

Bridestones Walk

Visit Ancient North York Moors Rock Formations

Visit my website for full details: <https://www.paulbeal.com/bridestones-walk>

Introduction to the Walk

Starting from the Saltergate car park beside the A169, this route follows Old Wife's Way across Newgate Brow into the Bridestones Nature Reserve, visiting High Bride Stones, Needle Point and Dove Dale, before looping past Staindale Lake and continuing to Low Bride Stones.

Highlights of the Walk

Bridestones Nature Reserve spans over 300 acres of high, wild landscape, blending open heather moorland, rugged pasture, wooded hillsides and flower-filled dales. As a Site of Special Scientific Interest, it is carefully managed to protect its habitats, with grazing helping to keep the open moor from reverting to woodland. Bridestone Griff divides the two main rock groups, with High Bride Stones to the west and Low Bride Stones to the east. These striking formations are the worn remnants of a Jurassic sandstone cap, sculpted by wind, frost and rain, and their name likely comes from the Old Norse for 'brink-stones' or 'edge stones'.

Expect memorable moments throughout: the moorland approach along Old Wife's Way, the ancient earthwork ridge on Newgate Moor, and the hidden path into High Bride Stones where you can wander among towering sandstone 'sculptures'. The ridge of Needle Point offers benches and views across Dovedale Griff, before a charming streamside path leads through Dove Dale.

A circuit of Staindale Lake adds woodland trails, picnic spots and a dragonfly-inspired sculpture, while the return to Low Bride Stones brings another superb set of formations. Along the way there are views to Blakey Topping and distant glimpses of RAF Fylingdales.

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Additional Information

- **Distance:** 8 miles (12¾ kilometres).
- **Duration:** Approximately 3¾ hours (excluding stops and breaks).
- **Difficulty:** Moderate, with some ascents, descents and uneven ground, but nothing overly strenuous for regular walkers.
- **Trail Conditions:** A mix of moorland tracks, grassy paths, woodland trails and cobbled stone sections. Some paths can be narrow, eroded or muddy in wet weather. Certain stretches can feel a little remote and exposed.
- **Recommended Map:** OS Explorer OL27 – North York Moors Eastern Area.
- **Parking:** Saltergate car park, located on the A169 Whitby to Pickering road, opposite the Hole of Horcum.
 - **Google Maps Link:** <https://maps.app.goo.gl/y4xuKqxwtuTkDhDx7>
 - **What3Words:** ///performed.tastings.melt

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Thank you for your support!

Paul Beal



Step-by-Step Directions

Begin your Bridestones walk at the **Saltergate car park (1)**, a spacious parking area located alongside the A169 Whitby to Pickering road. From the car park, do not cross the road. Instead, turn right and walk north for a short distance along the roadside verge. Although the road is busy, the grassy verge provides a safe walking space. After about a minute, **turn right onto a tarmac lane (2)**, which is a bridleway signposted to Crosscliff.

Follow this lane through a set of gates, continuing straight ahead. This route is part of the Tabular Hills Walk and is known as the Old Wife's Way. Heading south-east, you will pass a **large hangar-style building (3)** on your right. After approximately one mile from the main road, the lane transitions to a concrete surface and bends left, descending downhill. At this point, turn right onto a bridleway marked by a sign for the **National Trust Bridestones & Crosscliff (4)**. Pass through the gate and follow the path south-east onto Newgate Moor, keeping to the top of Newgate Brow on a grassy track. The route runs beside Newgate Wood, but take care to **ignore the first public footpath on the right (5)**, which leads across the fields. Instead, continue along the track, keeping Newgate Wood on your left.

Around 1½ miles from the main road, you will come to **two gates in close succession (6)**. Go through the first gate on your right, following a narrower grassy path onto National Trust land, which will lead you into the Bridestones Nature Reserve. Do not continue through the second gate, as this would take you along the Tabular Hills Walk, which is not your intended route. Once inside the nature reserve, the narrow path soon widens into a more defined track across the open moorland. To your left, you will notice a raised ridge, part of an **ancient earthwork (7)**, with woodland also on your left.

Continue along this track, keeping an eye out for a **public footpath on your right (8)**, which is somewhat concealed. It is marked only by a small wooden post with a public footpath badge attached. Turn onto this path and follow it across the moorland in a south-westerly direction. The path gradually becomes more defined, and as you progress, you will begin to see some of the impressive rock formations at High Bride Stones on your right. Initially, the path climbs uphill before levelling out and splitting into two. Take the right-hand fork, which leads downhill into Bridestone Griff.

As you descend, the path merges with a stone-cobbled route. Continue downhill, entering the woodland at the bottom of the valley. Cross the small stream and begin the ascent on the other side, following the path up towards High Bride Stones, the first major highlight of your Bridestones walk. You will pass two striking rock formations on your right before reaching another directly ahead. If you wish to explore more of these fascinating rock formations, take a right turn before retracing your steps. **Otherwise, turn left (9)**.

Walk south along the footpath across **Needle Point (10)**, with Dovedale Griff valley on your right and Bridestone Griff on your left. Across Bridestone Griff, you will glimpse the rock formations at Low Bride Stones, which you will visit later in the walk. Continue along the gradually descending path until it steepens and zigzags downhill through the woodland. At the bottom, go through a gate, cross a footbridge, and enter the valley of Dove Dale.

