**OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES and NATURE**

**Visit Ripon and the Skell Valley**

**Please see the bottom of this sheet for ideas on how to use this information.**

It’s easy to enjoy being outdoors and to appreciate nature in Ripon and the Skell Valley. Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty supports a range of different habitats including moorland, meadows, woodlands and water. They’re home to important populations of a variety of wildlife.

Merlin, golden plover and redshank can be spotted in the area, as well as concentrations of breeding curlews and lapwing. The moorlands and woodlands are important habitats for adders, common lizards and slow worms.

Otters and water voles are regularly recorded alongside the area’s rivers and streams, and river lampreys are widespread. Fountains Abbey is home to many birds such as nuthatches, treecreepers, and woodpeckers.

You can follow an established route to enjoy the landscape, such as the Nidderdale Way, or Yorkshire Heritage Way. Ripon’s Sanctuary Way Walk celebrates Ripon’s origins as a sanctuary. One original marker and several replicas can be found close to their original positions, indicating a place of safety, around one mile from the cathedral. The full circuit around the city is 10 miles, with options for shorter scenic routes.

The Ripon Rowel Walk is a much-loved route taking in landmarks, historic monuments and follies over a 49 mile route including villages surrounding Ripon. Its name comes from the name of the small spiked wheels fitted to horse-riders’ spurs. Ripon was famous for their manufacture in the 16th and 17th century.

The Seven Bridges Walk is an easy flat walk, along the route of some early John Aislabie landscaping, next to Studley Royal, with five picture perfect stone bridges originally constructed as part of his plan in 1716. This can be incorporated in the full 17.5 miles of the Aislabie Walk, stretching through Studley Royal Water Gardens and on to Hackfall near Masham, established by Aislabie’s son, William.

A more recent addition to the area’s outdoor attractions is the Crackpots Trail, which combines the outdoors with the arts. First established in 1997 by ‘The Crackpots’ of Kirkby Malzeard, the group of residents made a series of 22 mosaics, each celebrating the nature, character and history of the area.

Children delight in the adventures to be found at Lightwater Valley, while adults might like to try their luck at Ripon Races, know as ‘Yorkshire’s Garden Racecourse’.  The tradition of horse-racing in Ripon dates back to 1664. It was the first racecourse to hold a race exclusively for female jockeys in 1723.

Next to the racecourse is Ripon City Wetlands, a great place to enjoy wildlife-watching. Ripon. You might also enjoy sitting back to star-gaze in some of the UK’s darkest skies, perhaps booking to use the little-known Lime Tree Observatory at Grewelthorpe.

**HOW TO USE THIS INFORMATION**

We’d love you to use this information, or any of the other sections, in your own promotional activity – on your website, mailings or social media.

You can edit it and change it as much as you want.

You can use all of it, or just small snippets.

You’re welcome to add your own angles, and customise the info.

This is just a starting point.

We’ve created this information to encourage more collaborations between businesses.

For example, if you run a visitor attraction you might talk about other activities in the area to show there’s a critical mass of things to do and Ripon is worth the journey.

Accommodation providers might use some of this information to talk about their location and encourage longer stays.

See the other information on [www.tourismknowhow.com/Ripon](https://www.tourismknowhow.com/ripon).

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