

VISIT RYEDALE

KIRKBYMOORSIDE AND ST GREGORY'S MINSTER



Challenging Terrain

**5 Miles
Circular
2.5 hours**

090616



Access Notes

1. The walk has many gentle gradients throughout plus a couple of short steep slopes.
2. A few sections (including the paths close to the cave and minster) can be very muddy so good boots are a must.
3. You will need to negotiate several kissing gates, some stepping stones (although these can be avoided if you wish) plus 13 stiles (the majority of these stiles are tall and have tight wooden or wire fence surrounds so dogs will need a lift over).
4. You will cross one horse paddock, several sheep pastures and a couple of fields that may be holding cattle so take particular care if you do choose to take a dog with you.
5. The route crosses the main A170 road (which can be very busy) twice, so ensure you take time to wait for a suitable gap in the traffic.



A 5 mile (8 km) circular walk from the market town of Kirkbymoorside in Ryedale.

The route heads west through open fields and pastures, visiting Kirkdale Cave (where a fascinating set of fossilised bones were discovered) and St Gregory's Minster along the way. 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 Town Farm car park (just behind the library) at the start and end of the walk. If you are looking for refreshments there are plenty of pubs and cafes centred around the Market Place in Kirkbymoorside at the start and 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

Kirkbymoorside is located just off the A170 between Helmsley and Pickering. The walk starts and finishes outside the library at the top end of High Market Place. If you are coming by car, the long stay Town Farm pay and display car park is situated just behind the library (accessed from High Market Place between the library and The Kings Head). 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 6AT**.

If you are coming by bus, the nearest bus stop is Kirkbymoorside Market Place. For help with planning your journey by public transport please visit www.traveline.info. From the bus stop, walk uphill along the main street (Market Place) and just before the mini roundabout at the top, you will find the library on your left, where this walk begins.

Walk Sections

Go ➡ 1 Start to Fields

Standing with your back to the library, turn left along the pavement to reach the mini-roundabout at the top of High

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Market Place. Turn left here (signed to Farndale) and follow the pavement steadily downhill. At the bottom of the slope, turn left into Manor Close and just a few paces along turn right onto the wide tarmac footpath, Back Lane. Just before you reach a bench, turn left onto the side branch of this path and follow this between a house on your left and a hedge on your right.

Simply keep ahead on this concrete path between houses and you will emerge to the T-junction at the end of this residential cul-de-sac, Sturdy Court. Cross over to the far pavement and turn right along this. Follow this road as it bears left and then continues ahead, ignoring all the side roads. Where the main residential road swings left, cross over to fork right into the small corner cul-de-sac and take the tarmac footpath (between houses 45 and 47). The path leads you to the edge of open fields. NOTE: You may come across sheep grazing in some of the fields from this point.

1 → 2 Fields to Robin Hood Howl



Cross the stile to enter the first field and walk directly ahead, pass through the gateway (or use the adjacent stile) and stay in the same direction across this second field. Take the stile into the third field and cross this one at about 11 o'clock. At the far side another stile leads you into the corner of a fourth pasture. Keep straight ahead, following the line of hedgerow on your left.

Pass through the small gate to reach the edge of a fifth field. Cross this one between 11 and 12 o'clock, heading for the small wooden gate and wide field gate visible on the far boundary. Pass through the smaller of the gates to enter the sixth field. Keep directly ahead, following the line of hedgerow on your left. At the far side, pass through the gate and follow the path which leads you fairly steeply downhill along the edge of a woodland belt, known as Robin Hood Howl. At the bottom of the slope you will come to a T-junction, with the woodland to your right and a kissing gate on your left.

2 → 3

Robin Hood Howl to St Gregory's Minster



Turn left through the kissing gate (NOTE: this pasture may be holding cattle) and continue straight ahead, following the line of the wire fence on your right. Stay with this fence-side path and it will lead you out of the pasture via a kissing gate (just to the right of a field gate). You will emerge to a staggered road junction. Go straight ahead on the small lane signed to Helmsley (although this signpost was slightly skewed when we passed), taking care of any traffic. Further along, the lane begins to descend. Just a few metres before you reach the ford across the river, you will see a choice of two paths to the right.

