

VISIT RYEDALE

HELMSLEY AND RICCAL DALE



Challenging Terrain

**8 Miles
Circular
4 hours**

090616



An 8 mile (13km) circular walk from the market town of Helmsley in Ryedale.

The route heads out across sheep pastures and open fields to explore the woodland ravine of Riccal Dale, in the company of the beautiful River Riccal. This walk is part of the Visit Ryedale Collection, published through a collaboration between iFootpath and Ryedale District Council. For more visitor information on the area including events and accommodation, go to www.VisitRyedale.co.uk

There are public toilets in Borogate (just south of Helmsley Market Place at the start and end of the walk). If you are looking for refreshments, you will be spoilt for choice with pubs, cafes and restaurants in Helmsley at the start or end of the walk. OS Map: Explorer OL26 North York Moors Western Area. This walk follows public footpaths and bridleways which cross private and public land. Please respect people's privacy, keep dogs under control and remember the Countryside Code.

Getting there

Helmsley is located on the River Rye, on the A170 between Thirsk and Pickering. The walk starts and finishes in the Market Place in the centre of Helmsley. If you are coming by car, long stay parking is available in the Cleveland Way Car Park. The fee for up to 6 hours is £4.30 (correct Apr 2016) or half price if you use a Ryedale Parking Smartcard.

Approximate post code **YO62 5AT**.

From the car park, simply follow the signs to the Market Place. If you are coming by public transport alight at the bus stops in Market Place. For help with planning your journey by public transport please visit www.traveline.info.

Walk Sections

Go → 1 Start to Monk Holme Wood

The walk begins in the Market Place, directly outside the library and town hall. Standing with your back to the library, turn left and, at the junction with the road, cross over to reach the pavement and turn right along this. Pass the Black Swan on your left and keep ahead at the junction with the mini-roundabout. Follow this pavement leading you out of Helmsley, passing the North York Moors headquarters on your left. Just before you reach the pedestrian crossing, turn left into Carlton Road. About 60 metres along, turn right onto the tarmac track signed

Access Notes

- 1. The walk has several climbs and descents throughout, including a couple of steep sections within the woodlands.*
- 2. Whilst some of the tracks are firm stone, many of the other stretches through woodland can be very muddy in winter and after periods of rain so good boots are a must.*
- 3. You will need to negotiate several single bridle gates throughout plus one stile (with adjacent dog gap within the fence) and two footbridges with steps on the return leg.*
- 4. If necessary, you can avoid the stile and bridges by simply using the same paths for the outward and return leg.*
- 5. You will be sharing a few of the fields with sheep (and maybe horses) so take particular care with dogs.*

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as a public bridleway.

Keep ahead as this becomes an unmade track, passing a modern housing development on your right, to reach a field gate ahead. NOTE: You are likely to come across sheep from this point. Pass through the gate and keep directly ahead, with the hedge line running on your right. After passing a single ash tree within the field, you will come to the next waymarker. Bear diagonally left here to reach the left-hand fence and continue ahead with this fence now running on your left.

At the end of the field, pass through the wide gate ahead and continue on the grass track, which swings left following the line of the crop field on your left. Just before the crop field begins to rise, the grass track ends. At this point turn right through the field gate to enter the next sheep pasture. A fingerpost indicates a choice of two paths. Bear left, at about 11 o'clock on the bridleway signed to Riccal Dale. At the far side you will find a field gate on your left which leads you into a small woodland belt, Monk Holme Wood.

1 → 2 Monk Holme Wood to Riccal Dale Wood



Follow the obvious bridleway ahead, leading you through the centre of this woodland. At the first junction, ignore the two tracks uphill to the right, instead bear left on the level bridleway which continues along the woodland bottom. At the end of the woodland (with a fence ahead) stay with the track which swings right to reach a fork. The woodland bank ahead has a particularly beautiful carpet of bluebells in the late spring.

Turn right and follow the stone track leading uphill to reach a wide gate. Pass through the gate, walk ahead for a few paces and then bear left to join the narrow grass path leading you away from the woodland (with a crop field on your left and hedgerow on your right).

This bridleway leads you out to junction with a vehicle track,

Monk Gardens Lane. Bear left along this and follow it as it bends left and then right. At this point you will be rewarded with great views on your right that stretch for miles on a clear day. Stay with the vehicle track which bends left again and 70 metres later you will come to a fork (marked with a waymarker post). Bear right to follow the bridleway leading you into Riccal Dale Wood.

2 → 3 Riccal Dale Wood to Tun Way Junction



Follow the track leading you downhill. NOTE: The woodland slope down to your right is fairly steep so take care with children and dogs. At the bottom of the slope you will come to a staggered T-junction with another track. Bear left along this and follow it for some distance, ignoring any footpaths signed to the sides.

As the track makes a steady left-hand bend it passes close to the River Riccal on your right (giving an opportunity for a doggie or human paddle to cool off in the summer). The River Riccal is a tributary of the River Rye, which is in turn a tributary of the River Derwent. The name Riccal dates back to the 1300s from a term translating as Rye Calf. Calf was the term denoting a small island near a larger one. The name describes the way in which the river and its springs form islands within their meandering courses.

Keep ahead on the track (which later climbs steadily to run higher above the river) for another 0.6 miles, once again ignoring any side paths. After a section with a fenced enclosure running on your right, ignore the side track to the right (by a wooden building), instead stay with the main track which climbs steadily once again. 0.3 miles later, alongside another fenced enclosure, you will come to a fork in the main track (with a footpath also signed to your left). This marks the point at which the two main woodland tracks, High Tun Way and Low Tun Way, cross.

