

THE HARROGATE RINGWAY

A COUNTRY WALK AROUND HARROGATE

The Harrogate Ringway is a 21 mile circular walk around Harrogate. It is an excellent introduction to the attractive countryside on the doorstep of the town, and follows a richly wooded route with many good views. Particular attractions along the way are the Crimple Valley, Birk Crag, the Nidd Gorge, the riverside at Knaresborough and close-up views of four magnificent railway viaducts. The route is waymarked with the Harrogate Ringway logo.



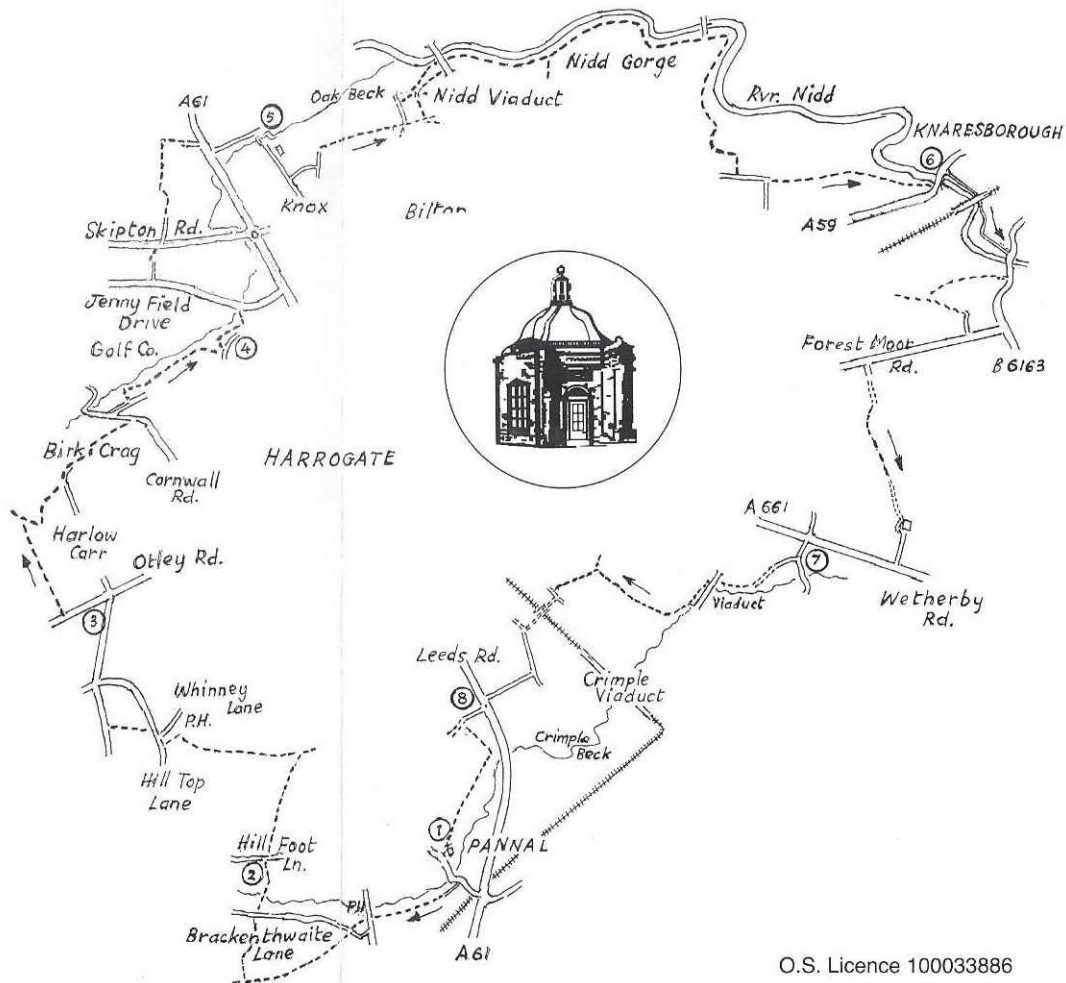
Although the Ringway can be walked all in one go, it can also be conveniently split into two or more sections, and several points on the route are convenient for buses to and from Harrogate. It is recommended that you bring with you on the walk the Ordnance Survey Explorer map 297.

