

The Yorkshire Dales

The Yorkshire Dales is an area of valleys and hills roughly in the centre of northern England. Some of the so-called hills are fairly mountainous, with steep sides, exposed cliffs and peaks over 600m, but most are lower, smoother and less foreboding – making the Yorkshire Dales ideal for walkers. It's one of the most popular walking areas in England.

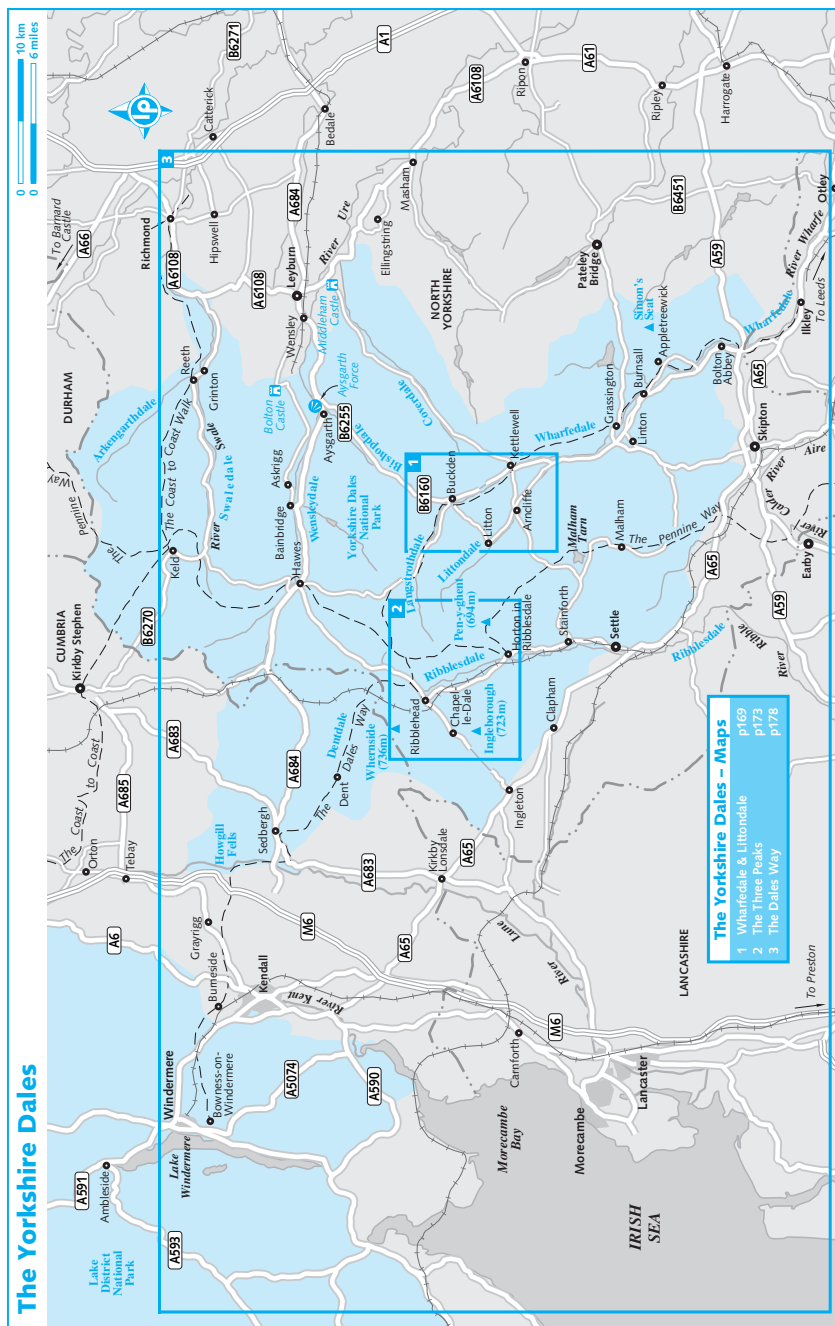
Added to this natural landscape are human influences. Centuries of habitation has given the area a legacy of ancient settlements, lonely farms, neat fields, classic limestone walls and isolated field barns, plus – it has to be said – the occasional modern eyesore quarry. There is no great wilderness here, but for many people that is the Yorkshire Dales' most important attraction.

The Yorkshire Dales are surrounded on three sides by other mountain areas. To the north extends the Pennine chain, to the west are the rugged fells of the Lake District and to the east lie the rolling North York Moors. South of the Dales are the great conurbations of Bradford and Leeds, looking close on the map but surprisingly distant when you're on open high ground or wandering through quiet valleys.

Much of the area lies within the boundaries of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, although just to keep you on your toes, some parts lie outside the county of Yorkshire (a county so large it's now actually split into four counties – North, South and West Yorkshire, and the East Riding of Yorkshire). Visiting the outer edges of the Yorkshire Dales, you may stray into the counties of Lancashire, Cumbria or possibly County Durham. Passports are not required for re-entry, although some proud Yorkshire folk may think they should be!

HIGHLIGHTS

- Wandering along the banks of the delightful **River Wharfe** (p168)
- Enjoying a post-walk pint in the delightful pubs of **Littondale** and **Wharfedale** (p168)
- Striding over the moorland between Wharfedale and Dentdale on the **Dales Way** (p174)
- Marvelling at the Victorian engineering of **Ribblehead Viaduct** (p173)
- Reaching the summit of **Pen-y-ghent** (p172) on the Three Peaks walk; one down, two to go



INFORMATION When to Walk

You can walk in the Yorkshire Dales in any season. One of the area's many great attractions is its year-round suitability. Having said that, in winter, although the valleys are relatively benign, there can be days of wind, rain and snow, so you'll need proper gear and map-reading skills if you go up on the high hills. Summer can be busy, making spring or autumn best for a combination of fair weather and a good chance of enjoying some solitude.

Maps

For a map of the whole Yorkshire Dales region, you can't do better than Harvey Maps' 1:100,000 *Yorkshire Dales Visitor Map*, with the whole park on one sheet, plus useful local information. Harvey also produces an excellent series of 1:40,000 *Yorkshire Dales Outdoor Maps* – great for walking – split into *North*, *South*, *East* and *West* sheets. The whole set is also available as a spiral-bound *Yorkshire Dales National Park Atlas*.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park is also covered mostly by Ordnance Survey (OS) Landranger 1:50,000 maps No 98 *Wensleydale & Upper Wharfedale* and 99 *Northallerton & Ripon*. For more detail, the park is also covered by OS Explorer 1:25,000 maps No 2 *Yorkshire Dales – South & West* and 30 *Yorkshire Dales – Northern & Central areas*, plus map No 19 *Howgill Fells and Upper Eden Valley*.

Books

General walking guidebooks covering this area include the excellent *Wharfedale & Nidderdale and Wensleydale & Swaledale*, both by Andrew Bibby. Between them, they cover the southern and northern parts of

the Yorkshire Dales, with colour maps and photos and new information to take account of recent 'freedom to roam' legislation (see p448), endorsed by the Ramblers' Association. In the same series is *The Three Peaks & Howgill Fells* by Sheila Parker, covering the western part of the park. If you want it all in one book, the handy *Walk the Yorkshire Dales* covers a wide range of routes with OS map extracts, colour photos and GPS information. Other options include the *Yorkshire Dales Pathfinder Guide* and the inspirational *Yorkshire Dales, Moors & Fells* by local enthusiast Paul Hannon, describing 40 walks of various distances, with maps and beautiful colour pictures.

Guided Walks

The national park rangers and some local organisations organise guided walks in various parts of the Yorkshire Dales with different distances and themes (wildlife, archaeology, local legends etc). Guided walks are also organised by the Settle–Carlisle Railway (see the boxed text, p174); all start and end at stations along the line. Tourist offices have leaflets with all the details.

Information Sources

There are many tourist offices in and around the Yorkshire Dales, all selling walking maps and books, and providing information on places to stay and public transport. Most also provide the latest weather reports. Useful tourist offices for visitors are at **Ilkley** (☎ 01943-602319; www.visitilkley.com), opposite the bus and train stations, and **Grassington** (☎ 01756-752774; grassington@ytbtic.co.uk), in the car park on the edge of the village. Others include **Malham** (☎ 01729-830363; malham@ytbtic.co.uk), **Hawes** (☎ 01969-667450; hawes@ytbtic.co.uk), **Settle** (☎ 01729-825192; settle@ytbtic.co.uk) and

YORKSHIRE PRIDE

Perhaps surprisingly, there has long been a connection between the rural Yorkshire Dales and the industrial cities of Burnley, Bradford and Leeds lying just to the south. In the early 20th century, and particularly since the end of WWI, factory workers from the cities would escape to the Dales on Sunday for a breath of fresh air and a break from the drudgery of the 'dark satanic mills'.

