

# Walks Around Rosedale Abbey

## Walk information

**Distance:** Roughly 8.5 miles.  
**Height to Climb:** 350m (1150 feet)  
**Start:** SE 725960. There is some parking by the green.  
**Difficulty:** Medium. The walk covers some rough ground on the moors but most of the day is spent on good paths and tracks.  
**Refreshments:** There are two pubs and two cafes in or near Rosedale Abbey with the Dale Head Farm a few miles distant but enroute.  
**Be Prepared:** The route description and sketch map only provide a guide to the walk. You must take out and be able to read a map (O/S Explorer OL26) and in cloudy/misty conditions a compass. You must also wear the correct clothing and footwear for the outdoors. Whilst every effort is made to provide accurate information, walkers head out at their own risk.  
**Please observe the Countryside Code and park sensibly.**

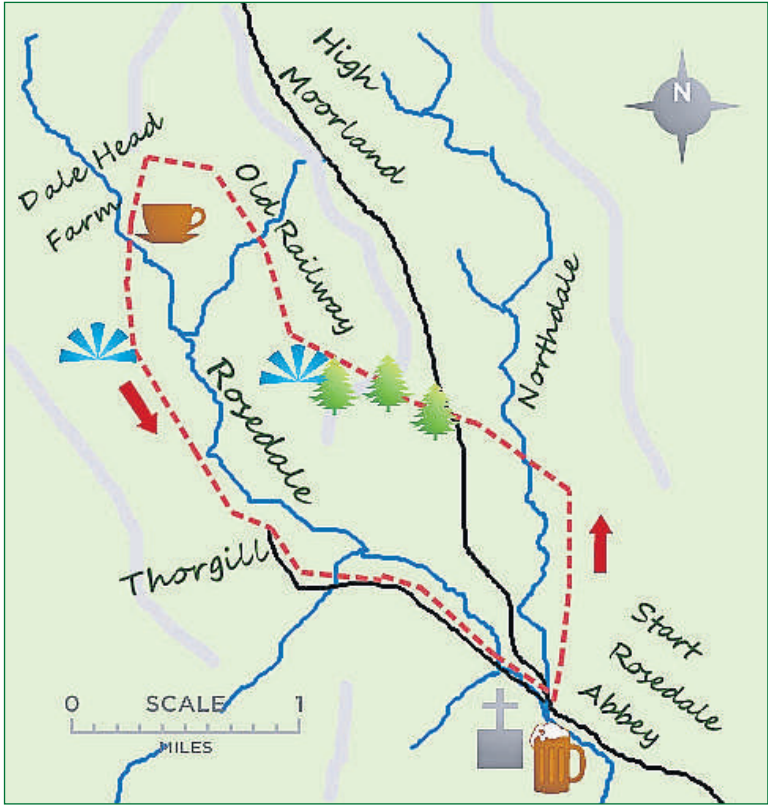
## The walk

SET in the heart of the North York Moors, Rosedale is a wonderful mix of farmland, moorland and an interesting industrial history. The valley itself is quiet at all times of the year with only the attractive hamlet of Rosedale Abbey disturbing its peace and tranquillity. The village and its immediate surroundings have two hotels and three cafes at the last count, all providing a fitting conclusion to an interesting walk. The village green at Rosedale Abbey is the best place to start the walk. The first thing to note is that there is no abbey and never was in Rosedale, but there did exist a Cistercian priory until the time of Dissolution of the Monasteries. This has since been destroyed with some of the stone re-used to build the existing church, only one tower remaining near the west door. From the green cross the main Rosedale valley road and head East for 100m past the

Milburn Arms. A footpath is signposted north. Take this and enter the valley of North Dale. Follow the path as it heads up the East bank of the stream over some stiles. After three quarters of a mile follow the bridleway as it crosses the stream at a footbridge before climbing steadily out of North Dale, heading just west of north. Just before the path enters some forestry double back south for 50 metres, cross a quiet road (Knott Road) and then follow the track back north west along a forest track. After half a mile the track bends sharply left, just after the bend a path heads back north west, out of the woodland and climbs on to the open moorland. The views open up impressively over Rosedale and across west to Frandale. The path meets a second path near a wall, cross the wall, leave the path and drop down the open moorland on to the Old Railway.

