

## 3·4 Ripley to Pateley Bridge

51 54 55 58 59

**Distance** 14·1 miles 22·7 km

**Terrain** mainly along clear tracks through fields, woodland and moor

**Grade** moderate undulations

**Food and drink** Ripley (café, pub and shop); Brimham Rocks (short detour); Pateley Bridge (wide choice)

**Summary** goes along the north side of the Nidd valley high above the river, and passes near dramatic rock formations at Brimham Moor, with many fine views



- Starting from the Boar's Head in the centre of Ripley, walk north along Main Street passing the Hôtel de Ville on your right. At the roundabout at mile 40·2 take the B6165 towards Pateley Bridge.
- After 150 m turn right into Birthwaite Lane, signposted Cayton Gill. As you climb gently there are excellent views of Harrogate (behind) and the Vale of York (to the right). After 900 m the road forks: bear right, ignoring the access road to Slate Rigg Farm.



Old milestone near the Way

- After crossing a cattle grid, bear left to follow the top edge of a field, and then walk beside Sir Henry Wood on the right. Remain on this track as it curves right in front of another wood. Then enter the wood and go steeply down to a gate at the bottom and into the open grassy valley of Cayton Gill.
- Turn right at the fence ahead and cross a low grass-covered arched bridge over the stream that trickles out of the marsh. Then walk along a grassy path through a recently planted wood to a metal gate. Wooden fences enclose the path, with a wood on the left and an open field on the right.
- At the end of the track turn left through a metal gate to enter a small wood. Walk down to a wooden gate and follow the path along the right hand edge of the dry valley with marshy ground to your left. To the east of Cayton Gill lie the remains of a medieval village and grange belonging to Fountains Abbey. The monks dammed Cayton Beck to make ponds for fish farming.

Near Cayton Gill

- Approaching the wood at mile 41.7, swing left at its corner to pass along its edge. (The Ripon Link route turns right off the Way here.) At the far corner go through a gate and turn immediately left to cross Cayton Beck by stepping stones.
- Go straight ahead to join a wide access track that climbs uphill through woodland. After 900 m the track meets a minor road (Scarrah Bank). Turn left to walk down it for 700 m. At mile 43 turn right into the road to Low Kettle Spring Farm.



