



'All Creatures Great and Small Herriot Country Trail'. *Suggested circular routes to enjoy Herriot Country.*

Visit some of the key locations from the television series **"All Creatures Great and Small"** and it's your opportunity to immerse yourself in Herriot nostalgia, beautiful countryside and delicious food.

Yorkshire Dales Route

Begin at the **World of James Herriot** in Thirsk and learn about the life, work and books of vet and author **Alf Wight OBE (James Herriot)**. The World of James Herriot pays homage to the life and times of the world's most famous vet, is a unique experience for visitors and is continuing to provide the story of Alf Wight the Vet and Author whose books, films and television series brought world-wide attention to Thirsk and North Yorkshire which has become **'Herriot Country'**.

At **Thirsk Racecourse** a banqueting suite is named after **James Herriot** and it's where he and Siegfried Farnon spent many a race meeting - a racing tip: check ahead for race dates to ensure the best racing atmosphere.

Once armed with Herriot's 'back story' you can begin your journey through **Wensleydale and Swaledale** to see first-hand some of the stunning Yorkshire Dales countryside, market towns and famous historical landmarks that James Herriot loved.

Tristan Farnon would approve of a visit to **The Black Sheep Brewery** at Masham and it's a must on All Creatures Great and Small Herriot Country Tour where the iconic beer brand has a visitor centre and special visitor tours.

Not too far from **Masham** is **Middleham** and **Holy Trinity Church**, Wensley where James and Helen were married in the TV series and a lovely spot for photographs. The unfenced road climbs to the shoulder of Penhill, then winds down very steeply into West Witton. James Herriot contemplated this scene, years ago, knowing that his car had no brakes. He decided to tackle the descent in first gear...and lived to tell the tale. **The Wensleydale Heifer in West Witton** was where James and Helen enjoyed many a meal is now a luxury hotel and restaurant.

At Leyburn, this bustling market town boasts a large market square. Leyburn is the real life equivalent of **Scarsburn**, where Ewan Ross (Frank Bingham in real life) had his practice and is the fictional home of Granville Bennett. **Thornborough Hall** was used during filming as the home of the Ministry of Agriculture, a building that Herriot always visited with trepidation!

Aysgarth Falls is a beautiful natural triple flight of waterfalls, surrounded by forest and farmland, carved out by the River Ure over an almost one mile stretch on its descent to mid-Wensleydale in the Yorkshire Dales.

Alf (James) and Joan (Helen) spent their honeymoon at the **Wheatsheaf Inn** at nearby Carperby a traditional, 19th-century, stone-and-brick country pub with rooms is 1 mile from **Yorkshire Dales National Park** and 1.3 miles from Aysgarth Falls waterfall.



It's also en-route to 14th-century **Bolton Castle** where James proposed to Helen and nearby village Castle Bolton, which takes its name from the castle. The castle is a Grade I listed building and a Scheduled Ancient Monument.



Onward to **Askrigg** and **Cringley House**, Main Street, Askrigg which was James' home and practice in the All Creatures Great and Small TV series (now renamed Skeldale House and reopened as a Bed and Breakfast). There's also **the Kings Arms Hotel**, which was also the location of the series' **Drovers Arms** and where they all enjoyed a few ales.

From **Askrigg** to **Reeth**, the road from Reeth passes through many streams and water catchments including the especially recognisable scene in which **Siegfried's car splashes through the stream**, a particularly lovely place to picnic now. Then continuing to **Richmond** taking in so much of the scenery in All Creatures Great and Small and then at the **Richmond Museum** there's the original BBC TV film set of **Skeldale House** interiors to see.



From **Richmond** to **Bedale** via **Hornby Park**, **Hackforth** and **Crakehall** takes in more Herriot scenery before Finghall Station falls into view as the original railway crossing at Darrowby Station in the BBC TV series. Take a ride on the **Wensleydale Railway**, which is a magical journey through Herriot Country and provides a completely different series of views than the road route.

Thornton Watless, **Snape**, **Carthorpe** and **Kirklington** are pretty villages on the way back to Thirsk, home of James Herriot and the World of James Herriot.



