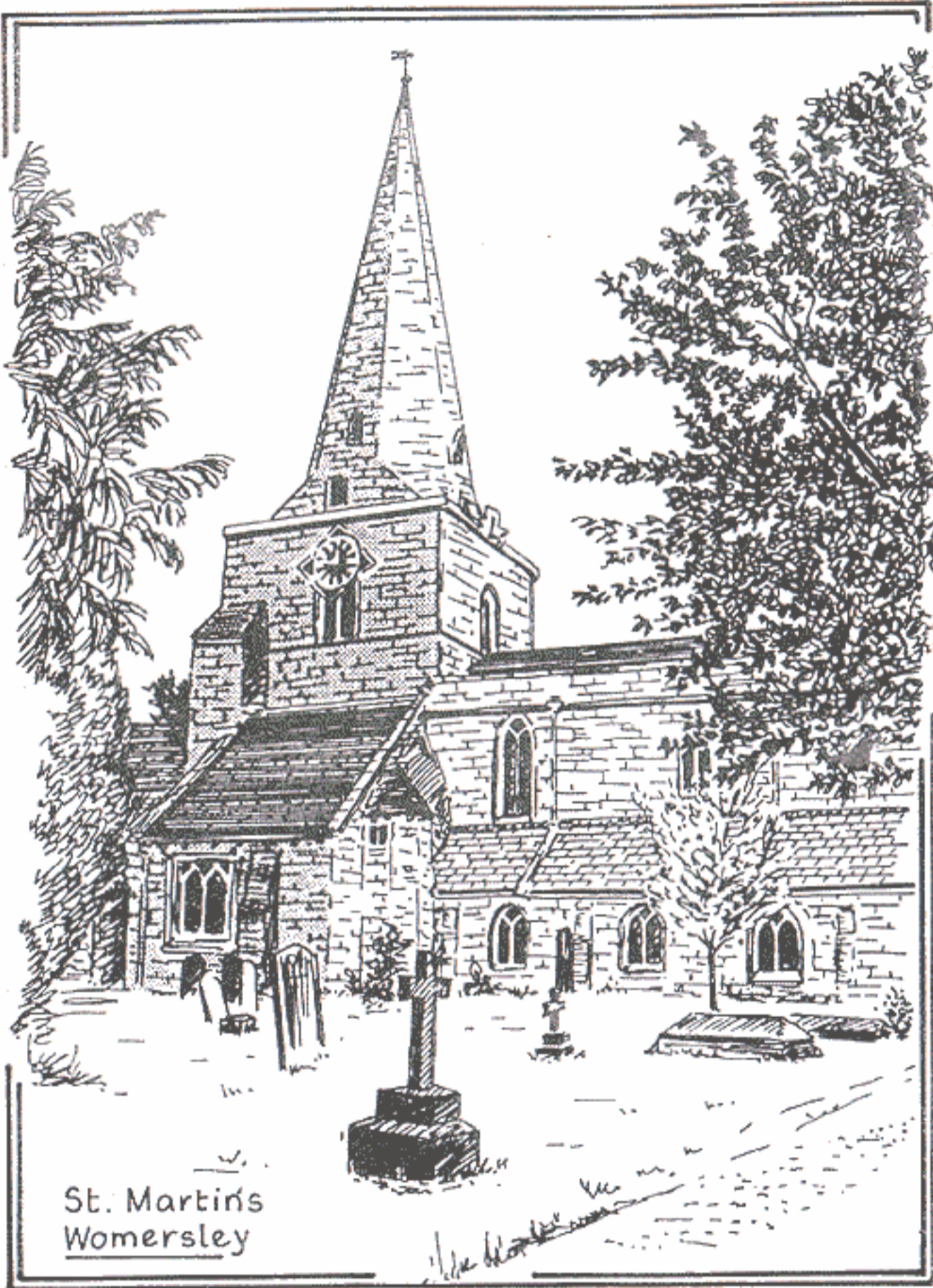


A Walk from Womersley



This leaflet describes a circular walk of about 7½ miles in the pleasant countryside to the south of Womersley, encompassing the small villages of the Smeatons and Walden Stubbs. The route is situated in the southernmost tip of North Yorkshire and so is easily accessible for walkers from the South and West Yorkshire areas.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Start Point: Western end of Womersley.

Distance: 7½ miles (12km).

Approx. time: 3½ hours.

