

Walking with THE WANDERER

Knaresborough: River and Rocks Time: 3¼ hours | Distance: 6½ miles

IS THIS WALK FOR ME?

While much of this walk is on hard surfaces, there are several rough paths, especially at Direction Points 6 and 7. These and some other sections beside the river can be slippery and muddy in wet conditions. There are also several steepish climbs, although none are long. There are no stiles.

GETTING THERE

The recommended starting point is Knaresborough station, to which trains run half-hourly from York. If driving, Knaresborough is 18 miles from York via the A59. The best parking option is at Conyngham Hall beside the river. Start the walk from Direction Point 13 after walking back to the main road.

REFRESHMENTS

There are numerous options in Knaresborough, both on and off route. Otherwise, the only opportunity is the Watermill Café at Direction Point 6.

WHAT TO SEE

Knaresborough has many attractions: the castle, the gorge and viaduct, Mother Shipton's

This walk to the south and west of Knaresborough visits some of the least frequented sites around the town, including a shrine and a saint's cave. It also includes sections by the river and an amble around the town's Conyngham Hall woods and parkland.

Cave and the town. The walk passes the Chapel of Our Lady of the Crag (open summer Sunday afternoons only), St Robert's Cave (freely accessible just off Abbey Road), and Knaresborough's Grade I listed parish church. The popular Conyngham Hall park is also freely accessible. Further information on all these can be found online.

Directions

1/ Exiting the station, turn left climbing Kirkgate. At the junction, turn right, soon going right again into a parking area with the police station to the left. Go left towards the public toilets, taking the tarmac path left of the twin castle ruins downhill. At the metal signpost, go left up steps into Bebra Gardens. Continue ahead for 20 metres, then turn right downhill to a paddling pool. Take the steps to its right. Turn right down more steps, reaching a road at the bottom.

2/ Turn left on the road, keeping right where it divides. Continue to a main road.

3/ Cross directly over into Abbey Road. Pass Chapel of Our Lady of the Crag and crags to the left. Remain on the quiet road to just beyond a house named Borrowdale on the right. Here, either continue along Abbey Road to Direction Point 5, or take the more adventurous route below in Direction Point 4.

4/ Ascend the signed footpath on the left. At a junction by a wooden fence, go right on a narrow path, still uphill. Climb a few steps to reach the top and turn right with houses to the left and a drop to the right. Ignore all paths left until a play area is passed - beyond this, turn left. Cross the tarmac drive to Nidd View, keeping ahead through a wooden gate into trees. Go over a track, going downhill still in trees. At the next path crossing, turn right (not up steps ahead) downhill to return to Abbey Road.

5/ Turn left (or continue if you

remained on Abbey Road from Direction Point 3), soon passing St Robert's Cave on the right. Keep ahead to a main road.

6/ Turn right across the bridge. Immediately over this, turn right between concrete blocks on a tarmac path. Pass the Watermill Café, beyond which, go left for a few metres on tarmac, but then head right parallel to the river, keeping all the mobile homes to your left. Where the tarmac ends, take an enclosed path climbing through trees high above the river. Briefly re-enter the mobile home park, continuing on a signed path which drops back down to the riverside.

7/ Now follow the riverside path through woodland, ignoring all ways off to the left. Eventually leave the river and trees, going between fences over fields. At a house, keep right of a dilapidated outhouse as waymarked, but in 20 metres, go to the left of a fence. At signposts, keep right by the river until a path junction on the left signed Calcutt. Here, turn left, leaving the river, continuing on a tarmac drive that leads to a road.

8/ Cross over and turn left. In 30 metres, turn right into Forest Moor Road. Walk on the pavement for about 200 metres to a track on the right. Turn right onto this (footpath sign, right-hand arm

confusingly removed). Follow the track as it goes left, reaching a gate. Through this, follow the left field edge to find a three-way footpath sign.

9/ Turn half left with the hedge to the right. Continue to the railway crossing. Over this, follow the obvious path with the golf course to the right, eventually dog-legging right and left to a road. Turn right, reaching the main road (A59) in 250 metres.

10/ Cross at the lights and turn right for 200 metres to Bilton Hall Drive. Turn left, remaining on this until the cycle track. Here, turn right, heading downhill. Go through two gates.

11/ Immediately after the second gate, turn left into trees, forking left in five metres. Now continue on the

edge of the trees. At a junction just beyond a bench, go right, but in a few more paces at the corner of an open area, turn sharp right with a grassy area to the left. Keep ahead (signed Wooden Bridge) on the main path. At the crossroads, turn right over the bridge.

12/ On the other side, go sharp left beside the river at the bottom of a steep bank. Follow the path as it soon doubles back and climbs. At a tarmac drive, keep ahead, passing to the right of buildings. Keep on the tarmac between metal fences until the A59 main road.

