

## Title: H & E Sutton Bank to Rievaulx Walk

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Deciding that Moorsbus can't be all work and no play, we sneaked off and took the M14 to Sutton Bank to stroll the five miles or so down to [Rievaulx Abbey](#). It's a delightful walk and very easy to follow since it's the first section of the

Cleveland Way. Leaving the Visitor Centre (Yes, bus users, it's back to being *your* "Visitor Centre" as well. At least it is for a few days of the year) we head over the footbridge above the Cleave Dyke (Ah, that's why they built it then). Braving the tiny tot's mountain bike course in a very pretty more- Santa's-Grotto-than-a-Christmas-one we came out at the Hambleton House racing stables. A lot of horsey history here; we were only a short head away from what was one of the foremost English Racecourses until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A grand, typical Tabular Hills big – sky stroll across to Cold Kirby, a picture postcard linear village. Look out for the roadside stall selling fabulous flapjack at Cold Kirby. Can you resist?

No, we couldn't either.

### *The Stall of Temptation at Cold Kirby*

A slightly muddy dive into and climb out of a supposedly dry valley took us to a stony track with more big sky views, before we dropped down through the woods into the secluded Flassen Dale. At least, it seemed secluded until we found this rather nice use of green timber.



We're still trying to guess what it is...

*The amazing summer house (?) with barbecue in Flassen Dale.*



*One of the dimmer occupants of Nettle Dale*

Next came an even dimmer than usual pheasant that didn't seem to realise that it was supposed to run away. Mind, it might have been a clever tactic to avoid being shot at by becoming too boring a target to bother with....

It was very easy walking from now on. The surprisingly wide and flat Nettle Dale shares the same hard road as Flassendale. The posh looking cattle were far too busy gorging on the luxurious grass to even acknowledge our presence.

*Nettle Dale and some more of its locals*

We very soon came within sight of the very impressive



fish rearing ponds that were built 900 years ago by the Cistercian monks of Rievaulx. They're still in use by anglers, who presumably don't eat their victims but rely on Tesco to keep the wolf from the door. A short slightly boggy bit led us to a few stepping stones and thence to another hard road.

*Nettle Dale and the first of the Rievaulx fish ponds*

Arriving at the first lake it became obvious that this was the place to hang out for North Yorkshire's mallards society.



There were hundreds of them.

Honest.

Until Helen tried to take a photo.

You'll just have to take our word for it.

*The Rievaulx fish ponds*



As we approached Rievaulx bridge Eden's moaning about his new boots (actually 2+ years old) increased to a point where the entire walking group decided that it would be a lot easier on both the feet and the ear if we didn't carry on to Helmsley but caught the M12 back from the Abbey. We just had time to admire the very impressive gardens at the cottage here before it was time to get ourselves to the

Abbey bus stop. Somebody has spent, we would imagine, a huge chunk of their lives wielding a spade and pickaxe to create such a thing of beauty. It would be churlish to invade the private beauty of such a stunning place by pointing a camera at it, as thousands have no doubt done before, so we have no photos to show you.

*Rievaulx Bridge*

Apart from this one.

A short trot up the road and we arrived at the bus stop at the same time as Mike and the M12 Moorsbus. We needn't have rushed though, because there were already 15 or so souls waiting there expectantly. They'd nearly all walked from Helmsley and were so amazed to see a bus stop when they came out of the Abbey that they wanted to see if this really was the quick, easy way home that they hoped it might be. We don't think that they were disappointed.

And so to Helmsley and home.

The walk took about 2 hours at a gentle pace. It's slightly rocky underfoot in places and a bit slippery in others, but mostly downhill and well signposted. It is a classic Sunday afternoon Moorsbus walk.

*Helen and Eden. August 2016*