



Dozens of bird species also breed here. To prevent disturbance to ground-nesting birds and the livestock which graze the grassland areas, dogs are not encouraged on the reserve and must be kept on a lead at all times.

**Heritage:** St. Peter's church in Kirk Smeaton was built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century from the distinctive local creamy magnesian limestone, probably quarried locally from the gorge, its smooth texture making it easy to cut and sculpt.

After crossing the footbridge onto Smeaton Pasture the route follows the line of the Heck Bridge and Wentbridge Railway, constructed in about 1827, with a short branch crossing the river to collect limestone from the quarries. Financial concerns prevented completion of the line and all work had ceased by 1831.

Castle Hill is thought to have been an iron age promontory fort on the bluff, now quarried away, overlooking the river. Although the hard evidence for a fort has gone, there is a lot of Iron Age/Roman occupation we know about on both sides of the river, where the fields with their connecting trackways and small enclosures can be seen on aerial photographs as a network of dark lines across the hillside.

Returning to Kirk Smeaton the route passes narrow little fields, the last remnants of the medieval strip fields which would have surrounded the village.

## At a glance

|                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| How far?        | 4 miles (6.5km)        |
| How hard?       | Easy with stiles       |
| Which map?      | OS Explorer 278 & 279  |
| Starting at?    | Kirk Smeaton           |
| Buses?          | traveline 0871 2002233 |
| Parking?        | Kirk Smeaton           |
| Any facilities? | None                   |

**A circular walk through Brockadale Nature Reserve from the picturesque village of Kirk Smeaton.**

## Contact us

**North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD**  
Our Customer Service Centre is open: Monday to Friday 8.30am - 5.30pm (closed weekends and bank holidays). Tel: **0845 8727374**  
Email: [paths@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:paths@northyorks.gov.uk)  
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If you would like this information in another language or format such as Braille, large print or audio, please ask us. Tel: 01609 532917  
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# ny walks

Kirk Smeaton and Brockadale  
Plantation



1. From the village of Kirk Smeaton, head east towards the church and at the bend on Water Lane walk down Hodge Lane, crossing a footbridge, and continue uphill. On reaching Chapel Lane turn left and head towards the public footpath (signposted) and continue along this path for about 800m.
2. Bear left through a kissing gate into Brockadale Nature Reserve and follow the path to another kissing gate, and then on to a third. Continue straight on, keeping the pylon to your right and head downhill, passing through two more kissing gates.

Keep following the well-defined path to a wooden footbridge. Turn left, then go through a kissing gate and turn right. Follow the path to a kissing gate and into Brockadale Plantation. Continue along the path until it forks. Take the lower route by the riverbank until it bears left away from the river. Continue along the path and head towards the motorway bridge.

3. At a small wooden waymark post, turn left up the embankment. Bear left before reaching the top onto a faint path. Bear right and enter a field at its corner. Go diagonally across the field to a footpath

signpost. Walk along Went Edge Road heading back towards Kirk Smeaton (visibility is good, but traffic can be travelling at high speed, so take care). After passing under the pylons, turn left at a metal gate.

4. Follow the path downhill and turn right at a kissing gate back into Brockadale Plantation. Cross a stile into a field, keep right onto a track and then bear left crossing over four more stiles. Follow the footpath uphill to rejoin the road back to the village.

### What you can see?

**Nature:** The river forms a steep-sided valley where it cuts through the Magnesian limestone hills. This unusual type of limestone forms a continuous band (about five to six miles wide) from Durham all the way down to north Nottinghamshire and is noted for the enormous range of wild flowers that it supports.

The grassland slopes of the river valley give a wonderful display of cowslips and early purple orchids in spring, followed by colourful field scabious and clustered bellflower, in addition to limestone specialists such as kidney vetch and autumn gentian.

A wide variety of butterflies can also be seen on the reserve, such as brimstone, speckled wood (see photo over the page) and marbled white.

