



# Addingham Moorside Connections Walk

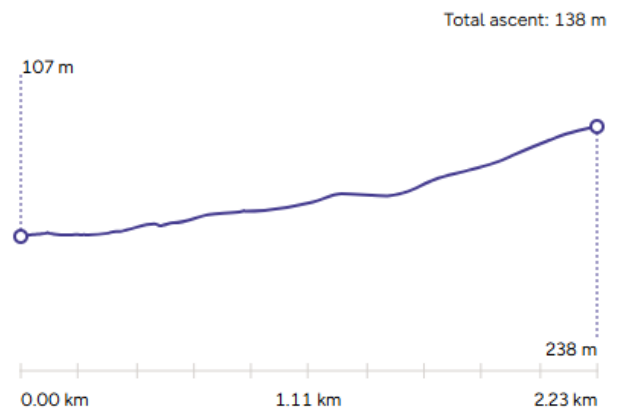


## GREEN ROUTE

*From Addingham Village (Old Station Way) to Moorside Lane, via The Street, Cat Steps, Small Banks, Stegholes and Beck House Farm.*

**Distance:** 2.23 km

**Total Ascent:** 138m



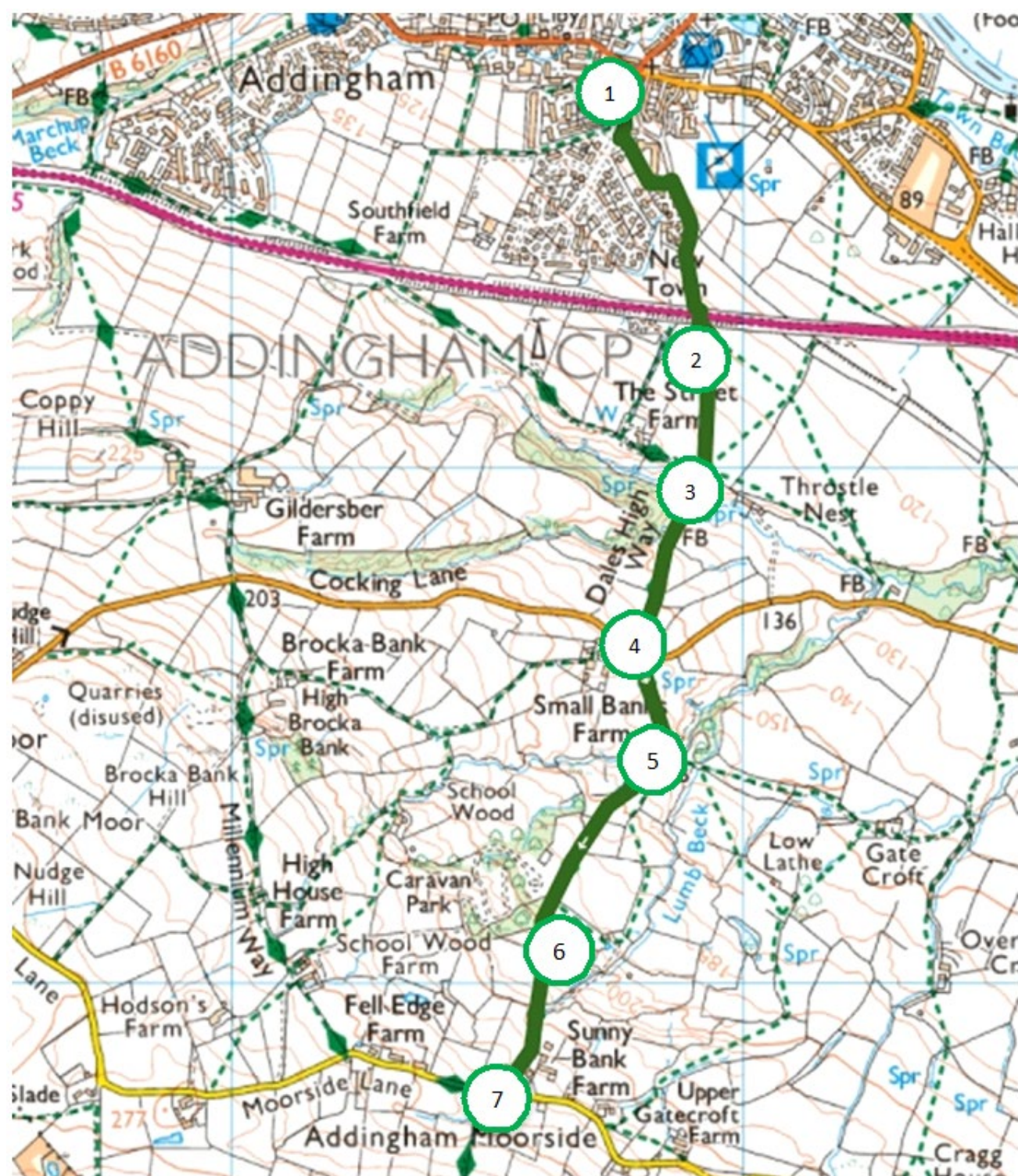
**Cattle and sheep:** Dogs must be kept on leads where cattle and sheep are grazing.