It's still something like that today. Every summer weekend the area's population probably doubles as visitors from the nearby cities and further afield come to walk, cycle, cave, rock climb, fish or just tour by car or coach. Despite, or perhaps because of, the influx of visitors, the people of Yorkshire are especially proud of their landscape and heritage, and seem to have the strongest 'national identity' of any part of England.

Richmond (☎ 01748-850252; richmond@ybtbc.co.uk). On the edge of the Dales, in Cumbria, **Sedbergh tourist office** (☎ 01539-620125; www.sedbergh.org.uk) is also handy.

General tourist websites covering the whole area include www.yorkshiredales.org, while the official national park site is www.yorkshiredales.org.uk. For walking information see www.daleswalks.co.uk.

For information about events, transport and accommodation, check the *Visitor*, a free newspaper produced by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

GETTING AROUND

For walkers in the Yorkshire Dales, the most useful public transport service is the famous **Settle-Carlisle Railway** (www.settle-carlisle.co.uk), running through the western section of the park and stopping at several rural stations, providing easy access to many areas that would otherwise be hard to reach with a car. It also means you can walk in one direction, finish at a station, then catch a train back to your starting point. For more details on the line see the boxed text, p174. A leaflet describing walking routes from train stations is available from tourist offices.

Tied in with the trains on the Settle-Carlisle Railway are a series of bus services aimed specifically at tourists; for example, a bus runs from Settle train station to Malham and Grassington (both popular walking centres). For more details contact local tourist offices, phone **Traveline** (☎ 0870 608 2608), or check www.yorkshiretravel.net or www.traveldales.org.uk.

GATEWAYS

To reach the Yorkshire Dales, the main gateway towns are Skipton in the south (most easily reached via Leeds and Ilkley), Kendal in the northwest and Richmond in the northeast. They all have good coach links with other parts of Britain. Ilkley,

Skipton and Kendal are also on the railway network.

WHARFEDALE & LITTONDALE

Duration	5–6 hours
Distance	13 miles (21km)
Difficulty	easy–moderate
Start/Finish	Kettlewell (opposite)
Transport	bus
Summary	A fantastic circular walk through classic Dales scenery; hilly, but not too strenuous.

This walk makes a perfect introduction to the Yorkshire Dales, following two contrasting valleys. Wharfedale, cut by the River Wharfe, is one of the largest and best-known dales in Yorkshire. In contrast, the valley of Littondale, home to the River Skirfare, is small and hardly known. This walk takes in both dales, linking them by paths across higher ground with fine views of the surrounding landscape. This is the kind of walk to be done slowly, maybe with a picnic or pub lunch halfway, so as to properly absorb the Yorkshire Dales scenery and atmosphere along the way.

PLANNING

We describe this circular route starting and ending in the village of Kettlewell, although you might want to do it from Litton. We describe it clockwise, but it can be followed in either direction. You should allow an extra hour or two for stops.

Maps

This route is on the OS Landranger 1:50,000 map No 98 *Wensleydale & Upper Wharfedale*. For more detail, see OS Explorer 1:25,000 map No 30 *Yorkshire Dales – Northern & Central areas*, although a tiny section of the route (through the village of Arncliffe) is just off the southern edge of the map.

NATIONAL PARK REALITIES

The Yorkshire Dales National Park covers around 680 sq miles (1770 sq km). Like all national parks in England and Wales, this is not state land. The park is made up of many privately owned farms and estates, administered by the national park authority. It's important to realise that this is very much a *working* park, not an environment preserved in aspic. More than 60,000 people live here, many engaged in farming and (more controversially) quarrying – and an increasing number in tourism-related jobs.

Information Sources

The nearest tourist office to the start of the walk is at **Grassington** (☎ 01756-752774; grassington@ybtbc.co.uk). You can also visit www.kettlewell.info.

NEAREST TOWN Kettlewell

Kettlewell is a popular walking base with several places to sleep and eat. Scenic and traditional, Kettlewell was the set for popular Brit-flick *Calendar Girls*, so the village attracts movie fans as well as outdoor types.

SLEEPING & EATING

For those on a budget, there's simple camping at **Fold Farm** (☎ 01756-760886; sites for 2 £6) and good-value accommodation at **Kettlewell YHA Hostel** (☎ 01756-760232; www.yha.org.uk; dm £14).

B&Bs include walker-friendly **Lynburn** (☎ 01756-760803; lorna@lthornborrow.fsnet.co.uk; d £46-54) and **Littlebeck** (☎ 01756-760378; www.littlebeck.co.uk; d £60).

On the main street, there's luxurious 'four-poster B&B' at **Cottage Tearoom** (☎ 01756-760405; d midweek/weekend £47/53) plus breakfasts, snacks, drinks and dinners from around £7. There's also **Zarina's Tea Room** in the village centre.

For drinks of a different sort, pubs include the **Bluebell** (bar meals around £7) and the **Racehorses** (bar meals around £7) – the latter has a nice river-side beer garden. Kettlewell also has a small general store.

There are more places to stay in the nearby villages of Buckden and Hubberholme (p179).

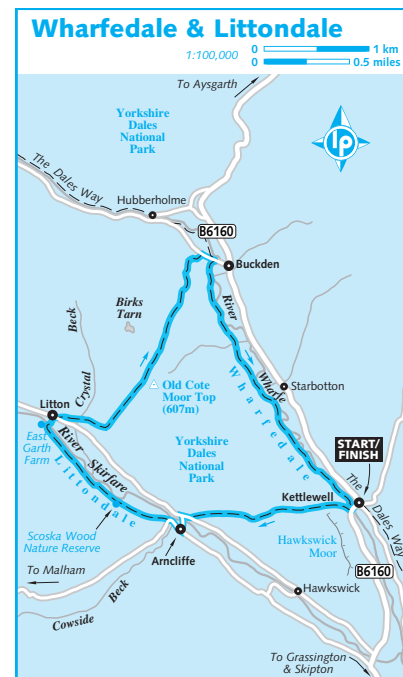
GETTING THERE & AWAY

There are several buses each day from the gateways of Leeds, Ilkley and Skipton to Grassington, from where you can get a local bus to Kettlewell (20 minutes). Services on weekdays during school holidays can be limited but on summer weekends there are extra services. The nearest train stations are at Skipton (from where you get a bus to Grassington) and Settle.

THE WALK Kettlewell to Arncliffe

1–1½ hours, 2.5 miles (4km)

From the centre of Kettlewell go southwest along the main road, across the bridge over



the River Wharfe. From the west side of the bridge, where the road bends to the left, take a wide track on the right, aiming uphill away from the river-side path. Go through a gate and almost immediately branch left again, onto a footpath sign-posted 'Arncliffe'. Keep heading up the fell (remembering to look behind at the fine views of Wharfedale), through a steep section of limestone cliffs and then over a few stiles as you cross the broad ridge between the two valleys.

As the path begins to descend into Littondale, you go through fields then over a stile and steeply down through woodland to reach the pretty little settlement of **Arncliffe**. Go straight across the lane and through a small gate opposite, turning right (northwest) alongside the River Skirfare, with the church on the opposite bank.

Arncliffe to Litton

1 hour, 2.5 miles (4km)

Follow the river-side path to reach a bridge. Cross this over the river, carry straight on and then turn right (signed 'bridleway') in

front of Smithy Cottage and some barns. After a few minutes you meet the lane again and turn right, following it over another bridge. Where this lane bends left (towards Malham), go straight on along a track signposted to Litton and Halton Gill. Leave the track by a small gate, into fields and follow the path along the level valley floor, through meadows and over several stiles. You pass through **Scoska Wood National Nature Reserve**, the largest ash and rowan woods remaining in the Yorkshire Dales. Only lightly grazed by cows, in spring and summer a profusion of wildflowers flourishes here.

The path keeps to the southwest side of the river all the way to East Garth Farm, where you go right to meet a track over the river. Turn left on the far side, look for the bridleway signs and follow the track round a few bends to meet a lane opposite the **Queens Arms Inn** (☎ 01756-770208; www.yorkshirenet.co.uk/stay-at-queensarms; d £75; ☹ Tue-Sun & Mon bank holidays), where lunch may beckon; it might even tempt you to stay the night and do the walk from here. This pub serves up snacks and good bar food (including homemade pies from £7), with a log fire when it's cold and a garden for when it's sunny. The pub is also a microbrewery and its Litton Ale is recommended. There are reductions on the B&B rate in winter. There's also a 'walkers room', sleeping up to six people for £75, plus £20 per additional person.

