



# Grejsdalstien



A hike between Vejle, Grejs and Jelling



During the 19th and 20th century, the mills lay this close along Grejs Å.

## Animals

Der The area is full of deer and if you are lucky, you might even see a fox or a squirrel along your hike.

## Protected area – Natura 2000

Approximately halfway along the route between Grejs Mølle and a little to the west of Hørup Bro, you will pass through an area that is protected according to EU rules. Here, the authorities must ensure that the delicate nature is protected and thrives. The area is protected because of its rich diversity of meadows, marshes, grasslands, streams and lakes. Some of Grejs Adal is also protected in accordance with Danish law. The reason for protecting

White-throated Dipper Foto: Erik B. Petersen.

this area is to preserve the beautiful countryside and prevent further urban development.

## Hydropower, mills and industry

Over the years, 15 water mills have harnessed the power of the Grejs Å's strong current. Many mills were placed along the the lowest 6 kilometres, where the stream drops no less than 25 metres. At the end of 19th and start the 20th century, the mill wheels were turning faster than ever. During this period of time, the area had the greatest concentration of industrial mills in Denmark. The mills supplied power to the clothing, paper and metal industry. Today, the old mills are only partially preserved, and many of

Grejs Klipper.

View from the Grejsdalstien at Brandbjerg.

them have been converted into living quarters. All dams have been removed, except Hobballe Mølle, located in the upper end of the stream. This provides free passage for sea trout along most of the stream, and the fish lives here in large numbers.

## Grejs Klipper

If you make a detour from the Grejsdalstien, about half a kilometre up Grejs Bakke, you will end up at a remarkable, rocky outcrop in Grejsdalen. These rocks are apparently the only ones of their kind in Denmark in addition to the rocks on the island of Bornholm. The rocky formation began as lime, which was precipitated deep in the ground. Here,

the lime melded with sand and gravel brought here by meltwater, and turned into a concrete-like rock.

## Train ride and attractions

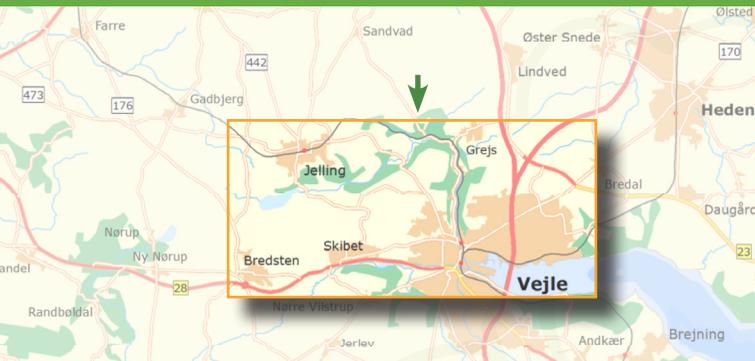
The railway that leads through Grejsdalen was ready for use in 1894 and claims to be Denmark's steepest railway – there are similar gradients in Storebæltstunnelen (the Great Belt Tunnel), however. During summer, a veteran train can be caught on the stretch between Jelling and Vejle. Spice up your hike with a historic train ride, and remember, two of Vejle's main attractions are at either end of the ride: the Kongernes Jelling museum and Økolariet in Vejle.



## Did you know...

Grejsdalen is Denmark's deepest valley with 50-70-metre high slopes. The valley was a popular excursion spot near the end of the 19th century – people went here on foot or by horse-drawn carriage.





# Grejsdalen and Grejs Ådal

Grejsdalen (the Grejs Valley) and Grejs Ådal (Grejs River Valley) are two distinct valleys that run in continuation of each other – both valleys direct water from Fårup Sø (Fårup Lake) and the surrounding areas out to Vejle Fjord. Grejs Ådal, extending from Fårup Sø to Grejs, is a tunnel valley, created by meltwater erosion under the glacier. Grejsdalen, extending from Grejs to Vejle, is an erosional valley. 18,000 years ago, during the latest Ice Age, the ice front boundary was located south of Grejs and west of Vejle. In front of the ice, meltwater flowed from the glacier and formed a sizeable pro-glacial lake – 'Bøgager Issø'. The lake drained in a dramatic

dam burst. The great force with which the body of water suddenly moved into Vejle Ådal created the beginnings of Grejsdal, a valley stretching from north to south between Grejs By and Vejle. Grejs Å's steep course drops 50 metres along its 22-kilometre stretch. Compared with Gudenåen (the Gudenå River), which only has a drop of 60 metres along its 158 kilometres, Grejs Å is basically a mountain stream. Because of this, the nature will be very different from what you meet near most other streams in Denmark. Many different species of stoneflies, mayflies and caddisflies live here – species which only live in clean water with a strong current.

