

Walk for May 2021

## Helmsley and the River Rye

*A pleasant easy walk downriver from the market town of Helmsley. The walk is on established footpaths and can be quite muddy but doing it in winter avoids the often overgrown vegetation along the riverside in the first half of the walk. The views over the town from the higher latter stages are excellent.*

*Reach Helmsley along the B1257 that runs along the top side of Slingsby. (Note; As you reach Helmsley on the B1257 and cross the bridge at the bottom of the steep hill, the road immediately going off to the left is Ryegate which is included on this walking route.*

*Parking. This can be difficult when tourism is at its height but there are currently several options:*

*a) Pay and Display either in the central Market Square (not available on market day, Friday) or in the signposted Cleveland Way Car Park.*

*b) There is free parking in some of the residential streets to the right if you turn into Ryegate and search.*

*c) One I recommend at present – turn right into Ryegate and 150 yards along turn right again down Sawmill Lane (signposted to NYMNP depot). Just before reaching the depot there is a disused BATA warehouse on the left hand side with a sizeable car park in front which permanently stands empty. If you park here, start your walk from here at point 3. Otherwise the walk is described from the Market Place.*

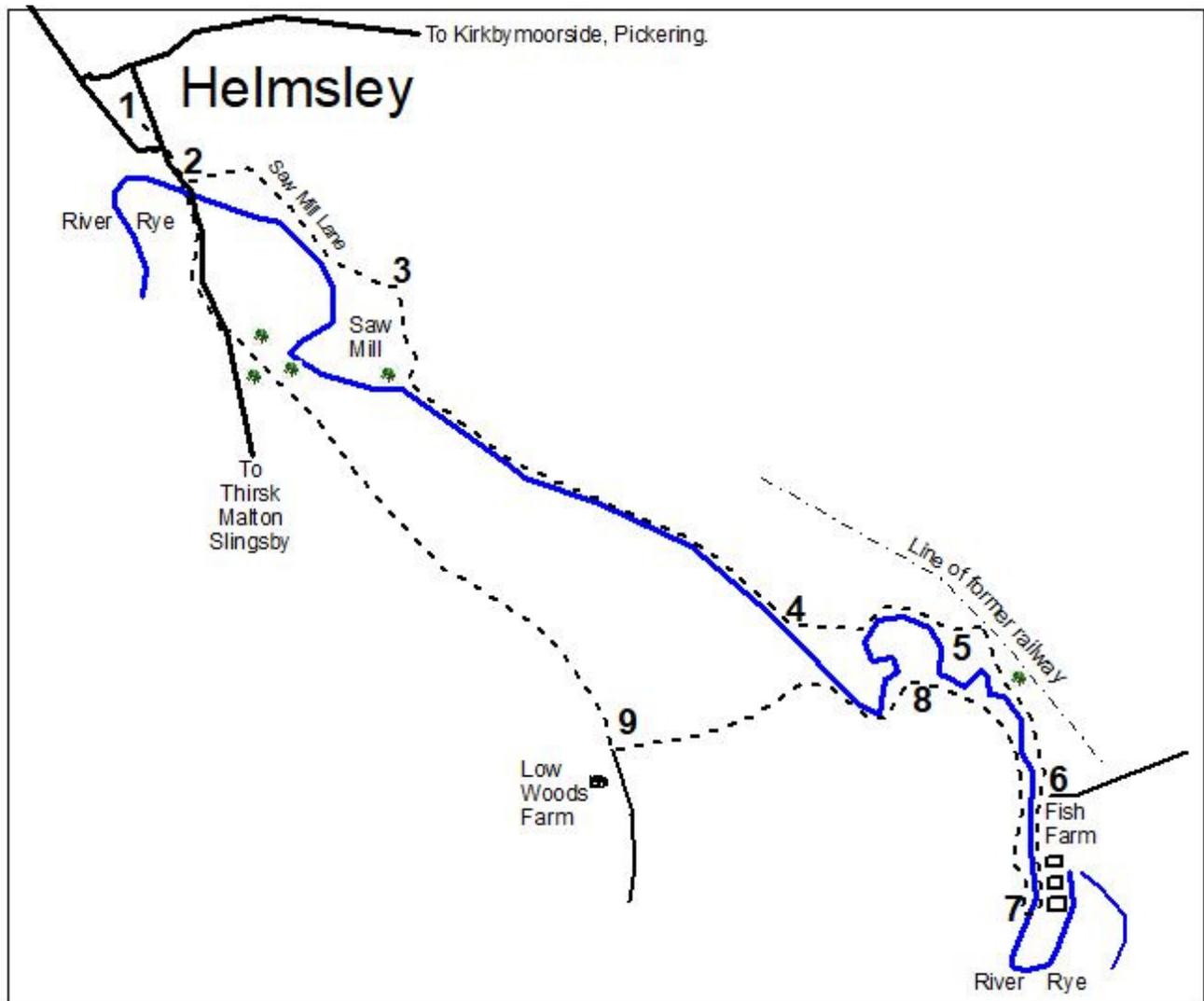
**Start** — Market Place in Helmsley

**Distance** – 4 miles **Duration** - 2 – 2 ¼ hours

**1.** Leave the Market Place at the bottom end alongside the road that leads back to the bridge you crossed to enter the town. Use the pedestrian crossing to swap to the left-hand pavement.