Litton to Buckden

1½–2 hours, 4 miles (6.5km)

With your back to the pub door, go left and uphill along a lane signposted 'Bridleway – Buckden'. The lane crosses a farmyard then becomes a track, dropping briefly into the pretty little valley of **Crystal Beck**, then climbs steadily up. Look back to see a patchwork of Dales fields, with the bulk of Pen-y-ghent and Plover Hill looming beyond. Keep your eyes on the route, though; as you climb out of the valley, the track becomes less distinct where it cuts back to the left to follow a stone wall steeply uphill. Keep the wall to your left.

After about 1.5 miles, where the gradient starts to ease, make sure you bear left through a gate to reach the broad top of the fell, marked by a new pathway of stone flagstones to guide you across the peaty ground. As you cross the ridge there's a

trig point about 200m to the right. Unfortunately the top is too broad to allow views down into both valleys, but as you start descending into Wharfedale you can see the villages of Buckden and Starbotton and the edge of Kettlewell. The hills beyond include Buckden Pike.

The path down to Buckden follows further stretches of flagstones across boggy patches. At the end of the flags, the path is indistinct in places but there are a few blue-topped marker posts to keep you in line.

As you approach a line of woodland, the path meets a track (signposted 'Bridleway') that winds down around the edge of the wood and through fields near a farm, eventually meeting the lane just west of Buckden. Turn right and walk along the lane for 500m to reach the bridge over the River Wharfe. If you need refreshment, go over the bridge into Buckden village (p179).

Buckden to Kettlewell

1½ hours, 4 miles (6.5km)

If you're skipping the delights of Buckden, before crossing the bridge turn right over a stile and onto a river-side path heading southeast. You are now on the Dales Way, although heading against the direction most long-distance walkers take.

Keep to this flat and very pleasant path as it winds through a few patches of woodland, meadows and fields, past stone walls and classic Dales field barns, and over a rather tiring number of stiles, all the way back to Kettlewell. In summer there's sometimes an ice-cream stall near the bridge. Otherwise the tearooms or pubs in Kettlewell will provide any required end-of-walk sustenance.

THE THREE PEAKS

Duration	9–12 hours
Distance	25 miles (40km)
Difficulty	demanding
Start/Finish	Horton in Ribblesdale (p270)
Transport	bus, train
Summary	A classic walk, long and challenging through high Dales country, with some sections of lower farmland for respite.

The three highest peaks in the Yorkshire Dales are Whernside (736m), Ingleborough (723m) and Pen-y-ghent (694m) – the main

points of this long, circular route, which has been a classic walk for many years. We mean *many* years: the first recorded completion was in 1887. Since then, thousands of walkers have done the circuit, traditionally aiming to complete the whole route in less than 12 hours. Some keen walkers knock it off in six hours or less. Even faster are the fell runners in the annual Three Peaks Race, who do it in about 2½ hours. If you're looking for a tough challenge, this might be one for you. If you like to actually enjoy your walking, doing a section of this route is perfectly feasible and still highly recommended.

PLANNING

This circular route can be followed in either direction; we describe it anticlockwise. The traditional start/finish is the village of Horton in Ribblesdale (usually shortened to Horton). Another possible start is Ribbleshead, if only to avoid the crowds that clog Horton on summer weekends. In recent years 'doing the Three Peaks' has become particularly popular with groups on sponsored walks raising money for charity, and things can get especially crowded if you happen to hit one of these days.

Wherever you start, paths are mostly clear. There are some very boggy sections, although many (but not all) of the worst bits are crossed by wooden boards or stone slabs, to protect the fragile environment as well as prevent walkers getting mired. There are some signposts, but the route itself is not specifically waymarked, so map and compass knowledge is essential.

The official total distance is 25 miles, but with all the ups and downs, and twists and turns, it's better to reckon on 26 miles. The route involves over 1500m of ascent, so this is no stroll in the park. With lunch and other stops, you should be able to do it in less than 12 hours.

YORKSHIRE HYPE

A local ditty reads 'Whernside, Ingleborough and Pen-y-ghent – the highest hills twixt Tweed and Trent'. The River Trent is in Nottinghamshire and the Tweed is on the Scottish border – an impressive 100 miles or more in each direction. But hold on there. Some walkers point out that the Lake District (and Scafell Pike – England's highest mountain) is only about 40 miles away, and so the rhyme is a little misleading. Although Yorkshire people are known to be proud of their county, this might be just a tad too much hype!

Alternatives

If 25 miles is too far, you can still enjoy a walk in this area by doing just one or two of the peaks. Pen-y-ghent and Ingleborough can be reached from Horton, while Whernside and Ingleborough can be reached from Ribbleshead. All are fine walks in their own right, with circular routes of between 5.5 miles and 12 miles possible.

The railway opens up more options. For example, from Horton you can walk via Pen-y-ghent or Ingleborough and Whernside to Ribbleshead, then catch the train back to Horton.

Maps & Books

The whole Three Peaks route is on the OS Landranger 1:50,000 map No 98 *Wensleydale & Upper Wharfedale*. For more detail use OS Explorer 1:25,000 map No 2 *Yorkshire Dales – South & West* or Harvey Maps' 1:40,000 *Dales West*.

Specific coverage of the route includes *The Three Peaks Map & Guide* by Arthur Gemmill, a handy little booklet that also describes other routes in the area, plus background on geology and history. Other guidebooks on the Three Peaks area include very nicely produced *Three Peaks & Howgill Fells* by Sheila Parker, with colour maps and photos and new information to take account of recent 'freedom to roam' legislation (see p448), endorsed by the Ramblers' Association. Others include *Walks in the Three Peaks Country* by Paul Hannon and *Settle & the Three Peaks* by Mick North.

Information Sources

The **Horton tourist office** (☎ 01729-860333; horton@ybtic.co.uk) is in the Pen-y-ghent Café. In between pouring mugs of tea, the friendly staff can advise on routes, and recommend maps, guides (on sale in the café) and local accommodation. A website dedicated to the route is www.3peakswalks.co.uk.

GETTING TO/FROM THE WALK

Bus routes run from the gateway town of Skipton to Settle during the day (45 minutes, hourly on weekdays, five buses each way on Sunday), but between Settle and Horton (20 minutes) there's a single bus that runs only on school days. So, by far the best way to reach Horton or Ribblesdale is on the trains that run between Leeds (one hour to Horton) and Carlisle (1½ hours to Horton) via Skipton (30 minutes from Horton) and Settle (10 minutes from Horton). This is the famous **Settle-Carlisle Railway** (www.settle-carlisle.co.uk) – see the boxed text on p174 for railway details. From May to September at least six trains run daily in each direction (five on Sunday).

If you're driving, note that the car park in the village often fills at weekends. The tourist office will direct you to alternative parking places. Cars left on verges or in gateways may be towed away by farmers with powerful tractors...

THE WALK

Horton in Ribblesdale to Pen-y-ghent

1½ hours, 2.5 miles (4km)

Leave Horton southwards, along the main street past the church. Cross over the stream and turn left into a lane heading uphill to a farm at Brackenbottom. From here a path leads straight up the hillside, over several stiles, to the southern shoulder of Pen-y-ghent. You can't miss the great bulk of this

mountain looming ahead. The cliffs look steep as you approach – and they are – but the path winds its way up between the worst bits, to flatten out for the final few steps that take you to **Pen-y-ghent summit** (694m). At the trig point, take a few moments to enjoy the view – hopefully the walk's other two peaks will be clearly visible.

Pen-y-ghent to Ribblesdale

3 hours, 7.5 miles (12km)

Cross the ladder stile over the wall running across the summit plateau, and drop downhill to the northwest. Horton is down to your left. You'll also see the great hole of Hull Pot. Even more obvious is the Pennine Way coming up to meet you. Don't take the Pennine Way back to Horton but continue northwest. (In wet weather your route is likely to be blocked by Hull Pot Beck, in which case *do* follow the Pennine Way towards Horton to meet a track going up the west side of the beck. This will lead you back onto the path described above.)

The path drops gradually down and continues along the valley, over several streams and bogs, to finally meet a dirt track near a house called Old Ing. From here you keep going downhill through fields to cross the River Ribble on a bridge to reach Lodge Hall Farm. Follow the farm lane to the main road (B6479) then walk along the side of this road – busy in summer, so take care – north to Ribblesdale.