3 → 4 Tun Way Junction to Hasty Bank Farm

Take the right-hand branch of the track, following the line of the fenced enclosure on your right. As the main track swings right towards the river, fork left to join a smaller stone and grass track. Pass alongside a vehicle gate and keep ahead to reach the point where the track peters out at the edge of a camp site.

Walk ahead, following the left-hand edge of the grass clearing, passing the wooden camp site buildings across to your right. At



the far side, pick up the path which continues ahead, winding through the trees to reach a gate. Pass through this and walk ahead to continue on the obvious path. The path will lead you to a ford crossing point within the river. Use the narrow concrete sleeper footbridge to cross the river and you will emerge to the bottom of a hillside pasture (which is likely to be holding horses and/or sheep).

Walk at about 11 o'clock to pick up a sunken track leading you between trees and on to reach an old barn building. Bear right just before the barn and walk uphill passing between the old barn on your left and the farmhouse of Hasty Bank Farm on your right.

4 → 5 Hasty Bank Farm to Stile



Continue uphill through the field, bearing left to pick up a stone and grass vehicle track. At the top of the slope you will come to a T-junction with vehicle gates each side. Turn right through the gate to continue on the vehicle track climbing fairly steeply uphill. At the top you will come to a fingerpost marking a T-junction. Turn right here, leaving the bridleway to join the grass track signed as a public footpath.

Follow this track with fenced fields running to your left and the steep woodland slopes of Riccal Dale on your right. Further along the track leads you past a collection of beautiful trees on your left and then continues through the woodland edge, with trees both sides. Just before the track swings sharp right down the woodland slope, fork left onto the narrow signed footpath which leads you alongside an old stone wall on your left.

This section of woodland has a very dense carpet of wild garlic in the spring months. Stay with this narrow path which eventually leads you down a slope to a junction with a track (with a gate on your left). Go straight ahead to continue on the narrow footpath, climbing to reach a stile.

5 → 6 Stile to Footbridge

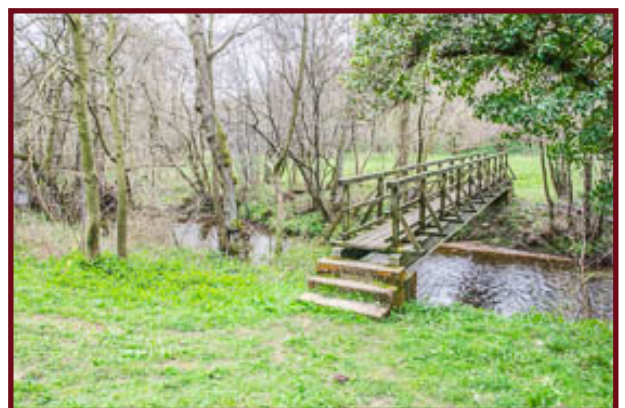


Cross this stile and turn right, following the narrow path with the fenced woodland running on your right. Just before the field edge swings left away from the fence line, keep ahead for a few paces and then turn right to pass through a small wooden gate to enter the woodland. Follow this narrow path (heading back on yourself) with the fence line running up to your right.

Towards the bottom, the path bends sharp left to join a wider track running down the valley bottom. NOTE: If, as when we walked, the final part of the narrow path is blocked by fallen trees, when you reach the obstruction turn left, pick your way down the woodland slope to reach the valley bottom path and turn left along this. Follow this track steadily downhill, picking your way over fallen branches should you need to. At the bottom you will come to a T-junction.

Turn left onto the grass track (passing a yellow waymark arrow on your left). Across to your right you will see the River Riccal again and, just beyond it, the track that you used on your outward leg. Pass another fenced enclosure on your left and just 60 metres later, you will come to a footbridge across the river on your right.

6 → 7 Footbridge to Field Edge Bridleway



Cross the footbridge and at the far side turn left along the grass track. NOTE: The next section of navigation needs care. A few metres later, with the ford on your left, stay with the grass tracks that bears right and then continues ahead through the riverside grass meadow. The subtle track leads you up the slope of a small bank and into the next grass clearing. Pass an old waymarker post on your right then follow the tree line on your right. Immediately after a clump of trees on your left, turn right onto a narrow dirt path (be careful not to miss this turn), which leads you through the trees for just 60 metres to

reach a T-junction with a vehicle track.

Turn right along the track for about 100 metres and then turn sharp left to join the stone track leading you uphill (this is the track from which you entered the woodland earlier). Follow this track all the way to the top to leave Riccal Dale Woods. (From this point you will be retracing your steps back to Helmsley). Turn left along the track and follow it as it swings right, left and right again. At the next left-hand bend, go straight ahead to join the field edge bridleway.

7 → 8 Field Edge Bridleway to End



At the end of the field, bear right through the gate and follow the stone track downhill into woodland. Follow this track as it swings sharp left leading you back along the bottom of Monk Holme Wood. At the end a gate leads you into a sheep pasture. Walk diagonally right and exit via the gate in the far corner. Turn left along the field-side grass track and follow this as it swings right to reach the next pasture.

Enter this pasture through the gate, walk ahead and then follow the line of the footpath to exit via the gate at the far left-hand corner. Keep ahead to reach the road, turn left and then turn right at the T-junction. Follow this road which leads you directly back to the Market Place where the walk began. Helmsley has plenty on offer to while away the rest of your day, with everything you'd expect in a quintessentially English market town and more: a vibrant market square, independent, specialist shops, excellent places to eat and drink, an imposing castle, friendly locals, a babbling brook, a walled garden, bird of prey centre, microbrewery, open air swimming pool and more than 50 listed buildings. For more visitor information on the area including events and accommodation, go to www.VisitRyedale.co.uk

Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