The following mile is a delight as it follows the old railway north with open views to the south and west. The Railway was originally built in 1860, ten years after an area of high grade iron ore was discovered. Locally referred to as the Yorkshire Klondyke it is estimated the population of Rosedale Abbey grew from six fold in no time at all. For 50 years this became a thriving mining community until production ceased in the 1920s and farming returned to the fore. The old track lines are easily followed and although this walk only follows them for a mile it is possible to carry on north all the way to Cleveland and Teesside. The vast kilns are still clearly visible as you walk.

After the old railway bends west a bridleway leads steeply south, with thick woodland to your left, towards Dale Head Farm. If you are walking Wednesday to Sunday and the weather is good you must stop for a tea and cake in the Dale Head Farm tea gardens, if only for the wonderful views down the valley (although the cakes were good as well). From the road



in to the farm a footpath heads west to the valley floor, crosses a footbridge and climbs to a second farm, Moorlands. From the farm a footpath skirts the slopes of the dale, heading just east of south, crossing a number of fields and stiles before meeting a larger track. The joy here is that the views are now excellent to the east across the dale floor, in contrast to the early part of the walk where the views were better west. There is no walk in the area which gives a truer feel in to the guts of the North York Moors than this.

From where the hill path meets the track back to Rosedale Abbey is a pleasant two mile walk. The initial mile takes you to the small hamlet of Thorgill, a perfect location for one of the many holiday cottages in the valley. Farming does still thrive in the valley but tourism is growing ad

in to the farm a footpath heads west to the valley floor, crosses a footbridge and climbs to a second farm, Moorlands. From the farm a footpath skirts the slopes of the dale, heading just east of south, crossing a number of fields and stiles before meeting a larger track. The joy here is that the views are now excellent to the east across the dale floor, in contrast to the early part of the walk where the views were better west. There is no walk in the area which gives a truer feel in to the guts of the North York Moors than this.

Jonathan Smith runs Where2walk, a walking company in the Yorkshire Dales. He has written his own book, the "Dales 30" which describes the highest mountains in the Dales. He also runs 1 Day Navigation Courses for Beginners and Intermediates. Join his Learn a Skill, Climb a Hill Weekend in the Dales. To find out more details on any of the above and details of many more walks in the area visit [where2walk.co.uk](http://where2walk.co.uk).



## Birdwatch By Ian Kerr

THE first small spring migrants are now arriving while some of the region's rarest and most spectacular species already back at their breeding sites. There used to be a time when the small migrants were usually the first to appear but these days it is often larger species which take that particular award.

Two comparatively recent colonists, avocets and marsh harriers, are already settling in before most of us have even had the pleasure and excitement of setting eyes on some of the other traditional early common arrivals such as wheatears, sand martins

and chiffchaffs. Avocets have already been seen at Saltholme and their regular breeding site at Washington. Others have returned to their most northerly nesting site at Cresswell Pond while a couple of miles northwards marsh harriers was back at the region's only breeding area at East Chevington.

Many avocets and marsh harriers are now wintering in southern Britain rather than migrating, as they did formerly, to southern Europe and Africa. So it's not really surprising that they can arrive back early and fit to claim the best nesting sites. In recent winters one or two harriers

have remained in the region. This past winter one has been regularly noted at Saltholme and there have been isolated sightings of another in Northumberland. A few ospreys are already back in Scotland so we can expect sightings of them over the next couple of weeks, probably at their only local breeding site around Kielder and at Derwent Reservoir which one of these days will hopefully attract a breeding pair or two.

A few early chiffchaffs have been found and the first sand martins have appeared at localities including Bolton-on-Swale and Castle Howard. By the time you are reading this I'm sure others

will have arrived in the region. There has been a scattering of reports of wheatears this week, mainly from the south coast although singles have made it as far north as Cheshire and Lancashire. Like the sand martins, I'm sure the first will be appearing very soon in their regular breeding sites in the North Pennines. Then we'll know that spring has really arrived.

Meanwhile, there are still many wintering birds with us. A glaucous gull was at Blackhall Rocks and one or two others are regularly around the Tyne estuary. Iceland gulls were at North Duffield Carrs, Big Waters

and Lindisfarne. A count of 140 long-tailed ducks off Bamburgh was the region's biggest concentration for many years. Among smaller wintering species a gathering of 150 twite was at Seaton Snook.

