



A gentle walk with  
spectacular panoramic views

## Nunnington

### The village

Nunnington has a public house serving food. Refreshments are also available at Nunnington Hall - please visit the National Trust website for seasonal opening times.

Holiday cottage accommodation is available in the village. Ceramics, furniture and gardenware can be purchased at the Nunnington Studios.

### Getting to Nunnington

**By car:** Nunnington lies six miles south-east of Helmsley, to the north of Hovingham, on the banks of the River Rye. Limited street parking is available in the village. Please avoid causing inconvenience to residents when parking.

**By bus:** Routes to Nunnington run from Malton (change at Hovingham) and York. Times available on **01653 692556** or from **[www.yorkshirecoastliner.co.uk](http://www.yorkshirecoastliner.co.uk)** and on **0870 608 2608** or from **[www.yorkshiretravel.net](http://www.yorkshiretravel.net)**

Nunnington also lies on a Moorsbus route. Timetables are available on-line at **[www.moors.uk.net/moorsbus](http://www.moors.uk.net/moorsbus)** and from the North York Moors National Park Authority office and visitor centres.

**By train:** The nearest stations are in York, Malton and Thirsk. Some services link with the above bus services.





The Howardian Hills AONB Junior Ranger Club re-enact the tale of the Nunnington Worm



Primrose



## A tragic folklore tale

The legend of the Nunnington Worm is one of several tales of worms (dragons) associated with settlements along the River Rye.

It was said that Sir Peter Loschy, a noble knight, fell in love with a maiden who would not marry him until he performed a brave deed. Sir Peter set out to kill the Nunnington Worm, which was causing havoc in the parish.

He found it on East Newton Hill (now called Losky Hill) and a terrible fight took place. Every time he cut a piece off the dragon it joined back together again. To prevent this happening he commanded his dog to take the pieces to the field above the church and bury them. The dog did as he asked and the dragon was slain.

The dog was joyous at their success and jumped up, licking Sir Peter on the face. Unfortunately the dragon's blood was poisonous and proved fatal to both Sir Peter and the dog. They are said to be buried together in the parish of Nunnington.

## Caulkleys Bank

The distinctive limestone ridge running east-west to the south of Nunnington is Caulkleys Bank.

A trig point just to the east of where the road from the village crests the ridge offers dramatic views north across the Vale of Pickering to the North York Moors National Park and, to the south, towards another part of the Howardian Hills AONB.

Caulkleys Wood Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) is on the scarp face of the escarpment. It is dominated by calcareous ash woodland and sections of coppiced hazel are also present.

The ground flora is dominated by dog's mercury, but the wood also contains ramsons (wild garlic), wood anemone, primrose and giant bellflower.

SINC sites have all been surveyed and are very important for biodiversity in North Yorkshire. Caulkleys Wood and a field of calcareous grassland on Caulkleys Bank near Stonegrave are both SINCS.



Brown hare





**The Church**

This varied walk starts in a pretty village with its ancient church, takes in the legend of the Nunnington dragon, a ridge walk with panoramic views and, depending on the time of year, the chance of plenty of wildlife. The National Trust property of Nunnington Hall is also well worth a visit. The walk can be extended to take in more impressive views and a riverside stroll.

Nunnington nestles on the banks of the River Rye and is characterised by limestone cottages with pretty leafy gardens. To the south of Nunnington is the ridge known as Caulkleys Bank. To the north, beyond the river, is the lowland Vale of Pickering and to the north of this rises the North York Moors National Park.

The Church of All Saints and St James, in its current form, dates mainly from the late 13th Century. Two fragments of an Anglo-Danish cross dating back to the 10th Century were found on the site of the current church in 1884.

Notable items include the organ (erected in 1885), the wooden altar (installed in 1672) and the modern lectern and west screen, both crafted by Thompson of Kilburn.



**You might be lucky enough to spot a kingfisher on the Rye.**



**Nunnington Hall**



A house has stood on the site of Nunnington Hall since the 13th Century. Two families dominate the house's history - the Grahams and the Rutsons. Sir Richard Graham oversaw construction of the current property in the 1680s. The Rutsons, merchants from Liverpool, purchased it in 1839.

The heiress to the Rutson Estate, Margaret, and her husband Colonel Roland D'Arcy Fife, were responsible for significant modernisation of the property in the 1920s. It was these owners who handed the property to the National Trust in 1952 and it is their style which is reflected in the house at the current time.