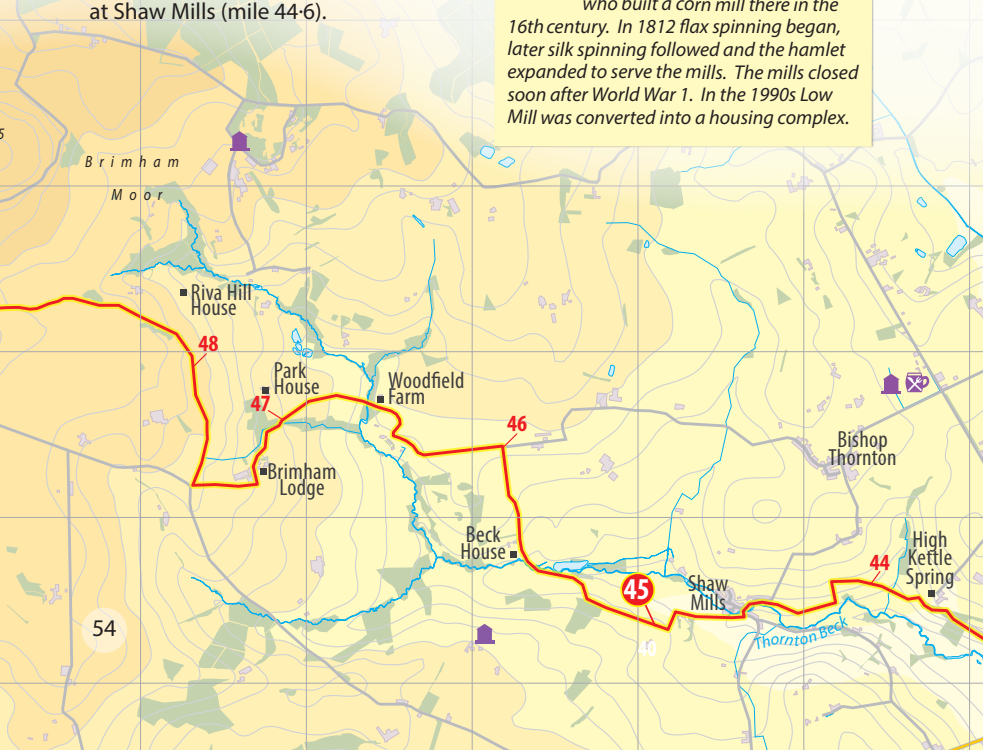
Approaching Shaw Mills

- Follow this road and after 750 m reach and pass between farm buildings. Go in front of the farmhouse to follow a clear track through woods up to a metal gate. Go through the gate and along a narrow overgrown track uphill to another gate.
- Turn left and follow the track below the farm buildings of High Kettle Spring Farm at mile 43.7. As you walk down the wooded bank look for a Nidderdale Way sign on a short post on your left which points into a large field. Follow the left side of the wall towards two metal gates.
- Go through the left gate and walk uphill with the field edge on your right to reach a wooden gate in the corner of the field. Go straight ahead and look for a gate in the wall on the right. Here turn 90° left and descend the field to another gate. Turn right and go along the field edge to a small wooden gate next to a metal field gate.
- Cross this field to another small gate in the wall behind a group of houses. Walk down a narrow ginnel to reach the road at Shaw Mills (mile 44.6).



#### Shaw Mills

The hamlet of Shaw Mills probably got its name from Robert Shaw who built a corn mill there in the 16th century. In 1812 flax spinning began, later silk spinning followed and the hamlet expanded to serve the mills. The mills closed soon after World War 1. In the 1990s Low Mill was converted into a housing complex.





Ripon

Ripon Cathedral

Borrage Farm

Hell Wath Nature Reserve

Hell Wath Cottage

Whitecliffe Hall

Bland Close

Markenfield Hall

Waterloo Farm

Markington

Hincs' Hall

High Cayton

South Stainley

High Kettle Spring

Low Kettle Spring

Slate Rigg

Studley Park

Studley Roger

St Mary's Church

Fountains Abbey

Water Garden

Sir Henry Wood

55

B6265

A61

A61

A61

42

41

43

Scaph Beck

Cayton Gill

Newton Beck

Markington Beck

River Skell

River Skell

Ver Laver

River Ouse



*Bridge over Thornton Beck at mile 45.5*

- Turn left to walk through the village and across the bridge over Thornton Beck. Immediately afterwards turn right into a farm entrance road with a fingerpost for Brimham Rocks and the Nidderdale Way.
- Walk uphill and follow the road around to the left. Take a grassy track to the right of the farm gate. At the end of the track, use the rightmost of two metal gates.
- Walk along the side of this field with the wall on your left. Continue in the same direction across three more fields, the last one bordered by a wood on its left side.
- At the next gate, a faint path swings right diagonally across the field towards the beck. Aim for where the stone wall meets a fence in the far corner and go through a metal gate. Keep the wall on your right to reach another gate with a fingerpost.
- Go through the gate and cross Thornton Beck again by a bridge. After going through a double metal gate turn left and walk along the edge of the field, following the boundary fence to reach a metal gate on your left.
- Go through the gate and turn right on to a surfaced access road for Beck House. Keep straight on for 550 m to a T-junction where you turn left (mile 46).
- Cross two cattle grids and walk past the site of Woodfield Mill on your left. Follow the road around to the right, and at the entrance for Woodfield House bear right over a cattle grid to follow the tarmac bridleway towards Woodfield Farm.
- Immediately after crossing another cattle grid turn left off the access road along the side of a fence towards the corner of a wood. Walk beside the wood down to another bridge over Thornton Beck at mile 46.6.
- Go through the gate ahead and climb uphill to another gate with the wall on your right. Go through it with the wall now on your left. Continue straight ahead through two more gates until you meet the farm track from Park House at mile 47. Turn left onto the track and walk through a wood.
- Go uphill and between the farm buildings to reach Brimham Lodge – a handsome 17th century farmhouse on the site of a former grange for Fountains Abbey. Look out for the old sundial set on a mounting block in front of the garden wall. Go past a cluster of communication masts.



