

SHORT WALKS IN NIDDERDALE



Steane



2-3
hours



4.5 / 7.3
Miles / KM



Moderate



Scenic/Wildlife/
Habitats



© Robert Light

Upper Nidderdale is renowned for its stunning natural beauty. This picturesque walk around Steane is one of a series of trails offering the chance to enjoy the contrasting landscapes and fascinating heritage that make Upper Nidderdale such a special place. Along this route you will enjoy the tranquillity and natural beauty of Cliff Woods, see dramatic limestone rocks and cliffs in How Steane Gorge and walk through traditional hay meadows on Low Riggs Farm.

PARK: Lofthouse

EAT & DRINK: Studfold, How Steane, Lofthouse, Middlesmoor

SHOP: Studfold, How Steane

View online at uppernidderdale.org.uk and print off at A4. Please follow the countryside code. Keep your dogs on a lead and close gates behind you.

- 1 Begin the walk from the War Memorial in the centre of Lofthouse. Take the path between the houses to your left as you face up the hill and cross the bridge over the river. Walk across Scar Road and go through the gate that is almost directly in front of you. Follow the path until you reach a gate leading to the layby on the corner of the main road to Middlesmoor. Go through the gate and briefly follow the road before taking the turning straight ahead to **Studfold Farm** Caravan Site and Nature Trail as the main road bends sharply to your right.
- 2 Stay on this road until you cross a small bridge over Steane Beck and then turn right up the single track road towards Steane village. Follow the road as it runs alongside **How Steane Gorge** to your right. Stay on the road for another half mile (800 metres). After passing How Steane Gorge Café, you approach Steane village.
- 3 Shortly before you reach the village, take the path to your right that leads down to How Steane Beck. Follow the path and cross the narrow footbridge over the beck. Go through the gate at the other side of the bridge and turn left, then follow the path which runs along the edge of this field and across the next. Go through the gate at the end of the second field and head downhill towards How Steane Beck.
- 4 As you reach the beck oak and ash trees begin to surround you as you enter **Cliff Wood**. About 300 yards (280 metres) after entering the wood the path begins to climb back up the side of the gill.
- 5 At the top of the slope you reach a crossroads with paths signposted right to **Middlesmoor** and left to High Riggs. Take the path down the hillside to High Riggs. Go through the gate at the bottom of the hill and across the field to the beck. Briefly follow the beck upstream then go over the bridge that crosses it. To your right you see a disused lime kiln. Follow the path as it swings right and carries on up the hill. Go through the gate at the top of the hill and across the next two fields. These fields are **traditional upland hay meadows**.

- 6 At the end of the second field you reach Low Riggs Farm. Go through the gate to the left of the farm house and across the yard. As you leave the yard you see the Nidd Valley aqueduct in front of you. Continue along the track as it sweeps left and then right, before carrying on up the hill to the abandoned High Riggs Farm.

LOOK OUT FOR THE NIDD VALLEY AQUADUCT

Completed in 1899 the aqueduct carries water from Scar House and Angram Reservoirs to the treatment plant at Chellow Heights, Bradford, some 32 miles (51 km) away.

- 7 When you reach the gate to High Riggs Farm take the path that runs in front of the wall to your left. Go through a couple of gates and follow the path along the edge of a small steep-sided gill. The hillside soon drops away in front of you as the gill joins the much larger How Steane Beck Gill. Turn left here and follow the path as it winds its way down to the side of How Steane Beck. At the bottom of the hill follow the path upstream alongside the beck to a set of stepping stones.
- 8 Cross the beck here, but take care as the stones can be slippery especially in wet weather. Once across the beck go over a stile in the wire fence to your left and follow the path as it climbs up the side of the gill. When you reach the top of the hill, head back down the valley, cutting across the field in front of you to a gate. Go through the gate and along the track towards the barn at the end of the next field. Just before you reach the barn, look for a stile in the wall at 90 degrees to your right and go through it.
- 9 Once over the stile bear left, then go over another stile and head towards another barn in the next field. The grassland here provides a rich **upland bird habitat**. Go over a final double stile before reaching the barn which is halfway across the field. Then take a sharp left turn and join the track at its junction with the driveway to Well House. Follow the track into Steane, around half a mile away (750 metres). When you reach the village, follow the road back to Lofthouse.





TRADITIONAL UPLAND HAY MEADOWS

The meadows here are cut once a year in late summer. This encourages wild flowers such as eyebright, red clover, yellow rattle, march marigold and devil's-bit scabius.

© Robert Light



CLIFF WOOD

This ancient semi-natural woodland is nestled amongst the spectacular limestone features of How Stean Beck Gill. The wood contains native species such as hazel, ash, birch and holly.

© Robert Light



MIDDLESMOOR

This charismatic collection of houses huddled together in an exposed spot on the hillside is a step back in time. Look out for St Chad's, the Anglican Church, which is renowned for the beautiful view down the valley from its churchyard. Inside the church is a stone cross dedicated to St Chad that is thought to date from the 10th century.

© L Fox



UPLAND BIRD HABITAT

The grassland here supports a variety of upland birds. In the spring curlew, lapwing, snipe golden plover and grey partridge are common and black grouse can be seen all year round.

© Robert Light



HOW STEAN GORGE AND CAFÉ

This deep cut gorge, with its spectacular limestone features, is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Gorge has attracted tourists since the 1800s and the café now boasts a glass floored viewing area which is well worth a look!

© Nidderdale AONB



STUDFOLD FARM

Built on the site of a Monastic Grange of Byland Abbey, evidence of earlier settlement has been found in this enigmatic landscape. The farm holding also includes Blayshaw Gill, a limestone gorge where remnants of 19th century lead mining activity can be seen on the award winning Studfold Nature Trail.

© Studfold Community Group

Seasonal Features

Spring: Bluebells cover the ground in Cliff Wood. Lapwing, curlew, redshank and snipe nest in the grassland on the edge of Stean Moor.

Summer: An array of species rich wild flowers blossom in the hay meadows on Low Riggs Farm.

0

1 (km)