

SHORT WALKS IN NIDDERDALE



Fishpond Wood



1-1.5
hours



2 Miles / 3 KM



Easy/
Moderate



Wildlife/Heritage/
Audio trail



© Robert Light

Upper Nidderdale is renowned for its stunning natural beauty. This short picturesque walk around Fishpond Wood is one of a series of trails offering the chance to enjoy the contrasting landscapes and fascinating heritage that make Upper Nidderdale such a special place. Along this route you can take a walk through the historic village of Bewerley and enjoy the serenity of Fishpond Wood.

PARK: Pateley Bridge/Bridgehouse Gate

EAT & DRINK: Pateley Bridge/Bridgehouse Gate

SHOP: Pateley Bridge/Bridgehouse Gate

For more free Nidderdale AONB walking and cycling guides, visit our website at nidderdaleaonb.org.uk

Please follow the countryside code. Keep your dogs on a lead and close gates behind you.

1 Begin the walk at the bottom of the High Street in Pateley Bridge. Walk over the bridge, past the recreation ground to your right and continue through Bridgehouse Gate before turning left at the bottom of Greenhow Hill, opposite The Royal Oak pub. Follow the footpath along the roadside through Bewerley and just after passing **Bewerley Grange Chapel** on the left look out for an iron gate in the wall on your right, just before you reach the junction with Peat Lane.

2 Go through the gate and enter Fishpond Wood. Just up the stone steps you will see an interpretation panel with details about the history of the wood. Although this ancient semi-natural woodland has been here for many centuries its current layout dates from the 1780s. It was fashioned by John Yorke of Bewerley, who was one of Nidderdale's major landowners at the time. Yorke was influenced by the picturesque movement which sought to create landscape settings where natural features were perfected by the intervention of man.

LOOK OUT FOR AUDIO POINTS

Marker posts numbered 1 to 10 are distributed along the route. Commentaries have been recorded describing different aspects of the woodland's history, fauna and wildlife. **Download from:** uppernidderdale.org.uk/historic-nidderdale/flagship-heritage-sites/fishpond-wood/explore/

3 Follow the path into the wood and look out for the audio trail marker posts, all but two are included in this route through the wood. As you follow the path look out for the amount of coppicing that has taken place reflecting centuries of woodland management here. After a while you reach some steps as the path climbs uphill. Go up the steps, turn right, away from the **Fishpond**, and follow the path to the edge of the wood for a short but rewarding detour to the **Icehouse** and Ha Ha.

LOOK OUT FOR THE HA-HA

From the Icehouse take a short walk to the nearby gate and look to the left. You will see a low boundary wall which is thought to have been constructed as a ha-ha. Ha-ha's were a common landscape feature in 18th century country parks, designed to showcase the extent and splendour of the landowner's property. The view here features much of Bewerley village including the now demolished Bewerley Hall, the Yorke family residence.

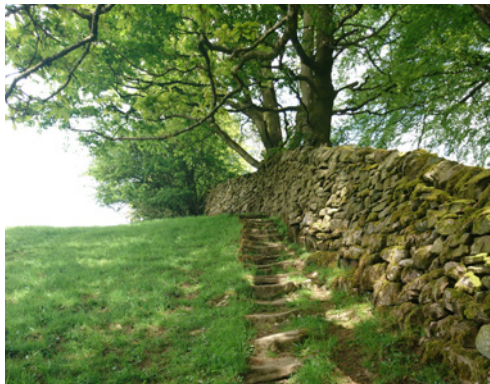
4 Re-trace your steps from the icehouse and head back towards the pond. As you approach the pond you will see a small stone jetty which was used to launch rowing boats for tourists who visited during the 19th century. After the railway link to Pateley Bridge was established in 1862 visitors began coming to Nidderdale in large numbers. Fishpond Wood, along with the Yorke family's other planned picturesque landscapes at Ravensgill and Skrikes Wood, became a popular attraction. In 1863 admission to these three attractions was sixpence.

5 Continue past the stone jetty and, after ignoring two paths that lead off to your left, follow the the path on the southern edge of the pond. The pond soon begins to narrow and before long you reach the stream that was dammed to form it.

6 Go over the footbridge crossing the stream at the end of the pond and follow the path to a stile in the wall. Carry on over the stile and head right, up the hill, using the **Monks' Steps** which you will see cut out of the hillside. As the hill levels out keep to the edge of the field and go through the gate in front of you. The higher elevation here offers excellent views across the valley towards Pateley Bridge.

7 Follow the path as it curves along the bottom of the hillside to your left and heads towards the centre of the field. When you reach the centre of the field, bear right towards the right-hand corner. The wall is quite dilapidated here but you will see a gap in the fallen stones. Head through it and carry on over the wooden walkway spanning a marshy ditch in front of you. Head straight on and go through the gate in the right-hand corner of the field. This takes you onto a single lane road. Turn right and head back to Bewerley. You soon reach the road you came along into the village. Turn left here and head back to Pateley Bridge.





MONKS' STEPS

After passing through the stile you will see steps set into the hillside to your right. Known locally as the Monks' Steps, these steps are often associated with the monks from the nearby Fountains Abbey grange. Although no evidence of a connection exists, monks and nuns elsewhere in Yorkshire did lay flagstone steps on paths they used regularly. Fanciful or not, it's a nice story.

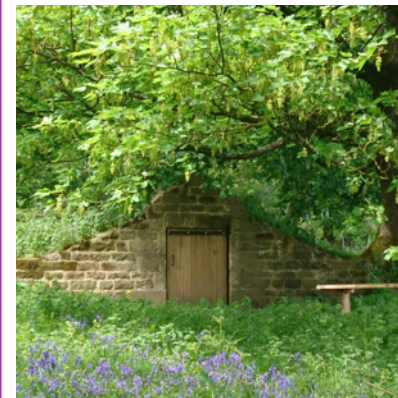
© Robert Light



FISHPOND

The origin of the pond is unknown. It may have been associated with the monks from Fountains Abbey who did establish freshwater fisheries elsewhere. But a small isolated village like Beverley seems an unlikely place for such an undertaking and it is thought the pond is probably a creation of John Yorke in the late 18th century.

© Louise Brown



ICE HOUSE

Probably built in the late 18th century the icehouse was used to store ice for Beverley Hall. Ice was collected in the winter from frozen streams or ponds and stored in a tapering brick built cylinder set about 13 feet (4 metres) into the ground. Long since redundant, the front of the building has recently been restored and amongst other insects is now home to a population of European cave spiders.

© Nidderdale Museum



BEWERLEY GRANGE CHAPEL

The chapel here was built in the late 15th century by Marmaduke Huby, the last Abbot of Fountains Abbey. It stands on the site of a much older chapel and from 1678 to 1831 was used as a school house. In 1965 the chapel was restored and returned to its original use.

© Paul Skirrow



COPPICING

Amongst the trees in Fishpond Wood are many examples of coppicing. This is when a tree is cut close to the ground and then allowed to grow back as a cluster of tall, straight stems. Practiced as early as the prehistoric period coppicing prolongs the life of a tree and increases the amount of wood it produces.

© Robert Light



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1 (km)

Seasonal Features

Spring: Dog's mercury, wood anemone, bluebells and wild garlic carpet the floor of Fishpond Wood.

Summer: Orchids grow in Fishpond Wood. **All Year:** European cave spiders can be found in the Icehouse.