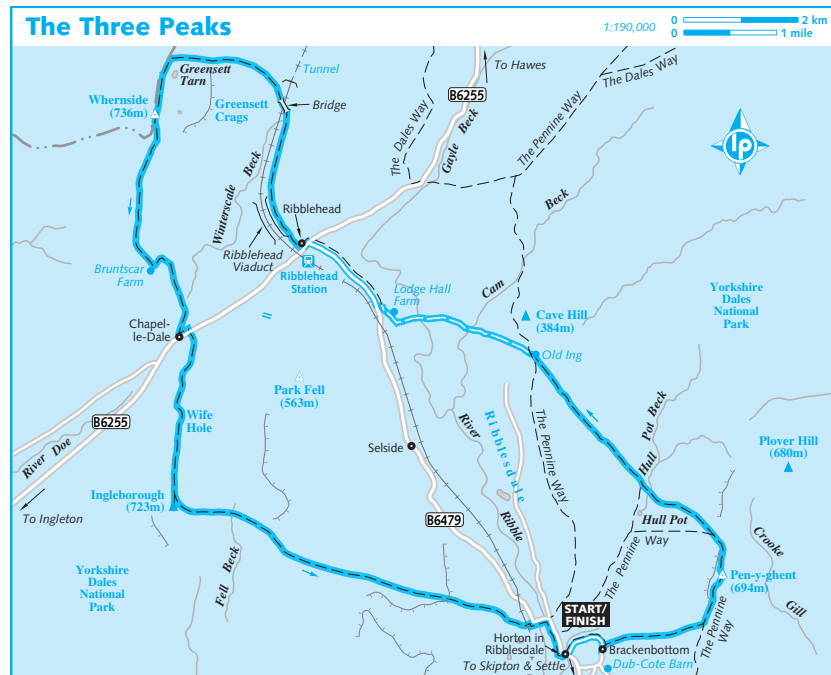
WALKERS' SAFETY SERVICE

Every weekend (and on some weekdays by prior arrangement) the helpful people at the Pen-y-ghent Café in Horton run a safety service – aimed specifically at individuals or small groups rather than the larger groups on organised sponsored walks. This service is free, and run by the café staff on a voluntary basis.

Here's how it works: you complete a card with your name and details, get the time punched onto it by the old factory clock in the café and leave the card. (If you want to get away in the morning before the café opens, there's an early-bird service – see the notice on the café porch for details.) When you finish the circuit you clock in so the staff know you're safely back.

The café closes at 6pm, but the staff wait around to check everybody gets back. If you've clocked out and don't manage to get back to Horton, it is *essential* that you phone the café to advise that you're OK. Otherwise staff will report you missing and that wastes the time and resources of the police and mountain-rescue team.

Although the clock-in service is a safety device (and not designed as 'part of the fun' for big groups on a day out), if you fulfil the requirements and complete the circuit in less than 12 hours you may get invited to join the Three Peaks Club – this means a certificate and a badge – issued by the café for a small fee. Note, however, that this is not a race. All you have to do is finish inside 12 hours – you don't get extra points for shorter times.



An alternative start and finish for this route, as well as a staging post, Ribblesdale is about 6 miles northwest of Horton by road. For B&B, bunkhouse accommodation, something to eat or just a pint of beer, head for the **Station Inn** (☎ 01524-241274; www.thestationinn.net; dm/s/d £9/32/50, meals £8-11). The bar serves sandwiches, giant filled Yorkshire puddings and meals like steak-and-ale pie, and is usually full with a mixed crowd of locals and visiting walkers, bikers, cavers and train spotters. If you want to keep moving, near the road junction a **tea van** may be parked (summer and weekends only).

Ribblesdale to Wharfedale

2 hours, 4.5 miles (7km)

From east of Station Inn, a dirt road leads northwest towards the **Ribblesdale Viaduct**. When the Settle-Carlisle Railway was threatened with closure in the 1970s, this viaduct became the symbol of the fight to keep the line open. The success of that campaign is commemorated by a plaque showing a Victorian navy and a modern railway engineer 'shaking hands across the century'.

Do not go beneath the viaduct but go uphill on the path running next to the railway as it curves round to the northeast, to take a small bridge across the line – also carrying Force Gill stream, so marked 'aqueduct' on OS maps. Continue upwards to the north of lonely (and lovely) **Greensett Tarn**.

The path eventually reaches a wall running along the ridge and leads all the way to the trig point marking the summit of **Wharfedale** (736m). The path is to the east of the wall and the trig point is to the west – so take care in mist.

Wharfedale to Chapel-le-Dale

1 hour, 3.5 miles (5.5km)

From Wharfedale follow the path southwest down the ridge for about 1.5 miles before branching left (south) and heading steeply down the hillside and into fields to reach Bruntscar Farm. From here a track then a lane leads directly to the B6255, about 500m north of the small village of Chapel-le-Dale. Almost opposite the point where the lane meets the main road is the popular **Old Hill Inn** – ideal if you need a meal or drink.

Chapel-le-Dale to Ingleborough Summit

1½ hours, 2.5 miles (4km)

From the Old Hill Inn head up the B6255 for about 200m to reach a gate and signpost on the right. The path goes through fields and a nature reserve of eroded limestone pavement, then past a large funnel-shaped depression called **Wife Hole**. Beyond here, the path gets increasingly steep as you keep heading south then swing round to the southwest to finally reach the summit plateau of **Ingleborough** (723m). In clear weather the trig point and large stone wind shelter are easy to see, but in mist you could get lost here, so keep your wits (and compass) about you.

Ingleborough to Horton in Ribblesdale

2 hours, 5.5 miles (9km)

From the summit retrace your ascent path for a short distance to reach a fork. Go right, heading east on a clear path, then southeast. Keep descending through a large area of limestone pavement with Horton coming into view in the valley below, and the turquoise lake in the quarry over to your right (south). You reach Horton near the train station. Cross the railway, go straight on, then over the river to reach the finish of the walk at the Pen-y-ghent Café – where no doubt you'll deserve several mugs of tea.

THE SETTLE-CARLISLE RAILWAY

One of the greatest engineering achievements of the Victorian era, the **Settle-Carlisle Railway** (www.settle-carlisle.co.uk) takes passengers across some of the most scenic countryside in England. The line was created by the Midland Railway Company at the end of the 19th century; legend has it that the company chairman looked at a map of Yorkshire, saw the big gap that was the Dales and drew a line across it with a pencil, saying, 'That's where I'll have my railway'.

The chairman hadn't realised there were quite so many hills and valleys to cross, and the line took 6000 men known as navigators (or 'navvies') more than seven years to build. It cost over £3.5 million (a vast sum in those days) and 100 lives (an even greater cost) due to accidents and appalling conditions in the workers' camps.

It was the last major railway to be built using pick and shovel by gangs of navvies, and involved some amazing work. The Ribbleshead Viaduct has 24 arches, the tallest almost 50m high, and the viaducts at Dent Head and Arten Gill are almost as impressive. The longest tunnel is under Blea Moor and is over 1 mile long. Altogether there are 325 bridges, 21 viaducts and 14 tunnels.

In the 1970s British Rail decided the expense of repairing the line was unjustifiable and the line was threatened with closure, but the ensuing public outcry ensured its survival. Today, passenger trains between Leeds and Carlisle run along the line at least six times daily, and it's also used by freight trains carrying coal and stone. During summer there are occasionally steam-hauled trains on the route but normally there are simply two-carriage diesels. Nevertheless, the views from the windows are amazing, and the railway is still one of the best ways for walkers to get to the heart of the Dales. For more details about the line's history, background and timetables see the website.

THE DALES WAY

Duration	6 days
Distance	84 miles (135km)
Difficulty	moderate
Start	Ilkley (p176)
Finish	Bowness-on-Windermere (p176)
Transport	bus, train
Summary	An excellent walk on good paths, over some hills, but mainly through some of the most scenic valleys in northern England.

The Dales Way winds through the heart of the Yorkshire Dales, and provides a perfect cross-section view of this wonderful walking area. The route ends in the foothills of the neighbouring Lake District, another of the most frequented walking areas in Britain, so this linking route is naturally very popular.

The major attractions are the scenery – traditional farmland, meandering rivers, ancient villages, rolling hills – and the relatively straightforward route, following clear paths, tracks and even a stretch of Roman road.

And one more plus: the Dales Way is also particularly well served by camp sites, hostels, B&Bs and village shops, plus a great

many comfortable cafés, teashops and pubs. If you stopped in them all you'd never make it to Windermere.

PLANNING

The Dales Way can be walked in either direction but we recommend going southeast to northwest. It's better to leave Ilkley than to arrive, and Lake Windermere makes a very precise and satisfying finish.

The official length of 84 miles is measured on the map, so it's a bit more with all the ups and downs, and most people take six days to cover the route. Many also start at a weekend, meaning a 'bulge' goes along the trail, sometimes filling all B&B options in the villages at the end of each day. To avoid this, try to start the route midweek. We suggest the following stages as most convenient:

Day	From	To	Miles/km
1	Ilkley	Grassington	17/27.5
2	Grassington	Buckden	11/17.5
3	Buckden	Dentdale	16/25.5
4	Dentdale	Sedbergh	13/21
5	Sedbergh	Burneside	17/27.5
6	Burneside	Bowness-on-Windermere	10/16

Alternatives

If you're a fast walker you could do the Way in five days but it would be a shame to rush. So, if your time is limited, start at Bolton Abbey and end at Sedbergh, a four-day trip covering the best bit of the route. If you really want to saunter, the route can be done in seven or eight days, splitting Day 1 at Burnsall and Day 3 at Cam Houses, for example.

