

STAGE 3: Bewerley to Ripley



1 day
Whole section



14 / 22.5
Miles / KM



Moderate
Varied terrain



Scenic
Woods, crags,
riverside paths,
ancient bridges



FISHPOND WOOD

Once a popular tourist attraction – in 1885 alone, 3,000 people came by special trains – this ancient wood was landscaped in the 18th century by John Yorke (1733–1813) to suit fashionable ideas of the picturesque.

© Louise Brown

BIRSTWITH

Not an ancient settlement, unlike its neighbour Hampsthwaite, but the creation of Victorian patronage. Birstwith was built by the Greenwood family of Swarcliffe Hall, above the village. Its immediate *raison d'être* was a cornmill on the river, bought by John Greenwood in 1805, and now a slightly incongruous food-ingredients factory.



RIPLEY VILLAGE AND CASTLE

Until the early 19th century a hotchpotch of crude thatched cottages, Ripley was rebuilt in grand style by Sir William Amcotts-Ingilby, who took as his model a village in Alsace-Lorraine – hence the *hôtel de ville*.

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RIVER NIDD

Our constant companion on the Nidderdale Way, the Nidd flows for 53 miles from Nidd Head Spring to its confluence with the Ouse at Nun Monkton, near York. It is enjoyed to best advantage on today's walk, which stays close to the riverbank for miles at a time.

PATELEY BRIDGE

GUISECLIFF

A towering gritstone crag, stunning in swirling morning mist, scarcely less impressive when it clears, Guisecliff rivals even Brimham Rocks for views.



YORKE'S FOLLY

As the mining industry went into recession in the late 18th century, philanthropic local landowners the Yorke family paid stricken workers to build a romantic folly on the hill overlooking their home, Bewerley Hall, far in the valley below.

© Louise Brown

PACKHORSE BRIDGE NEAR BIRSTWITH

A reminder of centuries past when Nidderdale was very much on the beaten track. This lovely old packhorse bridge dates from 1822 but probably reuses materials from one much older. It was part of a network of trade routes that linked the Yorkshire Dales to Scotland, the West Riding and beyond.



© Iain Mann

HAMPSTHWAITE BRIDGE

A very old crossing place on the Nidd. The Roman road from Ilkley to Aldborough came this way, as in later centuries did the main route from York to Lancaster.

HAMPSTHWAITE

Hampsthwaite gained its fair and market charter in 1304. The village's speciality was the manufacture of spurs. Members of the family of Victorian novelist William Makepeace Thackeray lie in the churchyard.



PAY ATTENTION
TO NAVIGATION



TOILET LESS THAN
0.5 MILES FROM ROUTE



PAYING ATTRACTION

0 (km) 1 2 3 4 5

There's plenty of gentle lowland walking on today's outing, as we keep close to the maturing Nidd. First, though, there is an airy traverse of the heights of Guisecliff with dizzying views over the dale.

SET OFF FROM BEWERLEY

- 1 Go along the village street past the green. Cross **Peat Lane** and follow the road as it bends to the right.
- 2 After **Skrikes Farm**, take the Nidderdale Way up the hillside and through a wood. Skirt left round an old quarry and through a gate onto **Nought Moor**. A path through the heather meets the road on a bend.
- 3 Go straight over and head for **Guisecliff**. After **Yorke's Folly** look for a gateway in the wall. Carry on past stacks of gritstone boulders.
- 4 The path wanders through birches along the clifftop. As you near the telecoms mast it leaves the trees. Take care as you pass through an area of deep crevasses.
- 5 Keep right of a drystone wall and follow the mast's perimeter fence round to the right. Pick up a metalled track and go past old quarry workings. At **Hilltop House**, go through a gate and stay on the same track to reach **Heyshaw**.
- 6 Go left past a farmyard. A Nidderdale Way signpost points the way over a stile and down the field to the righthand of two gates.
- 7 Follow a line of hollies and make for the corner of the plantation. At **Lane Foot**, pass between the houses and take a gravel driveway uphill. Meet a lane at a crossroads and go left.
- 8 At a bend in the track, cross a stile and pick out a path through the rushes. Head for the metal footgate at the bottom corner of the pasture.
- 9 Follow the next field's top edge to the right, then the left. Keep to the wallside in the next field. After another gate, bear right downhill towards a farm. Go through the farmyard at the righthand side of the barns.
- 10 Go down a grassy slope and turn right on the track at the bottom. Take a footpath on your left. After a couple more fields look for a gate into a concrete yard. Press on between the farm buildings to meet a lane end.

LOOK OUT FOR DACRE BANKS AND SUMMERBRIDGE

The mills on either side of the river are long gone, but these twin villages still have a faintly industrial flavour, a reminder of Nidderdale's footing in the West Riding cloth trade.

- 11 On a corner, take the narrow alleyway in front of you and continue along a residential street to meet the main road in **Dacre Banks**. Turn left and walk for a further 300 metres down to the bridge over the Nidd.
- 12 A gap in the wall gives onto a path leading downstream. Soon you'll pass across the foot of riverside gardens on the edge of **Darley**. Keep going until you reach an arched bridge over the Nidd. Take a track on the right going up the bank to a gate and stile.
- 13 Follow the fieldside to a wooden gate and walk along the brow of the bank to a wide grassy field. The path slants uphill to the road. Go left and past the roadside houses at **The Holme**. Immediately after the last house take a footpath diagonally across the fields to a footgate in a stone wall. Enter the corner of the wood and meet a flagstone trod heading directly uphill.
- 14 Leave the trees near **Reynard Crag Park**. Follow the lane, then go left opposite a farmhouse. At the gateway to **Bell House**, go round to the right and down the edge of the trees to meet the road.
- 15 Turn right and take the next left at **Stansfield Cottage**. At the bottom of the lane, near an old packhorse bridge, follow the river downstream to **Birstwith**.
- 16 Emerge on the village street in front of a large modern factory. Just inside the entrance, take a metal footbridge over the old millrace and go left along the perimeter fence. Swing right along the riverbank, then right again in line with the factory's back fence to meet the millrace again. Keep going round to the right until you get to a gate and a Nidderdale Way signpost. Now go left.
- 17 At a metal footgate the path branches right over to a barn and joins the road at the far righthand corner. Walk down the road into **Hampsthwaite**.

LOOK OUT FOR CLINT

The mostly modern houses of Clint stand on the site of a deserted medieval and Elizabethan village whose inhabitants were spinners, weavers and spur-makers. The old village cross and stocks are relics of those earlier times.

- 18 At the village street turn left to the bridge. As the road bends right at the railway embankment, take the footpath up the field in front of you. At the top emerge on the road in **Clint**. Go right and then almost immediately left. At the bottom of the road a bridleway continues into the woods. This old thoroughfare will take you all the way into **RIPLEY**.

LOOK OUT FOR RIPLEY CHURCH

Royalist prisoners faced the firing squad against the church walls after the Battle of Marston Moor – look for bullet holes in the stone. The church itself is very old, dating from the 14th century. The 'weeping cross' in the churchyard may be even older – it is the only one of its kind left in England.



EAT AND DRINK AT: Dacre Banks, Summerbridge, Darley, Birstwith, Hampsthwaite, Ripley



SLEEP AT: Dacre Banks, Summerbridge, Darley, Birstwith, Hampsthwaite, Ripley



SHOP AT: Dacre Banks, Summerbridge, Darley, Birstwith, Hampsthwaite, Ripley

See Directory for accommodation details