DESCRIPTION

The Harrogate Ringway starts at Pannal church (Grid Reference SE 306 517), 2 miles south of Harrogate. The village of Pannal can be reached by the frequent No. 36 bus service (alight at Spacey Houses), or by train to Pannal station.

1. With your back to Pannal church, turn LEFT along the road (Main Street), and shortly after crossing the River Crimple, turn RIGHT along Mill Lane. At the end of the lane, follow the enclosed path to the RIGHT of the mill pond (a pretty scene with ducks usually included). Keep straight on when cottages are reached, and follow a broad enclosed path to Burn Bridge Lane which you cross to the path opposite. Go straight on when Brackenthwaite Lane is reached, and follow an enclosed path which soon leads to a field. Keep straight on by the hedge on the right, and keep straight on in the next field with a wood (The Warren) to the right. Turn RIGHT at the end of the wood, and climb steeply, still with the wood on the right (good views from the crest of hill, with the upper Crimple Valley ahead). Go through the footpath gate at the corner of the field, then down the wood on a broad path. Cross the footbridge, then follow the path up to Brackenthwaite Lane where you turn RIGHT. After a few yards, turn LEFT along the path by the left side of a field, cross the Crimple Beck by a footbridge, then continue by the wall on the left to Hill Foot Lane. (1½ miles)
2. Turn RIGHT for a few yards, then go LEFT along an enclosed path. Keep straight ahead when the path enters a field and climb the hillside to a footpath

gate at the top. Continue in the same direction across four short fields. To the right are good views across to the North York Moors and Yorkshire Wolds. In the fifth field descend by the hedge on right to a junction of paths at a footpath signpost. Turn sharp LEFT and follow a track, then veer slightly RIGHT along a low grassy bank to the far end of the field. In the following two fields (both short) keep close to the hedge/fence on right, then go through footpath gate into the next field and turn sharp LEFT to reach Hill Top Lane where you turn RIGHT. Continue past Whinney Lane, and soon go over stile on LEFT. Cross a short field, then continue in same direction in next field to stile at far corner. Follow enclosed path, slant RIGHT across a short field, then cross the LEFT corner of the next field to an enclosed path leading to a road. Turn RIGHT and follow the road to a crossroads (good views to left including Upper Nidderdale, and sharp left to Almscliff Crag), then keep straight on along Beckwith Head Road to Otley Road (turn right for bus stop in ¼ mile). (3½ miles)



3. Go LEFT along Otley Road and after 300 yards, turn RIGHT on the footpath at the back of RHS Garden Harlow Carr . When a junction of paths is reached, go RIGHT for a few yards, then LEFT, and descend steeply to cross footbridge. The path then climbs the wooded hillside to go through a gap in the fence. Turn RIGHT, and follow the fence. After passing large rocks on left, the path climbs up steps to a junction of paths. Turn LEFT and shortly Birk Crag is reached (good viewpoint). After a few yards, the path descends the hillside on a steep lights of steps (care needed) and then levels out to become a broad woodland track leading to Cornwall Road. Turn LEFT along Cornwall

Road, and take the second road on the right, the unmade Kent Road. Continue along it for ¼ mile, then after house No. 72 turn LEFT down path into woodland and descend to the stream (Oak Beck). Do not cross the bridge (Irongate Bridge – Harrogate's oldest bridge), but follow the attractive woodland path to the RIGHT of the stream eventually climbing steeply to a road at the clubhouse of Oakdale Golf Club. (6½ miles)

