

# Grosmont to Beck Hole

## Bluebells

Carpets of sweet-scented bluebells are a familiar springtime sight in many woodlands, especially in the dense, damp, deciduous woodlands and shady banks of the Esk Valley. Hyacinthoides non-scripta to its friends, the common bluebell is native to western Europe, but it's Britain that really takes to the flower – amazingly, the UK boasts more than half the world's bluebell population. Adapted to woodland conditions, the show they put on each April and May is magical, flowering in profusion before the tree canopy spreads and blocks out the light. Bumblebees, butterflies and other insects love them, and in past times the bluebell was used in various folk remedies – the sap makes a natural glue, while the crushed bulbs are said to help stop wounds from bleeding.



## Bluebell woods and bygone days

Enjoy the signs of spring on a circular walk of just under 5 miles from Grosmont that starts with a shady woodland stroll through the bluebells of Doctor's Wood and Crag Cliif Wood. Halfway point is the charming riverside hamlet of Beck Hole, before you return alongside the tumbling waters of the Murk Esk, following the line of the original Whitby to Pickering railway – now preserved as 'The Rail Trail' (between Goathland, Beck Hole and Grosmont). Grosmont itself was transformed by the railway, and steam trains are still seen here on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. As the Esk Valley Railway also calls at Grosmont, this is a walk you can access without a car from Whitby, Pickering or Middlesbrough.

The path through Doctor's Wood, Grosmont, is a Community Access Project, delivered by the National Park Authority. Funding for this project was made available through the Rural Development Programme for England which was jointly funded by Defra and the European Union.

## Tunnel Town

Just before you cross the footbridge into Grosmont at the end of the walk, glance behind you to see what is believed to be the world's first passenger railway tunnel built by George Stephenson. Throughout the 1830s, a small village – simply known as 'Tunnel' – grew up around the railway. With the discovery of local ironstone, Grosmont became a thriving industrial centre almost overnight, and by the 1860s it boasted its own furnaces, brick works and lime kilns. The industries are long gone, but there are clues everywhere to Grosmont's pioneering past, from workers' cottages and the line of the railway to the humps and bumps in fields that are the remains of the old ironstone drift



### Did you know?

The Murk Esk is murky for a reason! It's one of the main tributaries of the River Esk, originating high up on the moors. On its long journey the water passes through peaty soil, acquiring its distinctive colour on the way.

### Great for:

woodland wanders, riverside rambles, nature arts, history buffs

### Length:

4¾ miles (7.75km)

### Time:

3 hours

### Start/Finish:

National Park car park, Grosmont

### Grid Reference:

NZ 827 052

### Map:

OS Explorer OL27

### Refreshments:

Grosmont, Beck Hole

### Toilets:

Start/Finish of walk



There are several cafés and a pub in Grosmont, and a tea rooms at the station. In Beck Hole there's the fine old riverside Birch Hall Inn, by the bridge.



National Park Information Point in The Railway Shop, Grosmont.

