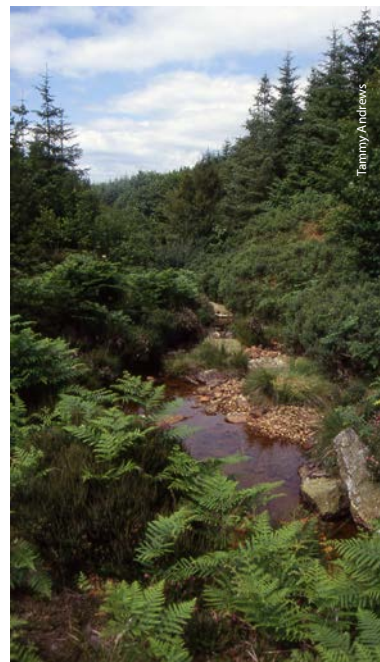


# May Beck and Falling Foss

## Tea, cake and local history

The beautifully sited woodland cottage of Midge Hall has a perfectly located tea garden – especially for weary Coast-to-Coast walkers who tramp by on their way to the walk's end at Robin Hood's Bay. Surprisingly, however, it's just the latest incarnation of a popular tradition, deep in the enchanted woods near Whitby.

What was originally built in the eighteenth century as an isolated gamekeeper's cottage was already being used as a tea garden as far back as the 1930s – with visitors bussed here from the coast for a stroll among the trees and a view of Falling Foss waterfall. The cottage was abandoned in the 1960s and fell into disrepair, but since 2008 new owners have breathed life back into a unique piece of woodland heritage.



Tammy Andrews

## The hermit of Falling Foss

A short walk from Falling Foss is a cave carved out of an enormous boulder. Known locally as the 'Hermitage', and dating from as far back as the 18th century, it was once the secluded home of a hermit. The woods provided food, fuel, shelter and building materials – but imagine the fortitude required to live such a reclusive life, deep in the woodland shadows.



## Wonderful woodland, fabulous falls



If ever there was a magical woodland walk, this is it. Take the trail through the trees on a 2-mile circular route that passes an idyllic woodland tea garden and the 30-foot Falling Foss waterfall, before returning alongside babbling May Beck. It's a lovely shady walk for summer – with shallow waters to paddle in, and a bridge to play pooh-sticks from – and spectacular in autumn when the woodland colours are at their best. If you don't intend to venture far from the tea garden and waterfall, you can use an alternative car park near Falling Foss instead.

### Did you know?

The romantic sounding name of Falling Foss is actually a straightforward description. 'Fors' or 'foss' is the Old Norse (ie, Viking) word for a waterfall.

### Great for:

woodland wanders, riverside rambles, family walks, nature nuts

### Length:

2 miles (3.2km)

### Time:

1 hour 30 minutes

### Start/Finish:

Forestry Commission carpark at May Beck, 6 miles (9.6km) south of Whitby

### Grid Reference:

NZ 892 024

### Map:

OS Explorer OL27

### Refreshments:

Falling Foss

### Toilets:

None on the route



The Falling Foss Tea Garden at Midge Hall is open daily from April to October, weather permitting.



Whitby Tourist Information Centre, Langborne Road, Whitby.

