

Title: Take Moorsbus Route to Rievaulx

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Date: Friday August 12 2016

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Take Moorsbus route to Rievaulx – just don't disturb the monks!

... and treat yourself to a trip to micro-brewery after tackling those steep-sided dales

BY STUART BELL

At this time of the year, on Sundays, you can get to some parts of the North York Moors National Park that are usually out of reach on public transport.

And those lovely people who have been operating the Moorsbus network since a man with a spreadsheet decided that the funds were needed to varnish a banker's yacht, have added a third bus this year.

They've scrounged enough money together to run a frequent service between Helmsley, Rievaulx and Sutton Bank and you can get to Helmsley by catching the 0930 service from Guisborough.

Hey, check times at Moorsbus.org (orgo in your car if you really insist).

Rievaulx Abbey was originally built by Cistercian monks, who were happy that the site afforded them the peace and tranquility that they were looking for in order to pursue a life of tranquillity away from the hustle and bustle of 10th Century life, preferably without a Moorsbus turning up on their doorstep every half hour.

From the Abbey entrance, head back up the road towards the village and after a couple of cottages follow the first footpath sign on your left. This leads you through successive gates onto a path signed for Bow Bridge.

The clear path is soon joined by the River Rye and after a gate or two, a marker post points you up onto a track, where you go left to soon cross the bridge. (Having diverted the river and built the Abbey and the origi-



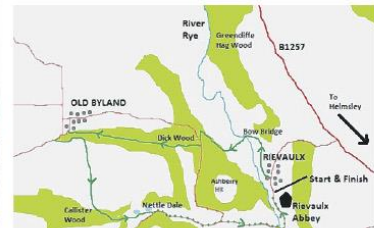
Rievaulx Abbey



Stepping stones



Re-enactment at Rievaulx Abbey



A map of this month's walk

nal Bow Bridge, I'm not sure those monks really knew how to relax after all).

After 200 yards, ignore footpath signs and follow the wide track as it starts climbing into the woods.

At a clear junction, turn sharp left and keep climbing up to a metalled lane (I wouldn't like to have to put the bins out from the houses at the bottom of this track).

There are many such steep-sided dales and howls in these parts. I presume they were created by glacial run-off as the ice across the plateau rapidly melted, retreating all the way back to the Carlisle pump in the Lion Inn on Blakey Ridge.

A tempting track on your left may well be a good option, but go straight on as the mud returns, the hogweed grows (careful now, Ted),

Turn left downhill but soon go sharp right on a wide track down into woodland, ignoring the brideway sign.

Immediately after crossing the brook at the bottom, leave the track to join an unmarked muddier version on your right. Someone has helpfully ploughed through some drier bits on the right, but the path eventually widens into a gorgeous secluded grassy dale.

It was here that a battle raged in the 14th Century between the Scots and the English, presumably much to the annoyance of the monks at Rievaulx who had to get the map out again and find somewhere a tad quieter.

Turn left on the road, and after 100 yards (ish) turn left onto a path which appears to



Take a trip on the Moorsbus

be taking you back where you came from. Never fear, for it goes across to the other side of the valley through a gate into open fields. Say "no" to a gate on your left, and "yes" to another gate ahead.

The views on a clear day – and mine certainly was – are excellent now that you've left those woods behind.

A mile later, drop steeply left through woodland hugging the next dale. At the bottom, cross the footbridge and head straight on to cross stepping stones before turning left at a Cleveland Way sign. Some pretty lakes fill the valley bottom on your left as your path eventually joins a minor road leading back to Rievaulx.

The abbey was dissolved by Henry VIII, who took a little time away from wedding cake and prenuptial contracts to order that the build-

ings be stripped of anything valuable such as lead and sheep.

Today, it is owned and operated by English Heritage who do a great job in preserving what is left and organising events, exhibitions and the museum.

It is well worth a visit, as is the Helmsley Brewery (on the main road in town as it heads south towards the bridge) where I went after the short trip back on the Moorsbus.

It has a small bar with a few tables outside and serves the freshest and finest real ales which are brewing away just a few yards from your seat. I heartily recommend Striding the Riding, a clean and refreshing pale ale which appropriately is the official beer of the Cleveland Way.

Moorsbus and micro-breweries. Scrumptious.



The microbrewery at Helmsley