



DALES DELIGHT

Jo Vaughan recommends a cracking little walk around a wonderful village in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales

THE CLUB'S Hargill House site, conveniently close to the A1 and Scotch Corner, has some of the Yorkshire Dales' most beautiful scenery on its doorstep, including Swaledale, where this month's walk is based.

Before we set off, allow me to give you a few words of warning. Firstly, three-quarters of the way around our route are the remains of a bridge that has been swept away by floods. Despite being fast flowing, the stream can still easily be crossed as the water is very shallow. Remember that it could be slippery underfoot and after periods of rain the stream could well be swollen, so would best be avoided.

Secondly, while walking along the main B6270 for a short distance, you'll need to take care as this is a very fast, busy road.

If you wish, you can easily avoid these two potential hazards – simply take the stepping stones mentioned in No 5 to the other side of the river and continue back to Reeth, following the directions after the series of stiles in instruction 10 (you can't go wrong following the riverbank anyway). Make

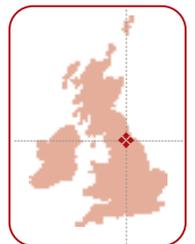
this shortcut, however, and you'll miss some of the best views as you head towards the main road bridge half-way round. The other alternative is to simply walk to this bridge, then turn around and retrace your tracks back to where you started – the views alone make this single-route stroll worthwhile.

Our start point is the National Park Centre in Reeth, which is about 13 miles from the site – you should be able to park anywhere in the village.

DIRECTIONS

1 With your back to the National Park Centre, turn right and walk to the right of the 'Anvil Square' sign. By a house named 'North Nook', veer right again up the road, but almost immediately keep left next to a big sign saying 'The Garden House' and 'To The River', down a narrow footpath flanked by stone walls.

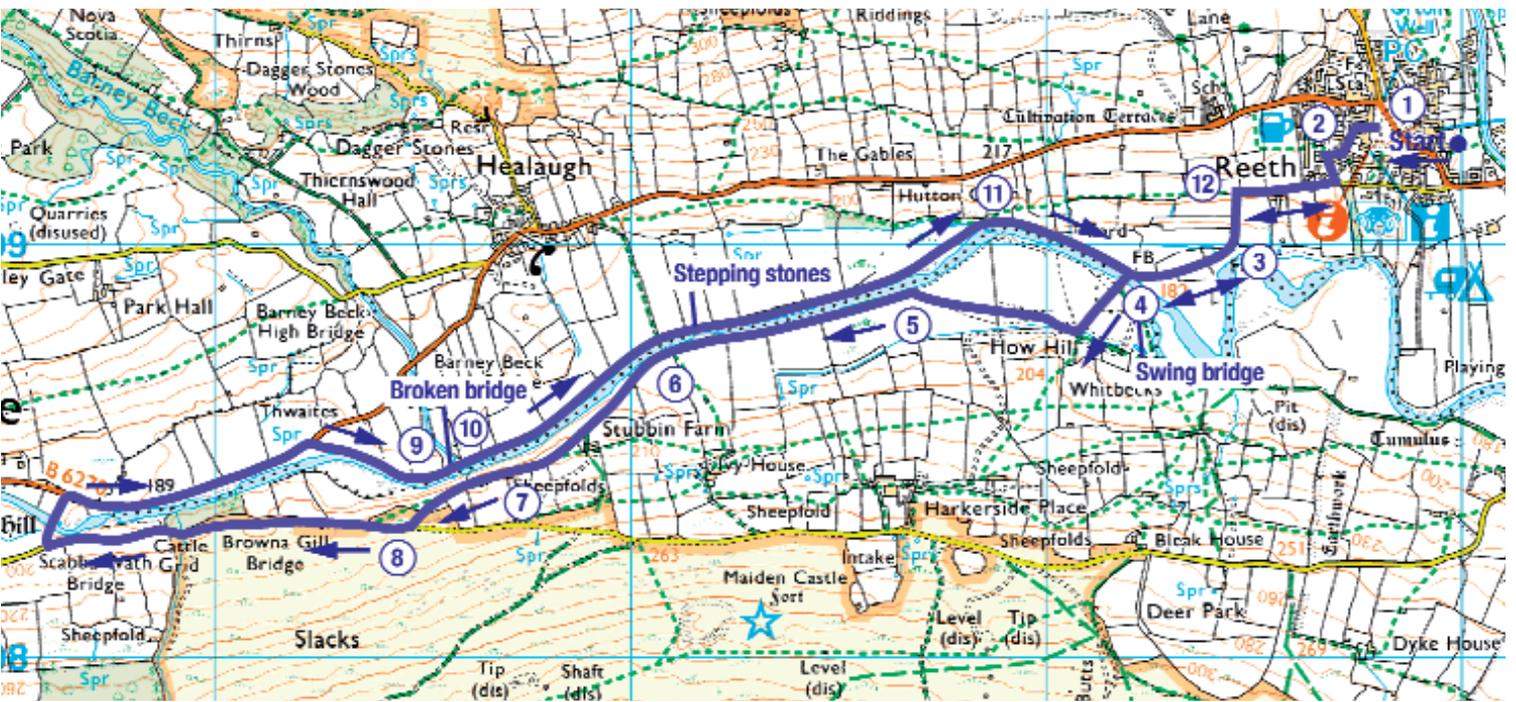
2 At the T-junction, turn left. Turn right at the next junction marked 'Doctor's Surgery' and continue ahead, past the



