



Bewerley Tree Trail, Bewerley, near Pateley Bridge



Nidderdale
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Introduction

This short enjoyable walk includes the delightful village of Bewerley and takes you through Fishpond Wood. The Trail was developed by local members of Nidderdale Tree Wardens who work in their respective parishes across Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty promoting the interests of trees and woodland, and encouraging good woodland management.

Map

OS Explorer 298:
Nidderdale

Distance/Time

1.25 miles (2km)
1 hour

Starting Point

Pateley Bridge showground car park near the river bridge (SE 157655).

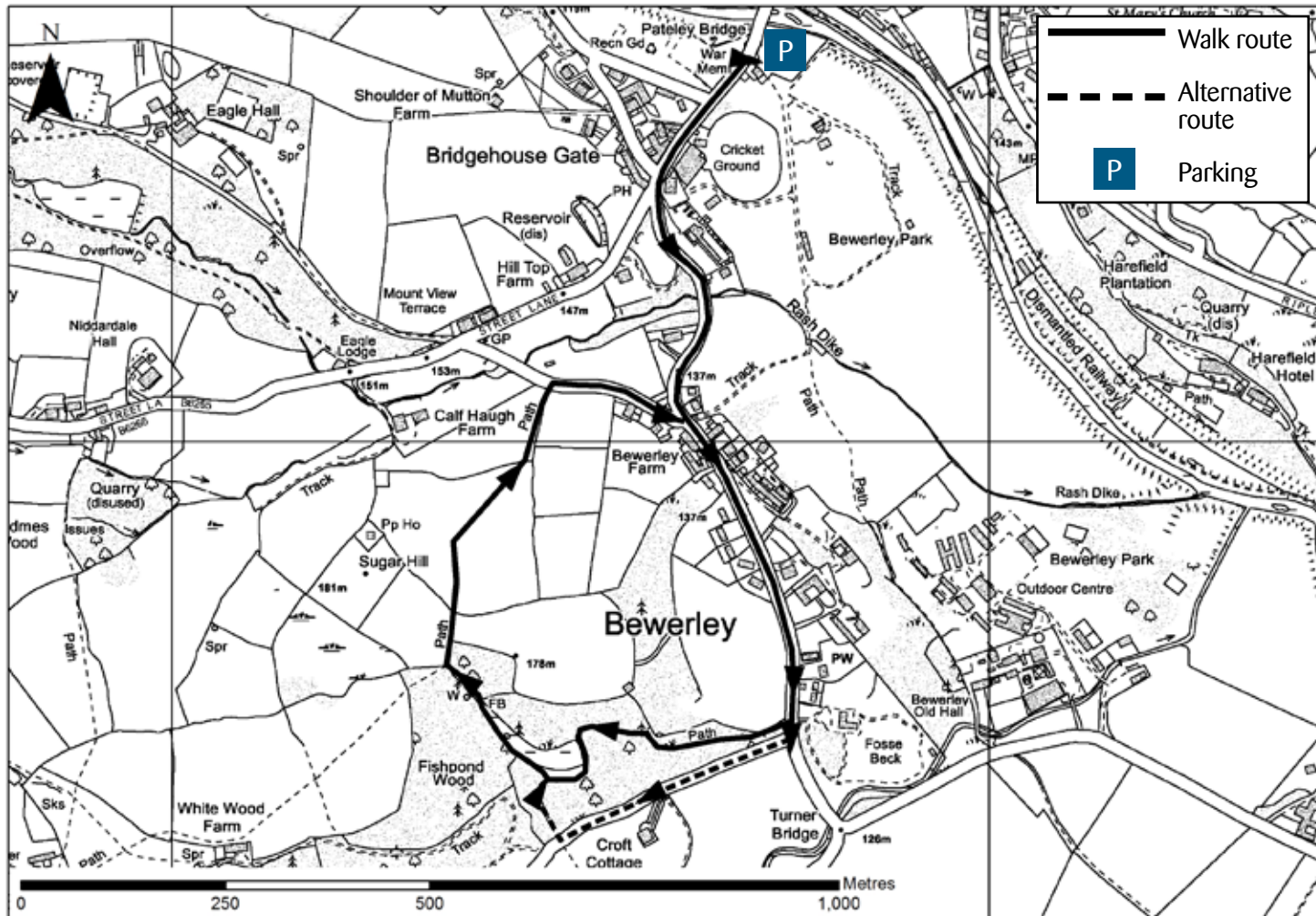
Terrain

This is an easy route but can sometimes be a bit muddy and there are two quite steep inclines along the way.

