

Rosedale Railway Path to Rosedale Abbey 9¼ mls (14.75km) 5½ hrs

Transport **M6 Outward** (from Pickering Library via Rosedale Abbey) – your suggested start point is further on up the dale on the Moorsbus, about 3 min on the bus after leaving Rosedale Abbey. Ask to be set down about 250m after a landmark “water tank” (an enclosed Yorkshire Water service reservoir on right hand side) at a track into woodland on left hand side, with a wooden fingerpost signed Public Footpath Hill Cottages. [On the bus between the water tank and your drop-off point, you’ll pass on the right an open area, a gated farm access track to West Northdale Farm, and just after that a handgate with a wooden fingerpost overlooking North Dale]

Return from Rosedale Abbey **M6**

Map 1:25,000 OS Explorer OL26

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

Overview

This walk begins by briefly overlooking North Dale, a lesser known more remote branch of Rosedale, before heading towards Rosedale itself and the start of the old railway path (east side). This reclaimed well surfaced trackbed runs contouring with superb views along the length of the east side of the dale, then it curves around the head of the dale to continue to run back down the length of the west side - but your suggested route for variety on this walk drops down soon after Dale Head into the dale* to return to Rosedale Abbey.

The walk has been colour-coded orange on account of its distance, although the route is pretty well defined and is mostly on the level. The terrain is mostly good tracks with only about two miles in total of rougher woodland/moorland path/track.

Walking boots recommended, as are walking poles.

There are no refreshments or toilets *en route*, only at your destination Rosedale Abbey. (You may, of course, decide to detour to the Lion Inn, Blakey – adding approx. just 250m but a stiffish short climb).

Please note that the railway path is an exposed walk, so bear in mind sun, wind and rain (which Rosedale can supply in your face in abundance).

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 in Rosedale.

Route

- Alight by a wooden fingerpost (signed Public Footpath Hill Cottages) 250m on left after a “water tank” on right on a rising lane (called Knott Road on the OS map)

Although you head off into woodland from your start point, you might like to take a peek over lovely North Dale first from over the wall on the opposite side of the road (or even better vantage point from just 30m back at the handgate). North Dale has remained remote and un-touristy; it feels wild without being wilderness. Inspired by this landscape the northern and international sculptor Andy Goldsworthy (commissioned by a local estate owner) has created 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 they are otherwise locked.

- Set off from your start point through a metal gate (usually open) along a good maintained track through woodland – this used to be a former tramway linking with the old railway line
- In just over 750m (and about 70m after a bend left in the track over a stream), **strike left downhill off the maintained track** on a woodland path – there is a wooden fingerpost but at the time of writing this had broken and was leaning against a tree (Note the track continues straight ahead but is no longer a right of way)
- In 150m emerge through a wooden field gate to almost immediately curve right in front of the boundary wall of a house (marked Clough House on the OS map)
- In less than 150m pick up a farm access track ahead which meets another access track in 300m at a T-junction, turn right uphill passing a farm on left
- At the top go straight ahead through a field gate (ignoring blue bridleway up right), following the track for 180m to join the old Rosedale Railway Path proper (which is a Concessionary Bridleway), views now opening up

1ml (1.75km)

As you walk along, the Lion Inn hoves ever more prominently into view, as a white building (behind a house) on the rim of the dale opposite

- Follow this former trackbed north for 3mls (5km) passing former ironstone mines and impressive ruined kilns – *you'll find excellent interpretation panels at the site of these remains* – and finally curving left on an embankment to reach the head of the dale

4mls (6.5km)

- Continue curving round Dale Head (still on the old railway path but now heading south on the west side of Rosedale), as a stunning view down the length of the dale opens up