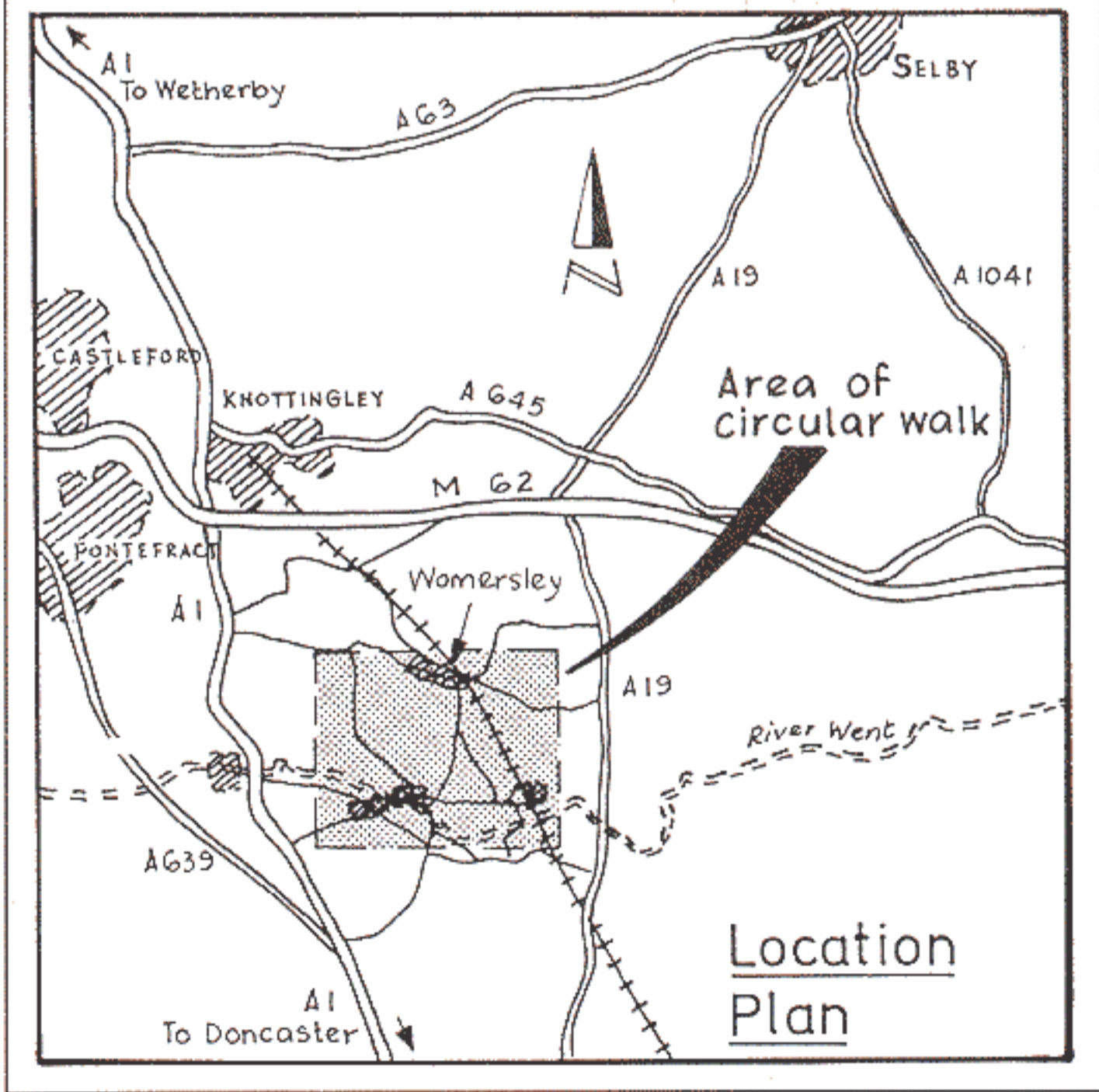
Parking: Limited parking in grassy layby near western entrance to quarry.

Terrain: Arable farmland and woodland, gently undulating. Mainly field paths and tracks, with some quiet roads. The wearing of walking boots or wellingtons is advised, as some sections can be very muddy at times.

Public Transport: Hourly bus service (Leeds-Pontefract-Doncaster) passes through village. Contact South Yorkshire Road Transport Ltd., Tel. Pontefract 704477 for details.