**2.** Just before you reach the bridge turn left into Ryegate. As you draw level with the side road called Pottergate on your left, turn right into Sawmill Lane (signed as a public footpath and part of the Ebor Way}. Follow this access lane ahead, passing some properties and then the premises of Thomas the Baker on your left.

**3.** Walk past Duncombe Park sawmill and North York Moors National Park Depot both on your right. Keep ahead for a few more paces and then turn right onto the stone track leading you behind the depot (still signed as the Ebor Way). When the workshop walls on your right end, you will come to a fingerpost ahead. Turn right and this stone track leads you to a field gate. NOTE: This next field is likely to be



holding horses and sheep. Pass through the gate to enter the pasture and walk straight ahead on the track, following the line of fence and trees on your left. Soon, when a low brick wall begins on your left, bear right across the grass to reach the fence immediately in front of the River Rye. On reaching the fence turn left and follow the grass riverside path with the river running on your right. The path stays close to the river as you make your way through gates and stiles, and at one point where the path passes to the right of a water treatment works. After passing beside two crop fields you reach a stile with open pasture beyond.

**4.** Cross the stile to enter the cattle pasture and turn immediately left, following the line of the fence on your left. At this point in its journey, the River Rye performs several meandering curves across to your right. Before the top of the field, bear right to re-join the riverside path and a little further along bear left to reach a gate in the top fence line. Pass through this gate and the next one to enter a sheep pasture. On your left you will see an old railway bridge.

**5.** Turn left towards the bridge but do NOT pass under it. Instead, turn right immediately beforehand, following the line of the fence and old railway on your left. Just a few metres along, fork right (at about 1 o'clock) across the pasture to reach a field gate set within the right-hand fence line (close to the corner where the fence steps back to the river). Pass through this gate and walk ahead to join the grass

track with the river running on your right. At the end, pass through a gateway to reach a junction with a stone access lane.

**6.** Turn right along this and it will lead you to the entrance for a fish farm. Immediately before the entrance, fork right through a gate to join the path running along the top of the embankment with the fish farm on your left. Towards the end of the farm, turn right over the footbridge across the River Rye.

**7.** At the far side of the bridge, a gate leads you into the next sheep pasture. At this point, the right of way performs a dog leg to reach the kissing gate visible to your right the kissing gate that you will use to exit this pasture. However, there is much evidence that many who have gone before actually turn right and cross directly to the kissing gate. Pass through this kissing gate and another gate soon afterwards to reach the edge of a crop field. Bear right, following the edge of the crop field or with the river running to your right. Where the field edge swings left away from the river, fork right across the green margin to reach a kissing gate which leads you back into the cattle pasture that you crossed on the outward leg at the other side of the river.

**8.** Go through the gate to enter the pasture and turn immediately left, staying fairly close to the line of the fence on your left. Part way along, you will pass through a fairly narrow section of field where the river (on your right) performs a curve running close to the fence on your left. After passing the next oak tree you will come to a small waymarker post, marking a fork in the path. Take the left-hand of the two options, at about 1 o'clock and bearing away from the river. Join a grass vehicle track which swings briefly right then bears left to reach a new gate and fencing. Pass through this gate and walk up the stone track ahead, with grassy banks each side. Carry on uphill to reach a T-junction with the main farm access track.

**9.** Turn right along this tarmac track. The track rises steadily and at the brow of the slope, take time to enjoy the far-reaching views that have opened up ahead and to your right. Further along, the distinctive red rooftops of Helmsley are visible in the valley bottom. Keep ahead on the track, passing old barns on your right. A final gate at the end of the track leads you out to a junction with the A170. Cross over (taking particular care on this busy road) to reach the pavement at the far side. Turn right along this, heading downhill. At the bottom of the slope, you will come to the road bridge over the River Rye. Cross the bridge, taking great care as there is no pavement on this short stretch.

Immediately after the bridge rejoin a footpath and, depending where you parked, take the appropriate route back to your vehicle.

Geoff Brooks 2021

Acknowledgment - I found the basis of this walk on the All Trails website which can be found on the following link <https://www.alltrails.com/trail/england/north-yorkshire/helmsley-and-river-rye>