Sutton Bank and North York Moors Route

Begin at the **World of James Herriot** in Thirsk and learn about the life, work and books of vet and author Alf Wight OBE (James Herriot). The World of James Herriot pays homage to the life and times of the world's most famous vet, is a unique experience for visitors and is continuing to provide the story of **Alf Wight the Vet and Author** whose books, films and television series brought world-wide attention to Thirsk and North Yorkshire which has become **'Herriot Country'**.



From Thirsk head East on the A170 toward Helmsley, through the pretty village of Sutton-under-Whitesonecliffe and up to the top of **Sutton Bank** where Alf Wight (James Herriot) declared the tremendous view from the dramatic Sutton Bank escarpment over the Vale of Mowbray and the Vale of York, the "finest in England". **The Sutton Bank Visitor Centre** on the site is free to visit and offers a quality selection of locally produced goods, including Joe Cornish cards and calendars, a variety of food and drink, ceramics, ironwork, stained glass, textiles, natural skincare products and even potato prints.

Opposite, on the southern flank of the Sutton Bank hillside is the **Kilburn White Horse** dating from 1857. Reached by foot from Sutton Bank Car Park the footpath to which offers a scenic view.



The best views of the White Horse are from the Bagby Road at the foot of the hill and when using the alternative caravan route from Thirsk avoiding Sutton Bank road. This route also takes in the village of Ampleforth home to the famous Ampleforth Abbey and College. **Ampleforth Abbey** is a monastery of Benedictine Monks a mile to the east of Ampleforth, part of the English Benedictine Congregation. It claims descent from the pre-Reformation community at Westminster Abbey through the last surviving monk from Westminster Sigebert Buckle.



After Sutton Bank continue along the A170, which reveals a patchwork of landscape toward Helmsley where farmland is varied, includes rising wooded land and rolling farmland and along which Alf Wight (James Herriot) would have travelled visiting the many small farms along this route.

Helmsley is a small market town on the southern boundary of the broad and rugged landscape of the **North York Moors National Park**. The town was first settled in around 3000 BC. **Helmsley Castle** was constructed around the 12th Century and the town thrived with the founding of nearby **Rievaulx Abbey** and in 1191. It has a wealth of historic assets including the stately home and historic parkland of **Duncombe Park**, Helmsley Castle and the Grade II* listed Canons Garth, which is one of the oldest surviving buildings having been originally constructed in the 12th Century.

From Helmsley is the start of your journey into the **North York Moors National Park**. Travel through **Kirby Moorside** to **Pickering** where the **North Yorkshire Moors Railway**, the restored steam railway that was in TV's Heartbeat and Harry Potter film is an optional way to travel north to Whitby. Whether travelling by train or road the scenery here takes in the largest area of the North York Moors National Park, which in August becomes a purple patch of beauty as the moorland heather blossoms.

Alf Wight (James Herriot) and his family loved **Whitby**. Rosie Page and Jim Wight his daughter and son have told us of the many happy times they enjoyed the town and the beach especially at Sandsend. It's our **Herriot Country seaside** resort. There's its magnificent **cliff top Abbey** and it's the home of another famous man called James, so be sure to visit the **Captain Cook Memorial Museum**, Walker's House, which belonged to Captain John Walker, to whom James Cook was apprenticed in 1746.

Heading west from Whitby takes in more of the magnificent moorland landscape along the A171 toward Guisborough. **Scaling Reservoir** offers sailing and other water sports and at nearby **Grinkle Park Easington** there's an excellent four-star hotel set in 100-acre forest estate. Ideal for a meal stop or an overnight stay.

Guisborough was in the North Riding of Yorkshire when Alf Wight was practising and whilst now in the administrative area of Redcar in Tees Valley, locals still consider themselves as Yorkshire men and women and it is very much part of **Herriot Country**. Archaeologists date the town to the Roman occupation and **Guisborough Priory** dates back to the 12th Century.

Leave Guisborough, head south to the heart of Great Ayton, one of North Yorkshire's prettiest villages, where the **Captain Cook Schoolroom Museum** tells the story of Cook's early life and education in the Charity School, the village he grew up in and his adventures on the high seas. **Stokesley** is up next where visitors to will find an intact historic high street, lined with many independent small shops and restaurants. On route you'll see **Roseberry Topping**, the distinctive half-cone shaped hill with a jagged cliff, which has led to many comparisons with the much higher Matterhorn in the Swiss-Italian Alps.