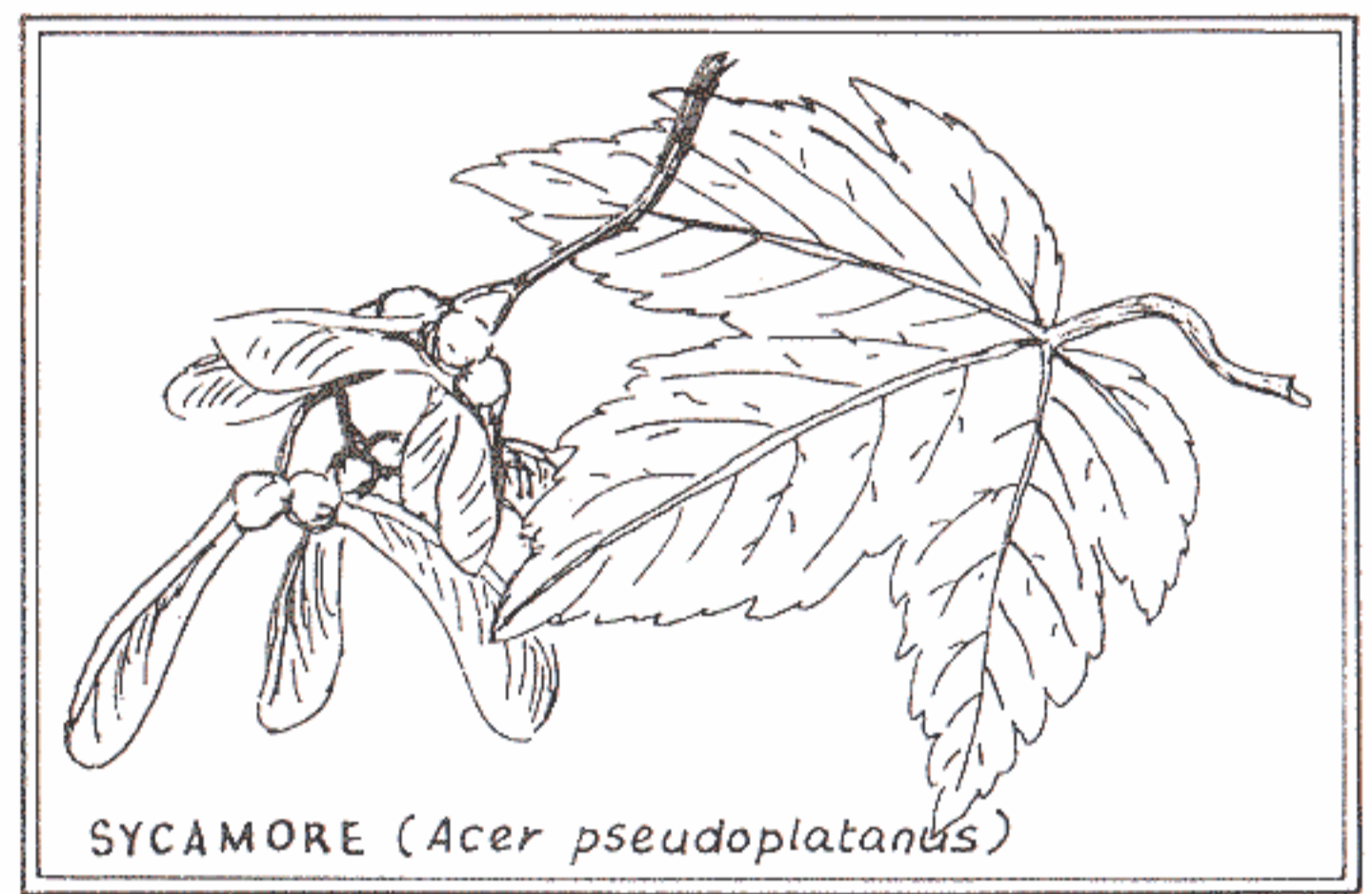
Refreshments: The Fox Inn, Little Smeaton. Shoulder of Mutton, Kirk Smeaton. Shop/Post Office, Womersley.

Maps: The map inside should be adequate but appropriate O.S. maps are the Pathfinder 704 (SE41/51), 1:25000 or Landranger 111, 1:50000.



START:

At the western edge of Womersley village a signpost indicates the start of the path. Go over the stone ladder stile and down the slope for 100 metres to cross the stream, before turning right. Continue on this line, a hedge on the left, until reaching a stile at the edge of some woodland. The path then runs along the field edge for about 300 metres with the wood on the right before turning to cross through a narrow section of the mixed deciduous trees — look out for the waymark directing through here.



At the far side of the wood turn left along the path next to a deep dyke which is soon crossed by a sleeper bridge to a field.

Exit the field through a gap about 50 metres along the next hedgerow and cross a dyke into a field which is kept for hay. In the summer the path may not be obvious through this field, which at times appears as a rich carpet of wild meadow flowers. As waymarked, turn half-right to cross the field in a southerly direction, making for the highest point on the skyline ahead.

The route next crosses an arable field — please take care when passing between any crops and walk in single file. At the edge of the field the route joins a long track known as Smeatley's Lane and the walk is continued in the same direction as it passes over a small rise before dropping down towards the villages of Little Smeaton and Kirk Smeaton. From this higher part of the lane there is a fine view across the surrounding countryside, encompassing several well-known landmarks in the

distance — from Ferrybridge in the west followed by Kellingley Colliery and then Low Eggborough, Drax and Thorpe Marsh power stations — as they are spread across the southern vale of York.