Useful Information

Pay & Display parking is available at Pateley Bridge Showground car park. Other parking is available in the town centre but it is limited to 4 hours.

There is a regular bus service from Harrogate (Transdev Harrogate & District No.24).



The Route

1. Start at the Showground car park in Pateley Bridge. Cross the road to the pavement and turn left towards the garage passing the children's playground on your right. Continue up the hill past the pub and take the road to the left sign posted Bewerley which leads into the village. The village green is edged with nine mature cherry trees which are a delight in May with their mass of blossom. Walk through the village to Bewerley Grange Chapel. Built around 1485, the chapel is now restored and well worth a visit; the grounds contain yew, walnut and cherry trees.

2. Continue along the road until you reach a metal gate on the right, just before Peat Lane: this is the entrance to Fishpond Wood. Go through the gate and up the steep stone steps, taking particular care if it is wet. Please note that Fishpond Wood is privately owned therefore access through this gate is by permission of the landowner. (The gate is occasionally locked; if so, please use the alternative route along Peat Lane as shown on the map, and enter the wood via a public footpath where a track joins Peat Lane.)

3. Whilst walking through the wood, notice the rhododendrons throughout the woodland. They are glorious when in flower but damaging to other plants. Follow the path up through the wood past the beech trees towards the elder shrubs. This area of woodland floor is covered in bluebells in spring and early summer. On the right

notice the two dead ash trees with the woodpecker holes.

4. Continue to walk up the path. Notice the large oak tree on the left hand side that has been coppiced at some time in the past and now has multiple spreading trunks. As the path levels out there is a single Rowan tree on the right, which has several decaying branches but is still producing new growth.

5. When the path forks, walk down towards the pond. Follow the path across the dam where an Alder tree stands dipping its roots in the water by the stone fishing jetty. Continue round the pond to where the Alder tree has collapsed into the water. Reed mace, often confused with bulrush, grows in the shallow water. Willow trees are invading the upper pond and marsh marigolds adorn this area in the spring.

6. Cross over the small footbridge and to your left is a mature holly tree. Just before you reach the gate note the fine beech tree which has been split by strong winds. To leave the wood, go through the gate and turn right up the hill. Take care, as it is very steep and use the steps next to the wall. At the top there are hawthorn, elder and blackthorn growing together. Go through the gate and walk down the field heading north and cross over the broken wall at the bottom of the field taking care as it can be boggy.

7. Head to the gate and look to the left at the hedgerow, which consists

of hawthorn and willow. Look out for traffic as you go through the gate and turn right up the lane. As you walk back to the village you will see the tall Corsican Pine next to the Victorian House on the left. The lane leads back into Bewerley; turn left at the road junction and walk back to Pateley Bridge.

Did you know?

Fishpond Wood is ancient semi-natural woodland – there have always been trees here. However, some trees have been felled, some new ones planted and others have regenerated naturally. There are no ancient trees but the woodland soil has developed over centuries and is an important habitat.

It is thought that the pond dates back to monastic times and provided a regular supply of fish for Bewerley Grange, one of Fountains Abbey's farms. In 1764 the Yorke family moved to Bewerley and were responsible for the landscaping and the laying out of footpaths.

Rhododendrons were introduced into the UK in 1793, when it was considered a fashionable shrub and was planted extensively in gardens. As it is damaging to other plants, attempts are now being made to clear some areas. This will allow the natural ground flora to regenerate and improve the diversity of the species.

The majority of trees in this woodland are Sycamore and many have been coppiced over the years. Coppicing is a traditional method used to manage trees. The tree is cut at ground level and then produces new shoots from the stool, which are harvested every 10-15 years. It allows light to reach the woodland floor, which helps to create diverse woodland ecosystems. However, if left to grow unmanaged, the trees produce multiple trunks like the one by the gate, which has five trunks.

Pollarding is another method of woodland management. The trees are cut at six to eight feet above ground level and allowed to grow again from the stump to produce successive crops of wood. Pollarding above head height protects valuable timber from being damaged by browsing animals such as cattle or deer.

Leaving dead timber on the ground may look untidy but it is an important part of the woodland ecosystem. Dead wood is a wonderful habitat for insects and fungi and a valuable food source for woodland birds.