

The Nidd Gorge

4½, 6½ OR 7 MILES
2 TO 3 HOURS
MODERATE

1 START

Leave the Conyngham Hall car park in Knaresborough and turn L up the main road (Bond End). Cross at the pedestrian lights to follow the pavement. Cross back again to take the B6165 signposted to Pateley Bridge (pavement on L). When the pavement runs out, cross first to R and then back again to L. After ½ mile, turn L down Lands Lane. After 100m, where the road bends to R, turn L following the wooden public-footpath signpost. Follow the moderately steep gravel path down to the river and turn R.

2 1¼ MILES

Follow the path along the riverbank into Scotton Banks and Gates Wood. Avoid muddy patches and protruding tree roots where possible and take extra care down the steps and over the footbridge. Where the path forks by Private Fishing sign, bear L, hugging the riverbank until a waymarker post indicates to go R up 72 steps (take your time!) At the top, turn L along the surfaced Nidd Gorge footpath back down towards the river. Cross

the large footbridge, enjoying the sights and sounds of the river below.

3 2½ MILES

For a shortcut, turn L on to the boardwalk, past a large, impressive beech drooping over the river. At the bench, take the path with steps that leaves the riverbank to go up a fairly steep slope. Continue on past two waymarker posts and through an area of coppiced hazel to large beech trees on the top edge of the wood. Leave the wood via a stile and continue on the footpath to a metal five-bar gate at the road. Turn L to rejoin the main route along the smooth tree-lined tarmac path known as the Beryl Burton Cycleway. (The phenomenal Beryl Burton, who was born in 1937 and died in 1996, was seven times world cycling champion.)

Turn R into Coalpits Wood. Take care down the steps and the sloping boardwalk and, where the path forks, bear R to cross a small footbridge. Cross a second footbridge and climb over the stile. Follow the river-edge path over the boardwalks, through open scrub/grassland and back into broadleaved woodland. Cross the stile into Bilton Beck Wood – muddy in places through an area of gorse, bracken and coppice. Go straight on

through a gap in the fence into more mature woodland. After 75m (before weir), take 40 steep steps up to the L to reach Milners Fork.

4 3½ MILES

For a shortcut, continue straight along the bridleway, up the shallow steps, taking in the rolling views to the R as the path opens up. Continue on between hedgerows to the gate. Follow the road down to the Gardener's Arms and turn L to rejoin the main route through Bilton Dene.

Turn R down the boardwalk (signposted to Bachelor Gardens). Pass through the squeeze gap and go down towards the weir below. Continue along the boardwalk on the edge of the wider river, through Rudding Bottoms. Go over the footbridge and straight on up the steps. Continue up the hill with the fence on R, then leave the wood and follow the field-edge path to the L. At the disused railway line, turn L and at the road turn L again to the Gardener's Arms.

5 5 MILES

Follow the pavement on the left-hand side through Bilton Dene, continue past the caravan park and along the quiet road, which turns into the Beryl Burton Cycleway.

6 6½ MILES

Follow the cycle path over the road, noting the great views of

Knaresborough over the fields. Go through the kissing gate at the cattle grid and past the bench. After the second kissing gate/cattle grid, turn R on to the cycleway. Go through the barriers, following the track to the R all the way to the gate at the road by the Yorkshire Lass pub. Turn L to go over the bridge and back to the car park on the left-hand side.



TERRAIN

Woodland paths along the riverbank can be muddy with some steep sections, usually with steps. First mile is on road with pavements. Last two miles are on good, smooth surface. Two stiles on main route and one on first shortcut.

PARKING

Conyngham Hall car park (grid reference SE344572), by River Nidd bridge, off A59 in Knaresborough. Pay & Display 8am–6pm every day (£2.80 for day).

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Bus station in town centre, close to Market Place. Train station on Station Road, off A59. For timetable enquiries, call Traveline on 0870 608 2608 or National Rail Enquiries on 0845 748 4950.

REFRESHMENTS

Gardener's Arms, Bilton Dene – traditional small pub with large beer garden (grid reference SE16577; telephone 01423 506051)

Riverside Café on Waterside in Knaresborough, across road from car park (grid reference SE346572; telephone 01423 865981)

ACCOMMODATION AND TOURIST INFORMATION

Knaresborough Tourist Information Centre, 9 Castle Courtyard, Market Place (telephone 01423 866886 or visit www.harrogate.gov.uk/tourism)

Nearest youth hostel is in York (telephone 0870 770 6102). National YHA enquiries 0870 870 8808

MAPS

Ordnance Survey Explorer 289, Landranger 104 (visit www.woodland-trust.org.uk/woods to buy on-line)

OTHER WOODS TO VISIT

See the Our Woods section on the Trust's website at www.woodland-trust.org.uk or the *Exploring Woodland* guide for Yorkshire & the North East (£5.99 in all good bookshops; £4.99 via our website or ring 0800 056 0643).