At the road junction continue straight ahead on the short stretch of road leading downhill into the western edge of Little Smeaton. Turn left on to the main street.

At this point an alternative route may be taken if wished, adding about two extra miles onto the main walk (or it can be a short walk in itself). Instead of turning to the left, go right along Hodge Lane onto a very popular and attractive walk which runs almost parallel to the River Went through a wooded area. After about a mile, cross the river and return along the south side of the valley into Kirk Smeaton. Walk through the village and turn left into Hodge Lane by the church, crossing the river back into Little Smeaton. Continue as directions of main walk.

Even if not taking the longer route it is worth making a small diversion into the pleasant village of Kirk Smeaton.



ST. PETERS,
KIRK SMEATON

The very attractive church of St. Peter dates from the 12th century with features from the 12th-15th centuries and was heavily restored in 1864. It is built from magnesian limestone with a Welsh slate roof. One of the gravestones which is on the eastern side of the church yard is a memorial to William Rockcliff of Kirk Smeaton who died

on March 31st, 1864 aged 88 years and was a "hero of Waterloo".

The twin villages of Little and Kirk Smeaton share many facilities and face each other across the valley of the River Went.

Back in Little Smeaton, walk along the main street at the far end of which is the Fox Inn. Pass the children's play area and recreation ground at the eastern end of the village and take the right-hand fork of the road. At the next road junction turn right (signposted to Norton) and then almost immediately turn left onto a path near Willow Bridge, where at one time there was also a railway crossing adjacent. Follow the path not far from the river and proceed in a south-easterly direction until a sturdy footbridge spanning the River Went can be crossed. Carry straight on across a field, then turn left onto Norton Mill Lane.

For this short stretch before re-crossing the river, our route is out of North Yorkshire — the River Went forms the county boundary along here — and into the Metropolitan Borough of Doncaster. Across the fields to the south is the village of Norton and visible on the skyline is a windmill which is situated between Norton and Campsall.

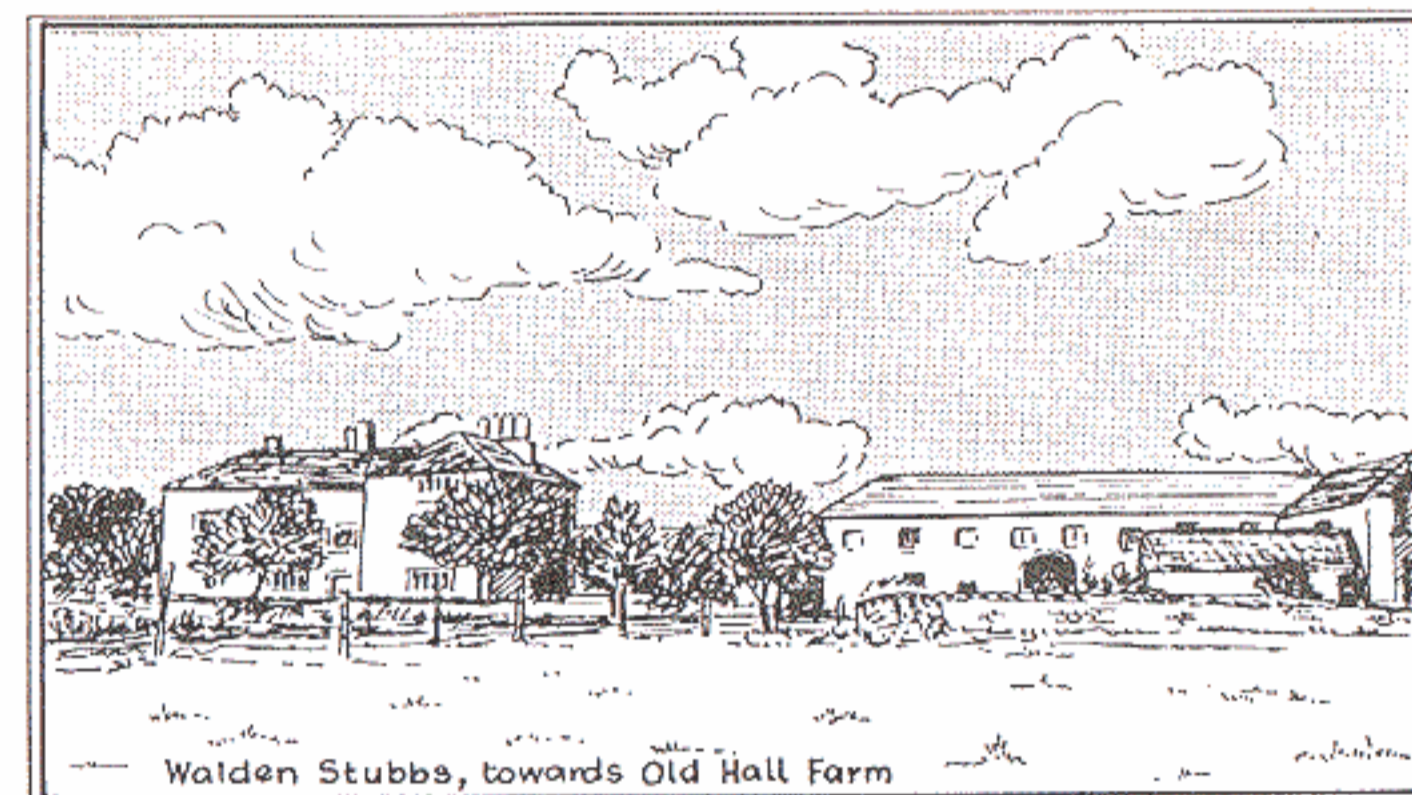
Continue along Norton Mill Lane to meet up with the Walden Stubbs Road at a sharp corner and continue straight on.