Features within the Hall include the 17th Century oak-panelled hall, Colonel Fife's bedroom, the panelled bedroom (said to be haunted), the maid's bedroom and the Carlisle Collection of miniature rooms, created by Mrs F. M. Carlisle (1891-1979). Having started off by collecting antique miniatures, she found that she needed somewhere to display them. Skilled local craftsmen were commissioned to make tiny scale models of rooms and furniture, usually to one-eighth actual size. The rooms are displayed in the attic of the Hall.

In addition to mown lawns and beautiful summer-flowering borders, the gardens of Nunnington Hall feature a replanted orchard, under which is a spring-flowering meadow with an array of wildflowers and bulbs.

The orchard boasts local varieties of cooking and eating apple, with curious names such as 'Dog's Snout' and 'Burr Knot'.

# Caulkleys Bank

## Quarrying

Wath Quarry is the easternmost of a series of Jurassic limestone quarries situated close together to the south. Currently it is the only active quarry in the AONB. It produces 4,000 - 6,000 tonnes of crushed stone per week, mainly for construction and road building.

The bands of rock vary in texture, width and colour, ranging from grey through to yellow. Hovingham Quarry, to the west of Wath, has been inactive for some years. Trees and grassland are returning and in due course Wath Quarry will be restored to cliffs and calcareous grassland.

Mid-late Neolithic remains of human skeletons, and the debris from feasting on bear, red deer and beaver, were found when a henge-type monument to the south of the quarry was excavated in the 1990s. It is believed to have been some type of sacred place in Neolithic times.

**The rose breast, thick black bill and sturdy build of the male bullfinch distinguish it from all other British finches.**



## Hovingham

The attractive village of Hovingham is centred around the village green and Hovingham Hall. The honey-coloured houses are built of stone from the local quarries. The village has been home to the Worsley family since 1563 and the current Hall was designed and built by the sixth Thomas Worsley, who was born in 1710 and died in 1778.

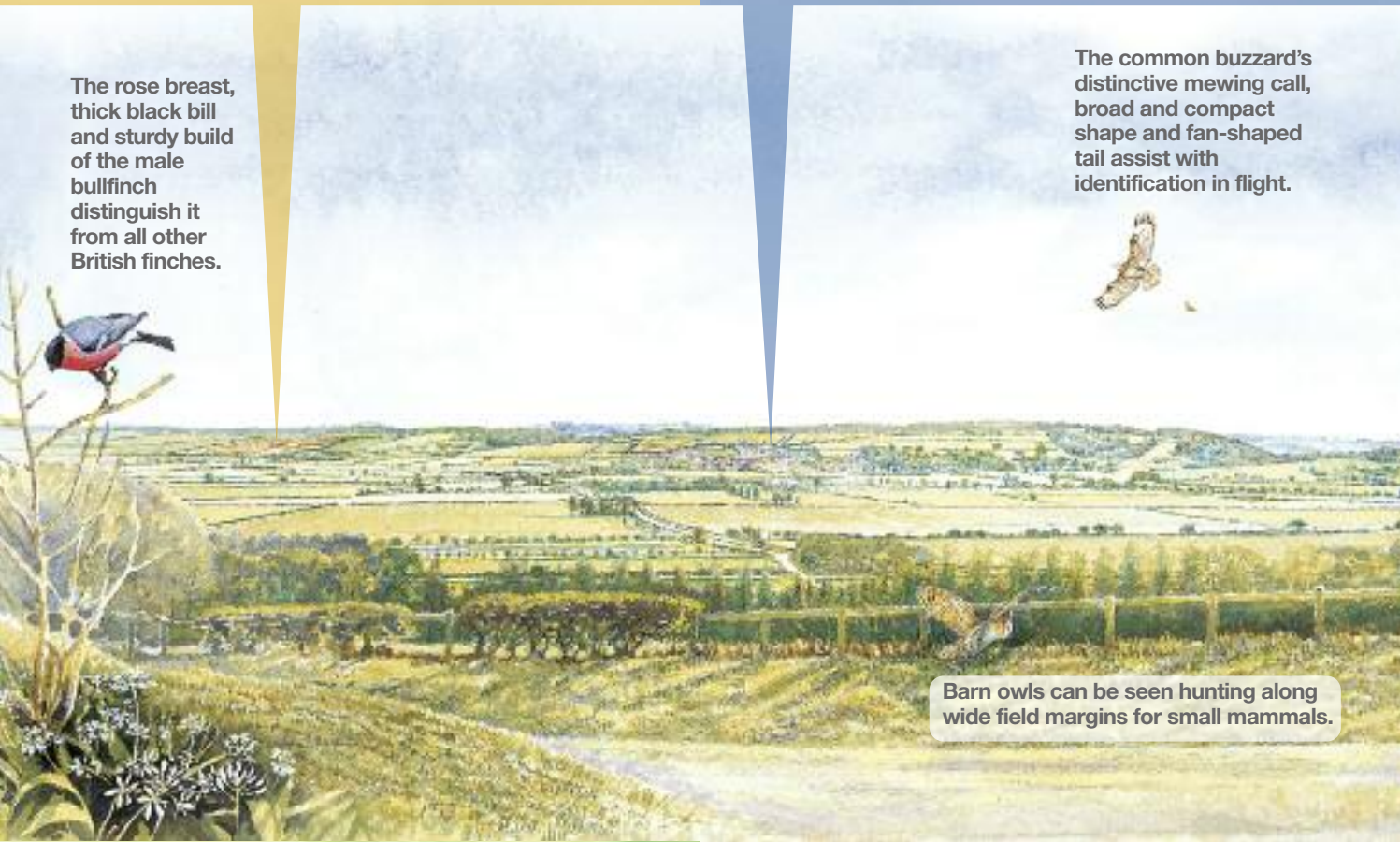
The tower of the Parish Church of All Saints is of Saxon origin. The majority of the church was constructed in 1860 by Marcus Worsley.