*Along the course of the Monk Wall*

- Leave the farm by the access road, which meets the Burnt Yates to Smelthouses road at a bend (mile 47.5). Immediately turn right at a fingerpost into an enclosed track, uphill along the route of the old Monk Wall.
- After 1 km meet a surfaced track and bear left. After 250 m leave the track where it bends right for Riva Hill Farm and go straight ahead through a gate. After 200 m, cross a stile and enter Brimham Moor, owned by the National Trust.
- Brimham Rocks is ahead and to the right, mostly hidden by trees. Within 1 km reach a metal gate leading to Brimham Rocks Road at mile 49.
- Go straight across this road onto a signposted footpath. After 120 m it meets a stony farm track at a fingerpost. Now choose whether to make a detour: read page 59's panel before you decide. To miss Brimham Rocks, skip the next bullet.
- To visit the dramatic rock formation shown on our front cover, make a 600-m detour here. Turn right, and after 25 m turn left on a path through woods to reach the car park at Brimham Rocks. There is a visitor centre, shop, refreshment kiosk and toilets, and (on foot) admission is free: see [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk). Afterwards, retrace your steps for 600 m to resume the Way at mile 49.2.
- The Way turns left here just before the stone wall and follows a clear waymarked path which runs south, roughly parallel to the wall, for 400 m until it meets the bridleway to Smelthouses. There are wonderful views here across the valley to Guise Cliff and Nought Moor.