**Ground nesting birds:** Please also keep dogs on leads during the nesting season.

**Liability:** While every care has been taken in the preparation of this self-guided walk, please note that Addingham Civic Society does not accept any liability relating to personal injury or illness, loss or damage to personal property, or any other unforeseen events that might occur during your walk.

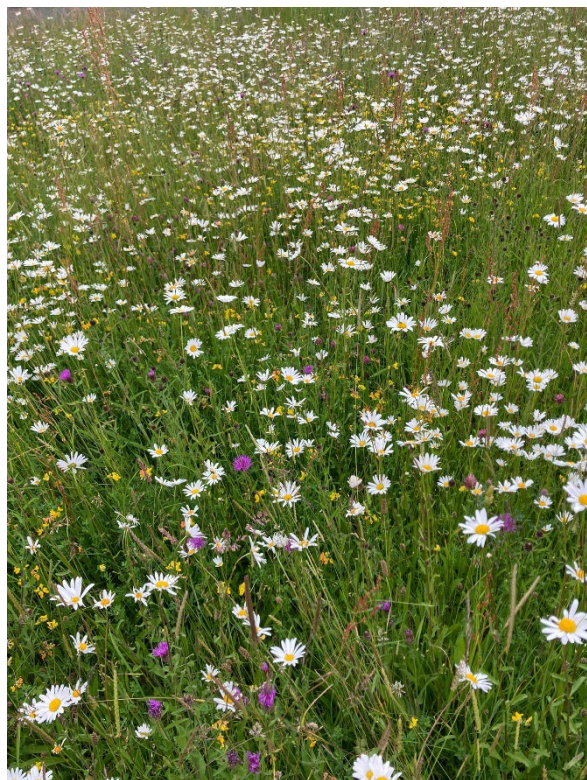
**Click a heading and its position will be displayed on Google Maps. If you have location enabled it will also show where you are standing.**

The 1:25,000 scale map OS explorer 297, or similar digital mapping, should be carried in addition to this route description.





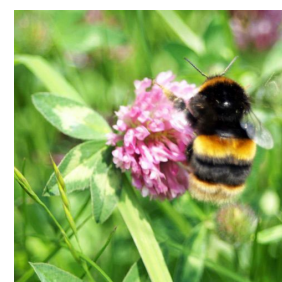
## 1. Old Station Way Meadow SE07734973 53.94367, -1.88365



*officinale*) provide much needed food for bumblebees and other pollinators emerging from hibernation. Pictured buff tailed bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*) on red clover.

- This village green space has been managed by Bradford Council & Addingham Environment Group for people and wildlife since 2017.
- It is one of the green spaces around the village where AEG is working with landowners to create wildflower rich mini-meadows designed to provide pollen and nectar sources for pollinators such as bumblebees and butterflies. 97% of Pennine hay meadows have been lost in the last 40 years, largely due to changes in agricultural practices, with a knock-on impact on bumblebee and butterfly populations.
- The meadow is at its best in late May and June, when yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), ox-eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), meadow cranesbill (*Geranium pratense*) and red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) are all in bloom, followed by knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) and wild carrot (*Daucus carota*), flowering into August.

In spring cowslip (*Primula veris*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum*



Walk up through the meadow and at the top cross over Old Station Way, walk along Mount Pleasant, turn right into Stockinger Lane and continue along the footpath up to the by-pass. Take great care crossing the A65 and continue walking uphill across the field in a southerly direction. Aim for the tall pine in the line of trees at the top of the field.