*[If you wish to detour to the Lion Inn, in 750m after Dale Head you pass a ruined water tower on the right (it was a water tower to supply a loco boiler-filling water crane but is actually now just a brick wall with a window opening) and then in another 400m, look out for an un-waymarked **rough moorland path forking up right off the railway path** – half way to this path after the ruined building, see a pond on the left - there are a few rocks at the foot of the path - take this path slanting diagonally up towards a property – then in 170m at the corner of a fence, the path bends right steeply up alongside the fence and then in just 100m meets a road with the Lion Inn opposite. To resume the railway path, cross the road outside the pub and turn right for 100m, fork left on a rough moorland path which slants down 300m to the railway path - turn right, then the farm track forking down left to Moorlands Farm is in 300m.]*

[The Lion Inn on Blakey Ridge is a remote 16th century inn located at the highest point of the North York Moors National Park. Perched at an elevation of 404m, it is acknowledged as the fourth highest pub in England and second highest in Yorkshire (after Tan Hill). The main building was completed by 1558; legend has it that it was founded by friars who set to brewing and welcoming weary travellers. There are religious crosses nearby, such as Ralph's Cross and 'Fat Betty', and friars famously planted daffodils and settled in Farndale below. In the mid 18th century the inn evolved into a market hub, operating as a bustling centre for farmers from the upper Esk dales, Farndale and Rosedale to trade surplus corn, bacon, fish etc. Its boom in trade came during the industrialisation of Rosedale's ironstone and railways in the 19th century, transforming into a lively watering hole for miners and navvies. When this industry and railway lines closed down, the pub survived by diversifying into farming, but today it is a very popular stop for tourists offering good food and beer in its characterful low-beamed bar with old stone fireplace and flagstone floors, plus outside beer garden. In winter it sometimes gets snowed in with its customers.]

- In 1.9km from Dale Head at a crossing with a farm track, **fork left downhill off the railway path** on a farm track down to Moorlands Farm (take care as the track is stony and can be slippery underfoot). There is a sign for Dale Head Farm tea room at the fork

Half way down the track, a rough path forking left short-cuts a loop of the track, if you wish

- In 1km at the bottom of the farm track at Moorlands Farm, bear right on the tarmac lane
6mls (9.5km)
- In 150m leave the tarmac lane through a field gate on right (with a wooden fingerpost showing Bridleway) to pick up 'Daleside Road (Track)' (as marked on OS map)

[About 500m after leaving the lane - ie. from start of track 'Daleside Road' - and just after going through a gate, find a large log beside the track on left that serves as a good perch for a picnic or just a rest]

- Follow the obvious track through several gates and past several farms for 1.75ml (2.75km) (quite rough track then eventually stoned surface) to enter the hamlet of Thorgill (the track eventually becomes a tarmac lane)
7¾ mls (12.25km)
- About 600m after leaving Thorgill (and after passing a farm track entrance on a bend left down to Low Thorgill Farm), take a path **off the lane left** across a field through a gate, with a wooden fingerpost signed Dunn Carr Bridge
- After crossing the bridge, at a 4-way junction of paths turn right
8½ mls (13.5km)
- Follow this path up, through a gate and then alongside a campsite below on your right
- After 400m from bridge, go through another gate to join a site road through the campsite itself
- In 550m just after passing on right an open grass area with some children's playground equipment, at a crossing of ways, turn left on a grass/stony path to go through a metal kissing gate in a wall in just 40m
- Emerge onto a road in Rosedale Abbey, turn right then follow curving left to find the village green (plenty of shade) and Abbey Stores café (there's another café at far end of village green)

