

Walks

Bousdale Wood & the Hanging Stone

Walk information

Distance: 8.5 km (5.25 miles)
Time: 3 hours
Maps: OS Explorer OL26 ‘North York Moors Western Area’
Parking: Car park at Guisborough Forest & Walkway Visitor Centre (Pinchinthorpe).
Refreshments: Guisborough Forest & Walkway Visitor Centre.

Terrain: This walk follows forest tracks and paths for most of the way, with a stretch of track across Newton Moor. The climb up to the Hanging Stone is short but steep (rough and muddy underfoot), whilst the forest paths and tracks are rough underfoot in places.

How to get there: Guisborough Forest & Walkway Visitor Centre lies just off the A173 to the south of its junction with the A171 to the west of Guisborough.

Caution: This walk to the Hanging Stone includes some steep sections. Many of the paths are rough/muddy underfoot. Areas of forest have been felled, and forestry operations are ongoing, so the appearance of this forest may change. Observe forestry operation signs.

Points of interest

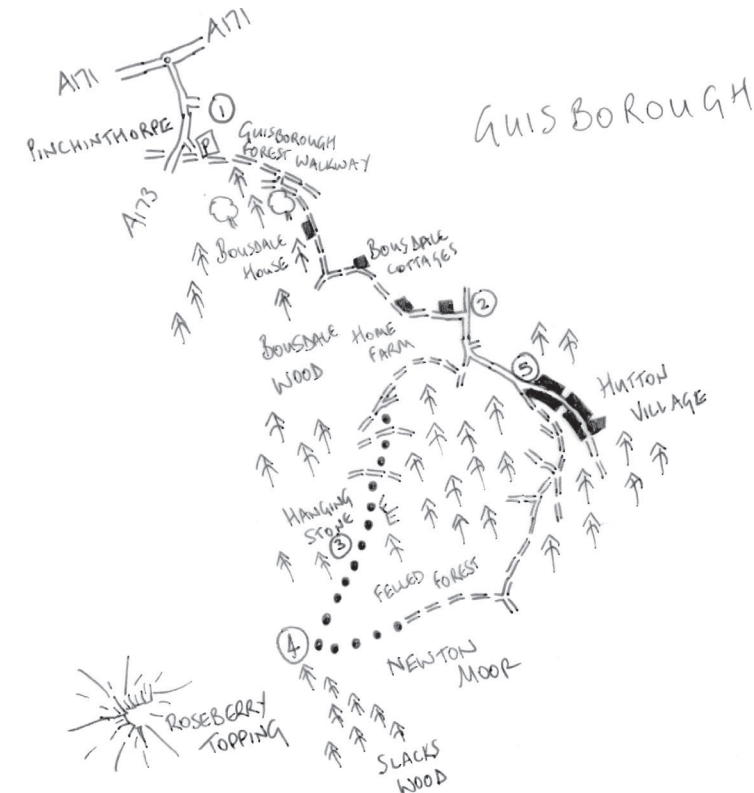
THIS first and last part of this walk heads along the Guisborough Forest Walkway, a delightful path that follows part of the route of the old Middlesbrough and Guisborough Railway that was built in the 1850s to serve the numerous local mineral mines. The line closed between Nunthorpe and Guisborough in 1964, part of which has since been transformed into a walking route along the northern edge of Guisborough Forest. Our route then heads through Bousdale Wood before reaching the scattering of houses and farms at Hutton Gate, which once had its own private station for the sole use of Hutton Hall. Tracks and paths then lead

up through the forest, with a steep pull up to the fantastic viewpoint of the Hanging Stone. This large outcrop of sandstone rock provides wonderful views towards Guisborough, across Teesside and Cleveland. The name of this rock most probably comes from the fact that it is perched rather precariously on the hillside, rather than the old superstition that it was the site of some gallows in medieval times.

The walk

1 From the Guisborough Forest and Walkway car park, walk up to join the old railway track-bed where you head left passing the Visitor Centre. Follow this track (old railway) straight on for 500 metres along the edge of the forest to reach a series of small ponds alongside the track on your left. Just after these ponds, turn right (blue waymarker post) along a track up into the forest to soon reach a track across your path (Bousdale Wood information board ‘Trim Trail’). Turn left and follow the clear track gently rising up and bearing right to soon reach Bousdale House. Continue along the track passing in front of the house then gently dropping down and curving to the right for 300 metres to reach a junction of tracks at the bottom of the ‘dip’. Turn left and follow the track across the field to reach a Bousdale Cottages set in trees (large chimneys) where you follow the track curving right then straight on for 400 metres before turning sharp left to reach Home Farm. Continue straight on along the track passing the farm buildings on your left to reach a road.

2 Turn right along the road for 150 metres then, where the road bends left, head straight on (to the right) through the gate (signpost). After the gate, head straight on along the track along the bottom of the shallow valley for 100 metres to reach a fork in the track (halfway across the field - signpost



‘bridleway’) where you head sharp right up across the field to reach a gate that leads into the forest. After the gate, follow the track straight on gently rising up through the forest and curving round to the left for 500 metres then, just before a fenced off pond beside the track, turn left along a footpath that leads up through the forest (waymarker). Follow this path up to quickly reach another forest track, where you follow the path straight on rising up through the forest to reach another (rough) track across your path. Carry straight on rising up through the trees to reach a third (clear) track across your path. Turn right along this track for a few paces then left along another footpath (waymarker post) and follow this path up through the forest to soon emerge out into a clearing where you carry straight on climbing steeply up to reach the Hanging Stone.