Initially we take a small detour to visit Kirkdale Cave. Turn sharp right onto the first right path, a sunken track leading you through the trees. This short path leads you directly to the large rock face which is home to Kirkdale Cave. You will see the small cave opening about 3 or 4 metres above ground level (there is a ledge to help reach this entrance where you can peer inside, but if you choose to do so please take extreme care).

This small opening leads to an extensive cave system formed by underground streams thousands of years ago. In 1821 workers discovered a large quantity of bones within the cave. Great sensation was caused when these were identified as bones of elephants, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, antelope and hyenas dating back to the last inter-glacial period – the oldest archaeological find in North Yorkshire. Oxford-based palaeontologist William Buckland studied the remains in 1822 and determined that the bones were the remains of prey animals brought into the cave by hyenas who had been using it for a den.

When you have finished at the cave, retrace your steps back to the junction of paths alongside the ford. At this point you have a choice because the next stretch follows a pretty but steep and uneven path through woodland as well as crossing the river via low stepping stones. This is not advisable unless the river is running low and the ground is fairly dry.

Choice One: To avoid the woodland path and stepping stones, simply cross the river via the footbridge and keep ahead on the lane, climbing. Turn right into the access lane for St Gregory's Minster and follow it up to the church. Now skip to the directions in the next section.

Choice Two: To follow the full walk (including the stepping stones), turn right onto the signed public footpath (immediately before the ford's footbridge). Follow this level woodland path with the river, Hodge Beck, running on your left. After passing the churchyard visible on the far bank (which we will be visiting shortly), the path climbs steeply to run high above the river (which is still down to your left). The banks are steep so take particular care. In spring these woodland slopes are awash with wild garlic, bluebells, wood anemones and look out for occasional orchids too. As soon as the river

begins to bear left, turn left onto a side path down a steep slope (take care!) and you will emerge to the corner of a riverside grass meadow. Keep ahead following the river on your left and continue just to the point where a vehicle track crosses the river via a ford. Use the low stepping stones alongside this ford to cross the river and follow the track through the meadow, passing through a gate at the far side to reach St Gregory's Minster on your left.

3 ➔ 4 St Gregory's Minster to Welburn Hall School



St Gregory's Minster is one of the smallest, but perhaps the most interesting, church in the area. It is called a minster because it was once the centre for missionary activities and occupies the site of an ancient Saxon edifice. St Gregory's is the burial place of King Ethelwald of Northumbria and the sundial above the south-facing door bears an inscription recording the rebuilding of the church between 1055 and 1065 (just before the Norman conquest).

Sir Herbert Read is buried in the graveyard of the Minster. His grave is easy to find and is inscribed, Here lies Herbert Read, Knight Poet Anarchist.

Read, the son of a local farmer, was a poet and critic who shaped the British art scene profoundly from the 1930s to the 1960s. He fought in World War I, emerging in 1918 as a decorated hero (DSO, MC), committed pacifist and poet. His name is inscribed in the Memorial to the War Poets in Poets' Corner Westminster Abbey.

He was a curator at the V&A, a friend of TS Eliot, Picasso and Man Ray and a champion of young artists including Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth. He wrote important and influential works on the role of art in education and society, and co-founded the Institute of Contemporary Arts. Read accepted a knighthood in 1953 despite regarding himself as an anarchist.

His Yorkshire roots were important to him and he made his family home at Stonegrave, where he died in 1968.

When you have finished at the church, follow the tarmac access lane which leads you past a stone outbuilding on your right and out to a T-junction with the road (you are now on the far side of the ford crossing). Take the stile at 11 o'clock to enter the sloping sheep pasture. Walk diagonally left, soon picking up and following a fenced section of trees on your left.