## 2. The fields above the by-pass to The Street SE07924926 53.93944, -1.88076

- As you climb the hill towards the Moor you cross a series of sandstones and mudstones. These are mainly overlain and obscured by glacial deposits left behind from the last ice sheet, which melted between approximately 18,000 and 14,000 years before the present, but the more resistant sandstones forming the steeper slopes often form outcrops. In places they have been quarried for building stone.
- The rocks were formed in the upper Carboniferous Period, over 300 million years ago, when a huge delta extended over the area. Addingham sat on the equator at that time. The climate was tropical and huge rivers carried silt, sand and grit eroded from mountains to the north into a shallow sea. Over time rocks were formed and the land moved north, elevated, folded and faulted. Locally the layers of rock now dip gently to the south-east forming prominent ridges (gritstones) and intervening softer mudstones (or shales). Each has individual names. Gildersber (to the west of this point) is built on the Middleton Grit. Above that is the Brocka Bank Grit and the moor ridge is formed by the Addingham Edge Grit.

- A geology walk from the village up to the moor is available to download on the AEG website: [here](#). It was designed by local geologist Will Varley.
- These fields have been ‘improved’ to create pastures for sheep and cattle grazing and grass for winter feed. The meadows are dominated by rye grass (*Lolium perenne*) and are cut early for silage, so few wildflowers survive.
- In some years cuckoo flower (*Cardamine pratensis*) can be seen here in early May. This is an important food source for orange-tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*) butterflies, who lay their eggs on the stems.
- At the top of the field the land levels out. This is the line of the former Roman Road from Ilkley to Ribchester via Elslack. It is known as ‘The Street’, taking its name from the Latin word ‘Strata’.



At the top of the field running parallel to it is a small, steep-sided valley, take the ‘Cat Steps’ footpath down into the valley and up the other side.

### 3. **Cat Steps – The Street Local Wildlife Site** [SE07914897 53.93683, -1.88092](#)

- In the north of England narrow steep pathways between mill buildings are often named ‘Cat Steps’ as it was said the agility of a cat was needed to climb them. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, no doubt family members from the Moorside farms used this footpath on their way to and from work in Addingham’s textile mills, hence the name.
- To the right of the steps is the eastern end of The Street Local Wildlife Site. The vegetation is a combination of woodland (predominantly ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), oak (*Quercus* spp.) and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), with extensive elder (*Sambucus nigra*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) scrub. Crack willow (*Salix fragilis*), grey willow (*Salix cinerea*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) grow in the damper conditions in the bottom of the valley.
- This is excellent habitat for wildlife, with nesting sites, shelter and food for a wide range of birds, small mammals and invertebrates. In the summer months, listen out for warblers singing here. Black cap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), chiff chaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) and willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) (pictured) are all present here. Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*), tree creeper (*Certhia familiaris*), wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) and song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) are resident here. Check out Addingham Environments Group’s [bird records](#).
- Roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) are frequently seen in this area.



- The sheltered south facing edge of the woodland by the steps is a good place to see butterflies on a sunny day. Orange-tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*), ringlet (*Aphantopus hyperantus*), speckled wood (*Pararge aegeria*) (pictured) and comma (*Polygonia c-album*) have been recorded here on regular walks by [AEG Bee & Butterfly recorders](#).
- At the bottom of the steps there is a small marshy area through which a small beck flows in wet weather. The valley was formed by a much larger flow of meltwater at the end of the last glaciation, cutting down rapidly through the softer shales (see the **DARK BLUE** route for more details).
- In medieval times, this area below the Street was known as ‘The Park’. Around 1205 CE King John gave permission to the Lords of the Manor to make a park here for the hunting of deer and other wild



animals. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century the land was sold to surrounding farms, but the steep slopes are likely to have remained partially wooded.

*Cross the footbridge over a wooded tributary of Lumb Beck and out into the pastures above. Continue uphill across the field, over the stile next to the horse paddock up to Small Banks on Cocking Lane.*

#### **4. [Small Banks Hamlet](#) [SE07794864](#) [53.93387](#), [-1.88276](#)**

- This hamlet was originally a group of four farms with their farmhouses and barns built on the ridge of the Middleton Grit. Most of the fine stone buildings were rebuilt in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by local stonemasons. From April through the summer look out for swallows nesting in the barn and in September gathering on the telephone wires, ready for their long journey back to southern Africa for the winter.
- On the north side of Cocking Lane, looking towards Ilkley, the field by the side of the road is in some years allowed to grow on as a traditional hay meadow, and so it is then rich in wildflowers before the hay is cut and bailed. In other years it is used as sheep pasture.
- Otherwise, the fields below and above the settlement are grazed by sheep and/or cut for silage. Above Small Banks, Lumb Beck flows down from the moor, in a steep ghyll (wooded valley) on the eastern margin of these fields. On steeper slopes which are less heavily grazed going down towards the beck some pockets of wildflower rich grassland are to be found.