Around this section of the walk there are several 17th/18th century buildings — the old watermill (now privately owned) and Norton priory and farm. Norton is mentioned in the Domesday book as having a mill and it was possibly at or near the present site. The old mill stream flows through the land at the back of the buildings and rejoins the river near Tanpit Bridge. There are also signs of some ancient fish ponds close by.

Walk along the road for a short distance. Immediately after the farm buildings on the left, cross the stile next to a finger post into a field where there are grass covered ditch and bank formations. Follow the path through the field, cross a new footbridge over the River Went and then turn half-right to cross two fields before joining the road at a T-junction, where the remains of a medieval limestone cross can be seen. Cross the road and take the lane ahead into the hamlet of Walden Stubbs.

This tiny village has remained unaltered for centuries and used to be called Stubbs Walden, taking its name from Walding who held it at the time of King Stephen in the 12th century. Walding probably resided in the nearby moated Hollins Hall which in later years was a farm but sadly now is derelict.

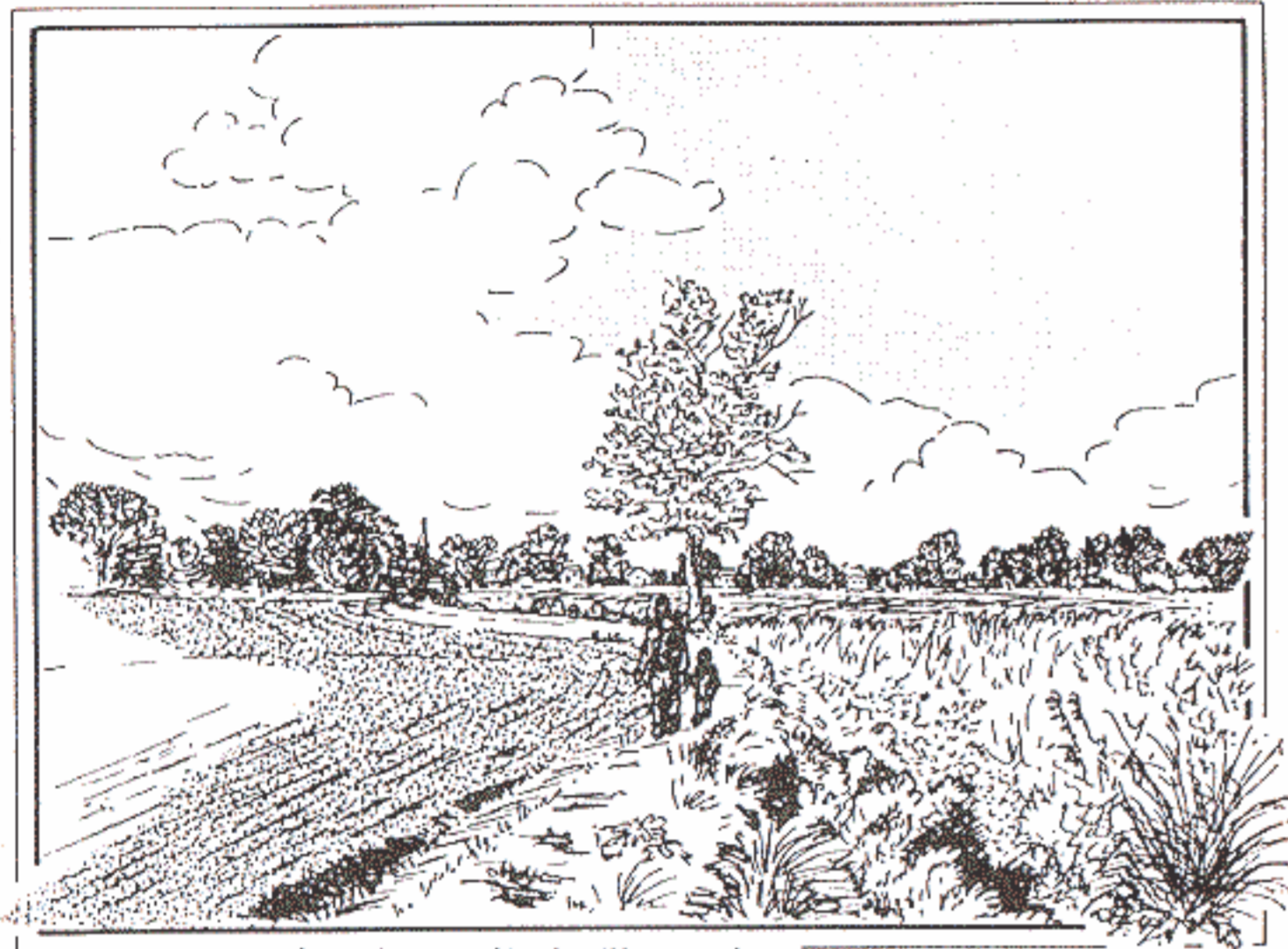
Follow the road through the village and at the T-junction at the north end of Walden Stubbs, cross to the waymarked stile opposite. This directs the walker across a paddock close to Old Hall Farmhouse (formerly Walden Hall or Manor).