There are several places in Hovingham where refreshments can be purchased all year round and another leaflet in this series can be picked-up in the local shops, pub, etc.

**The common buzzard's distinctive mewing call, broad and compact shape and fan-shaped tail assist with identification in flight.**



**Barn owls can be seen hunting along wide field margins for small mammals.**





# Coxwold - Gilling Gap

The Coxwold-Gilling Gap is the mile-and-a-half wide valley linking the Vale of Pickering to the Vale of Mowbray. It is formed by two parallel faults. The fault on the north side of the valley roughly follows the Oswaldkirk - Ampleforth road. The fault on the south is along the steep northern edge of the Howardian Hills.

Near Kilburn, at the western end of the Gap, the height difference is 220 - 300m; near Gilling it is 150m.

The sinkage of the central block of land, 'the Gap', took place before the last Ice Age, probably during the Cretaceous Period (about 65 million years ago).


To the north the limestone is Oolite (egg-like) and to the south Corallian (formed of coral deposits on the floor of a shallow sea). Around Gilling, particularly on the high land to the east of the village towards Cawton, fossils abound (especially ammonites).

With the coming of the Ice Age, ice 300m thick penetrated the Gap from the west, as far as Gilling, forming a massive dam. As the ice melted the Gap acted as a meltwater channel for Lake Pickering.

The retreat of the ice resulted in wooded slopes, ample water supply, exposed building stone, good soil for pasture and the growing of crops and sites easily

capable of being defended. It is not surprising therefore that the area was occupied by man at a very early period.


Extracts from:  
*History of Gilling,*  
John Marwood, 1995.



Whilst the skylark's crest is the clearest visual aid to identification, it is its song which defines the species. The skylark rises into the air (from field or hedgerow) producing a continual rapid stream of rolling, chirruping and whistling notes. This mid-air song can be maintained for up to 15 minutes. At the conclusion of its song the bird folds its wings and falls silently to the ground.



Brown hares chase about and spar during the spring, earning them the title of 'mad March hares'.



The main nectar sources for the adult meadow brown butterfly are the flowers of thistles and knapweeds.

Sensitive management of road verges greatly enhances their conservation value in the AONB.



## Caulkleys Bank

A short walk of 2.5km/1.5 miles, with an impressive view

Follow the route marked .....

Start at the Church. Easy/moderate grade due to the ascent and descent. Surface is a track with a wide grassy path. Return either on the road or retrace your steps.

**1** From the Church, walk uphill away from the village, following the fingerpost sign directing you along a rough track towards 'Stonegrave 1 mile'.

**2** At the top of the bank you reach a three-way fingerpost sign. Turn left at this point towards 'The Avenue ¼ mile'.

**3** On reaching the road cross over to the wide verge on the other side. This is a good spot from which to identify the features marked on the panorama above. Please take care to avoid traffic on the road.

If short of time retrace your steps or carefully walk down the hill along the wide road verge, to get back to the village.

*For a more leg-stretching route extend the walk on to the River Rye, to give you more time to take in the impressive views to the north and south and to enjoy a pleasant riverside stroll as you return to the village.*



Barn owl

## River Rye

A longer walk of 6km/3.75 miles, with riverside scenery

Follow the route marked ————

Easy/moderate grade due to the ascent and descent. Surface is a track with a wide grassy path, then grass and field-edge paths as you return along the River Rye.

