

North Dale to Rosedale Abbey 4mls (6.5km), 2½hrs

Transport **M6** (from Pickering Library via Rosedale Abbey) - Ask to be set down about 200m after a landmark “water tank” (an enclosed service reservoir) and ignoring a gated farm access track to West Northdale Farm - approx. 3 min. on bus after leaving Rosedale Abbey (named Knott Road on map) – at your start point a footpath crosses the road by a gate on right hand side

Map 1:25,000 OS Explorer OL26* (or OS Landranger 94 1:50,000 Whitby & Esk Dale but less detail)

Start North Dale - Grid ref. start point SE 718 978

Overview

This walk takes in part of North Dale, a lesser known more remote branch of Rosedale, before cutting back to overlook splendid Rosedale itself, then eventually dropping back down to Rosedale Abbey. In August when the heather is out, the moorland section is especially lovely.

The walk has been colour-coded blue for its distance and relative ease of navigation but there are ups and downs and the terrain underfoot is mostly uneven (rough in places on moorland paths), hence the generous time ‘allowance’.

The going is farm track, field path, rough moorland path, bit of road-walking. There is a descent across rough pasture then an initially stiff climb up a hillside in North Dale, followed by a steepish then steady climb on a (sometimes very) rough track onto the moor, finally an uneven but well-used descent back into Rosedale. Walking boots recommended, as are walking poles.

In mid to late Victorian times, Rosedale saw a population burst from a scattered rural 558 inhabitants to an industrialised 2398 in twenty years, as a result of its ironstone mining. Along each side of the dale ran a railway line serving the mines and the kilns which calcined (roasted) the ironstone before the ore was transported in railway wagons to supply the blast furnaces of the north-east. (This story forms the core of the Land of Iron Project.) Since the 1920s the dale has now reverted to being green and rugged with ruins of its industrialised past, and Rosedale Abbey itself welcomes visitors (two cafes and a pub Coach House Inn, toilets, original glass workshop, and campsites). It is probable that the name of the valley derives from a personal Viking name “Rossi”, or a word meaning ‘horse’, or another word ‘rhos’ meaning ‘moor’. So no roses.

There are no refreshments or toilets *en route*, just in Rosedale Abbey itself. Find a welcome bench for a picnic after 2.75mls with the best view overlooking Rosedale.