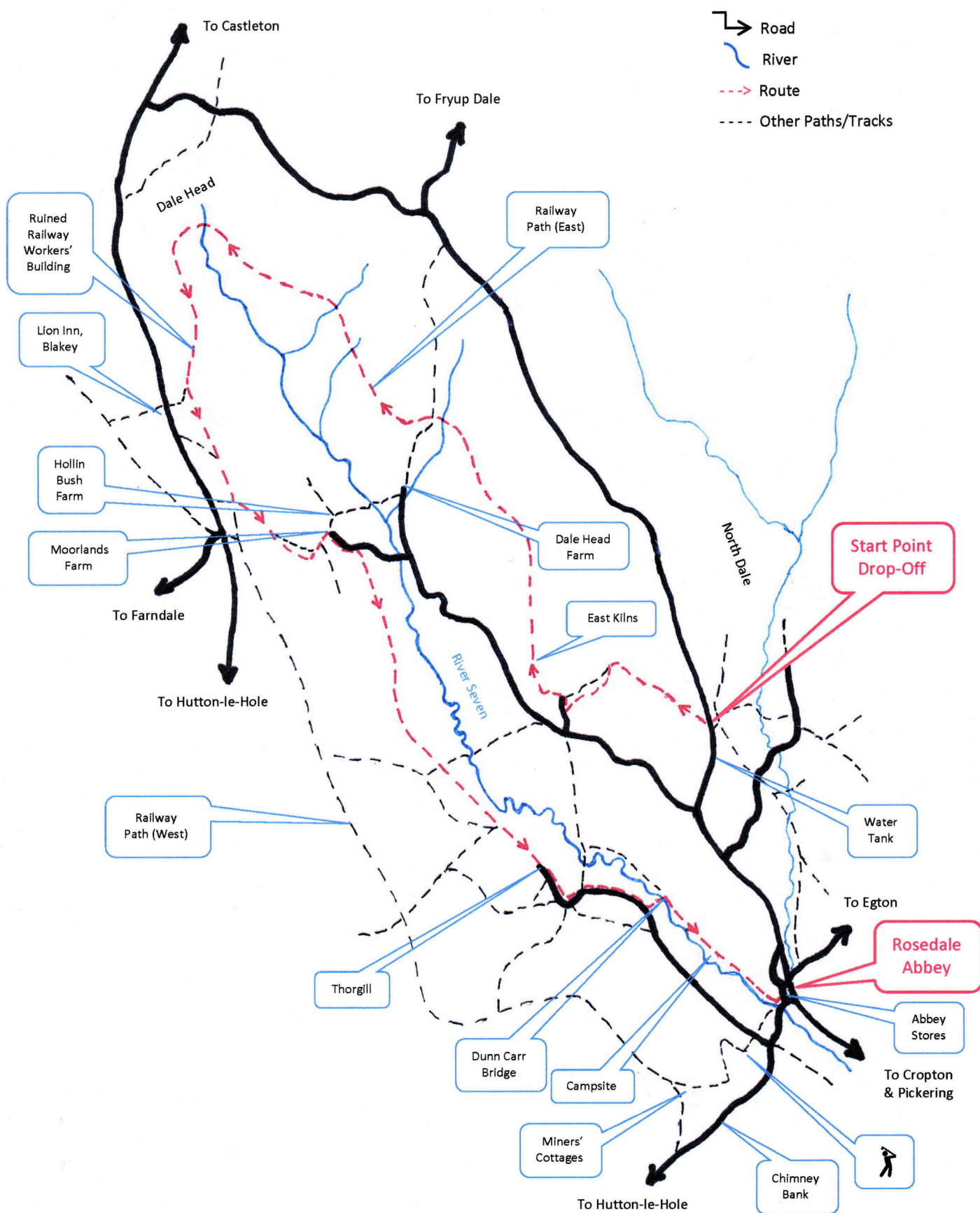
9¼ mls (14.75km)

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.

To find the pub Coach House Inn, after turning right out of the campsite onto the road in the village itself, keep going straight ahead (ie. not curving round left to Abbey Stores) to a slanting T-junction, head right and the pub is just after on the left (about 170m from Abbey Stores)

- For return to Pickering, **Moorsbus M6** stops outside (just before) Abbey Stores

** If you are enjoying striding out on the old railway path, you may prefer one of other routes to return to Rosedale Abbey that drop down from the railway path further along – see sketch map. For example, the railway path (west) continues all the way to Chimney Bank Top so there's a path that cuts down left off the railway path just before a row of old miners' cottages, bending left to follow a steep (very rough) path that eventually heads through a golf course, then directly over a lane straight down the hill*



With thanks to Peter Lockwood.