Next, call at **Northallerton**, which was the large town known as Allerton in James Herriot's books. Set in the rich farmland of **Herriot Country**, you would be forgiven for thinking Northallerton is the perfect place for a sedate country escape. But instead this thriving and bustling market town is full of life and is an ideal base for visitors to explore the nearby moors, historical cities and picturesque villages. Take a detour from Northallerton onto the **Wensleydale Railway**. The line runs 22 miles



(35 km) between Northallerton West station, about a fifteen-minute walk from Northallerton station and Redmire. Finghall Station on route is the original railway crossing at Darrowby Station (Thirsk) in the 'All Creatures Great and Small' TV series.

Return to **Darrowby (Thirsk)** and perhaps another visit to the World of James Herriot where just opposite is the **Thirsk Museum**, once the home of **Thomas Lord** who was born here in 1755 and the founder of Lords Cricket Ground in London. Thirsk has a charm of its own, essentially unchanged and uninfluenced by the world. It centres around a bustling cobbled market square, dominated by the town clock, with its Monday & Saturday markets and independent shopping. Visitors from all over the world are impressed by the warm and friendly welcome of the residents of this gem of a town. You will soon see why Alf Wight OBE (James Herriot) was so happy to make it his home.

John Gallery, July 2019

2020 Update – New Channel 5 All Creatures Great and Small TV Series

All Creatures Great and Small has made a welcome return, produced by Playground Entertainment for **Channel 5 TV** in a new series that is retelling the **James Herriot** stories of life as a country vet in North Yorkshire that has been tastefully re-created for the small screen.

Nicholas Ralph plays **James Herriot** and emulates **Alf Wight's** (James Herriot) Scottish accent admirably whilst **Samuel West's** interpretation of James' boss **Siegfried Farnon** is a modern tribute to the late **Robert Hardy** who played the part so well in the original series. **Callum Woodhouse** as Siegfried's gregarious brother **Tristan Farnon** has put his own stamp on the character and relationship with his brother, whilst housekeeper **Mrs Hall** played by **Anna Madeley** has given the series its common-sense character. **Helen Alderson**, love interest for James who later becomes Mrs Herriot is played by a very Yorkshire sounding and plucky **Rachel Shenton**. Sadly, **Dame Diana Rigg** who played **Mrs Pumphrey** passed away just as the series began transmission but leaves a legacy that her infamously pampered Pekingese, **Tricki Woo** can be proud.

The series shows the beautiful scenery of the **Yorkshire Dales** in all its glory. The settings have expanded **Herriot Country** deep into the western parts of **North Yorkshire** where scenes such as the **Buttertubs Pass in Richmondshire** are given full exposure. **Grassington** in Wharfedale was the location for filming of the fictional **Darrowby**, (based on the real town of **Thirsk** where Alf Wight practiced and where you will find the original home and surgery now the **World of James Herriot**) so the villages and countryside around the area give visitors even more **Herriot Country** locations to enjoy.

The expanded **All Creatures Great and Small Herriot Country Trail** takes in Grassington, the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Start in **Thirsk** at the **World of James Herriot**, drive past **Thirsk Racecourse on the A61** and aim for **Ripon Racecourse**, the location for scenes in the new series when Siegfried was attempting to become the official vet to **Darrowby** racecourse. The course is on a lovely approach to the **City of Ripon** with its famous Cathedral founded as a monastery by Scottish monks in the 660s, it was refounded as a Benedictine monastery by St Wilfrid in 672.



Head West from Ripon on the B6265 toward **Grassington**. On route you can take in a visit to National Trust and English Heritage Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal south west of Ripon or a detour to the rugged National Trust Brimham Rocks. You are now in the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and if, like James Herriot, you love animals, a stop at Herriot Country Tourism Group member Nidderdale Llamas would be real treat. Next, swing through Pateley Bridge, where you may want to stop for delicious local food and drink and if you have a sweet tooth, a visit to the **World's Oldest Sweet Shop?**

Take in the magnificent views in this part of Herriot Country as you rise at Red Brae Bank and through the rugged wilderness of the countryside stretches for miles ahead. **Stump Cross Caverns**, a limestone cave system between Wharfedale and Nidderdale discovered in 1860 by lead miners, has a rich history going back hundreds of millions of years.