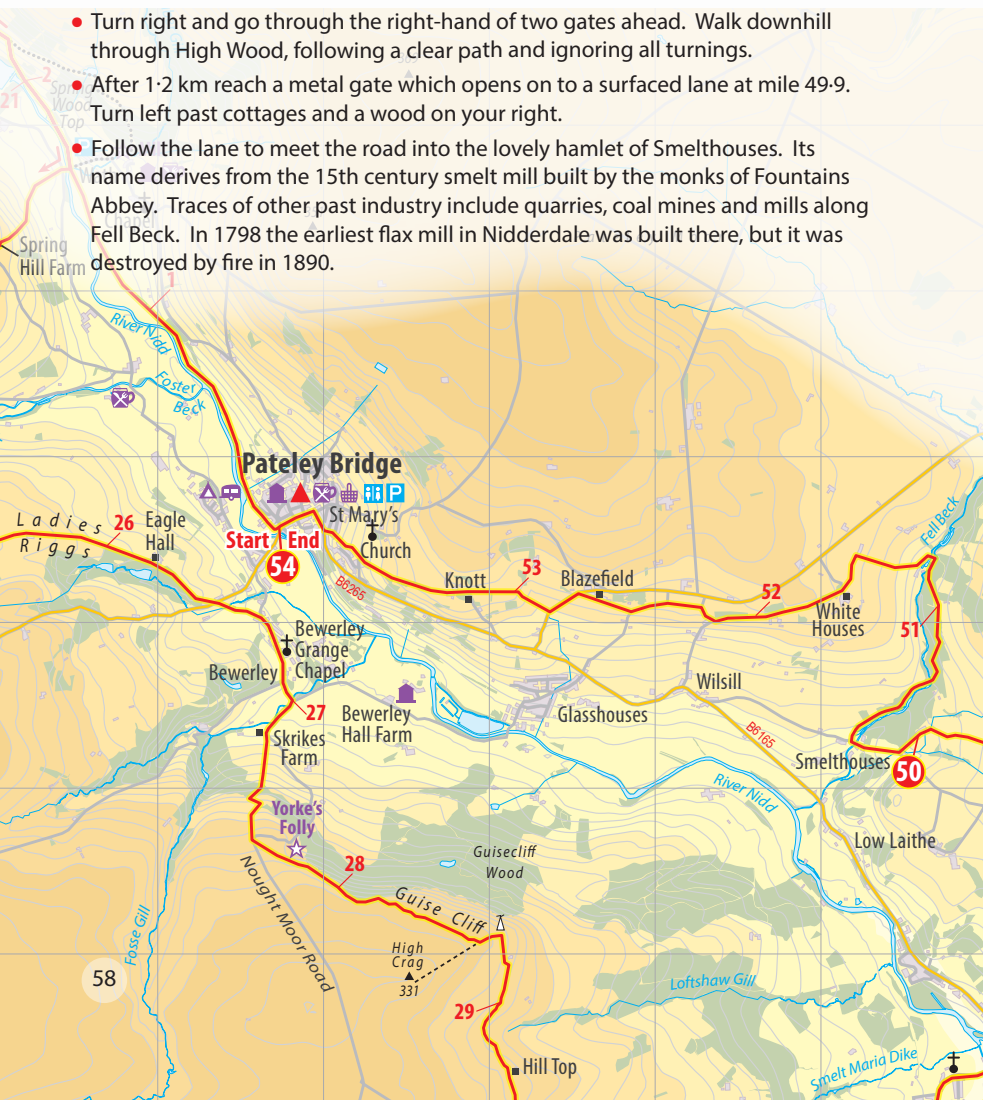
*Eagle Rock, Brimham Rocks*






High Wood

- Turn right and go through the right-hand of two gates ahead. Walk downhill through High Wood, following a clear path and ignoring all turnings.
- After 1.2 km reach a metal gate which opens on to a surfaced lane at mile 49.9. Turn left past cottages and a wood on your right.
- Follow the lane to meet the road into the lovely hamlet of Smelthouses. Its name derives from the 15th century smelt mill built by the monks of Fountains Abbey. Traces of other past industry include quarries, coal mines and mills along Fell Beck. In 1798 the earliest flax mill in Nidderdale was built there, but it was destroyed by fire in 1890.