This 17th century building was occupied for nearly 200 years by a branch of the Percy family. Over the main doorway there is a coat of arms, those of Percy and Vavasour, two old families of the district brought together by a marriage in the 17th century. The old house and its outbuildings (barn, pigeoncotes, stables and carriage house) are all listed buildings.

Pass by some old walls and ruins of a barn, through a gap in the wall towards a stile in the field corner and follow the hedge-side path in a northerly direction. Turn left on to a rough surfaced track and follow it as it curves to the right and continues northwards. Cross straight over the line of a dismantled railway. (Please note that the old railway is *not* a public right of way.) Now follow the field side to Birdspring Wood and continue as the path skirts the edge of the woodland. The church spire of Womersley can be seen over the tree tops of the small woodland areas ahead. On reaching the corner of Birdspring Wood, cross a bridge over a deep dyke and

then turn right and continue on a field edge path, much of which runs alongside Womersley Beck. At the brick bridge the footpath continues ahead beside the beck towards the church rather than on what may seem to be the more obvious track to the right.



Fieldside path to Womersley

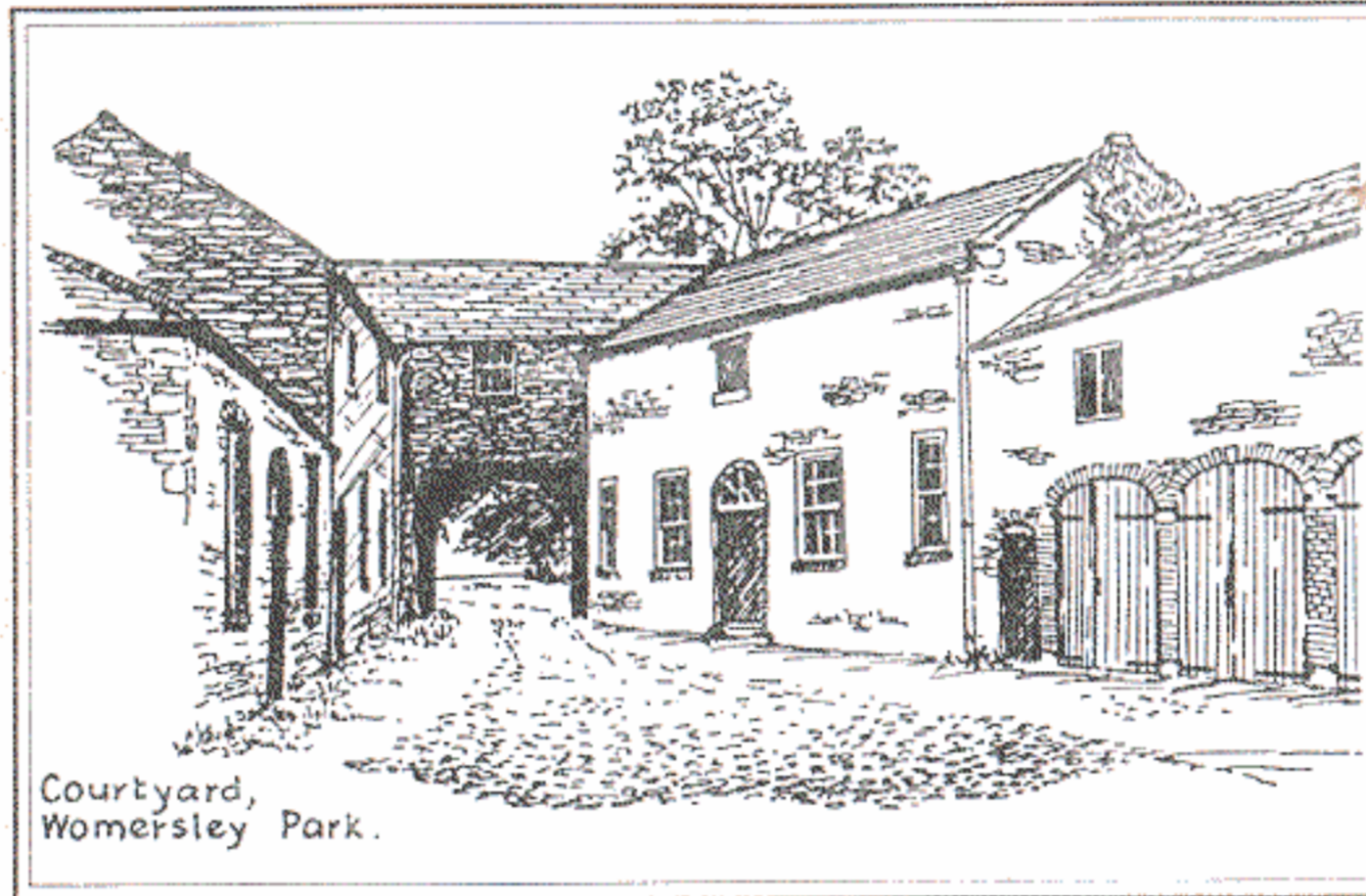
It then joins a good farm track which runs parallel to the railway line and this emerges onto Highfield Lane by the level crossing at the east edge of Womersley. Turn back into the village to complete the walk.



