



Walk 24
West Dipton Burn
(Moderate Route)

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Distance – 4 miles (km).

Maps – Explorer OL34

Walking time – 2 ½ hours.

Star and finish point – Letah wood car park (grid reference - NY 943608). If you are driving up Hexham high street (heading west) turn left B6306 (road sign – Blanchland). As the road bends around to the left, you turn right (road sign – Dye House 3 ¾ , Whitley Chapel 5) and then the first left (road sign – Whitley Chapel 5, Dye House 4, Ordley 3). Continue along the road for a little while and take the second right (just after Mill Barn). There is a car park for two cars immediately on your left. If this is full there are two large lay-bys a little further up the road.

Summary

This lovely walks explores the landscape around the West Dipton Burn as you pass through some quite spectacular wooded gorges, with just the burn for company.

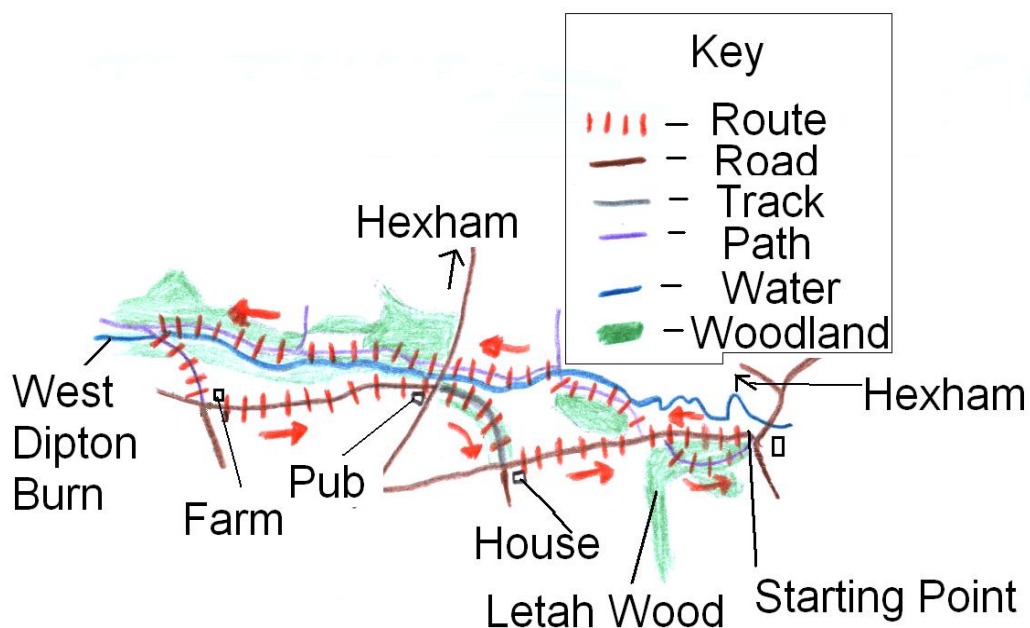
After crossing a footbridge at the far end of the walk you climb steeply out of the gorge and pass back through some contrasting farmland scenery, before dropping back to the famous Dipton Inn, serving its own brewed beers.

On the final stretch of the walk you pass through Letah Woods, owned and wonderfully maintained by the Woodland Trust, which really is the icing on the cake for this walk.

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The walk is good underfoot, but strong shoes are recommended.

Map.



Route details.

Walk back on to the road, turn left and walk up the hill with the wood on your left and some horse paddocks on your right.

Continue to rise up on the road, losing the wood on your left. After a short while you reach and cross a stile on your right (Public Footpath – Dipton Mill $\frac{3}{4}$, Hexham $2\frac{1}{4}$).

Pass down the field heading towards a large metal gate in the bottom left hand corner of the field. The path zigzags its way down the field, but this can be seen in the lie of the land.

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Reach and pass over a stile located to the left of a large metal gate. Continue along the prominent path with the fence immediately on your right and the West Dipton Burn the far side of it.

After a little while the fence goes off to your right but just continue on walking in the same direction as you were previously. After a short time you join up with the fence again on your right and follow it.

These lovely paddocks you are walking through are extremely picturesque but can be far from ideal for sheep, therefore requiring good shepherding. The water and tree cover all around will more than likely mean a higher than normal fly population during the summer months. As flies can lay their eggs around sheep's bottoms if they are left uncleaned this can mean that maggots can become a large problem, feeding on the sheep's flesh. This problem can be dramatically reduced by dipping and/ or applying a fly repellent to the sheep. Good shepherding is required to assess when the risk is high so that precautionary measures can be taken.

You reach the top corner of the field and pass over the footbridge. Ignore the public footpath and stile on your right, but bear around to your left, continuing to follow the burn, which is now on your left.

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As you continue on you reach and pass over a stile and follow the prominent path bearing away to your left. You eventually pass a house (Dipton Mill Cottage) on your left and gradually rise up to a stile, which is located to the left of a large wooden gate.

Cross over the road and pass over the stile (Public Footpath – West Dipton Wood). Continue on following the prominent path through the woodland before you reach and pass over a small burn, located just before a stile. Cross the stile and continue on walking in the same direction. At the fork in the track bear left, ignoring the path rising up to your right.

After a short while you drop down and pass through a fence, comprising of two barbed wires. Turn immediately right and pass over a stile and walk on the prominent path, passing through the middle of a triangular paddock, which is surrounded by trees.



When you reach the top end of the paddock pass over a stile located to the side of a small wooden gate. Ignore the path going off to your right but continue on, following the burn on your left.

As you follow the path you are in the bottom of a true gorge, with the ground rising up steeply either side of you. Then you reach and pass over a stile and continue on the prominent path. The path

then splits in two and you can take either one. The left hand one goes down by the waters edge and the right hand one rises up instead.

Just before the two paths rejoin you have a lovely waterfall, between the two paths.

As you continue on you reach a marker post, turn left and immediately cross over a footbridge. Follow the path as it bends around to the left, before climbing steeply out of the gorge and passing down a lovely grassy tree lined lane before reaching the road.

Turn left along the single track road and after a short while you will come to a farm on your left. You continue with a hedge on your left and a wall on your right. Above the wall you can see two strands of barbed wire. Over the years the wall has 'slouched' and therefore it is no longer stock-proof. By erecting these wires that run above the top of the wall it will stop any athletic sheep escaping on to the road.

As you continue on you pass Shield Green Nurseries on your right, before the road starts to drop down.

Just before you reach the road you pass the Dipton Inn on your right. The inn serves a full range of Hexhamshire beers, which they brew themselves.

Cross the road and walk directly up the tree lined track in front of you. After a little while the track rises up until you reach a road. Turn left along the road and you immediately pass a large house on your right with not just a double garage, but a triple one.

As you continue on you pass Newbiggin Hill Farm and the road starts to gradually drop down. Ignore the stile on your left, which you crossed earlier in the walk, but continue down the single track lane.

The wood joins you on the right. Turn right at the first lay-by and pass to the right of the Letah Wood 'welcome' sign. Pass down the steps and drop down into the woods and follow the path around to your left crossing the boardwalk.

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The wood was formerly part of the Newbiggin Hall Estate and acquired by the Woodland Trust in two parts in 1985 and 1986. There is a very good information board about the wood just near the exit point.

Continue on the prominent path as you cross the burn twice, using stepping stones, before climbing back up on to the prominent path.

You gradually rise up on this path back to your car.

Revised March 2006

