Brimham Rocks to Pateley Bridge circular walk or walk & ride

Brimham Rocks, Summerbridge, Harrogate, HG3 4DW

Overview: This walk takes you by the river Nidd to Pateley Bridge, returning via the Nidderdale Way.

Trail: Walking / Grade: Moderate / Distance: 8.4 miles (13.5 km) / Time: 4 hrs - 5 hrs

OS Map: Explorer 298 / Geology: Carboniferous (315 mya) sandstone and some Cayton Gill Shell Bed Limestone.

Walk and ride: Buses from Pateley Bridge mean that you can walk just sections 1 - 3. Check timetables beforehand.

Bus 24 from Pateley Bridge to Harrogate daily - alight at Summerbridge and walk up Hartwith Bank, straight on for about 1.5 miles to Brimham Rocks.

Please tell us what you think of the walk, thank you. Click here
Metres and yards: Metres (abbreviated as m) are used in this guide, but the distances mentioned are short and approximate enough that metres and yards can be regarded as more or less equivalent.

Geo-coordinates: For those who might like to use them, Ordnance Survey map grid references and geo-coordinates (longitude and latitude) are given at the start of each section. The geocoordinates are linked to Google Maps, and so you can tap them and see the location on the map - satellite view is best.

Cattle and sheep: Dogs are welcome, but must be kept on leads where cattle and sheep are grazing.

Section 1  (SE 2085 6458 / 54.07660, -1.68270)

Brimham Rocks to Smelthouses (2.3 km / 1.4 miles)

From the Brimham Rocks car park, go down the road you came in on, but before reaching the public road turn right down the track marked Private Road to Druids Cave farm.

After about 75m - and just before the track passes between a gap in a wall with a National Trust boundary marker - there’s a footpath to your left. Take this path and then the right fork, continue keeping the wall just on your right.

In about 350m the ground will dip down sharply to a farm track with a gate to your right with a public bridleway sign. Take the stile on the left of the gate. Keep straight on the main path - ignoring stiles and paths to the right and left – for about 1.2 km until you reach a farm track. Through the gate and turn left past the tiny cottage Artists Retreat. The track is signposted Public Bridleway / Smelthouses. Continue for 240 m until you reach a road, turn right here.

Section 2  (SE 1923 6425 / 54.07392, -1.70749)

Smelthouses to Glasshouses (2.7 km / 1.7 miles)

After 250 m near the bottom of a dip in the road, just past a letter box and before a bridge over the beck, look out for a track on your left signposted Public Bridleway to Low Laithe.

Follow the track, keeping straight on where the track forks left to Knox Hall. At the road go straight across to the sign posted public footpath - ignoring any signs saying 'Private' - and then down the grassy slope.

Follow the path over the beck on a wooden footbridge and continue over a stile to the bank of the River Nidd.

Turn right beside the river and follow the path. In a little over 500m you’ll pass under an old railway bridge, and in another 1.5 km or so you’ll reach the road in Glasshouses.
Section 3  (SE 1712 6437 / 54.07500, -1.73978)

Glasshouses to Pateley Bridge (1.9 km / 1.2 miles)

Near the road bridge on the same side of the river you’ll find a path signposted Public Footpath to Pateley Bridge 1¼ miles. Take this path passing Glasshouses Dam on your left, and soon after look out for the weir where the path returns to run beside the river.

Stay on the path beside the river all the way - ignoring any paths to your right - until you reach the road bridge at Pateley Bridge and turn right.

Looking towards the High Street and to your right there’s a car park with public conveniences.

There’s no shortage of places for refreshment in the town and do make the most of them - there won’t be another opportunity before getting back to Brimham Rocks.

Section 4  (SE 1575 6557 / 54.08580, -1.76070)

Pateley Bridge to Blazefield (2.4 km / 1.5 miles)

Head up the High Street, following Ripon Road round to the right at the top. In about 200m just past the Methodist church on the right, look out on the left for a blue signpost to Panorama Walk and continue up the steps.

At the top of the steps follow the Panorama Walk path up the hill running parallel to the road. When you reach the cemetery gates on your left, go straight on up the track with a 6’6” width traffic sign on its right-hand side.

After about 250m there’s a gate on the right, which leads to a view-point built in 1887 in celebration of Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee. There’s a bench on which to rest from the climb, lovely views across the Nidd valley, and an interesting local history information board.

Continue up the path for another 350m or so until you reach the top where there are houses left and right. Continue straight on the track signposted Hole House, Nidderdale Way and Blazefield.

In about 400m you’ll reach a footpath ‘T’ junction, take the right-hand path leading down for about 200m until you get to a road. Turn left up the road, and just as it’s beginning to bend right take the track to the right which runs behind the terrace of houses at Blazefield. It’s signposted ‘Nidderdale Way’ and ‘Sandy Lane’. Follow this track until you reach a road after 300 m or so.
**Section 5** (SE 1785 6506 / 54.08110 -1.72870)

**Blazefield to Whitehouses (1.6 km / 1 mile)**

Turn left on to the road following the sign to the Nidderdale Way. At the top of the hill where the road bends sharp left, take the walled footpath straight ahead. Reaching a road, step over the small ford and turn right down the road.

After 150m - immediately after a righthand hairpin bend - turn left onto the track signposted Public Footpath Brimham Rocks & Nidderdale Way. Look out for Llamas in the meadow to your right. Follow the path to the left of the entrance to the Llama Trecking Centre, continuing straight on.

At the Whitehouses crossroad of tracks go straight on to a Public Bridleway signposted to Ripon Road / Nidderdale Way. After 250m you'll reach a footpath to the right immediately before a row of cottages signposted to Brimham Rocks & Nidderdale Way.

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**Section 6** (SE 1921 6541 / 54.08421, -1.70789)

**Whitehouses to Brimham Rocks (2.6 km / 1.6 mile)**

Take the path past the end of the cottages and keep straight on beside the wall on your right. After the meadows follow the footpath markers to a farm track and bear left. Over a cattle grid then take the second track to your right down to the footbridge over Fell Beck.

Immediately after the footbridge do not go over the stile, but turn right beside the beck. After a short winding climb, at a fork take the right hand path signposted Smelthouses.

Continue to a stile through a wall, then after 75m turn left on a path with the yellow footpath marker. Up the path between the farmhouse and a meadow and turn right onto the farm track. Follow the track for 1.5 km and you'll reach the Brimham Rocks entrance road which you can follow back to the car park.

Head up to the visitor centre for a refreshing drink and snack.

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*Guide and Photographs by Malcolm Secrett*

*Please tell us what you think of the walk, thank you.  Click here*