WOMERSLEY was mentioned in the *Domesday Book* as *Wilmersleye*. Surrounded by fine agricultural land, the village today remains much as it was in medieval times. Most of the houses and farms are situated on the north side of the winding main village street (known as Park Lane) whilst to the south is Womersley Park with its Hall hidden from the road by a high stone wall.

Womersley Hall is a mainly 17th-18th century building (with some later additions) which apparently is on the site of a much older structure. The house is a Grade II* listed building, along with the adjoining coach house and stables. During weekends and Bank Holidays from late

March until Christmas "Womersley Crafts and Herbs" are to be found here (with a car park on the opposite side of the road). This group enterprise was formed in 1978 and it offers for sale a wide selection of locally made crafts; also herbs and dried flowers.



Courtyard, Womersley Park.

*Adjacent to the Hall is the Church, dedicated to St. Martin. There has been a church on the site since Saxon times and it was also mentioned in the *Domesday Book*. The present building originates from the 12th and 13th centuries, but there have been many additions and alterations since then, with major restorations in 1890. Approached by the driveway, there is a war memorial surrounded by yew trees in front of the magnesian limestone church with its handsome broach spire. Inside there are many interesting features including a late 13th century reclining effigy of a knight (thought to be Adam de Newmarch who died in 1287) in the south aisle, with a stone coat of arms above. On the wall near the font is an eye-catching Spanish 17th century tiled mural depicting the Last Supper, and on the jamb of the south doorway there is a carved medieval prayer.*

Towards the western edge of the village (near to the shop) there is an old cast iron village pump and trough (reputedly from 1842) and next to it are the remains of a medieval stone cross, moved from its original position in the centre of the village where in the past markets were held each Thursday. Permission for a weekly market and a fair was granted to Womersley in 1346.

FOLLOW THE COUNTRY CODE



- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work.
- Guard against all risks of fire.
- Fasten all gates.
- Keep your dogs under close control.
- Keep to public paths across farmland.
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls.
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone.
- Take your litter home.
- Help to keep all water clean.
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees.
- Take special care on country roads.
- Make no unnecessary noise.

This is one of a series of walk leaflets produced by North Yorkshire County Council. A circular recreational route has been created by linking various public rights of way, enabling people to enjoy and learn a little about the area whilst walking in the countryside.

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Copies of this leaflet are available by sending a S.A.E. to:

Public Rights of Way, Environmental Services,
North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall,
Northallerton DL7 8AH.

No. 4 County Area Surveyor, Fulford Lodge,
1 Heslington Lane, Fulford, York YO1 4HW.