As with all long-distance paths (LDPs), you can do just a single-day linear section of the Dales Way or a circular route taking in a stretch of the main path. Publications suggesting other routes are listed on right.

Maps

Despite its popularity, the Dales Way is not well waymarked throughout, so you'll need a map and you'll have to keep an eye on it to avoid following other footpaths that branch off the route.

For the whole route on one map, you can't do better than Harvey Maps' *Dales Way* 1:40,000 strip map. If you want to explore the Dales beyond the strip, then you'll

need more sheets. In the Harvey *Yorkshire Dales* 1:40,000 series this means the *East*, *South* and *West* sheets.

If you prefer OS Landranger 1:50,000 maps, the Dales Way is mostly on maps No 98 *Wensleydale & Upper Wharfedale* and 99 *Northallerton & Ripon*, with the start of the route on No 104 *Leeds & Bradford* and the end on No 97 *Kendal & Morecambe*.

For more detail, the southern and central parts (except the first few miles out of Ilkley) are also shown on the OS Explorer 1:25,000 maps No 2 *Yorkshire Dales – South & West* and 30 *Yorkshire Dales – Northern & Central*. The section of the route north of Dent is on maps No 19 *Howgill Fells* and 7 *The English Lakes – South Eastern*.

Books

The book that started it all is *Dales Way* by Colin Speakman, first published in 1970 and since gone through many editions. *Dales Way Route Guide* by Colin Speakman and Arthur Gemmell is another long-standing, very handy and inexpensive booklet, with details of the main route plus several circular day walks taking in sections of the Way. *The Dales Way Companion* by Paul Hannon is lovingly handcrafted in the Wainwright tradition, combining pen-and-ink text and illustrations, plus just enough background information to entertain without distraction. These three books have hand-drawn maps but they should still be used with a proper survey map. Other route guides include *The Dales Way* by Terry Marsh and *The Dales Way* by Anthony Burton, containing extracts from the OS 1:25,000 maps.

The exceedingly useful *Dales Way Handbook*, published annually by the Dales Way Association (and available by post), contains accommodation listings, public transport details and other essential information. It's also available in most tourist offices.

Information Sources

See the walk description for tourist offices on or near the route. Also near the Dales Way, and handy for information on the area surrounding the northern part of the route, is Kendal, which has a **tourist office** (☎ 01539-725758; www.lakelandgateway.info).

The website of the **Dales Way Association** (www.dalesway.org.uk) is full of information, including latest updates to the route, new

guidebooks and places to stay. Membership of the association includes the handbook (see p175), and in this way you can support the people who support the route.

Baggage Services

Baggage-carrying services are listed on p437.

NEAREST TOWNS Ilkley

At the start of the route, Ilkley was originally established as a village on a packhorse route across the Yorkshire Dales, then grew into a wealthy market centre in the Middle Ages, with much of the trade based on wool. Today, Ilkley still exudes an air of quiet comfort, with hanging baskets and antique shops, the ever-reliable indicators of well-to-do towns, much in evidence. The **tourist office** (☎ 01943-602319; www.visitilkley.com) is opposite the bus and train stations.

SLEEPING & EATING

There are many B&Bs in town and those welcoming walkers include **Archway Cottage** (☎ 01943-603399; thegreens@archcottage.fsnet.co.uk; 24 Skipton Rd; d from £50); **1 Tivoli Place** (☎ 01943-600328; www.tivoliplace.co.uk; d from £70); **63 Skipton Rd** (☎ 01943-817542; d from £70); and the **Riverside Hotel** (☎ 01943-607338; www.ilkeley-riversidehotel.com; s/d £45/65), in a quiet setting very near the start of the route, also with a bar and restaurant.

Ilkley has a good selection of places to eat, including the famously genteel **Betty's Cafe** and several pleasant pubs.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Ilkley is served by frequent buses from Leeds (one hour) and Skipton (30 minutes), both easily reached from anywhere in the country by National Express coach. By train, the nearest mainline station to the start of the walk is Leeds, linked to London and the rest of the country by fast and regular services. From Leeds, local commuter trains run to Ilkley (30 minutes) at least once an hour.

Bowness-on-Windermere & Windermere

The Dales Way ends at the small town of Bowness-on-Windermere, only 1.5 miles from the larger town of Windermere itself, although the two places pretty much merge. As the name implies, Bowness-

on-Windermere sits on the shores of Lake Windermere, on the eastern edge of the Lake District. There's a **tourist office** (☎ 015394-46499; windmeretic@southlakeland.gov.uk) in Windermere.

SLEEPING & EATING

When it comes to accommodation, if any house in Bowness or Windermere doesn't do B&B, it's probably abandoned. Or at least that's how it seems in this busy tourist honey pot. Having said that, in high season you may still have to do a bit of phoning around to find a bed for the night. Another point to remember is that many B&Bs here don't really cater for passing walkers but prefer to take tourists for a number of nights.

The more walker-friendly places include the **Fairfield** (☎ 015394-46565; www.the-fairfield.co.uk; Brantfell Rd; d £74), a smart and comfortable place – to your left as you come down the road at the end of the route – with discounts for stays of two or more nights and in the quieter months, and the nearby **Blenheim Lodge** (☎ 01539-443440; blenheimlodge@supanet.com; d £32-50).

Good-quality **Belsfield House** (☎ 01539-445823; www.belsfieldhouse.co.uk; 4 Kendal Rd; d from £50) is very near the end of Brantfell Rd; guests can use the sauna, massage and jacuzzi facilities free of charge at a nearby hotel leisure centre – ideal for reviving tired legs after the walk!

Also good is **Lingwood Lodge** (☎ 01539-444680; www.lingwoodlodge.co.uk; Birkett Hill; d £70), about 800m south of the pier.

Just off the Dales Way, near Matson Ground, about 1 mile before you reach Bowness, a good choice is **Gilthwaite Rigg** (☎ 01539-44621; Lickbarrow Rd; d £60). The friendly people here will pick you up from the end of the route and run you back into town, if required, for an evening meal. If you have your own car, they also offer long-term parking, so you can leave it here while you're walking the Dales Way.

If you want a real blowout at the end of your walk, try the **Old England Hotel** (☎ central reservations 0870 400 8130; www.macdonald-hotels.co.uk/oldengland), overlooking the lake. B&B ranges from £39 per person midweek in winter to about £85 on summer weekends. Take your boots off before checking in, though!

A favourite pub in the same part of town is the **Hole in't Wall** (a reminder of all those squeeze gates you've pushed through on the

Dales Way!), with good beer, lively atmosphere, bar food and music some evenings. There are other good pubs on the nearby streets, most doing food. For other eating options, Bowness and Windermere have more tearooms, cafés and takeaways than you can shake a stick at, not to mention a batch of classy restaurants. Stroll around for 10 minutes and you'll soon find a place to suit your taste buds and budget.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

In the summer, local buses run between Bowness-on-Windermere and Windermere, from where buses go to all parts of the Lake District and other places in the north of England, while National Express coaches go to all parts of the country. From Windermere there are hourly trains to Kendal (15 minutes), on a main line, from where you can reach the rest of the country. (For more details on transport away from Windermere to other parts of the Lakes, see p188)

THE WALK

Day 1: Ilkley to Grassington

6–8 hours, 17 miles (27.5km)

This is a long day and can be a hard introduction to the route. It can be busy too, especially around Bolton Abbey on summer weekends. If you're fully kitted out with boots and backpack, you'll feel a bit silly surrounded by people in beachwear, kids in pushchairs and grannies on Zimmer frames. Nevertheless, this is a really beautiful bit of the valley. Try to do it on a weekday.

From the centre of Ilkley go to the 'new' bridge (built in 1904) over the River Wharfe. Don't cross this bridge but go left down some steps and along the river to reach the Old Bridge, the official start, marked by a single Dales Way signpost.

Continue along the south bank of the Wharfe, then follow the path away from

the river, through woodland, past a tennis club and then across flat meadows to enter more woodland next to the river once again. Although the main road is nearby, it's surprisingly quiet – the sound of traffic is not enough to drown out the birdsong.

The Way winds around the backstreets of the village of Addingham, then follows the river bank closely for 1.5 miles to suddenly pop out on the busy and narrow B6160. The Way used to follow this road but thankfully a new route leads to the driveway of Lobwood House then through the fields, parallel to the road but separated from the traffic by a wall. Not quite far enough, though, as there's still a nasty little section along the edge of the road before you branch off onto a path back to the river.