*Having crossed Cocking Lane, take the footpath around the edge of the garden of Swallow House and continue uphill across the field and then down to Lumb Beck. Cross the beck by the stone slab footbridge and take the path to the right, taking care going under the low tree trunk. Continue on the path uphill through the Stegholes fields, with their traditional stone walls and stone stiles.*

## 5. Stegholes Local Wildlife Site SE07844843 53.93198, -1.88200

- This part of The Moorside is designated as a Local Wildlife Site.
- On the banks of Lumb Beck, semi-natural broadleaved woodland survives, with ash, sessile oak (*Q. petraea*), sycamore and hazel (*Corylus avellana*) growing in the drier parts and alder and willow closer to the beck. There is a good shrub layer of holly, hawthorn, wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and gorse, all providing excellent habitat for insects, birds and small mammals. Ancient woodland indicator species such as wood anemone (*Anemonoides nemorosa*), native bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) and primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) flower on the banks in places.
- The woodland is not fenced here so the ground vegetation suffers from grazing and poaching where cattle go down to the beck, causing erosion and water pollution.
- Out in the fields, through a combination of thinner, poorer soils, and less intensive agricultural use the grassland is rich in wildflowers. It is usually grazed by cattle for a just few weeks each year. Common knapweed and betony are abundant, with self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), bugle (*Ajuga reptans*), hawkbit (*Leontodon hispidus*), tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), marsh orchid (*Dactylorhiza praetermissa*), birds-foot trefoil, devils' bit scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), eyebright (*Euphrasia officinalis*) and Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*) all to be found.
- On a warm sunny summers day this is a good place to see butterflies and bumblebees feeding on the nectar and pollen when the flowers are in bloom. Small copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*) (pictured on knapweed), peacock (*Aglais io*), ringlet (*Aphantopus hyperantus*), red admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) have been recorded here on regular walks by [AEG Bee & Butterfly recorders](#) . Unfortunately, sometimes the cattle are brought on to graze when the flowers are in full bloom reducing the availability of food for pollinators.



- Listen out for the mewing sound of buzzards (*Buteo buteo*) circling above the woodland and the distinctive sound of curlews (*Numenius arquata*) foraging in the fields above here in Spring and early Summer. Sadly, curlew numbers are in decline and nest sites are being lost. This iconic bird, breeding on our moors in the summer, is now on the Red List of threatened species.

Continue walking up hill on the footpath in a southerly direction, over three stone stiles, passing the caravan site on your right. Eventually you will come to a gate on the northern boundary of Beck House Farm.



## 6. Beck House Farm SE07614805 53.92857, -1.88552



- The current owners of this holding are restoring habitat for wildlife. They are happy for walkers to stop a while and explore the new woodland and wetlands, using the network of tracks and grass paths they have created.
- Before they took over, the land was intensively grazed by sheep. The neighbouring farmer still brings his stock on, but numbers and the amount of grazing is much reduced. With less grazing, wildflowers such as meadow buttercups (*Ranunculus* spp.) and pignut (*Conopodium majus*) flower here in the early summer. In former times the tubers of pignut were eaten when food was short.
- Starting in 2014 new hedgerows have been planted along the northern boundary, and alongside Lumb Beck. The new fence and hedge protect the beck from grazing animals, reducing pollution and soil erosion.
- More than 3000 native trees and shrubs have been planted on the steeper slopes, with open areas of grassland left to create a mosaic of habitats.
- The steep slope is caused by the Brocka Bank Grit that outcrops here.
- When the trees are more mature the aim is to manage this land as wood pasture. Tree guards are essential while the trees are young to protect them from the roe deer and brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) populations as well as grazing sheep.



- Agricultural improvements in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century on land such as this involved putting in deep stone field drains and culverts to make the land less wet. In 2022 work was done to open-up the drains and 'daylight' the water course running across the land, creating two ponds and marshy ground alongside the seasonal watercourse. This 'rewetting' helps to hold more water in these headwaters, slowing the flow downstream, while bringing in more aquatic insect life which in turn provides food for birds and bats.

