

# Witton Gilbert Walks No. 3

## Beaurepaire/ Trig Point Route 6.1 Km / 3.8 Miles

Grade: moderate

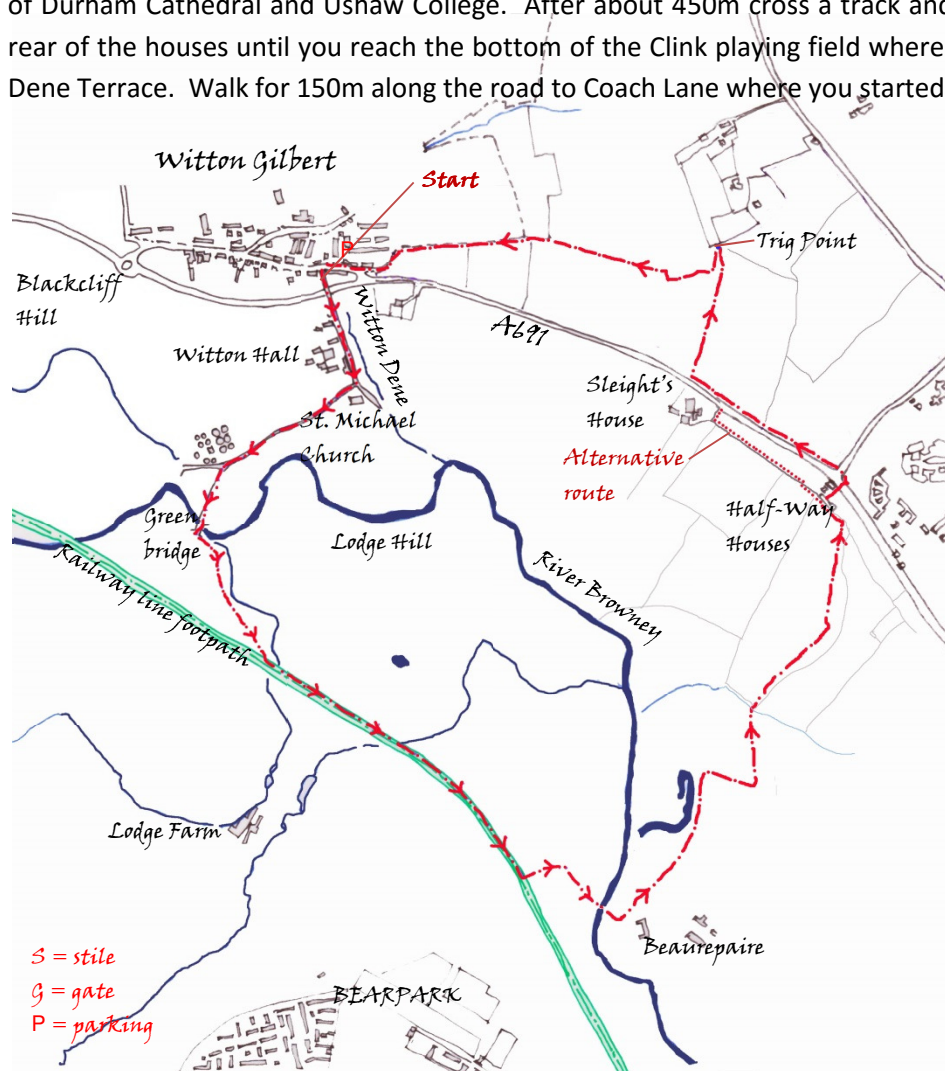
Time: 2.5hrs.

Start location: NZ 234 456

Published by the Witton Gilbert Development Group 2015

### Directions

**1 Starting in Coach Lane**, head to the church of St. Michael and All Angels. **2 Take the lane** to the right and after about 400m, past the sewage works, bear left for 190m along the track to the green bridge. **3 Cross the bridge**, turn left, and follow the broad track for about 500m until it meets the old railway track. **4 Turn left** and walk about 880m until you come to a gate across the track. **5 At this point** turn left following the track for 300m down to a bridge. To the right is a track (not a public right of way) leading to the 13<sup>th</sup>C ruins of Beaurepaire, (French meaning "Beautiful Retreat") the mediaeval residence of the priors of Durham built for Prior Bertram de Middleton. **6 Cross the bridge**, and follow the road for about 120m until you reach a gate and stile on the left. Cross the stile and follow the path to the right of the hedge for 250m after which the path turns sharply to the right, the track continuing up the hill. After 100m there is an isolated sycamore tree overlooking a large swampy area. Continue left along the path for 150m until you reach a gate. The path proceeds steeply up the hill with a wooded dene to your right; the trees are mostly oak, ash, hazel and sycamore. After 500m you reach a field boundary with paths to the right and left: take the left hand path. After a short distance there is a stile to the right at Halfway House leading through a caravan site to the main road (A691). Take this path and cross the road, continuing along the footpath for 450m until you reach a stile and footpath on the right. (n.b. instead of leaving the path at Halfway House you can continue for 350m to Sleights House Farm from which you can reach and cross the main road). Cross the stile and walk to the trig point obelisk at the top of the hill. Take the path to the left which winds around the edge of the field. There are fine panorama of the Browney valley together with views of Durham Cathedral and Ushaw College. After about 450m cross a track and continue for 300m down the hill at the rear of the houses until you reach the bottom of the Clink playing field where you will find steps and a path leading to Dene Terrace. Walk for 150m along the road to Coach Lane where you started.



### Points of interest

As you walk down the hill from the church, keep a look out for grey squirrel on the mature trees to the right. The track is bordered by aniseed scented *sweet cicely* in the spring. Look out for dippers on the river as you cross the green bridge.

The old railway line is mostly bordered by oak, ash and Scot's pine but when you join it look for a short stretch of grass to the right where during the summer months you will find yellow rattle, wild mignonette, bladder campion and hop trefoil. Yellow rattle is a partial parasite of grass and, when ripe, its loose seeds rattle inside the inflated calyx. On the short stretch of road leading to the bridge at Beaurepaire, look to the boggy ground on the right where you can see the tall heads of reed-mace and in late spring the purple spikes of orchids.



Despite its present appearance, Beaurepaire was an important country retreat for the priors and monastery of Durham and the centre of the mediaeval estate enclosed in 1267. Visitors included Edwards I, II and III, and King David of Scotland.

The trees by the river are frequent haunts of gold crest, long-tailed tit and tree-creeper; Roe deer can often be seen.