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children's play area on your right. At the end of the lane, you will see two metal gates – ignore these and instead veer left to follow a public signpost to 'Harkerside and Grinton' (the signpost is partially hidden on your right).

3 Go through a wooden gate and continue down the hill, crossing a small wooden walkway. Go through another wooden gate and then continue to the Swing Bridge via another gate. Turn left to cross the bridge, passing through two more gates.

4 Follow the direction of the signpost almost straight ahead marked 'Harkerside – ½ mile'. Soon you'll pass over a small wooden bridge and reach a track – turn right here to proceed along the track. When you reach the end of the stone wall on your right, you'll see a public

footpath sign adjacent to a set of gates (also on your right). Pass through these gates and follow the signpost direction diagonally across the field, back towards the river.

5 Keeping the river to your right, walk along the bank. Pass through a wooden gate, go down the slope and continue along the stony walkway. The path soon returns to a mud track, and shortly afterwards you'll see some stepping stones on your right. If you want to shorten the walk and avoid the aforementioned damaged bridge, use the stepping stones to cross the river and turn right along the opposite bank to return to Reeth.

6 Pass through another wooden gate, then veer left along the line of a stone wall as the path climbs sharply (you're now high above the river). There's no footpath sign at this last junction but there is a 'TAA Private Fishing' sign on a tree by the river, beside the gate.

7 Continue straight ahead, ignoring a gate on your left (you'll see some blue arrows painted on the wall showing you the way). Cross the stile or go through the gate, continuing ahead again. Where the stone wall corners at 90 degrees to the left, veer slightly left to a gate in front of you (to the left of a telegraph pole). Go through the gate and continue ahead.

8 Very soon, turn right down a lane. After a while you'll go through a gate beside a cattle grid, before continuing to the road junction. Turn right across the stone bridge (signposted 'Reeth'), then turn right again along the main road (signposted 'B6270 – Healaugh 1 and Reeth 2'). Continue, taking great care, until you reach a small parking area on your right, where there's a public footpath sign, 'Footpath Reeth 1¼ miles'. Follow this along the line of the fence.



9 Soon you'll cross a stile before turning right to walk along the riverbank again, keeping to the right side of the fields. When you come to a stream ahead, you'll see the old stone bridge damaged by flooding. It's still not difficult to cross the stream, as long as you have waterproof boots and preferably a pole for balance.

10 Continue along the path by the riverside. Cross five stiles and then go through two gates and a kissing gate. Cross another stile before you reach a series of gates with a signpost in between. Take the right path through the right kissing gate (signposted 'Swing Bridge') which continues along the riverside.

11 Go through the next kissing gate and over a small wooden bridge, and then through two more kissing gates. Now you're back to the Swing Bridge. Pass it this time without crossing – go through the two wooden gates ahead and continue retracing your steps over the small wooden footbridge. Go through another gate and up the enclosed path.

12 At the top of the path, turn right (signposted 'Reeth'). When you reach the T-junction, turn left at the footpath sign towards some bungalows. Take the first right turn, just before a hedge, before veering right again passing the yellow grid/salt box. Retrace your steps until you reach Anvil Square – the National Park Centre is on your left.



INFORMATION

Club site: Hargill House, Gilling West, Richmond, North Yorkshire DL10 5LJ. Open 18 March to 7 November. Call 01748 822734 or see caravanclub.co.uk/searchandbook.

Distance: 4½ miles/7.2km

Terrain: mostly riverside paths with a short distance of road walking

Number of stiles: 8

Essential equipment: Ordnance Survey Explorer OL30 map, waterproof boots, walking stick for balance

Level of difficulty: easy, with one moderate scramble across a stream

Refreshments: in Reeth

Toilets: in Reeth

Directions and parking: park anywhere in Reeth (which is just over 13 miles from the site). The walk begins from the National Park Centre (which is signposted from the village centre as 'Tourist Information').

