front of the clock tower and there is a FP sign for a path which contours around the front of Kirkley Hall. Take time to have a look in the Hall gardens R and down to a pond L before crossing the ladder stile. The trees and gardens are well worth a closer look and many of the plants are labelled to satisfy the curious.



Arch into courtyard at Kirkley Hall



Gorse in Spring

The Rifle Range was built in 1902 on land bought from Lord Ridley. There were three gallery ranges which were converted into electronic targets in 1985. Now part of the Army Training Establishment, two of the ranges are still used by Cadets and Reserve Forces.

The track continues, sometimes through mud, sometimes on a hard surface, until it reaches the Berwick Hill road. Turn L on road and walk on R-hand verge facing the oncoming traffic past East Farm on the R into Berwick Hill. At the next houses on R there is a BVV signed for Berwick Hill Low House. Follow this grassy track with hawthorns on either side at first until it goes through a wicket onto a cultivated field. TL along the field edge and at the next field boundary TR and walk down the field with the hedge on your R to Berwick Hill Low House. Follow this grassy track with hawthorns on either side at first until it goes through a wicket onto a cultivated field. TL along the field edge and at the next field boundary TR and walk down the field with the hedge on your R to Berwick Hill Low House. Cross the stile and follow arrows to drop down to the Pont. There are well spaced stepping stones to cross the river and then TL and up to the next farm, South Carter Moor.



Red flag indicates firing on the range