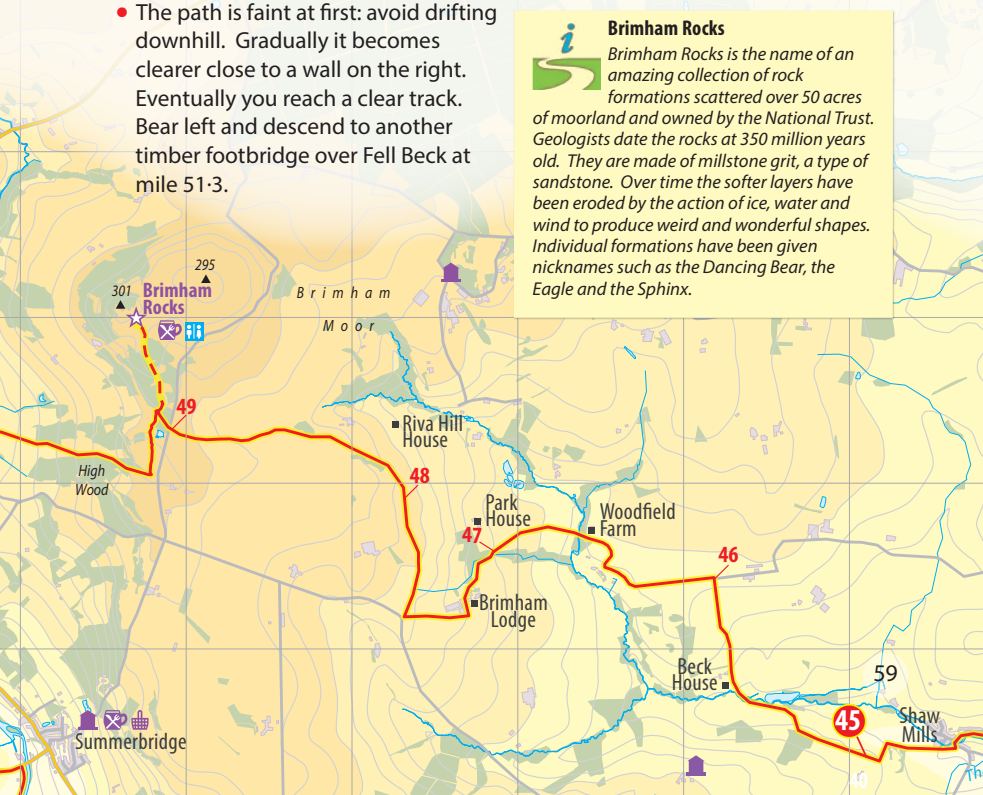
Fell Beck

- Turn right and go steeply downhill to a bridge over Fell Beck at mile 50.3. Look for a fingerpost on your right after the bridge and go through a gate to follow an enclosed footpath into the wood. In places the path is very narrow and uneven and there is a steep drop to its right. Cross a wooden footbridge over the beck. 
- Turn right to follow a path which climbs steeply away from the river then turns sharply left after 70 m to double back up the hill. After a further 150 m, fork right. The path eventually reaches a broken stone wall. Go ahead, ignoring a right turn marked 'Private', and walk along an enclosed path beside a paddock. Cross a stile at the end and enter a wooded area.
- The path is faint at first: avoid drifting downhill. Gradually it becomes clearer close to a wall on the right. Eventually you reach a clear track. Bear left and descend to another timber footbridge over Fell Beck at mile 51.3.



### Brimham Rocks

*Brimham Rocks is the name of an amazing collection of rock formations scattered over 50 acres of moorland and owned by the National Trust. Geologists date the rocks at 350 million years old. They are made of millstone grit, a type of sandstone. Over time the softer layers have been eroded by the action of ice, water and wind to produce weird and wonderful shapes. Individual formations have been given nicknames such as the Dancing Bear, the Eagle and the Sphinx.*



- Take a right turn up a stony track uphill and at a crossroads go straight ahead, to the right of a millstone sign to Mill House.
- Cross a cattle grid and after about 50 m turn off the track via a metal gate on the right. Cross the field to another gate and go uphill through the next field to a kissing-gate and continue uphill towards a group of houses.
- Go over a stile and along an alley beside the end house. Turn left at mile 51.5 onto an enclosed track. At a five-way junction at White Houses, bear slightly right and go through a wooden gate onto another enclosed track.
- Continue for 800 m, passing a llama trekking centre about halfway. There are good views across the valley. The track merges with a farm access track, then meets a road where you turn right and walk steeply uphill.
- After 120 m, turn left onto an enclosed path between two walls that shortly joins a minor road going in the same direction. Where the road swings left, bear right along another enclosed path that passes in front of several houses and a row of cottages at Blaze field Bank.
- Reach the road at mile 52.7 and turn left. After 200 m, turn right onto a bridleway and walk steadily uphill to a junction. Take the left fork and follow another enclosed path, which soon joins a road travelling in the same direction. Pass Cross Lane House on the right and reach a small group of houses at Knott.
- The Way now follows a track known locally as Panorama Walk - a clear path heading steadily downhill with wonderful views. Look out for a viewpoint at Pulpit Rock, on the left through a black metal gate. After about 700 m pass a cemetery.
- To visit St Mary's Church take a footpath on the right just before the cemetery entrance and walk up to the church and enjoy the views over Pateley Bridge.



*Ruins of St Mary's Church*

St Mary's Church dates from the 13th century, but by the early 19th century it had become too small for the congregation, and was falling into disrepair. A larger church, St Cuthbert's, was built down in the town. St Mary's was closed in 1826 and is now a roofless ruin, but well worth a visit.

- Retrace your steps back to the Panorama Walk for the last 300 m along the backs of houses to emerge on to the road at mile 53.8. Turn right and follow the road around to the left and down into Pateley Bridge.

**Congratulations on completing the Nidderdale Way.**

*Over Pateley Bridge from the cemetery*