3 As you reach the Hanging Stone, carry straight on along the narrow

path along the top of the fairly narrow ridge (felled forest) to soon reach a rough forest track across your path (area of felled trees ahead). Turn right along this track and follow it curving round to the left (ignore track down to the right) then straight on gently rising up through this area of felled trees. The track soon levels out and leads straight on all the way to reach a gate and stile in a fence on the edge of the forest, with Newton Moor ahead (National Trust sign ‘Roseberry Topping’). Cross the stile and follow the broad path straight on across the heather moorland (Newton Moor), with a wall to your right, for 400 metres to reach a plantation across your path (Slacks Wood) and a bridlegate in the wall corner to your right.

4 Do NOT head through this bridlegate, but turn sharp left back on yourself (45 degrees) heading along the clear path/track across the middle of Newton Moor (ignore

the path to the left alongside the plantation). Follow this straight on for 400 metres to reach a gate that leads back into the felled forest. After the gate, turn right (waymarker) and follow the clear stony track along the edge of the felled forest, with moorland to your right (ignore tracks to your left into the felled forest) for 600 metres to reach a T-junction with another track, just beyond a metal barrier. At the T-junction (with gates on your right), turn left down along the clear stony track and follow this straight on down through the forest (felled at first then forested) for 700 metres (ignore track off to the left after 500 metres) to join a very clear forest road. Head straight over and follow the track ahead down through the forest (ignore the cycle route branching up to the left) to join the road on the edge of Hutton Village.

5 Turn left along the road and follow it straight on for 300 metres then curving to the right then, after 150 metres, take the lane to the left (signpost ‘Walkway Visitor Centre’) and re-trace your steps to Home Farm. Continue along the clear track passing Home Farm and then Bousdale Cottage, after which continue along the track for 150 metres to reach the T-junction again. Turn right at this T-junction and re-trace your steps climbing gently back up along the track (blue waymarker) passing Bousdale House once again. Continue along the track, which curves down to the left then, at the junction of tracks at the bottom, turn right (signpost Walkway Visitor Centre) to quickly re-join the old railway line. Turn left along the old railway line, passing the series of ponds, back to the Visitor Centre.

Mark Reid
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Countrydiary

By Phil Gates

ANYONE who grows dahlias will be very familiar with earwigs. These common insects like to squeeze into tight crevices at night, head down, with their defensive tail pincers at the ready, and densely packed overlapping petals of dahlia or chrysanthemum flowers make a perfect hiding place. That wouldn’t be a problem if it was just shelter that they were looking for, but they also have a tendency to nibble holes in petals, which makes them an enemy of growers of blooms for flower shows.

One traditional method for catching them is to fill a flower pot with straw and place it open-end down on a short cane, when the earwigs will crawl in at night. Unless you are a vengeful gardener they can then be transported to somewhere where they can do no harm, but first it’s well worth taking a close look. Male and female earwigs can be told apart by their tail pincers, which are strongly curved in males and straighter in females. Both sexes can fly but rarely take



to the air because their fan-shaped wings are so intricately folded under their wing cases. They are unusual amongst insects in that they care for their young. Eggs are laid in autumn and the parent guards them, licking mould from their surface and cleaning and feeding the young when they first hatch.

Earwigs’ common name comes from the myth that their liking for crevices includes taking up residence in our ears when we are asleep and nibbling our brains. This fear dates back at least to AD 77, when the Roman natural historian Pliny the Elder advised that “if an earwig be gotten into the ear.....spit into the same, and it will come forth anon” – hard to do without help from a trusted friend!

Birdwatch

By Ian Kerr

WHEN I started bird-watching, admittedly a long time ago, a telephone box was the only method of alerting anyone to the discovery of something rare. Today mobile phones, tablets and instant internet access have transformed things, enabling news to be given to hundreds of people, as happened last Sunday with an extremely rare seabird. Fea’s petrel has a tiny population confined as a breeder on Madeira and the Cape Verde Islands. Very occasionally they are caught up in Atlantic movements of other petrels and shearwaters and reach British waters. On Sunday morning one of these mega rarities, named after Italian naturalist Leonardo Fea who first described them in 1898, flew north off Flamborough Head. Instantly word went out alerting birders further north.

It was seen again off Filey and Burniston and then off Cleveland at Cowbar before it vanished for almost three nail-biting hours when it presumably rested on the sea. To the relief of everyone, it reappeared off

Seaham and Whitburn where it lingered long enough for one enterprising birder to combine his phone and telescope to snatch a picture he posted immediately on the internet. The bird continued northwards and was seen well from eight Northumberland localities before it finally disappeared past the Farne Islands. Technology had enabled this bird to be tracked for 120 miles over an eight-hour period, giving scores of appreciative birders the chance to see it, if only briefly.

The petrel appeared during a good passage of Manx and sooty shearwaters, similarly designed by nature to effortlessly ride the up-draughts from waves for hundreds of miles on feeding forays. Much rarer great shearwaters were logged off Filey and the Farnes and a Balearic shearwater was off Whitburn. This excitement overshadowed a continued good showing of smaller rarities, including further yellow-browed warblers at Marsden, Whitburn, Hartlepool Headland, Burniston and Filey.