When you reach **Grassington**, you are now in **Darrowby** of the Channel 5 All Creatures Great and Small series so head for Main Street and the Square where much was filmed. **The Strikey Badger Book Shop** at the top of the Square has James Herriot books for sale and was turned into the **G F Endleby grocery shop** for the series. The Devonshire public house was the Drovers Arms in the series. The house at the top right of the square on Gills Fold and Hardy Grange doubled as **Skeldale House**, the home and surgery of the veterinary practice. **Grassington Folk Museum** is on the Square and you'll find the **National Park Centre** in the town which is a lovely base for touring this part of Herriot Country.

South of Grassington you may want to detour to the market town of **Skipton** where you will find the atmosphere of a bustling North Yorkshire farming community town and just outside Skipton, **Broughton Hall Estate** which was the location for **Mrs Pumphrey** and **Tricki Woo's** palatial home in the new Channel 5 series.

Head North from Grassington on the B6160 through the village of **Kilnsey** where **Kilnsey Park** offers fishing, pony rides and nature trails with red squirrels and butterflies, plus a cosy cafe and shop. You'll pass the majestic Kilnsey Crag. The road follows the River Wharfe as you head toward **Kettlewell**, another site for the TV filming. The hills in this countryside are dramatic and you'll see the likes of Birks Fell, miles of dry-stone walls and the famous stone Barns scattered amongst the fields. Just imagine yourself in James Herriot's Austin Seven traversing up and down dale to get to the remote farms in this beautiful and rugged part of **Herriot Country**.

At **Buckden** there's a choice of routes, heading toward either **Hawes** or **Aysgarth Falls**.

Take the **Hawes** road via hamlets and villages like Hubberholme, Yockenthwaite (where the **Yockenthwaite Farm** produces lovely local dairy products) through Deepdale then to Gayle and Hawes. It's stunning route and gives you a real sense of escape and into the heart of Wensleydale. At Gayle stop and see the **Gayle Mill** dating from about 1784, is thought to be the oldest structurally unaltered cotton mill in existence.



At Hawes, the scene of the **Darrowby Cattle Market** in the BBC series, you'll find a wealth of attractions, not least the famous **Wensleydale Creamery** which has daily visitor tours all about its award-winning cheese. **Outhwaites Ropemakers**, a long-established family firm of rope and braid manufacturers with a visitor experience and the **Dales Countryside Museum** run by the **National Park Authority**, it tells the story of the people who have lived and worked in the Yorkshire Dales for over a 1,000 years. Local B&B's and Hotels such as **Cocketts Hotel, the Crown Inn** and there's even a **Herriots Hotel and Café!**

From **Hawes** take the A684 road to **Bainbridge** (The Romans knew Bainbridge as Virosidum, and built a fort here on the little hill that overlooks the village) and back to **Askrigg and Aysgarth, West Witton and Leyburn. (See Yorkshire Dales Route).**

If you take the Aysgarth route, when you reach what might feel like 'the top', you will reach the famous **Aysgarth Falls**, a must-see attraction. The Falls are a triple flight of waterfalls, surrounded by woodland and farmland, carved out by the River Ure over an almost one mile stretch on its descent to mid-Wensleydale in the Yorkshire Dales.

Carperby is nearby and the **Wheatsheaf Inn** here was the location in the first All Creatures Great and Small TV series where James and Helen had their honeymoon. The village hall was used to film the village dance.

From Carperby it is a short hop to **Askrigg** which became the fictional town of **Darrowby** in the BBC TV series. **The Kings Arms Hotel** doubled as the **Darrowby Inn** and the former **Cringley House**, which doubled as the exterior of **Skeldale House** in the BBC series, is now a bed and breakfast been renamed Skeldale House by its owners.

From **Askrigg** it is just a 15-minute drive to **Hawes** via **Bainbridge. (See Hawes route then Yorkshire Dales Route)**

John Gallery September 2020