Follow the grassy path alongside the stream as the valley widens towards its southern end. Cross another footbridge, pass through a gate, and ascend a grassy bank before **turning left onto a stony track (11)**. Walk east along this track, with woodland to your left and a sloping grassy bank to your right. Continue along the tree line until you reach another gate. Take note of this gate and the left-hand uphill path, as you will return to this point later. For now, continue straight to the **Bridestones car park (12)**.

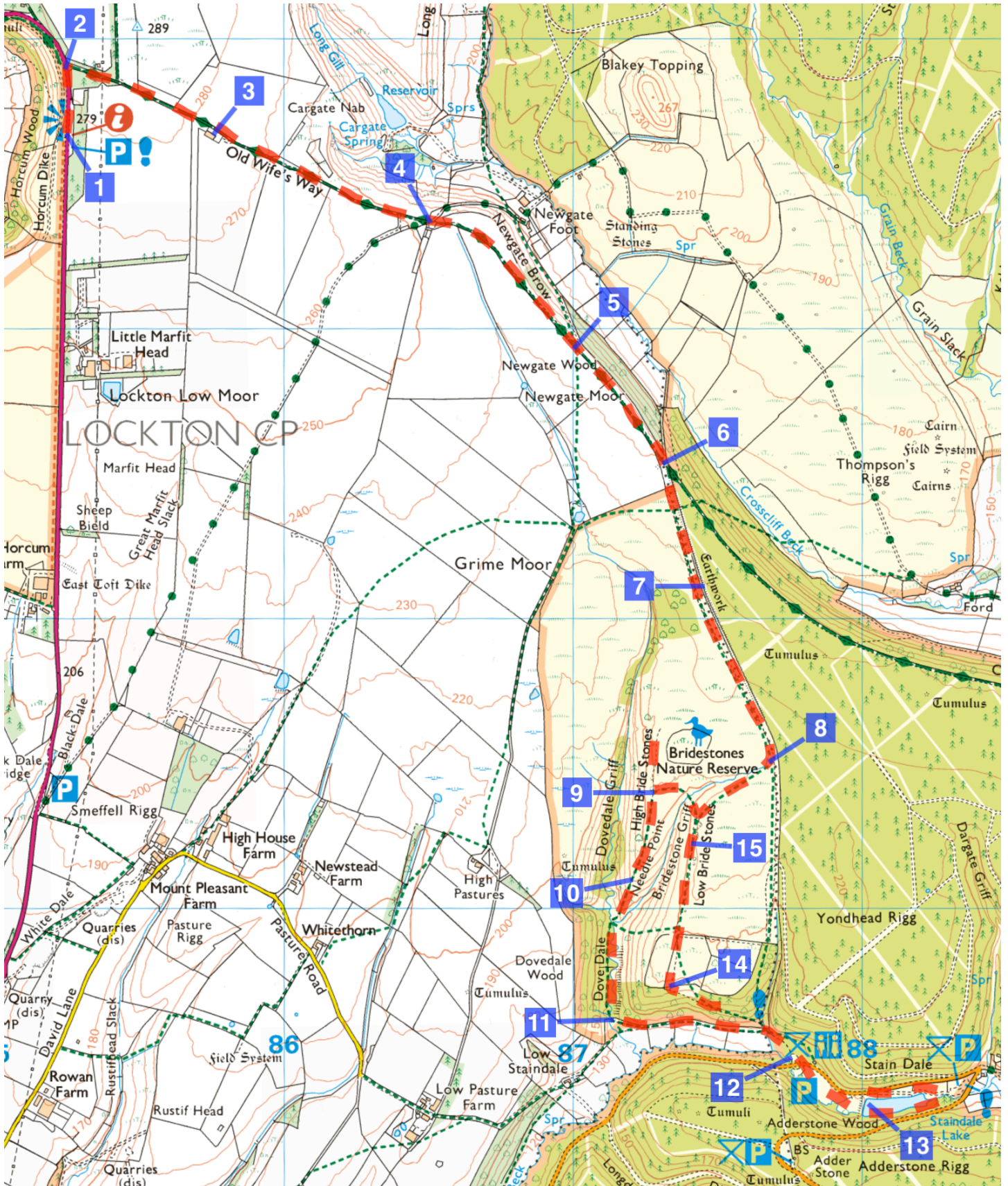
Cross the road into Staindale car park, then follow the path through the picnic area towards Staindale Lake. The path leads to a grassy bank resembling a dam on the lake's western side. Walk up the steps and turn right onto the path. Continue your Bridestones walk by circling **Staindale Lake (13)** before returning to this point. Retrace your steps through the picnic area and back to Bridestones car park.

From the car park, follow the stone path past the National Trust Bridestones sign and back to the gate you passed earlier. This time, do not go through the gate. Instead, turn right uphill, then take the left-hand fork almost immediately. Follow this steep woodland path until you reach another gate. Pass through it to emerge onto **open countryside at Low Bride Stones (14)**.

Continue along the cobbled stone path, passing all the dramatic rock formations of **Low Bride Stones (15)**, the second key highlight of your Bridestones walk. After passing the final rock formation, the path splits. The left-hand path descends back into Bridestone Griff, but you should turn right, heading uphill. Almost immediately, take the left-hand fork, leading across the moorland path through the nature reserve. Eventually, you will reach the wider track at the woodland's edge. Turn left here.

Retrace your steps north-east along the ancient earthwork, crossing Newgate Moor and following the Old Wife's Way back to the car park at Saltergate, marking the end of your Bridestones walk.

Map of the Walk



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