

## FREMINGTON EDGE, HURST and ARKLE BECK

from Reeth 7½ miles (12km)

**T**he area explored during this walk has a good contrast of terrain and scenery; heather-clad moors, lead mines and a beautiful beckside return through the meadows and woodland of Arkengarthdale.

Reeth is the capital of Upper Swaledale, occupying the loveliest of positions below Calver Hill, with views of the surrounding hills and wild moorland. It is a very attractive village with a large sloping green, enclosed on each side by housing, hotels and shops. Reeth used to be a busy market town with a charter granted in 1695 permitting four fairs each year and a market every Friday. The fairs and the market have long since gone, but the Annual Agricultural Show is still held on the last Wednesday in August.

After leaving Reeth a meadow path is followed to Fremington, a peaceful little village with its small scattering of stone cottages dotted about on the hillside. Most of the drystone walls which extend straight to the top of the fell are the result of the Parliamentary Enclosure Act of 1778. Enclosure of land for the purpose of scientific management was recommended by Sir Thomas Elliot of Fremington, one of the greatest improvers of the moors in Yorkshire. He advised “never to attempt any improvement without enclosing”. This action transformed the countryside and contributed to the unique character of the Dales.

From Fremington we follow a narrow tarmac lane which climbs up behind the aptly named White House passing some

former chert quarries to Fremington Edge. Chert is a hard, flint-like stone, which was quarried in both black and white forms. It was ground to a fine powder and used in the making of fine china and pottery. As height is gained we are favoured with splendid views of Reeth, Arkengarthdale and Swaledale. Our route continues across the heather covered Marrick Moor to the ancient hamlet of Hurst, with its two imposing chimneys.

The isolation of Hurst provides an introduction to the bleak and rugged landscape, created by the lead mining industry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During the time of the Roman occupation, the Hurst mines are thought to have been used as a penal settlement, where slaves and convicts were sent to work. Lead from Hurst is said to have been used to roof buildings in Jerusalem and St Peter’s in Rome.

The village was once known as Red Hurst owing to the discoloured waters of a nearby spring and Redshanks was the nickname of the Hurst men. According to legend, a traveller was passing by the spring when the guardian spirit snatched him up, dyeing the spring with his blood. The villagers went to pray for his soul and saw

a vision of the Virgin, thereafter the Well of Roan “flourished with blessings and streamed with health”.

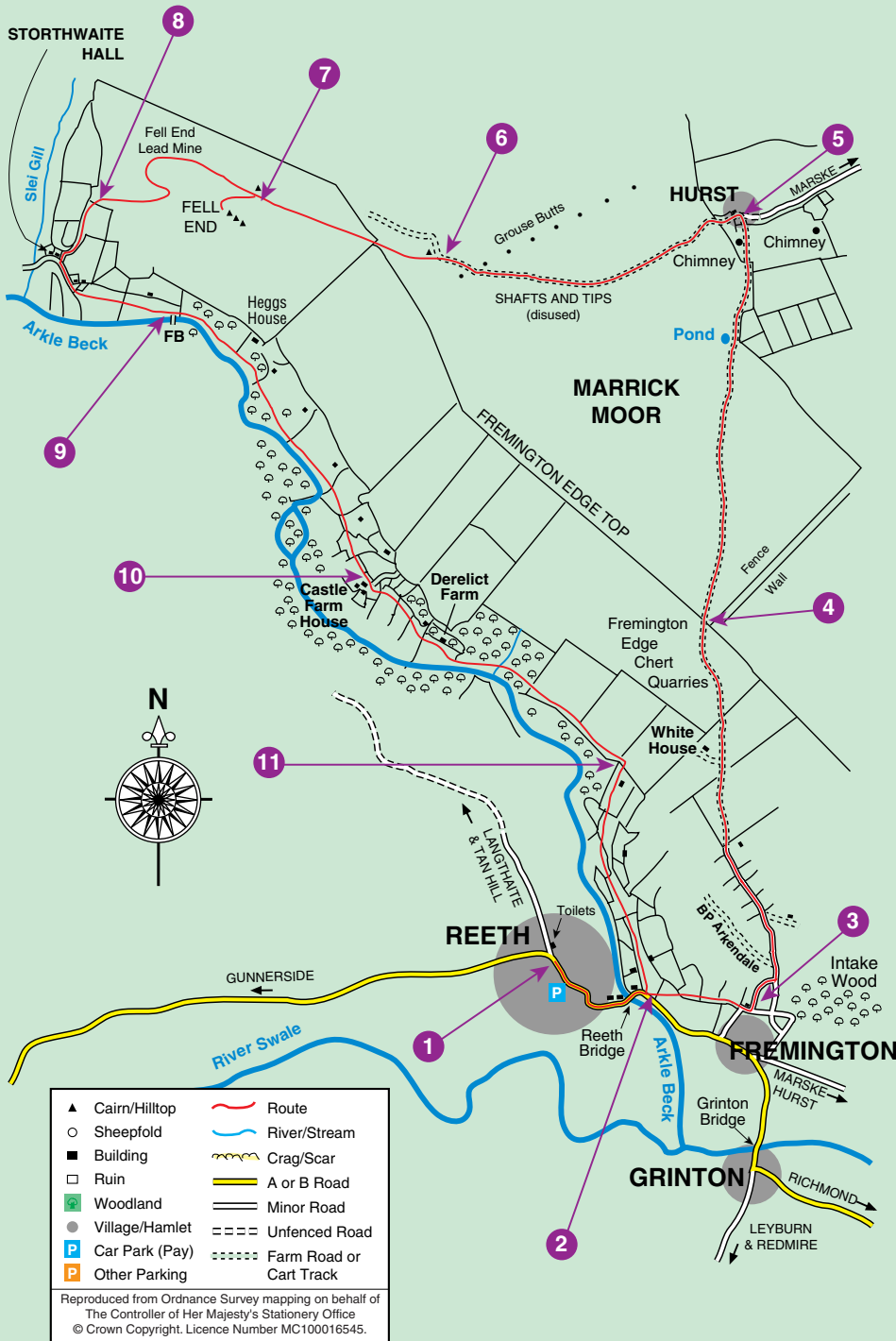
Our route from Hurst passes through a large area of mining spoil to reach the cairns at Fell End. Here spectacular views extend across Arkengarthdale to the tiny hamlet of Booze and the more prominent landmark of North Rake Hush over the side valley of Sleil Gill. From the cairns we descend to the delightfully positioned cottage of Storthwaite Hall, which sounds very grand but the translation means ‘the bullock clearing’.