# ... wonderful woodland, fabulous falls ...

## Route instructions

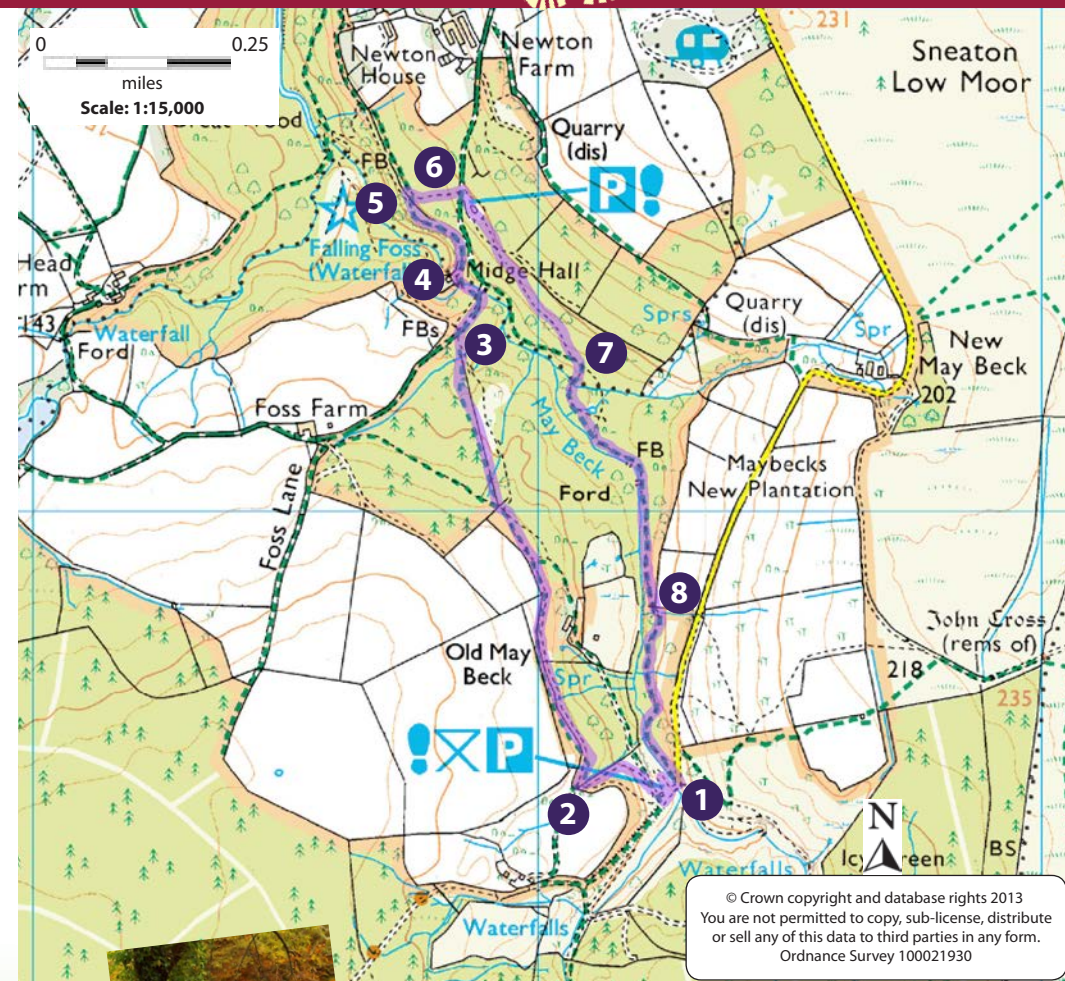
- 1 From the car park entrance don't cross the bridge. Instead turn right, uphill on a stone/gravel track, and immediately turn right again along a level track. After about 25 yards turn left up rough stone steps and follow a winding path through bracken.
- 2 Go through a gate. Don't go left over the stile, but instead turn right and follow the path into the wood. Stay on this path, ignoring minor paths to left and right.
- 3 At a junction with a stony track, turn right, downhill. At the bottom, don't go over the stone bridge but turn left to cross a footbridge. Please note that you should keep your dog on a lead from here to point 5 due to very steep drops off the path.
- 4 Bear right, passing Midge Hall (Falling Foss Tea Garden), and keep the fence on your left. Down below is Falling Foss waterfall – and the path soon becomes unfenced, so take care.
- 5 Go through a gap in an old low wall to reach a signpost. Turn right (signposted 'Car Park') and go uphill through the wood.
- 6 Go through a gap in the wall at the top and bear right (ignore the track on the immediate right) into the car park. Take the track at the far end of the car park and follow the path down through the wood.
- 7 A path joins from the right and you continue down left to cross a footbridge. Continue on the path through woodland beside May Beck.
- 8 Go up rough steps and through a gate. Continue ahead along the beck to return to the car park.



Most of the walk is on woodland paths which are occasionally uneven and stony. There are some uphill and downhill sections, although the gradients are generally easy. There are two gates but no stiles on the route. Some of the walk is over Forestry Commission access land, and tracks may occasionally be closed for tree-felling or other operations, although the land is usually open at weekends.



Near Falling Foss waterfall there are some very steep drops off the path – you should keep your dog on a short lead for safety. In the last section of the walk there may be sheep grazing – please keep your dog on a short lead if livestock are present.



## Like this walk?

Falls fanatics should also visit the waterfall of Mallyan Spout, in Goathland – our Mallyan Spout and Beck Hole walk is the perfect companion.