

BHS Paralympic Legacy Access Project

Route 12 – Arden Great Moor, North Yorkshire



PLAP Route 12 – Arden Great Moor, North Yorkshire

Distance: approximately 13 miles

Map: Ordnance Survey Explorer Map Number OL26 (Map 1:25000)

What more could a carriage driver want than breath-taking views, historic pathways, isolation, at least a third of the route off-road and a pub halfway round? The answer is surely a fit horse and sunny day!

This route unfortunately cannot be divided into individual sections without retracing track already driven (with a horse/pony) and is less physically demanding if driven in an anti-clockwise direction.

Other considerations of this route include:

- A variety of ground surfaces ranging from the sublime to the unenviable (in one short area)
- Steep slopes in some places (marked on the accompanying map),
- Practical facilities are few and far between.

However, these are totally surpassed by the scenery, historic influence and importance of parts of the route, and a feeling of dependency on your horse while in such immense surroundings. Once again, the true spirit behind Paralympic achievement is reflected through Yorkshire landscape.

The highlight of the route is the three-mile section along the Hambleton Street. This may be the oldest road in Yorkshire - contemporary with the Berkshire Ridgeway and was used as a high road between York and Durham. William the Conqueror is believed to have marched his troops this way, and in 1322 Robert the Bruce's army came this way before trouncing the English army near Sutton Bank. Little-used for centuries, it came back into use in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century as a droving route for cattle from Scotland to London.

About half a mile north of the Arden to Kepwick road, a few ruins mark the site of Limekiln House, once an inn and resting place for the drovers, their cattle and their dogs. There was a family living there until 1890, and it was finally pulled down in 1953.

Arden Hall is on the site of a small nunnery - it had eight nuns when it was closed in 1536. The Hall is a Grade II* listed building, constructed in 1710 for the Tancred family. It now belongs to the Earl of Mexborough. The little road from Hawnby to Osmotherley survived as a stone road until tarred in 1940.

Recommended and researched by Dr John Sugden, BHS Cleveland Committee and County Access and Bridleways Officer.

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Route Description

It is advisable to drive/ride this route in an anticlockwise direction. Lettered points are marked on the map.

Leave the Square Corner Car Park following signs for The Cleveland Way, continuing (through the gate) for approximately half a mile, passing a footpath on your left and a bridleway on your right

(A) The track gradually reduces in width and becomes considerably steeper as you climb towards the plateau at the top. This has recently been resurfaced with loose chalk stone, which should compress in time but is at present rough and relatively demanding to a driven horse/pony.

(B) On leaving the plantation on your right the surface improves considerably, and you soon find yourself on level going, with amazing views on both sides. Continue following the track signed Cleveland Way (note the change of direction at White Head Gill) until reaching the information board at which you turn left (B-C approximately two miles).

(C) Follow the gated stone track in an eastward direction towards Hawnby. This starts to gradually descend into the valley parallel to the start of the plantation on your left and becomes steeper after you pass the quarry. Continue down Arden Bank until you reach the tarmac road.

(D) At Arden Hall, remain on the tarmac road passing the Estate Office at Hawnby Lodge on your left. Do not turn off this road until reaching The Inn.

At the next two junctions, turn left – the first signed Osmotherley, and the second Snilesworth, and continue up a narrow road for a short way ('blind summit' warning) before returning to unfenced moorland. Note: although this is narrow and steep, there are places where you can walk on the grass. At (E) (Sunley Slack) where a number of different tracks converge there is a parking area.

After (E) continue along an unfenced tarmac road, passing firstly Hazel Heads – an open grass area with an information board (F), then over a bridge with 10 percent ascent/descent marked as a ford.

Continue on several sharp bends followed by a cattle grid with side gate. Be aware that between (F) and (G) there are several steep inclines.

At (G), bear right and continue up the steep hill to the next junction follow sign to Osmotherly. The road takes you once again through unfenced moorland (where parking might be possible) and back to Square Corner Car Park.

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General Information

Parking: A small car park is available at Square Corner (right). Some roadside parking is accessible beyond this, and another slightly larger parking area is available at E (Sunley Slack, bottom left) shown on the accompanying map.

The start of the route is best accessed from the A19 turning to Osmotherley. From the cross roads in the centre of the village turn right (southwards) and then after approximately half a mile turn left onto a road signed 'Unsuitable for Buses and Coaches' 'Bends ½ Mile'.

The road ascends relatively steeply, and an unmarked narrow bridge needs to be negotiated before reaching Square Corner Car Park. Note that this road is narrow and steep.

Insurance: The BHS recommends that before undertaking any part of this route, both horse and rider should be adequately insured against public liability. The British Horse Society can provide public liability and personal accident insurance cover as well as many benefits if you join as a member (terms and conditions and territorial limits apply). For more information or to join, visit www.bhs.org.uk/membership.

Feedback: These routes are kept to the standard that the local authority can afford. They were all accessible at the time of launch and are on definitive public rights of way. If you experience any problems with the routes or wish to raise any concerns, please contact the local authority, your local BHS Access Officer or the Access Team at BHS HQ via access@bhs.org.uk.

About the Paralympic Legacy Access Project

In 2013, the BHS launched the Paralympic Legacy Access Project (PLAP), dedicated to identifying and promoting 20 off-road routes across Britain. The 12-mile circular routes were recognised to suit the needs of carriage drivers with physical limitations.

The project was inspired by an anonymous donation to commemorate the achievements of the Paralympics and Para World Carriage Driving Championship in 2012. Launched by BHS President, Martin Clunes, the 20 routes were all tested prior to launch.

A huge thank you to those who volunteered their time, knowledge and input to create the routes of the Paralympic Legacy Access Project.

Discover more at www.bhs.org.uk/carriagedriving

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Contact Us

Write to us

The British Horse Society
Access & Rights of Way Department
Abbey Park, Stareton
Kenilworth, Warwickshire
CV8 2XZ

Email

access@bhs.org.uk

Telephone

02476 840 515

Find out more

www.bhs.org.uk/accessadvice