4. Turn LEFT, then immediately after the golf club car park, turn LEFT on enclosed path. Ignore footbridge and continue along tarmac path with houses on right and woodland on left. At end of houses, turn LEFT to cross the Oak Beck (close to electricity substation) soon to reach Jenny Field Drive where you turn LEFT. After 1/3 mile, turn RIGHT down path opposite Grantley Drive. Bear RIGHT when a stream is reached, soon to reach Skipton Road (A59) where you turn RIGHT. After a few yards turn LEFT up a lane. Immediately after Grange Farm at a junction of tracks, go over the stile on LEFT. Continue along the lane which bends RIGHT to meet the A61 Ripon road (frequent buses) where you cross to Knox Mill Lane. (8 miles)
5. At the end of Knox Mill lane, turn RIGHT across the charming Spruisty Bridge and follow the road (Knox Lane) up the hillside. Turn LEFT along Old Trough Way, turn LEFT and follow Old Barber to the end, then bear RIGHT along a grassed area by "Welcome to Nidd Gorge". Follow the clear path, past allotments, across a road, and by housing on right. At junction of paths turn LEFT, and, now in woodland, keep straight on at X-roads of paths following "Nidd Gorge" sign. After approx. 150 yards when an open area is reached turn LEFT on path (often overgrown) by high metal fence and descend to the River Nidd at the start of the Nidd Gorge (to avoid overgrown path, continue across open area for 100 yards then turn LEFT to rejoin Ringway). With the River Nidd on the left the path goes under the mighty stone arches of the Nidd Viaduct (which formerly carried the railway to Ripon). Follow the beautiful woodland path down the Nidd Gorge for over 1 ½ miles. The path is rarely far from the River Nidd on the left, but note that near to the weir (½ mile) it slants up the hillside to a junction of paths where you turn LEFT soon to return to the bottom of the gorge. Keep straight on beside the river when a footbridge over the river (Burgess Bridge) is reached, and approx. ¼ mile later follow the path that bears RIGHT up the wooded hillside (pause at the seat for the delightful view over the gorge). Shortly after leaving the woodland, go LEFT when a lane is reached. Keep straight on at junction of paths and follow enclosed path (Beryl Burton Way) to the valley bottom. Keep straight on soon to reach the main road at High Bridge, Knaresborough (Bus stop). (13 ½ miles)
6. Go LEFT across High Bridge, then at the World's End pub TURN right down Waterside passing under the picturesque viaduct and by the impressive crag that supports Knaresborough Castle until after approx. ½ mile Briggate is reached. Turn RIGHT to cross Low Bridge, then follow the B6163 past the Mother Skipton pub and up Blands Hill. Immediately after the row of cottages on right, turn sharp RIGHT along an enclosed path. When the path enters a field, keep straight on towards two mature trees, then after the tree on the left,

turn LEFT to a stile. Now keep the hedge on the left, then in the next field follow the hedge on the right. Turn LEFT at the junction of paths at the end of the field and keep the hedge on the right soon to come to a footpath gate and a lane leading to Forest Moor Road where you turn RIGHT. After ½ mile, turn LEFT opposite “Brooklands” and follow a track beside a field. When the track turns left, veer RIGHT across the field, then at the end of the field veer slightly LEFT soon to come on to a broad enclosed path. Continue in same direction along a farm track and follow it past farm buildings to reach the main A661 where you turn RIGHT to reach X-roads after ½ mile. (17 miles)

7. Go LEFT at the X-roads, then soon turn RIGHT along Crimble Lane and past the Travellers Rest pub. Keep straight on at the end of the land and into the wood, then continue in the same direction across a field and into another wood. Veer slightly RIGHT, soon to reach a former railway viaduct where you go under the last arch on the right, then immediately turn LEFT and descend steeply (care needed). Follow the path at the bottom of a field with the River Crimble on left. Veer slightly right when woodland is entered, cross a footbridge then turn RIGHT and follow the broad woodland path as it climbs out of the valley with fine views of Crimble Viaduct beyond the field on the left. The path bends LEFT at the top soon to reach a junction of paths where you keep straight on and past buildings on left. Turn LEFT when a road is reached, then RIGHT at gates of St Michael’s Hospice. Ignore paths on right and continue along a wooded lane to a road (Fulwith Mill Lane). Turn RIGHT soon to reach Leeds Road at the top of Almsford Bank (frequent buses). (20 miles)
8. Briefly turn LEFT, then RIGHT along Stone Rings Lane, past houses and into open country. Just after a stream is crossed (Stone Rings Beck), turn LEFT on narrow enclosed path which drops down to the bottom of the valley. Turn right at the junction of paths (n.b. the official Ringway continues straight on along a permissive riverside path that is often overgrown) and follow a clear path across fields leading to Pannal churchyard and the end of the walk. (21 miles)

The Harrogate Ringway has been devised by the Harrogate Group of the Ramblers. For information on the Harrogate Group’s weekly programme of walks and footpath protection work see www.harrogateramblers.org.uk

For information on the work of Ramblers Association on behalf of walkers, and how to join, see www.ramblers.org.uk or phone 020 7339 8500

Photo on front: The Harrogate Ringway in the countryside near Pannal.