

<p>Distance: Approx. 5 miles</p> <p>Time Taken: Approx. 2.5hrs</p> <p>Terrain: Good footpaths, some ascent and descent. Can be muddy during wet weather and winter.</p> <p>Total ascent / descent: 360ft</p> <p>Dog Friendliness: Very dog friendly. Keep on leads on roads and past farms.</p> <p>Toilets / Refreshments: Two pubs in Hart Village.</p> <p>Parking: Church car park</p> <p>OS Maps: Explorer 306</p>	<p>Hart to Monk Hesleden Circular</p> <p>Background: Hart is a village and civil parish in the borough of Hartlepool. The walk starts at St Mary Magdalene Church car park. The church has been a place of worship for hundreds of years, with its roots dating back to the Saxon Era. The earliest evidence of a church on the site where St Mary Magdalene's stands today dates to 675D. The original church would have been wooden, later being replaced by a stone building.</p> <p>During the Norma Era St Mary Magdalene Church was held in the estates of the De Brus family. In 1120 Robert De Brus gave the church along with other land as a gift to the newly founded priory in Guysborough.</p> <p>The village of Monk Hesleden stands on the verge of a deep wooded dene or valley. The word Hesleden is believe to be derived from the local word dene and Hesle which is a corruption of Hazel, so the original meaning may have been 'Forested Valley of the Hazel Trees' which are common in the local denes.</p> <p>All that remains of St Mary's Church in Monk Heselden which can be dated back to the 13th century is the graveyard which is pass through on the walk. Take some time to explore the headstones and see how far back they date.</p> <p>Route Description: Starting in the church car park in Hart Village, follow the road back out past the school along Magdalene drive and turn left onto Butts Lane. At the fork on Butts lane take the right hand path, past North Hart Farm and Caravan park. Follow this road for around a mile as it veers to the right heading to Middlethorpe Farm. There is a signpost on the left of the road for the footpath although can be hard to spot in the summer with all the vegetation. Take this footpath on the left which will take you along the edge of the Dene before heading into and down into it. Once in the Dene follow the footpath to the footbridge. Cross the footbridge and follow the path up on the right (this bit is quite steep) and this will bring you out onto the Hart Haswell walkway / cycleway.</p> <p>Follow the walkway for around ¾ of a mile until you reach a road that cuts across the walkway. Follow the road left and into Monk Heselden. In Monk Heselden there is a small green with a bench, follow the road ahead keeping the green and bench on your right, there is a public footpath sign on the green showing the heading.</p> <p>Continue straight along an enclosed path and into the graveyard at Monk Hesledon. This path again drops back into the Dene. Be careful after wet weather as it can get muddy and slippery. Follow the footpath down into the Dene and cross another footbridge. Once you cross the footbridge the path will head up (again steep) and out of the Dene. Follow the path along the left of the fields past Nesbitt Hall.</p> <p>Continue on this path /road until the road starts to bend right. Take the path on the left which is a farm track so can have tractors coming and going. Follow this farm track until you reach the top of Butts Lane. Follow Butts Lane back into the Village and back to the Church.</p> <p>Points of Interest: Nesbitt Dene, St Mary Magdalene Church, St Mary's Church Graveyard in Monk Heselden and Hart Haswell Walkway.</p>
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