- The hay meadow closer to the house is being restored, with a late July/early August cut, and autumn grazing only. Yellow rattle is now plentiful, along with other northern hay meadow species. *(Note there is no public access to this field).*
- Nature recovery at Beck House Farm has been supported by advice and grants from Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, The Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, The Woodland Trust, White Rose Forest, Yorkshire Water Biodiversity fund, and Addingham Environment Group volunteers.

*After exploring the Beck House Farm pasture and woodland, return to the main footpath, continuing uphill in a southerly direction, through the gate onto the lane by Lumb Beck until you reach Moorside Lane.*

## 7. [Addingham High Moor & Moorside Lane Farms](#) [SE07524779](#) [53.92623, -1.88689](#)



- Moorside Lane follows the 800-foot contour, marking the upper limit of crop cultivation in earlier centuries.
- Beck House Farm is one of a series of farmhouses along Moorside Lane. The small traditional farm holdings were for the most part linear in layout with better land going down the hillside below the lane and rougher grazing above the lane.
- Typically, up to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, these farms, consisted of a stone farmhouse, and a barn with housing for a horse, a half a dozen cows, a few calves, perhaps a pig and a few hens. Farming was often combined with textile trades such as wool combing and handloom weaving, in workshops up on the farm, until the opening of the mills down in the valley during the industrial revolution
- In the fields there would have been a few ploughed acres, growing turnips, potatoes and some oats, alongside the hay field for winter fodder and summer pastures for feeding the animals
- The farmhouses and barns were for the most part rebuilt in stone in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, a time of agricultural improvements. The moorland above the lane was enclosed with stone walls to create 'intake' fields. The land was drained and lime was applied to make the soil less acid to improve the grass for grazing and haymaking.
- Farming practices altered little during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the small farms keeping their traditional ways. Major change came after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, with government agricultural policies encouraging mechanisation and more intensive use of the land for red meat (sheep and beef cattle) and dairy production. These changes led to less biodiversity and habitat loss. Today only a handful of people work on the farms. Holdings have been amalgamated, farmhouses and barns sold off and renovated by non-farming families.





- The rougher grazing above Moorside Lane provides nest sites for ground nesting birds such as curlew and lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*). Sadly, there are fewer of these birds on our Moors. Nest sites and breeding success are vulnerable to earlier cuts of grass for silage and birds such as crows taking the eggs.



- The rougher land is also good habitat for small mammals such as voles (*Microtus* spp.) providing good hunting for barn owls (*Tyto alba*) (pictured). Red kite (*Milvus milvus*) are now fairly frequently seen in the sky above here.

At this point if you wish to extend the walk to the ridge follow the **[LIGHT BLUE ROUTE]** from the end of the **[GREEN ROUTE]** by crossing the lane at Beck House Farm and following the footpath uphill to the crag top, then walk in a westerly direction along the gritstone edge to Wingate Nick. (Add on an extra 40 minutes)



Otherwise, you have a choice of:

- turning left and heading east along Moorside Lane to return to Addingham Village via Sunnybank Farm, Gatecroft, Hall Gill, Lumb Ghyll Wood, over the bypass to Ilkley Road and Main Street **[RED ROUTE]** or
- turning right and heading west along the lane to return to the village via School Wood Farm, Cuckoo's Nest, and Small Banks **[DARK BLUE ROUTE]**.

## References

Greenhalgh, J., Collins, R.A., Edgley, D.E., Genner, M.J., Hindle, J., Jones, G., Loughlin, L., O'Donnell, M., Sweet, M.J. & Battarbee, R.W. 2022 Environmental DNA-based methods detect the invasion front of an advancing signal crayfish population. *Environmental DNA* 2022, 596–607.

Kate Mason, Addingham from Brigantes to Bypass. 1966

Arnold Pacey et al, Addingham: A view from the Moorside. 2008

Don Barrett, Walks Around Addingham. 2018

Haycock & Jay Associates Ltd., Moorside Connections: Phase 1 Habitat & National Vegetation Classification mapping of Lumb Beck Catchment 2021. (study funded by a Natural England Nature Recovery Grant, for the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust & Addingham Environment Group)

Addingham Civic Society, 2025. [Will Varley's Addingham Geology Trail](#)

Addingham Environment Group website links:

[Moorside Connections](#)

[Bee & Butterfly Transects](#)

[Bird Report](#)

[Invasive Plants](#)

## Photograph Acknowledgments

Addingham Environment Members

Addingham Photo Archive (Southfield Aerial photo)

John Fontana, Ilkley Camera Club – Moorside buildings & footpath signs

Keith Allen, Ilkley Camera Club – moorland birds

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