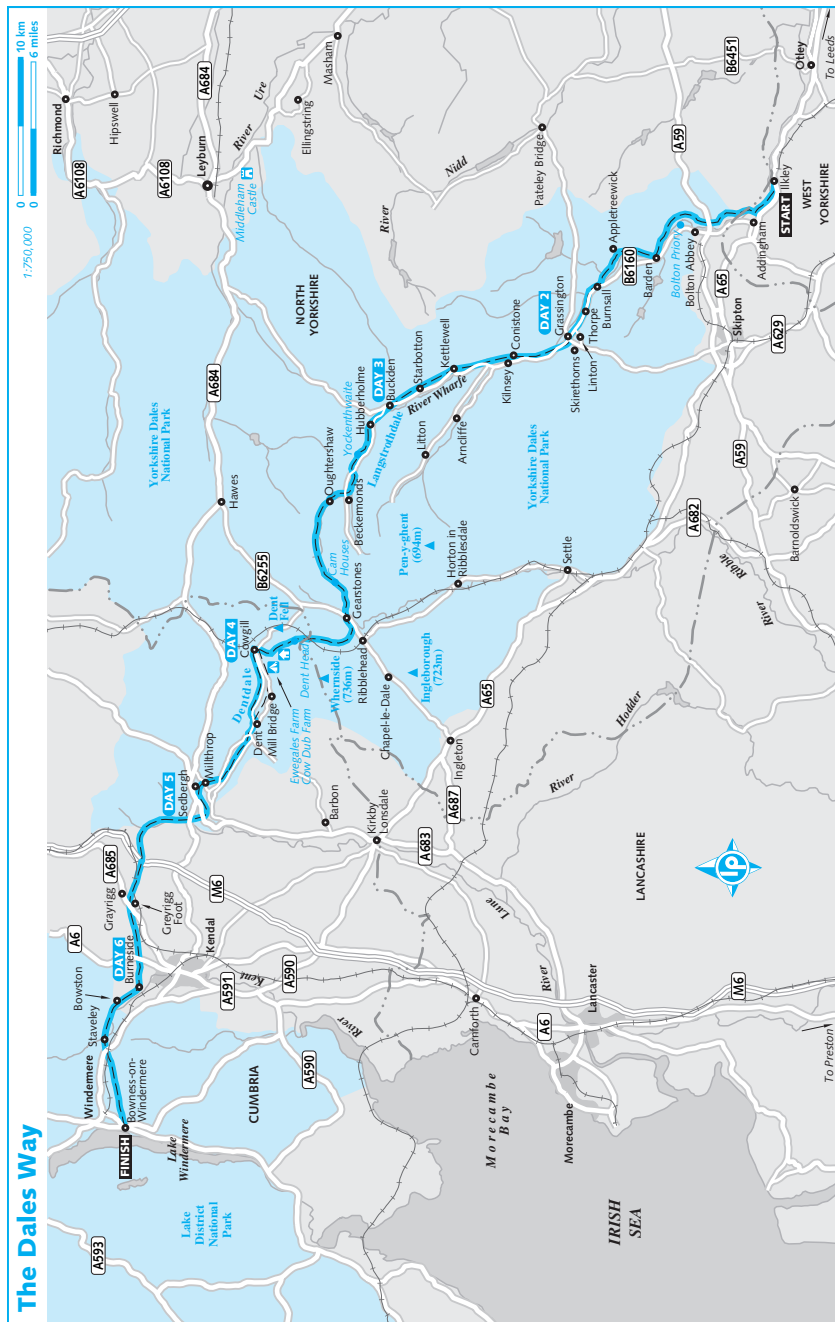
Follow the river-side path, under another main road (the A59) then past old Bolton Bridge and across fields, following signposts to Bolton Abbey. Keep near the river to bypass the village of Bolton Abbey. Just beyond here are the ruins of **Bolton Priory** – see the boxed text, below.

Near the priory you cross the stepping stones (or the nearby footbridge) to the east bank of the river and head north. A short distance along you could divert across another footbridge to reach the **Cavendish Pavilion**, selling drinks, meals, snacks, ice creams and postcards. The route continues through delightful woods above a narrow gorge called the **Strid** (there's a tearoom at the nearby car park), to reach Barden Bridge.

Follow the river through farmland, passing close to the village of Appletreewick – with a couple of pubs that get very crowded on summer weekends. Less frenetic is Burnsall, about 2 miles upstream, where excellent food and accommodation is available at the **Red Lion Hotel** (☎ 01756-720204; d £125). It's just a few more easy miles, through fields and patches of woodland, to Grassington.

BOLTON PRIORY

Bolton Priory is often mistakenly called Bolton Abbey (but that's the name of the village). The priory was built in the 12th century by Augustinian monks. During the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII in 1539 all but the nave of the priory was destroyed. The surviving nave has now been converted into the parish church. The spectacle of these grand ruins in such beautiful surroundings has inspired poets and painters such as Wordsworth and Turner. The priory is open to visitors every day and contributions towards the upkeep are always welcomed.



GRASSINGTON

The very attractive village of Grassington was once a lead-mining centre but today the major industry is tourism, with several pubs, cafés and craft shops, a small supermarket, a bank, an outdoor gear shop and heavy crowds on summer weekends. If you've arrived with time to spare, the Mining Museum is worth a visit. The **tourist office** (☎ 01756-752774; grassington@ytbtic.co.uk) is in the car park on the edge of the village.

Campers can go to **Wood Nook Caravan Park** (☎ 01756-752412; Skirethorns; sites for 2£10), about 1 mile west of Grassington, a good place with hot showers and shop.

Walker-friendly B&Bs include **Lythe End** (☎ 01756-753196; Wood Lane; d £25). At the upper end of the main street are **Craven Cottage** (☎ 01756-752205; cullingford44@aol.com; d from £50) and **Grove House** (☎ 01756-753364; www.grovehousegrassington.net; d from £60).

A little out of the village centre are **Raines Close** (☎ 01756-752678; www.rainesclose.co.uk; Station Rd; s/d £32/50) and **Springroyd House** (☎ 01756-752473; www.springroydhouse.co.uk; Station Rd; d from £46). A smarter option is the **Grassington House Hotel** (☎ 01756-752406; Market Sq; s/d £44/76), with good meals and comfortable en suite rooms.

Of the pubs in the village, our favourite is the **Foresters Arms** (☎ 01756-752349; www.forestersarmsgrassington.co.uk), an old coaching inn on the main street, serving good beer and no-nonsense bar meals. Other pubs (also with food and accommodation) include the **Black Horse** (☎ 01756-752770; www.blackhorsehotelgrassington.co.uk) and the **Devonshire Hotel** (☎ 01756-752525; www.thedevonshirehotel.co.uk), both in the centre of the village.

Away from the pubs, Grassington's best eating option is **Number Forty-seven** (☎ 01756-752069; ☺ lunch & dinner), a delightful little restaurant at the upper end of the main street.

Day 2: Grassington to Buckden

4–5 hours, 11 miles (17.5km)

Today you continue up Wharfedale, but leave the valley floor to cross grassy fields and some beautiful sections of limestone pavement. The route also winds through several picturesque villages, most with lunch or overnight possibilities.

From the centre of Grassington go up the main street, left into Chapel St, turn right and go up a lane. Follow the waymarks

across fields in a westerly direction, before swinging north again, high above the valley. The route passes through an old lead-mining area, and there are some entrances and shafts dotted about – so take great care if you lose the path in mist.

About 2.5 miles from Grassington, the Way crosses Bycliffe Road, an old pack-horse route and now a bridleway used by mountain bikers. On the other side of the valley is Kilsney Crag, a rock climbers' test piece. All activities catered for here!

The route drops to a lane about 1 mile south of the pretty little village of Kettlewell then soon branches off right (north). If the lane is quiet you might as well head straight into **Kettlewell** – an ideal lunch stop with pubs and tearooms, plus a shop and a post office. If you want to overnight here, details are given on p169.

Beyond Kettlewell the path follows the river, sometimes near the bank, sometimes a few fields away from it, but all the time through classic Dales scenery of stiles, dry-stone walls, ancient barns and a few patches of woodland, to reach Buckden.

BUCKDEN & HUBBERHOLME

The small and scenic village of Buckden has several walker-friendly B&Bs, including **West Winds Cottage** (☎ 01756-760883; d from £40), which is also a tearoom; **Birks View** (☎ 01756-760873; d from £44), next to the shop; and **Romany Cottage** (☎ 01756-760365; www.romanycottage.co.uk; s/d £27/44), also offering guided walks in the area. On the outskirts of the village is lovely old **Hartrigg House** (☎ 01756-760443; www.hartrigghouse.co.uk; d £60), originally built about 120 years ago as the station hotel – a little ambitious at the time, as the railway never arrived.