Map with contour lines showing how Vejle's and Grejs' river valleys almost form a square around an island.

## The forests

Det The hilly and steep terrain has never been suited for agriculture. Therefore, most of the area has been covered in forest since the ice age. The forests are predominantly beech forests that grow on the slopes. With their roots in the water, ash and alder trees grow several places along the river systems of the low-lying areas, as well. Many rare fungi, mosses and lichens grow on the forest floor – the biodiversity is especially high in Højgård Skov.

fisher, skimming over the surface of the water. The bird digs its nesting hole into the slopes and lives off insects and small fish from the clean streams. One of the country's largest populations of grey wagtail live and breed in Grejsdalen, and as the only place in the country, the white-throated dipper breeds here every year, too. The white-throated dipper only breeds near fast-flowing water and is a rare bird in Denmark. You will usually be able to spot it perching on a rock or flying low along the stream.

## Birds

Langs There are several breeding populations of fairly rare bird species along Grejs Å. You may be lucky and see the fast-flying king

## Plants

The biodiversity is especially high in Sønderskov, Højgård Skov and in the swampy meadows near Hørup Bro. Here, close to 270 different plant species have been

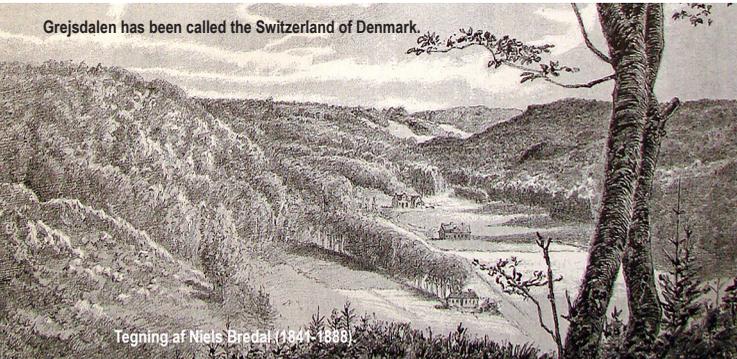
Water pineapple, grows in a small lake in Grejsdal.

The black chanterelle is a nice, edible mushroom.

found. In the alder marsh at Hørup Bæk, you will see the metre-tall northern giant horsetail. Growing in the damp clay soil, the rough horsetail gets its rough exterior due to the plant's content of silicon dioxide. People used to clean tubs and vats with the plant. Come spring, you will be able to see sizeable areas with white butterbur in Grejsdalen – a plant that will get big and very distinctive leaves later in the year. Yellow and blue anemones can also be seen at springtime in Brandbjerg Sønderskov. The perennial, Honesty, is a herb that is normally only seen on the island of Bornholm, has also been seen growing in the valley. On some of the meadows along the Grejs Å river system you can enjoy big populations of western marsh orchids.

## Fungi

The soil is highly varied in the forests – it is clayey in some places, and there are loads of dead branches and tree trunks on the forest floor. Because of these specific conditions and because the forests are many thousands of years old, a host of fungal species thrive here. No less than 200 species of fungi have been registered in Brandbjerg Sønderskov and Højgård Skov alone – 14 of these are rare in Denmark and are listed as endangered species. You will also find many good edible mushrooms, e.g. the black chanterelle which typically grows under beech trees.



Get an overview of all your opportunities for an active outdoor life, hiking routes and overnighting outdoors and more in the Vejle area. Download brochures at [www.vejle.dk](http://www.vejle.dk) or [visitvejle.dk](http://visitvejle.dk). For shelter booking, visit [udeliv.vejle.dk](http://udeliv.vejle.dk), and for nature guides visit [okolariet.dk](http://okolariet.dk).