The return along Arkle Beck has to be the highlight of the walk, with beautiful woodland, lush meadows and superb views to enjoy all the way.

Arkle Beck rises on the wild moorland near the Tan Hill Inn. It is a fast flowing tributary to the river Swale which it joins near Grinton Bridge. Do not be misled by the gentle look of Arkle Beck. In 1986 when ‘Hurricane Charley’ passed, it became a powerful and destructive force rising 12 feet (3.5m) above normal. Further upstream, the top of Whaw’s bridge was washed away and cottages at Langthwaite were flooded to a depth of 2 feet (0.6m) on the ground floors.

Start/Parking:	Reeth, around the village green and also an overflow car park 100 yards (90m) along the Gunnerside road.
Location:	Reeth is 11 miles (17.5km) from Richmond on the B6270 Richmond to Kirby Stephen road.
Grid Ref:	038 993.
Distance:	7½ miles (12km) circular. Allow 4 hrs.
OS Maps:	Explorer OL30 (1:25,000) or Landranger 98 and 92 (1:50,000).
Refreshments:	The Black Bull, The Buck Hotel, The King’s Arms, The Copper Kettle Restaurant, The Cobbles Tea Shop
Public Toilets:	Reeth, near the Buck Hotel.
Other:	Swaledale Folk Museum, Blacksmith’s Ceramic Design, Reeth Gallery, Philip Bastow’s, Post Office, telephone, bus service.

## 2 Fremington Edge, Hurst and Arkle Beck



- 1 (GR: 038 993) Leave Reeth via the Richmond Road and after crossing the bridge over Arkle Beck, go through a stile on the left.
- 2 (GR: 042 992) Take the right path through a stile, then bear left to another stile to the right of an iron gate. Turn right and stay with the wall through two more gap stiles, emerging onto a road at High Fremington.
- 3 (GR: 046 991) At the first cottage on the left (*Brambles*), turn left onto an enclosed track and follow it uphill to join a narrow tarmac lane. Turn left and keep on this lane, climbing uphill to a gate. From the gate, continue up to a fork where the tarmac lane changes to a stony track by a spring. Follow the right fork, passing behind the White House. Ignore public footpath signpost and continue to climb up via a gate, passing some old chert quarries. Ignore all forks and climb up to the gate in the wall at the top.
- 4 (GR: 044 007) Go through the gate and continue on a stone track which leads directly away from the wall and across Marrick Moor, to the hamlet of Hurst. After going through a gate Hurst's two chimneys are very prominent.
- 5 (GR: 046 023) Go through a gate onto the road. Turn left and continue via two gates to join a clear stone track which leads across the mining spoil. After passing through a line of grouse butts, the track becomes a little greener. Follow it round to the left and uphill to a right bend, where a wall comes into view (*Fremington Edge Top*).
- 6 (GR: 034 021) At a cairn on the left, leave the track and follow a path through a break in the heather. Head towards the wall and go through a gate where two wall corners meet. From the gate, a faint path leads towards some mining spoil heaps. Pass to the left of the spoil towards a cairn.
- 7 (GR: 026 024) From the cairn the path descends through the mining spoil on a cairned/waymarked track and then winds down a stony section to arrive at a gate.
- 8 (GR: 019 024) Go through the gate (*SP Langthwaite*) and staying with the wall follow the blue waymarks down past Storthwaite Hall and through a gate onto a farm lane. Turn left, go through a gate and follow an enclosed lane to a farm, go through another gate. Continue across two meadows, dropping down to join Arkle Beck by a footbridge (*don't cross the bridge*).
- 9 (GR: 022 019) Using the gate to the left of the bridge enter a small wooded area. At a fork, take the path to the right (*SP Footpath Reeth*) and follow the yellow waymarks over derelict walls. After entering another wood, continue to follow the yellow waymarks, cross a small stream and leave the wood, climbing up to a signpost. Turn right here and, after going through an open gateway (*SP Fremington*) head to the right hand wall. Cross over two broken walls, a farm track and through a gap stile to Castle House Farm.
- 10 (GR: 030 009) Pass behind the farmhouse, keeping to the wall. Cross an enclosed lane and over a broken wall opposite. Continue on an obvious track through a gap stile. Descend over two broken walls to a ruined farm. Arkle Beck is rejoined at the next wallcorner. Continue through an open gateway and, at a fork, follow the left track climbing away from the beck. Keep to the wall through three more open gateways.
- 11 (GR: 041 001) When the clear path fades out, go through a gap stile in the wall on the right. Descend to the right of a barn, through two stiles, then turn left through another stile. Keep to the right hand wall across two fields, to reach the stile at Reeth Bridge and then return to the car.

1. A detour is recommended to the left, along a narrow path which leads to the cairns on the cliffs at Fell End. Excellent views down the valley. Then retrace steps to cairn.