The village shop stocks enough for lunch or overnight if you're camping. Attached is the friendly **Buckden Village Restaurant** (lunch around £6, dinner £8–11; ☺ to 8pm Thu–Tue in summer). For evening food and refreshment, there's the **Buck Inn** (☎ 01756-760228; www.thebuckinn.com; mains from £8).

Less than 2 miles upstream from Buckden is the even smaller village of Hubberholme, where you'll find the highly rated **George Inn** (☎ 01756-760223; www.thegeorge-inn.co.uk; d £60), with good beer and excellent bar meals; walker-friendly **Church Farm** (☎ 01756-760240; gillhuck@hubberholme.fsnet.co.uk; d £44); and **Kirkgill Manor** (☎ 01756-760800; d from £58).

Day 3: Buckden to Dentdale

7–9 hours, 16 miles (25.5km)

This is a long day and potentially the most serious stage of the whole route. There are no shops or cafés for lunch on this section – in fact there's not much at all, except wonderful, wild, open hills, big views and the sound of the breeze.

After Hubberholme (where the ancient church is well worth a look around), the valley is called Langstrothdale but the river is still the Wharfe, getting more stream-like as it nears its source. The path passes through the lonely farmsteads of Yockenthwaite and Deepdale, then at Beckermonds you take a lane north towards Hawes. Just after the hamlet of Oughtershaw the Way branches off to the left (westwards) and into the fields again. The names of these dispersed farmsteads – and many other local names – are derived from the period when the Yorkshire Dales were inhabited by Vikings. Even words like 'fell' and 'dale' are Nordic in origin.

Meanwhile, back in the present, the valley gets broader and the landscape more exposed. When the wind blows up here you really know about it and, even on calm days, there's a great feeling of remote emptiness.

The route passes **Swarthghyll Farm** (☎ 01756-760466; www.swarthghyll-farm.co.uk; d £40). It's a long way to the pub for dinner, so the owners provide a food package (£6) for you to cook yourself, and also do packed lunches for the next day.

The route keeps going up gradually to pass the remote farmstead of Cam Houses (also called Camm Farm), up the hill, through the northern corner of Cam Woods, across a farm track, then diagonally up a final slope to a cairn. Here you meet the **Cam High Road**, part of an old Roman road, where you turn southwest. You can put the map away for a while and stride out like a centurion, taking in the splendid panoramas of Ingleborough and Wharfedale – two of the highest peaks in the Yorkshire Dales – away to the left. This section of the route is also part of the Pennine Way and you may see other long-distance walkers, mostly heading in the opposite direction on their way to Kirk Yetholm in Scotland.

At a second cairn the Pennine Way branches off left but you keep straight on, descending on the track to meet the B6255

at Gearstones. If you need sustenance or a bed, 1.5 miles to the west is Ribblesdale and the Station Inn (see p173). If you're leaving the Dales Way here, the station is on the railway south to Settle and north to Carlisle. For details see the boxed text on p174.

If you're staying on the Dales Way, turn left and follow the road for 100m, then go up the first farm track on the right (signposted 'Dent Head'), past Winshaw House. From here the path leads through fields and the moorland edge to a lane. Turn left and follow the lane downhill into the top of Dentdale valley, under the arches of **Dent Head railway viaduct** – a fine example of Victorian engineering that comes as quite a surprise in this quiet rural area. The Way continues along the lane; traffic is light but take care.

DENTDALE

The route descends along Dentdale, and passes some accommodation options strung along the valley. In the tiny settlement of Cow Dub, the longstanding and near-legendary **Sportsman's Inn** (☎ 015396-25282; www.theportsmansinn.com; d £54) has comfortable rooms, log fires, fine beers and good bar food every day, and provides a real welcome for Dales Way walkers.

Another 800m brings you to the equally walker-friendly **River View** (☎ 015396-25592; RiverView@btinternet.com; Cowgill; d from £50), near Lea Yeat Bridge.

Camping is possible at **Cow Dub Farm** (☎ 015396-25278; sites for 2 £5), next to the Sportsman's Inn, and at **Ewegales Farm** (☎ 015396-25440; sites for 2 £8), further down the valley.

There are more B&Bs a few miles along the valley (see the Day 4 description, below) and others in Dent village; some will pick you up from here if you arrange it in advance.

If you're leaving the route here, Dent train station is nearby – at the top of a very steep hill north of Cowgill. Trains head north to Carlisle or south to Settle and Leeds.

Day 4: Dentdale to Sedbergh

5–6 hours, 13 miles (21km)

This is a fairly easy day as the Way meanders through fields and woodland. The scenery is once again classic Yorkshire Dales (even though you're now in Cumbria).

From Cowgill the Dales Way winds down Dentdale, first on the south side of the valley, but crossing and re-crossing on a couple of occasions. At Mill Bridge (about 2 miles from Cowgill) there's a range of accommodation options at **Wharfedale Manor** (☎ 015396-25213; camp sites for 2 £6, bunkhouse £8, B&B d £60), though we found this place doesn't exactly ooze welcome. Next door, homely and friendly **Smithy Fold** (☎ 015396-25368; www.smithyfold.co.uk; d £40, dinner £13) offers comfortable B&B, and dinner by prior arrangement.

From Mill Bridge you follow a delightful path beside the River Dee to the large village of **Dent** – an interesting place to look around, with narrow, cobbled streets and a fine old church, and a **shop** (☎ daily) for supplies. For lunch there are a couple of teashops, plus two good pubs, also doing accommodation: the **George & Dragon** (☎ 015396-25256; www.thegeorgeanddragon.co.uk; d weekdays/weekends £59/75) and the **Sun Inn** (☎ 015396-25208; d from £37). With several B&Bs in and around the village, Dent is also an overnight possibility.

From Dent return to the River Dee and continue following the Dales Way along a beautiful section of river bank on paths through fields. Near a point called Ellers the path meets the quiet lane along the south side of the valley and follows this to Brackensgill, where you turn right onto a track and the river is crossed on a new footbridge (older maps still show 'ford' here). The track meets the larger road running along the north side of the valley. You go almost straight across here and uphill on another track, going left, then left again past Gap Wood, where the gradient eases. There's one final hill, with fine views from the summit, before dropping through the village of Millthrop into the town of Sedbergh.

SEDBERGH

The busy old market town of Sedbergh promotes itself as 'England's Booktown' and this certainly is a good place to stock up on reading material. The town also has food stores, banks, pubs, a couple of outdoor gear shops and a **tourist office** (☎ 01539-620125; www.sedbergh.org.uk), which is, perhaps not surprisingly, in a bookshop on the main street.

The most convenient place for camping is **Pinfold Caravan Site** (☎ 015396-20576; sites for 2 £10), on the east side of town, with plenty of facilities, including a laundrette.

The well-equipped **Catholes Bunkhouse** (☎ 015396-20334; dm £6) is just off the Dales Way, before Sedbergh, and is best reached by turning off at Millthrop.

Walker-friendly B&Bs in Sedbergh include **Holme Croft** (☎ 015396-20754; www.holmeCroftbandb.co.uk; Station Rd; d £46) and **Wheelwright Cottage** (☎ 015396-20251; 15 Back Lane; s/d £25/44).

Of the pubs in town offering B&B, the characterful **Dalesman Country Inn** (☎ 015396-21183; www.thedalesman.co.uk; Main St; s/d £30/60) serves fine beer and bar food. Also worth a try is the **Bull Hotel** (☎ 015396-20264; Main St; s/d £30/60; ☎ lunch & dinner), while the **Red Lion** is a traditional pub with very friendly and helpful staff.

For tomorrow's picnic, stock up from the good range of home baking at **Ellie's Bakery & Tearoom**.

Day 5: Sedbergh to Burneside

6–8 hours, 17 miles (27.5km)

This is a day of transition. The Way leaves the Yorkshire Dales and passes through the gently rolling landscape of the Eden Valley. You need to keep an especially good eye on the map here, as you encounter farmyards, old lanes and a great number of stiles and gates. There's no place to buy lunch, so bring a picnic.

The route leaves Sedbergh along the River Rawthey, which flows into the beautiful River Lune. This is followed through fields and meadows (and, at Hole House, almost through someone's kitchen!) for several miles. All morning the velvety humps of the Howgill Fells dominate the scene to your right (east) and the route is crossed by several splendid viaducts belonging to a disused railway, seemingly out of scale for what was a fairly minor branch line.