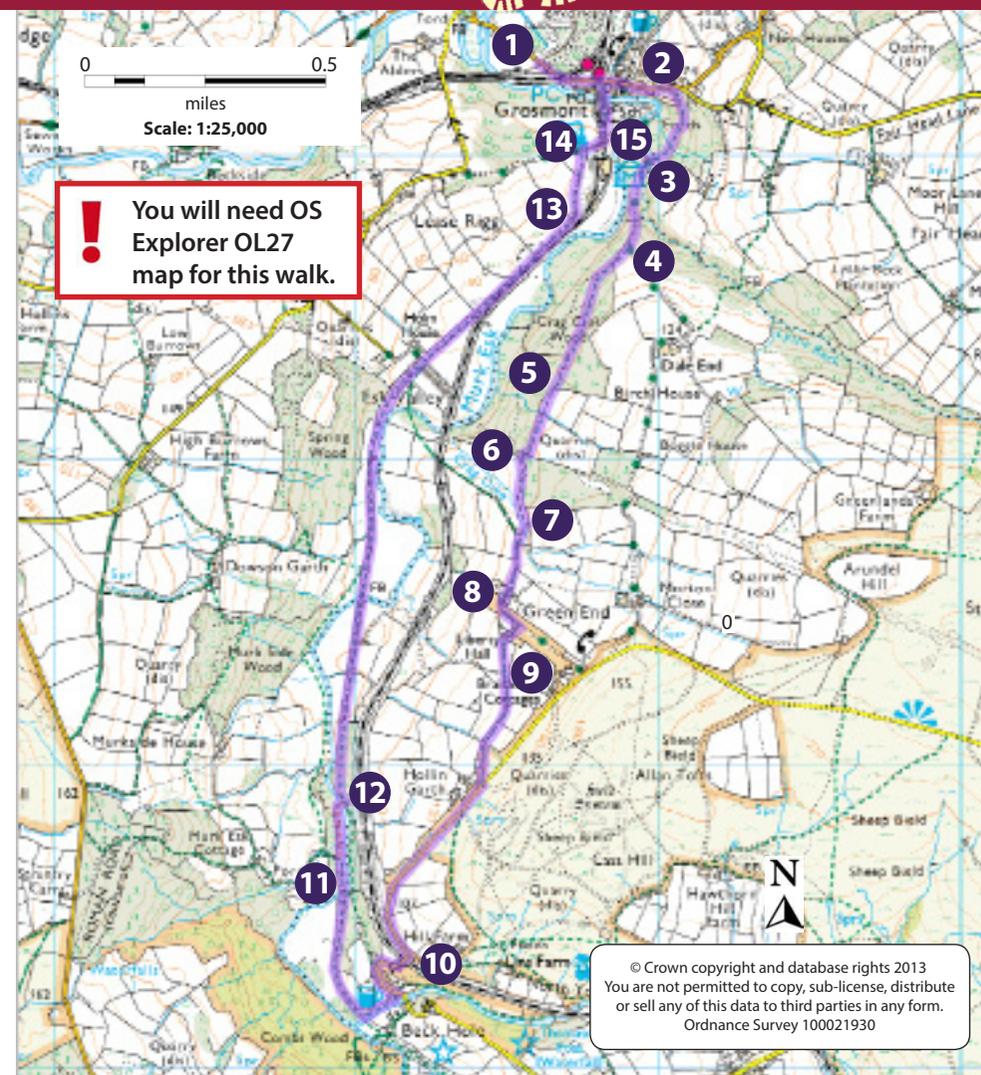
# ... bluebell woods and bygone days ...

## Route instructions

- 1 From the car park, turn left and follow the road uphill, past the station.
- 2 Turn right opposite red-brick Park Villa, through a gate, into Doctor's Wood.
- 3 At the minor road, turn left.
- 4 Go through a metal gate, then bear right at a 'Public Footpath' sign to follow the stone trod. Enter the wood and continue ahead, following the trod.
- 5 Cross the footbridge and continue across two fields (with stiles), keeping woodland on your right.
- 6 Cross the stile, turn left to cross a second stile and continue ahead.
- 7 Cross over the stream, head uphill, and turn left at the top, through the gate.
- 8 Approaching the buildings, go through the stone gateway marked with arrows (chicken sheds on the right). At the track, turn left (uphill), then turn right and follow the bridleway through the farmyard.
- 9 Where the track bends sharp right, continue ahead, through a gate and through fields towards Hollin Garth. On reaching the farm, turn right on the road.
- 10 Cross over the railway and continue down into Beck Hole. Just before the bridge, at 'White House', turn right down a path marked 'Murk Esk and Rail Trail'. Then turn right to join the Rail Trail to Grosmont.
- 11 At a 3-way signpost, the Rail Trail turns right (down steps) and then left to follow the other side of the river for a short way. For an easier, level route keep straight on, following the 'Esk Valley' sign with wheelchair symbol.
- 12 The two routes meet at a footbridge – continue straight ahead.
- 13 Turn left through the kissing gate and follow the path uphill.
- 14 Go through the gate and turn right – great view over Grosmont from here.
- 15 Turn left through the gate, down past the church, cross the footbridge and, at the road, turn left for the car park.



The first half is a fairly gentle walk through woods and across fields. There are some stiles and gates, and a stone trod in the woods, and parts of the route can be very muddy after rain. After Beck Hole, the return is along the old railway line, which has a compact, hard surface and is fairly level (except for the final section at Grosmont, where there's a climb and a descent).



The route runs through woodland, farmland, a farmyard and along the River Esk. Help prevent disturbance to wildlife, including woodland and river wildlife, by keeping your dog under control at all times, and always on a short lead where livestock is present.

### Like this walk?

Then walk the full 3½ mile route back down the line of the original railway from Grosmont to Goathland. Buy 'The Rail Trail' booklet from our online shop.