From point **3** continue along the top of the bank in an easterly direction towards 'West Ness 1¼ miles'. Initially passing between overhanging trees the route soon opens out to become a wide grassy track. After approximately 300m you reach a trig point.

**4** The trig point is the highest point on the bank. Looking to the north the largest settlement you can see nestling at the foot of the hills is Kirkbymoorside. Carry on walking along the crest of the bank, losing height gradually as you do so. In the summer you are likely to hear the continual song of skylarks as they ascend over the adjacent fields.

**5** Cross the stone track above Stammer's Wood and follow the public bridleway, which is flanked on either side from this point by mature hedgerows.

**6** After passing some farm buildings the bridleway sinks into a stone-bottomed hollow-way as it descends towards the lane near West Ness.

**7** On meeting the tarmac lane continue straight ahead towards Kirkbymoorside (rather than turning left to Nunnington).

**8** After 250m the road bends sharply to the left then passes farm buildings, a disused Wesleyan Methodist chapel and a phone box. When you reach the bridge over the River Rye do not cross the bridge, instead turn left (to the west) on the public footpath to 'Nunnington 1¼ miles'.

**9** This path follows the route of the river upstream back to Nunnington. At times it deviates from the river bank slightly but remains on the low-lying flat ground.

Alders along the river have been coppiced to allow more light to reach its surface - this will enhance plant growth, increase invertebrate numbers and, consequently, the fish population should also rise. Look out for the tell-tale ring patterns on the water, as brown trout feed on flies. You'll also pass the old mill with its nearby weir.

**10** Follow the waymarks away from the river, so as to skirt around the perimeter of Nunnington Hall. Turn left at the road, then right at the crossroads, to arrive back at the Church.



# Wildlife watching

Usually seen in pairs or small groups, the **bullfinch** has a quiet, slow low-pitched song. They breed in mixed woods and copses and make use of shrubs in village sites such as churchyards. Mainly feeding on seeds and shoots, they also eat some insects during the summer months.

**Barn owls** breed in farmland with scattered trees or copses, using holes in mature trees as nest and roost sites. They have very pale undersides, giving them a ghostly appearance in flight. Barn owl boxes can be put up in trees and barns to provide additional nesting opportunities.

Increasing numbers of **common buzzard** have been seen circling over the valleys and hillsides of the Howardian Hills in recent years. They tend to breed in small woods, close to open farmland where they can hunt for prey. Primarily feeding on voles they are also known to eat reptiles, small birds, rabbits, insects and earthworms.

Common  
buzzard



Wood anemone

Large patches of **wood anemone** can be seen on the floor of many semi-natural woodlands. It can also be found growing under ancient hedgerows. The solitary white flower, which is seen between March and May, sometimes has a pink or purple tinge.

The **meadow brown** is the most widespread of our brown butterflies. Adults have a wingspan of 4-5cm and fly from June to August in meadows, pastures, heaths and along road verges.



Meadow cranesbill

Flower-rich verges adorn numerous roadsides in the AONB, and free-draining soils with a low nutrient content are typically the most species-rich. **Common knapweed, meadow cranesbill, common spotted orchid, field scabious, meadow vetchling** and **yellow** occur more frequently on road verges in the AONB than in other habitat types.

**Brown hares** are noticeably larger than rabbits; they have longer limbs and ears, richer-coloured fur and move faster. They rest in shallow depressions (known as forms) in fields or long grass and feed on herbs in the summer and cereal crops and grasses in the winter. They are mostly active at night although they will relocate during the day if disturbed.



Meadow brown



## Howardian Hills

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

For further information  
please contact:

Howardian Hills AONB  
The Mews  
Wath Court  
Hovingham  
York  
YO62 4NN

Telephone: **0845 034 9495**  
**[www.howardianhills.org.uk](http://www.howardianhills.org.uk)**  
**[info@howardianhills.org.uk](mailto:info@howardianhills.org.uk)**

**To find out about visiting Nunnington Hall  
please contact:**

National Trust  
Nunnington Hall  
Nunnington  
York  
YO62 5UY

Telephone: **01439 748283**  
**[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)**

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## The Countryside Code

**When walking in the Howardian Hills AONB  
please remember The Countryside Code:**

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs on a lead or under close control
- Consider other people

Please also take care not to disturb stock and to follow the waymarking, map and directions as you pass through farmyards and settlements.

## Maps

You are advised to use an OS map alongside this leaflet when following the walks.

These routes can be found on:

**OS Explorer 300, The Howardian Hills and Malton.**  
**OS Landranger 100, Malton and Pickering.**

Nunnington can be found at grid reference SE 668794