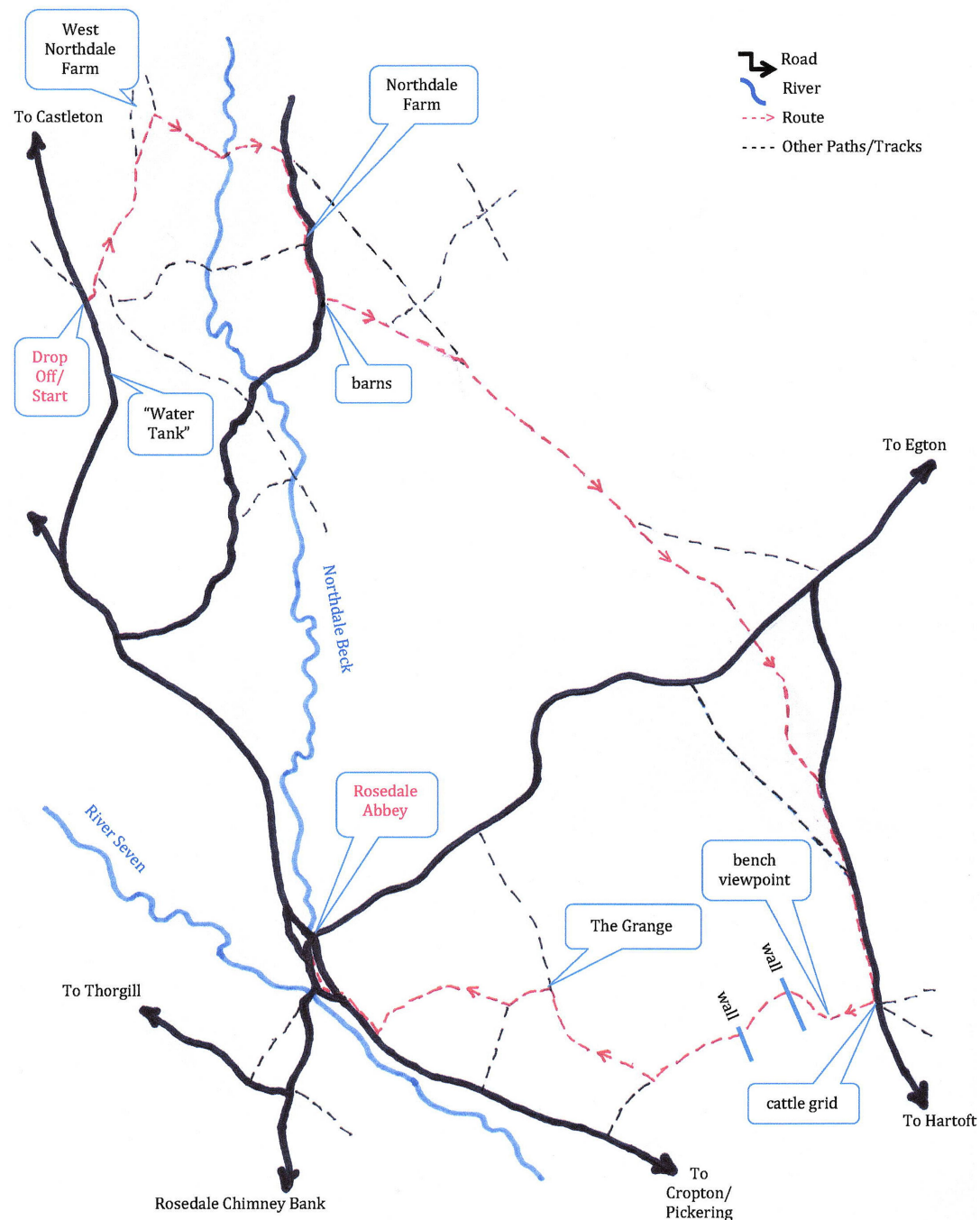
Route

- Alight by a wooden fingerpost (signed Public Bridleway Village) 200m after a Yorkshire Water “water tank” on a rising lane (Knott Road) - you’ll see another footpath (fingerpost) heading off into woodland on the left just up the road but you take a path through a handgate on the right, overlooking North Dale

To help get your bearings for the walk, if you look directly across the valley from the gate off the road, the farm you see on the opposite side is Northdale Farm and you can detect the line of your route slanting uphill left to right across the hillside, below the brow of Northdale Rigg but above and behind the farm (your route climbs to join this track to the right of the farm)

- In 5m after the start point gate, the path drops to a wide stony track, turn left
- In less than 100m descend to a farm gate straight ahead (ignore bridleway/grassy track bending down sharp right off this stony farm access track just before gate)

Leaning on the farm gate, enjoy the view of North Dale which has remained remote and un-touristy. It feels wild without being wilderness. Inspired by this landscape the northern and international sculptor Andy Goldsworthy has set himself a project (commissioned by a local estate owner) to create a series of stunning artistic / architectural 'installations' dotted around the dale exploiting previously ruined stone buildings. The project is known as "Hanging Stones" and the installations may be visited (on a 6ml loop walk) only by booking, as the installations are otherwise locked.



- Go straight ahead on the farm track through the gate (follow yellow waymarker)
- In 450m gently downhill pass through a gate (about 100m before a farm, marked West Northdale Farm on the map), see a wooden fingerpost on left by a hedge (fingerpost may be obscured in hedge)
- Turn right here off farm track through a wooden field gate, then head immediately left along top of field, keeping hedge on left (following yellow waymarkers)
- In less than 100m at a gate, veer slightly right (farm buildings up on left)

- In 50m down across a rough pasture at a three-way wooden fingerpost, cut sharp right downhill keeping a gully initially on your left (ignore path ahead left at this fingerpost heading up through a gate) – you are now aiming for bottom right corner of this field
- Continue downhill in generally same direction crossing flattened-out gully (ignoring a track right through a gate into another field)
- In 220m from three-way fingerpost, at bottom right corner of field, curve left down on a sunken path (ignore straight ahead off bend through a gateway in a wall) to a handgate
- Cross beck (this has been culverted so just a soil path, not a proper 'bridge'), almost immediately to another handgate
- Head straight up steep bank, path then continues more steadily up narrow field, keeping by left wall, heading for gate in wall at top
- In 175m uphill from beck (ie. at gate at top), turn right onto a stony farm track, which rises gently between walls towards Northdale Farm on right

¾ml (1.1km)

- Follow farm track for 200m past Northdale Farm to come to a pair of barns – immediately up side of first barn on left, take bridleway track up left through a gate
- The stony track rises steeply to a gate in 200m – here bear right through this gate following yellow footpath waymarker (ignoring blue bridleway bearing slightly left) – your path is not obvious on the ground (now open moorland) but keep going diagonally upwards right to meet a slightly more obvious track, turn right (NB. There is a shallow ditch running along the top side of this track so if you cross this ditch you have overlooked the track you want)
- Follow the rough track for 300m climbing steadily to a gate in a tall drystone wall

Over on your half-right as you climb you can see in the middle distance a clump of trees on top of a small hill. This is Bell Plantation. The hill is known geologically as an 'outlier', meaning it used to be connected as the end of a continuous ridge (dividing Rosedale and North Dale at their 'confluence') but the end of the ridge got cut off by erosion, leaving this hill isolated. At the foot of the hill lies a farm known as Bell End Farm (cue for a titter).