13/ Cross at the lights and turn left. In a short distance, take the path right (signed 'Town centre'). Keep ahead on the walled lane. Turn left immediately beyond the church, taking the walled alleyway ahead that leads back to the station.



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Walking with THE WANDERER

Poppleton, Red House and the Ouse Time: 3½ hours | Distance: 8 miles

IS THIS WALK FOR ME?

Although relatively long, this is an easy walk. There are no hills or stiles, and much of the route is on tracks or lanes with hard surfaces, making it suitable for any time of year. If the river is in flood, the route may be impassable between Red House and Poppleton.

GETTING THERE

The recommended starting point is the green in Upper Poppleton, where considerate roadside parking is available. Bus no.10 runs regularly

to Upper Poppleton - alight at The Green stop. An alternative public transport option is to take a train to Poppleton and walk 400 metres on Station Road to the start point. If driving, it is also possible to start near the river at Nether Poppleton (parking area at Direction Point 6), or close to the entrance to Red House (Direction Point 4, very limited parking spaces).

REFRESHMENTS

Upper Poppleton has two pubs. The Lord Collingwood is open daily,

but not until 4pm on Mondays to Wednesdays. The White Horse is also open daily except Monday (4pm opening on Tuesdays). The popular Poppleton Social in the Poppleton Centre has an extensive menu and is open every day, but closes at 4pm on Sundays and Mondays.

WHAT TO SEE

Despite the suburban development, Upper Poppleton retains a village feel in the area around the green. The 20-metre-high maypole was

This walk explores the countryside west of Poppleton, between the Ouse and the A59. With just a few farms and scattered houses, this is one of the quietest and least frequented areas close to the city. About a third of the route is alongside the river, with most of the rest over farmland, mainly on tracks and lanes.

erected in 1961, the fifth to have stood on the green since the first was recorded in 1830. Red House has a long history, and the chapel is open for public viewing. Slightly upriver is the waterworks lagoon, a good bird-watching site. On the riverside, a range of wildlife may be encountered. Sand martins nest on this section of the Ouse. The entire area has a mix of wildlife - reed buntings were spotted by the river, and curlew were calling and seen at Direction Point 3.

Directions

1/ Starting from Upper Poppleton, and with the Nisa store and White Horse pub behind you, take the road opposite (Hodgson Lane), keeping the maypole left. Walk on the right-hand pavement, pass the Lord Collingwood and in about 200 metres, and where the pavement ends, turn right into Westfield Lane. Continue, soon leaving the houses, on the narrow tarmac road, eventually reaching a crossroads.

2/ Go straight over, still on tarmac. Pass a telecoms mast continuing ahead. Keep going over a dip/beck, but 200 metres beyond this, fork off right on a stoned track with a wooded area to the left. In a further 700 metres, with a house/farm buildings to the right, do not take the signed footpath right, but go through the wooden gate ahead into a grass field.

3/ Keep to the field's right edge. At the corner, turn left with a fence to the right until you reach a metal gate. Go through and continue to a tarmac drive. Take this for a short distance, but where this goes left, be sure to take the earth track to the right (yellow arrow). Follow this, soon going between hedges and bending left to return to the drive. Turn right and continue on the drive for just over a kilometre to a T-junction.

4/ Turn right (not ahead through an enticing gate opposite) on the

hedged lane. Go under pylons, ignoring all turnings off. In about 800 metres, pass the Park Farm complex, soon after which the lane bends right with woodland to the left. Where the tarmac splits, keep ahead into Red House Estate on its access drive. As the drive bends right, look for a 'Permissive Footpath To River' sign on the left. Take this, soon going through a gate. Where the path forks, keep right on a raised bank near trees/bushes to the right. Continue to a path junction in a small grassy open area.

5/ Turn right, passing between gateposts with paddocks and the buildings of Red House to the right and the river to the left. (To view the water treatment works lagoon, turn left for 100 metres, then retrace your steps). Now, continue beside the river, soon passing through a gate, then with youngish trees to the right. Beyond this, the path trends slightly away from the water onto a bank with a field at the right. It then enters a slightly overgrown area to arrive at a wooden footbridge over a beck.

6/ Cross the bridge and keep going on the obvious

path, which returns closer to the river. After nearly 1,500 metres of riverside walking, reach an open grassy area surrounded by trees, at the end of which the path splits. Here, take the main path to the right, going through trees to arrive at a parking area and road.

7/ Turn right on the road. Pass a bus stop on the left (return bus to the city centre), staying with the road as it bends right. Pass the Poppleton Centre and school to the right. Keep going, soon with part of the green to the right, to reach the starting point.



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