

= Leeds Country Way =

The Leeds Country Way is a circular long @-@ distance footpath of 62 miles (99 km) around Leeds , West Yorkshire , England . It is never more than 7 miles (11 km) from Leeds City Square , but is mainly rural with extensive views in the outlying areas of the Leeds metropolitan district . It follows public Rights of Way including footpaths , bridleways and minor lanes , with a few short sections along roads .

= = History = =

A route was first devised by Fred Andrews of the Ramblers Association , and then developed by West Yorkshire County Council in the early 1980s . This council was abolished in 1986 , and the path is now under the care of the Countryside section of Leeds City Council . The Leeds Country Way was realigned in 2006 , using a route devised by Bob Brewster , to bring it entirely within the boundary of the Leeds metropolitan district (previously it crossed the boundary into Wakefield) , and the path was officially relaunched on 26 September 2006 with a revised set of map leaflets (see external links) and improved waymarking .

= = Route = =

The path is waymarked in both directions and can be started at any point , but is described here clockwise from the A660 road at Golden Acre Park (grid reference SE267417) , divided into parts and sections which correspond with the official map leaflets .

= = = Part 1 : Golden Acre to Barwick @-@ in @-@ Elmet = = =

Section 1 : The path crosses Golden Acre Park and passes the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust 's Adel Dam Nature Reserve , following the route of the Meanwood Valley Trail . It coincides briefly with the Leeds link to the Dales Way north of Eccup Reservoir , before crossing the Ebor Way and entering the Harewood Estate . Here there is a glimpse of what looks like a small village , not marked on any map , but which is actually the set for the TV series Emmerdale . Walkers may also see red kites which have been successfully reintroduced in this area .

Section 2 : After crossing the A61 , the way passes north of Wike and reaches the village of Bardsey with its Anglo @-@ Saxon church tower and the Bingley Arms public house , which claims to be the oldest in England . The way turns south , crossing the A58 , to Scarcroft .

Section 3 : The path continues through Thorner , crossing the A64 before entering Barwick @-@ in @-@ Elmet (SE398376) with England 's tallest maypole , a Norman motte and an Iron Age fort .

= = = Part 2 : Barwick @-@ in @-@ Elmet to Carlton = = =

Section 1 : From Barwick the way passes the southern corner of Scholes , then crosses the M1 motorway and enters Garforth .

Section 2 : It leaves Garforth along the disused Garforth @-@ Kippax railway line (part of the North Eastern Railway and earlier the Leeds , Castleford and Pontefract Junction Railway) , then approaches Swillington and passes Little Preston Old Hall . It skirts St Aidan 's Country Park , and crosses the River Aire at Swillington Bridge . The path follows the river downstream , past the marina at Fleet Bridge .

Section 3 : The path continues along the river , here forming the Aire and Calder Navigation , to Mickletown , and then turns south to Methley . It swings eastward , crosses the A642 and continues to Carlton (SE337272) , heart of the West Yorkshire Rhubarb Triangle .

= = = Part 3 : Carlton to Cockersdale = = =

Section 1 : From Carlton the path crosses fields before briefly joining the A61 and recrossing the M1 south of Robin Hood . It turns south across the M62 , follows the valley of Dolphin Beck , and reaches East Ardsley on the A650 .

Section 2 : From here the path skirts south of West Ardsley , and reaches Woodkirk with its historic church , on the A653 . It passes the ruins of Howley Hall (built 1590 for Sir John Savile) before dropping down to reach Scotchman Lane .

Section 3 : A track through Birkby Brow Wood , just inside the Leeds @-@ Kirklees boundary , leads to the A643 , which is followed to recross the M62 . The path 's longest section of road walking follows the A650 through Gildersome , then a series of field paths leads to Cockersdale (SE233297) , on the A58 near Tong .

= = = Part 4 : Cockersdale to Golden Acre = = =

Section 1 : The path follows the valley of Cockersdale , and then goes along Tong Beck , below Fulneck Moravian Settlement , skirting the south of Pudsey . At this point Tong Beck forms the Leeds @-@ Bradford boundary . The path crosses the Leeds to Bradford railway and meets the busy A647 at Thornbury .

Section 2 : Passing playing fields and old quarries , the path crosses the Woodhall Hills and follows Fagley Beck to cross the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and the River Aire at Apperley Bridge , then follows the river past Woodhouse Grove School before climbing up to meet the A65 south of Rawdon .

Section 3 : From here the path skirts Horsforth , follows for a time the southern boundary of Leeds Bradford International Airport , and goes round the northern edge of Cookridge , before crossing Breary Marsh Local Nature Reserve to return to Golden Acre Park (SE267417) .

= = Practical aspects = =

As the route is circular it can be started at any point , but the description in the official leaflets starts and finishes at Golden Acre Park , going clockwise . These divide it into four parts each split into three sections , but walkers can choose to divide it in various ways as there are many bus routes and several railway stations (Woodlesford , Garforth , New Pudsey and Horsforth) on or near the path . West Yorkshire Metro provides information about bus routes serving the path and train services in the area .

The Ordnance Survey maps covering the route are :

Landranger 1 : 50 @,@ 000 sheet 104 (Leeds : covers almost the whole route) and 105 (York : needed for a short distance near Garforth)

Explorer 1 : 25 @,@ 000 sheets 289 (Leeds : Golden Acre Park clockwise to Scotchman Lane) and 288 (Bradford : Scotchman Lane clockwise to Golden Acre Park) .

The route is waymarked with an owl symbol , taken from the Leeds coat of arms .

The original route of the path is used for an annual trail running relay race organised by Kippax Harriers . Teams of twelve , with two runners taking each of six sections , complete the route in about seven hours .