The handsome **Crook of Lune Bridge** is a good place for a rest, and maybe an early lunch and a spot of reflection over the last few days of walking, as the river marks the boundary of the national park. Go over the bridge and bid farewell to the Dales. After another 2 miles, the next bridge is quite a contrast – over the thundering traffic on the M6 motorway – but you soon enter farmland once again. A little further along you join a lane to cross a major railway line.

The Way continues through the small settlement of Grayrigg Foot (1 mile west of the slightly larger village of Grayrigg),

where it crosses the A685 running south to Kendal, then continues through more sleepy farmland. If you're thinking about stopping for the night, there's B&B or a place to pitch your tent at **High Barn** (☎ 01539-824625; www.highbarn.info; sites for 2 £6, d £32, dinner £13) in the hamlet of Shaw End, about 1 mile beyond Grayrigg Foot, near Pattern Bridge.

Beyond here you pass the small lake of **Black Moss Tarn**, then it's another 3 miles or so of potentially complicated walking (you'll definitely need your map) along lanes, paths and farm tracks to finally reach Burneside.

BURNESIDE

On the edge of the Lake District, and overshadowed by the nearby honey-pot town of Kendal, the large village of Burneside sees few visitors. It may be the better for that. There's a shop, post office, and (for those wanting to leave the Dales Way) a train station.

Campers can go to the simple site at **Burnside Hall Farm** (sites for 2 £6), just before Burneside as you come in from the east.

On the main street, the **Jolly Anglers Inn** (☎ 01539-732552; s/d £38/56; ☎ dinner except Monday in winter) is a friendly village local. Next door, the **Jolly Fryer** (☎ dinner Tue, Thu & Fri) serves fish and chips to take away in the evening, plus a few lunchtimes.

In the next village of Bowston (also on the Dales Way), B&B is available at **Hillcrest** (☎ 01539-821489; d £56); with notice the friendly landlady will cook you an evening meal for around £18, including a bottle of wine.

If these places are all full, some B&Bs in Kendal will come and pick you up. These include friendly and historic **Bridge House** (☎ 01539-722041; www.bridgehouse-kendal.co.uk; Castle St; s/d £30/52). Guests are also offered complimentary Kendal Mint Cake – a locally made, sugar-based, traditional energy food, vital fuel for generations of British walkers and mountaineers.

Day 6: Burneside to Bowness-on-Windermere

3–4 hours, 10 miles (16km)

This final day is pleasingly easy, alongside rivers and through rolling farmland. Way-marking is generally good but there are still a few tricky bits. Rather than stopping en

route, plan for a late lunch at Bowness-on-Windermere.

From Burneside the Way follows the River Kent for about 3.5 miles – a very enjoyable stretch of walking to get you in the mood for your first steps in the Lake District. The route passes just south of Staveley village, crossing a road, under a railway and then over the busy A591 between Kendal and Windermere on a small road bridge. If it's time for coffee, head into Staveley to find **Wilf's Café** (☎ 01539-822329; www.wilfs-cafe.co.uk), a very popular spot for walkers and cyclists, on a small industrial estate near Wheelbase Cycle Shop.

Beyond Staveley, there's a short section of walking along a lane and then the Way once again crosses peaceful farmland and some high ground near Hag End Farm, where a wide vista of Lake District mountains suddenly opens out before you. It's a wonderful sight but don't try to admire it while you're walking – stop and do it properly! – as on these last few miles the route ducks and dives through gardens and narrow farm lanes, with several paths branching off the main route, and it would be a shame to get lost so close to the end.

Although you can see the mountains of the Lake District, thus far there's been no view of Windermere, but on **Brant Fell**, just 1 mile or so before the finish, you're treated to the first view of the lake. Below this lookout is a slate bench with a plaque marking the official end of the Dales Way. You may want to sit down and celebrate, or you may decide it's more pleasing to continue down the path to Brantfell Rd, which then leads to the centre of Bowness-on-Windermere – a busy tourist town that can be quite a shock after days of near-solitude in the Dales.

Keep going downhill, past the pubs and cafés and souvenir shops, to the lake shore, where you can reach the water between crowds of holidaymakers and boats moored at the pier, and dip your toe in the lake to ceremoniously mark the end of your Dales Way walk. You can then enjoy a well-earned cup of tea or ice cream at one of the nearby snack bars overlooking the shore.

This goodbye to the Dales Way is also hello to the Lake District. For more details on this area, see p185.

MORE WALKS

In this chapter we have described a classic peak route, a less-demanding circuit through two valleys, and a wonderful long-distance route through the heart of the Dales. But there are many more opportunities for walking here; the following pointers describe areas roughly south to north.

THE SOUTHERN DALES

A great place to base yourself in this area is the village of Malham (p268). It's on the Pennine Way, and there's plenty of accommodation, and easy access by bus. Malham can get very busy, however, so is best avoided at weekends and during holidays. The surrounding area is a geologist's paradise – you can visit the precipitous cliff of Malham Cove, the remains of an ancient waterfall topped by an area of classic limestone pavement complete with numerous clints and grikes (sections of rock between narrow fissures). Nearby are picturesque Malham Tarn and the waterfall of Gordale Scar, and these can all be linked on an excellent 8-mile (13km) walk.

East of the River Wharfe, the hills of the Dales are quieter. A good circuit goes from Bolton Abbey, northwards for a short distance along the river's east bank before climbing up through an area marked 'The Valley of Desolation' on OS maps (although it's very pleasant in reality) to reach the wide, flat moorland of Barden Fell and the impressive summit of Simon's Seat, with great views over lower Wharfedale and the surrounding area.

THE WESTERN DALES

In the western part of the Dales, the small town of Ingleton makes a good base; it's quite easy to reach and has several places to stay. In the area to the north, the valleys of the Rivers Twist and Doe are popular, but the stunning scenery attracts many visitors, so come at a quiet time of year if you can. The nearby village of Clapham is easy also to reach – there's a train station 1.5 miles away. From here you can walk to the large and impressive Ingleborough Caves and continue on to the high ground, even to the summit of Ingleborough itself – one of the famous Three Peaks.

Northwest of Ingleton is Ribbleshead, easily reached on the Settle-Carlisle Railway. As well as Ingleborough and Whernside (described in the Three Peaks walk, p170), many other areas can be reached from here. If you have an interest in history, you can go a few miles north of Ribbleshead and walk part of the Roman route known as the Cam High Road. For a great day walk you can stride out along this ancient route all the way (12 miles) across the moors from Ribbleshead to Bainbridge in Wensleydale.

THE HOWGILLS

In the western reaches of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, within sight of the Lake District, is a group of very impressive, though often ignored, hills called the Howgill Fells. They're big, rounded and compact, sometimes likened to a group of squatting elephants, with some good walk options. The best base for exploring these hills is the town of Sedbergh (p181), from where a hike over Calder's to a summit called the Calf is an excellent introduction to the Howgills. Take care though, as there are not many paths and the tops are featureless, making navigation a serious test in bad weather. But the walking underfoot is easy and the hills are not crowded, with unsurpassed 360-degree views of the Lake District to the west, the Yorkshire Dales to the east and south, and the Pennines to the north.

THE NORTHERN DALES

The main valley in the northern part of the Dales is Wensleydale, famous worldwide for its cheese, and with plenty of walking opportunities on the wild fells to the north and south. The town of Hawes (p270) makes an excellent base, with several places to stay. Other possible bases, further to the east, are the villages of Askrigg and Aysgarth – handy for a visit to the spectacular Aysgarth Force waterfall.

Finally, don't forget Swaledale, a relatively remote but beautiful valley in the far north of the national park. A route along the length of this valley forms part of the Coast to Coast Walk (p237), but there are many circular day-walk options. Good bases include the small town of Reeth (p247) and historic Richmond (p248), a

gateway town just beyond the far north-eastern tip of the park.

HERRIOT WAY

Perhaps one of the best ways of exploring the northern Dales is to follow the four-day, 53-mile (85km) Herriot Way, named for James Herriot, who wrote many popular books about his work as a vet in the farms of this area. The circular route links Hawes, Aysgarth, Reeth and Keld, thus combining two days of valley walking with two days of fell walking – a perfect Dales outing for a long weekend. For more details see www.herriotway.co.uk.

THE INN WAY

The Inn Way through the Yorkshire Dales is a 76-mile (122km) circuit starting (and finishing) at Grassington (p179). The walk goes via Wharfedale and Littondale to Buckden, then through Langstrothdale and Raydale to Askrigg in Wensleydale, and along Swaledale to Reeth, before turning south through Apedale, Bishopdale, Walden, Coverdale and Kettlewell. The route is described in *The Inn Way to the Yorkshire Dales* by Mark Reid – one of several guide-books in a series combining great country walks with great country pubs. For more details see www.innway.co.uk.