Released by Vejle Kommune september 2017.



Several eroded passages



Flowering meadows.



A shelter with a primitive toilet and campfire is available at Brandbjerg.

# Grejsdalstien

På Walking along the Grejsdalstien, you will pass through one of the nation's deepest and most beautiful valleys with steep hill slopes and Grejs Å running along the valley bottom – this is Grejsdalen, a valley stretching from Vejle and about 5 kilometres to the north. The first trees migrated here approximately 12,000 years ago, and the slopes have probably been covered in forest ever since – mostly beech forest, nowadays. Several erosion gullies cut into the river valley at right angles and have made large depressions in the hilly landscape. Between Hørup Bro and Brandbjerg, the path runs parallel to Hørup Bæk. Here, you will experience a mixed and varied beech forest in a river

valley full of gullies only interrupted by open meadows and marshland.

## Untouched forest

When you arrive at Brandbjerg Sønderskov, you will see a more cluttered forest of old and overturned trees and dead trunks and branches scattered on the forest floor. This forest has been left untouched since 1997, when normal forestry was discontinued to make way for a rich and varied nature. The forest is left to its own devices, evolving naturally with no human interference. Downed trees are left where they fall, new trees must be self-sown, and felling and removing trees is prohibited. In short, the forest must be left untouched. Untouched forest is unique; there are hardly any left in

Denmark. Only one percent of Denmark's forest is untouched forest. Most forests you are likely to visit, e.g. state and municipal forests, are forested with respect for the natural processes. Foresters are mindful of nature and the environment, but the forests are nonetheless 'looked after' – water is drained away, trees are felled and removed, and new trees are planted where needed.

## Know them by their trunks

Two very similar tree species grow in Brandbjerg Sønderskov - European beech and European hornbeam. You can tell the difference by looking at the tree trunks. The bark on an old hornbeam is silver-grey, smooth and has fine, bright stripes run-

ning vertically along the trunk. The bark on a beech is light grey and smooth. The hornbeam actually belongs to the birch family and it only grows in the wild in the southern part of Denmark.

## Open countryside

On the stretch between the Brandbjerg and Jelling, the route passes through open countryside on dirt roads and along fields and fences before it eventually tags onto Hærvejen (the Army Road), which leads directly to the Kongernes Jelling.

## Practical info

The hike is marked with orange arrows, and there are walkways to help you cross wet stretches. There are stretches of the hike which can

be quite muddy, especially during the rainy season – we recommend bringing a pair of good hiking boots. The majority of the hike is easy and does not have any major elevation, but the terrain will get rather hilly around Brandbjerg Sønderskov. It takes approximately 3-5 hours to walk the entire trip of 16 kilometres. On your way back from either Jelling or Vejle, depending on where you start off/end up, you can catch both train and bus. Please note that during periods of rain there are stretches of the hike that are muddy. Here, you will benefit from a pair of good hiking boots. The hike mostly passes through privately owned forest; only the forested area at the very beginning of the hike from Vejle is owned by Vejle Municipality – see map.

## Nature regulations

- You are allowed to walk and bike on roads and paths in open terrain.
- In privately owned forests, you can walk and bike on roads and paths from 6 AM and until sunset – however, biking is not allowed on prohibited stretches.
- In public forests, you are free to roam the forests outside of the paths anytime of day
- Dogs must be kept on a leash
- You are allowed to pick berries, mushrooms and flowers for your own consumption on land, you have legal access to. However, do not pick protected species.



Eggleaf twayblade



Perennial honesty



The trunk of a hornbeam tree.



The trunk of a beech tree.



White butterbur



Petals from the white butterbur once it has deflowered.



- Hærvejen hiking trail
- Grejsdalstien
- Periodically wet stretches
- Cycle trail/for mountain bike
- Regional biking trail/Hærvejen
- other hiking trails
- Campfire
- Shelter site
- Municipality Forest
- Place of cultural interest
- Parking
- Railway station

**BEGIN YOUR HIKE HERE:** In Veje, St. Grundet Skovvej – in Jelling, Kongernes Jelling



Height profile  
 0 m  
 Veje