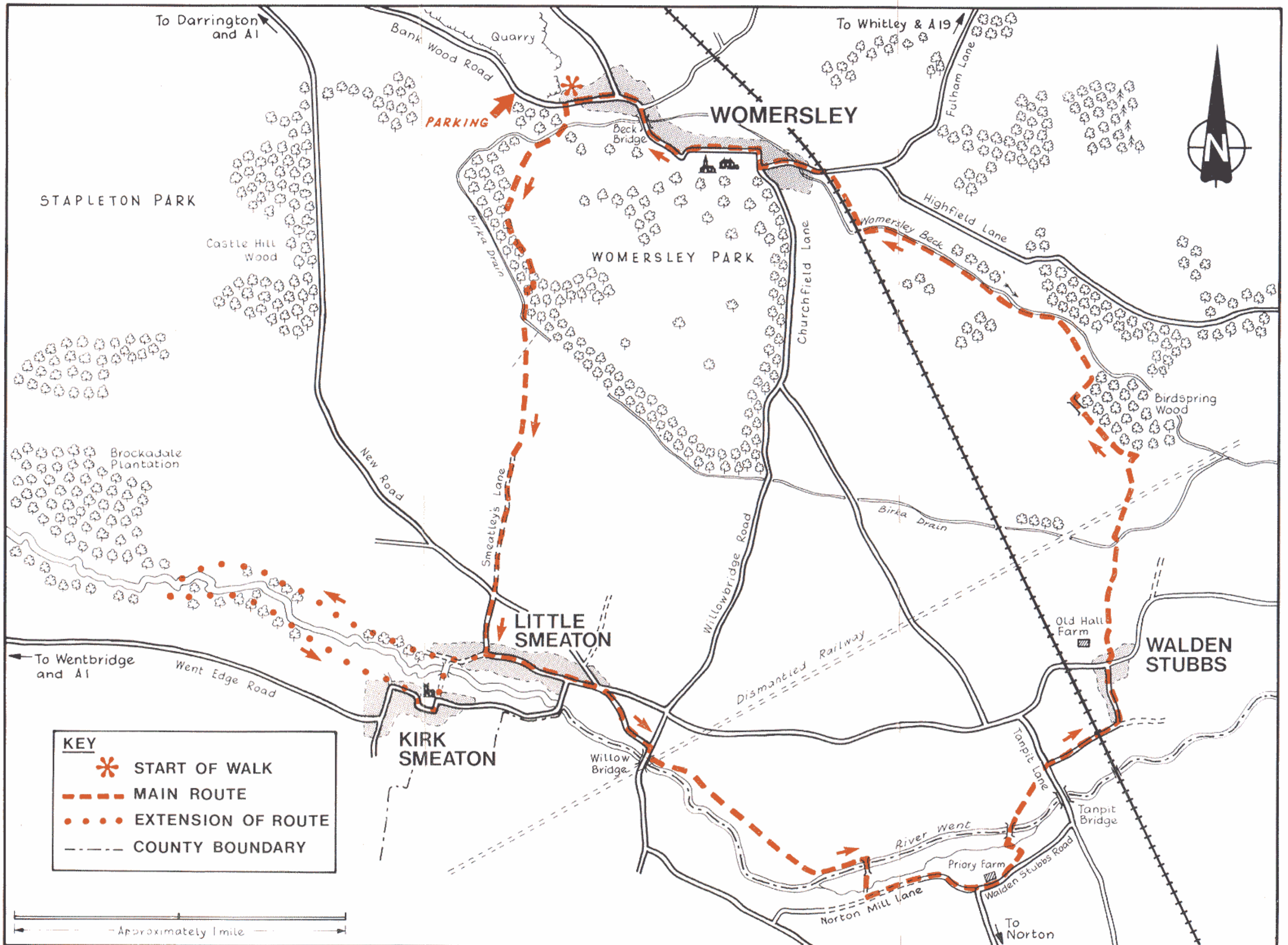
Selby District Council, Civic Centre,
Portholme Road, Selby YO8 0SB.

If any problems are encountered, please contact the Area Footpath Officer at the Fulford address above.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council for their assistance with this project.



To Darrington and A1

To Whitley & A19



STAPLETON PARK

WOMERSLEY

WOMERSLEY PARK

WALDEN STUBBS

LITTLE SMEATON

KIRK SMEATON

Castle Hill Wood

Brockadale Plantation

Birdspring Wood

Went Edge Road

Bank Wood Road

Highfield Lane

Churchfield Lane

Birka Drain

Willowbridge Road

Smeatley's Lane

Willow Bridge

River Went

Norton Mill Lane

Priory Farm

Walden Stubbs Road

To Norton

Old Hall Farm

Tanpit Bridge

Tanpit Lane

Dismantled Railway

Beck Bridge

PARKING

Quarry

New Road

Fulham Lane