Where the fence line on your left steps back for a few metres, pause a moment and glance to your left and right. You are now crossing the line of a dismantled railway and you will see old bridges both sides. The viaduct to the left (which once carried the railway over the river) is a particularly beautiful structure. Simply keep ahead, maintaining your direction (with the fence veering away to your left). Within the far field boundary you will

find a small stile concealed in the hedgerow. Cross this to reach a grass verge alongside the A170 road.

NOTE: This is a fast moving road but visibility is good so please take time to wait for a suitable gap before you cross. Cross over the road and take the stile ahead leading you into a paddock (which is likely to be holding horses). Walk directly ahead and at the far side cross the stone stile over the wall to reach a quiet lane. Cross the quiet lane and take the path ahead which swings sharp right and crosses a stile to enter the next pasture.

Turn immediately left and follow the left-hand field boundary. At the far end, a stile (in front of a large tree) leads you out of the field. Take the path diagonally left through the woodland belt and you will emerge to the driveway for Welburn Hall School, with the school buildings visible to your right and a stone river bridge on your left. The school, which opened in 1951, works with children with special educational needs and is based in an old Jacobean manor, dating from 1603.

4 ➔ 5 Welburn Hall School to Howkeld Mill



Turn left along the driveway, crossing the stone river bridge. Immediately afterwards ignore the first path on the right (Beckside Footpath), instead continue on the driveway for just 10 more paces and then turn right onto the grass path. Follow this path to a gate at the edge of a large field and pass through the gate (or the adjacent kissing gate) to enter the field. Walk diagonally right to join the right-hand fence line and follow this along the length of the field.

At the far side you will reach a T-junction with a tarmac access lane. Turn left along this lane and, as soon as the fence line on your right ends, fork diagonally right across the grass heading for the left-hand edge of the collection of buildings. As you reach the far fence line, pass through the gate (to the right of the cattle grid) and join the tarmac drive ahead which leads you into the centre of the buildings of Howkeld Mill, a former watermill dating from the early 1800s.

5 ➔ 6 Howkeld Mill to Primary School

Use the gate to the left of the next cattle grid to reach the gravel courtyard at the centre of the mill buildings. Keep ahead through this courtyard and exit via the narrow gate in the far right-hand corner. NOTE: Immediately beyond this gate you will cross the workings of the mill race on your right, so take particular care with children and dogs.

Continue ahead, passing the buildings of the trout farm on your left, and then cross the sleeper bridge over Howkeld Beck to reach the edge of a large crop field. Go straight ahead on the grass track which leads you through the centre



of this field (and can be boggy in parts). At the far side, a stile leads you into a sheep pasture. Walk diagonally left (at about 10 o'clock) crossing through the line of trees (now home to a shallow ditch but once the line of the dismantled railway that you saw earlier).

Continue at 10 o'clock to reach a stile. Cross this and continue in the same direction to reach the top field corner (passing a stone barn across to your right). Cross a (final!) stile and turn left along the stone track for a few paces to reach a junction with the main A170 road. Cross the road (again taking care to wait for a suitable gap in the traffic) and turn right along the far pavement. Just after passing the driveway for Broadview on your left, bear left at the fork and follow this as it becomes a pavement alongside West Fields, passing the primary school on your left.

6 → 7 Primary School to End



Keep ahead and, at the fork in the road, take the right-hand branch, passing the Quaker Meeting Room on your right. Stay with the road between a number of beautiful town houses and passing the 1861 Methodist Chapel on your left. You will emerge to a junction with Church Street and Market Place.

Turn left along Market Place, heading steadily uphill, and this will lead you to the library on your left where your walk began. If you are looking for refreshments, there are plenty of pubs and cafes centred around the Market Place. With an award-winning butcher, two bakeries, plenty of independent shops, several antiques shops and a weekly market, there is plenty on offer to while away the rest of your day in Kirkbymoorside. 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.