Don't miss next fork of tracks!

- **In just 30m from last gate, fork right (go effectively straight ahead)** leaving wider track (which bends obviously up left) onto a narrower unmaintained moorland track – continues to be rough going and not always obvious
- As you progress and the path levels out, head generally in the distance towards a lower, middle section of a line of trees to guide you (you are heading towards Hartoft on the map)
- In 900m meet a road (Rosedale Abbey to Egton, marked top of Heygate Bank on map)

2mls (3.1km)

- Cross this tarmac road to pick up a bridleway straight ahead (green metal box-top sign) – this path is narrow and still rough in places and may be obscured by heather but is followable (still heading towards that lower middle section of a line of trees but now closer)
- In approx. 650m meet a road (marked Hancow Road on the map)
- Continue ahead on the road for approx. 450m to a cattle grid at a wall

As you walk along the road, Rosedale opens up on your right. Opposite is the famous Rosedale Chimney Bank road twisting to above a distinctive arched set of ruined kilns, a remnant of the ironstone industry in the valley. At max. gradient 1:3 (33%), Chimney Bank is the steepest road in England. (This accolade is supposedly shared with Hardknott Pass in Cumbria, but don't tell that to a Yorkshireman.) As such it provides a challenge for individual cyclists and international races, known as "the chain breaker". The 'chimney' in question was stone-built in 1861 and served a nearby ironstone mine and stationary steam

engine for ventilation – at 100ft tall it was a prominent landmark. The mine closed in 1929, whilst the chimney was demolished as unsafe in 1972.

- **Do not cross the cattle grid** but at a small parking area before it (with an info. board about Hartoft Rigg, where you are), turn right on an obvious wide track, keeping the wall initially on your left then at a fork as the wider track bends left, veer slightly right on a narrower but still obvious stony/grassy path
- In less than 150m from road find a bench – this memorial bench provides a stunning panorama of Rosedale
- Your path continues below the bench, curving slightly right downhill, eventually meeting a wall on left
- In 150m from bench, go through a gate through a stone wall
- Descend quite steeply on a rough but obvious path for 250m to a gate at another wall
- Head straight down the field for another 250m to a wall corner by a three-way wooden fingerpost – you want right, signed The Grange
- Use stone stile over wall on right, then immediately a wooden squeeze stile, to head slanting downhill along top of field, keeping a wall on your right
- In 150m go through a field gate to head over rough ground (keeping wall generally on left)
- In 60m through a metal gate, continue ahead across rough pasture (wall still generally on left)
- In 120m go through a gate to take a farm track towards a farm (this is 'The Grange' as marked on map)
- In 80m enter a woodyard, curve left down past a small stone farm building – ignore footpath waymarked right (or actually straight ahead, also a right of way across yard)
- Keep bearing left downhill through a farmyard, then leave the farm on a farm lane, shortly passing a duck pond and using a boardwalk over a ford
- After pond, farm lane curves right uphill - in 50m where this farm lane curves sharp left, leave lane right/straight ahead off the bend, through a kissing gate (with stone gatehole) - this leads onto a straight often overgrown path between a fence on right and a fence/wall on left

3½mIs (5.5km)

- In 100m go through a hand gate by a wooden fingerpost, to head diagonally left down across a field to a field gate at bottom right hand corner, by buildings

[Note: this is the line of the right of way diagonally across the field – this field is normally pasture, but even if cropped you have the right to walk across it – if you prefer to go around the outside, turn left from gate then right along bottom edge of field to far diagonal corner]

- In 170m go through a field gate (belonging to a goat farm that sells cheeses etc.), pick up stoned farm access track, heading straight down to road
- In 130m turn right on road (campsite opposite) – take care, no pavement
- In 250m at road junction (just past Coach House Inn on right), ignore sharp left turn over bridge (at foot of famous Rosedale Chimney Bank) to bear left into village - road bends right round corner to Abbey Stores/Tea Rooms with shaded village green nearby – Moorsbus stops just in front of Abbey Stores

Opposite Abbey Stores, you'll see the parish church (with an external bell) and behind it there are the ruins of the priory (there was never actually an abbey in Rosedale Abbey) - only a turret, staircase and stone seat or sundial remain of the original small Cistercian priory founded in 1154 (served by nuns who are credited with being the first to raise sheep commercially in the area) and dissolved in 1536. The priory's stonework has been raided over the years to be absorbed into the church and local houses.

[*Note: the route slips off the right edge of this OL26 map (onto OL27) at SE 000 960 but don't worry, you quickly pick up the onward route by Quarry (dis.) at SE 000 957, where the bench is]

With thanks to Peter Lockwood.