

TRANS-DALES TRAIL 3

A walk across the Yorkshire Dales

from Kirkby Stephen to Masham

devised and written by

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assisted by Peter Tomkinson

Dedicated to Ron Bartlett

DALES TRAILS

Trans-Dales Trail 3

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"A PRE-RAMBLE"

Welcome to the third Trans-Dales Trail. Like the other Dales Trails, this is also about sixty miles in length and can be comfortably completed by anyone that is reasonably fit in five days, with four nights Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

The aim, as before, is to establish a link from Dale to Dale using some of the public rights of way that are less frequently walked. In fact this time we were to discover places with no trace of a path existing on the ground. On the crossing of the moor from Coverdale to Nidderdale in particular, you will need to have your map and compass handy. I wouldn't wish anyone to deviate towards Dead Man's Hill!

The problems we encountered with the route in Upper Nidderdale means that this guide offers you several options – and it is essential that you have the use the 1:25000 map.

The route again deliberately visits parts of the Dales new to me, Mallerstangdale, Coverdale, and that “no-mans land” between Nidderdale and Masham. Some of the paths and tracks used are ancient packhorse or drove roads or wagon ways to long disused mine workings. One is even an old Corpse road! Although this walk does not reach the heights attained on previous Trails, there are some steep climbs and some rough tracks and pathless moorland, which together make Trail 3 seem more strenuous. Or was it because we were a year older and that the weather was rather unkind to us when we made this trek in June 1997?

The thinking behind Trail 3 was that you could arrive at the start of the Trail by train over the scenic Settle-Carlisle line and at the finish you could celebrate with a visit to one or both of the breweries in Masham. You will most likely need to be collected from Masham as it's not well served by public transport. After an hour or so in the breweries you will probably need picking up anyway!

Alas, Peter and I failed to meet both of the above criteria – we did not arrive by train nor did we visit the breweries. At the end of our trek we were soaked to the skin after a day's continuous rain which had turned roads into rivers and we just wanted to get home. Our visits to the breweries will have to wait. *(Peter has since visited the Black Sheep Brewery).*

This third route intersects Trail 1 at Middlesmoor and Trail 2 at Askrigg, opening up the possibility of walks that incorporate parts of more than one Trans-Dales Trail. At the two points of intersection we renewed our acquaintances with our B&B hosts on previous visits. As always they showed a keen interest in our Dales Trail guides. At this point I should remind you that accommodation should be booked in advance as the Dales is a very popular area. The availability of accommodation at Garsdale Head and at Middlesmoor in particular is rather limited.

"Trans-Dales Trail 3" starts in Cumbria, about 6 miles outside the Yorkshire Dales National Park. After about 30 miles it leaves the National Park on West Scafton Moor and enters Nidderdale, an area recognised as being of Outstanding Natural Beauty. .

I hope this booklet, and others in the series, will inspire you to explore parts of the Yorkshire Dales that are 'off the beaten track' and to do so you need not follow this guide to the letter. Peter and me completed this walk in June 1997, and it is that route which is described in detail. The text also mentions other possible variations that you may wish to follow, or may have to follow due to the availability of accommodation.

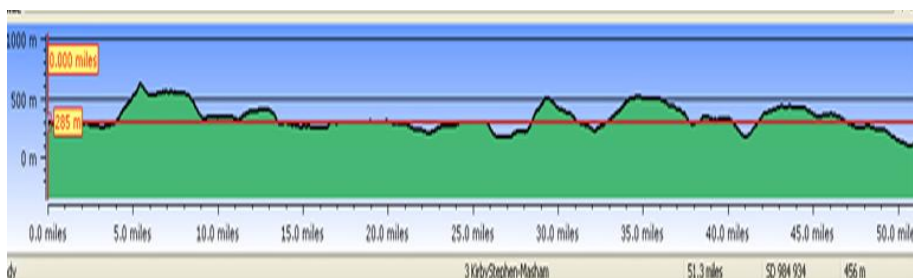
Finally can I say how good it is to hear from folk who have completed the Trails – so far those I know about have found their walks to be most enjoyable.

Good walking

Arnold Underwood & Peter Tomkinson, July 1999

p.s. Thanks again to Pam for getting us to Kirkby Stephen, and to Ann for rescuing two much wetter souls from Masham. Also thanks to Judith for bussing us to and from Lofthouse so we could get an evening meal!

GRADIENT PROFILE



NOTES

For your convenience, the layout of this guide is such that the area covered by each sketch map corresponds to the text on the adjacent page.

The maps are drawn to a scale of about 1:50000, but you are advised to obtain and use the relevant Ordnance Survey Maps as detailed in the text. The 1:25000 series is recommended.

1:50000 Landranger Sheets 92, 98, and 103, or

1:25000 Outdoor Leisure Sheets 10 and 30, and

1:25000 Discovery Sheet - Nidderdale.

●●●●●● the described route; other paths

Abbreviations: FP - footpath; FPS - footpath sign; BW - bridleway

Heights on maps are in metres (with approximate conversions to feet in the text)

KIRKBY STEPHEN MARKET SQUARE



KIRKBY STEPHEN

This little town with its wide market place surrounded by houses, shops and inns is well worth a visit. Situated at the junction of ancient trade routes across the Pennines, there has been a regular market here since 1351. The handsome St Stephen's Church, much restored in the 19th century, is approached through the 'Cloisters' – an attractive portico graced with columns and a small bell tower, built in 1810.

Kirkby Stephen is probably best known these days as a stopping-off point on Wainwright's Coast to Coast Walk and there remains a good choice of inns and cafes to cater for these modern-day travellers.

TRANS-DALES TRAIL 3

Day One : Kirkby Stephen to Garsdale Head

10 miles (14km)

Ascent 1200ft (380m)

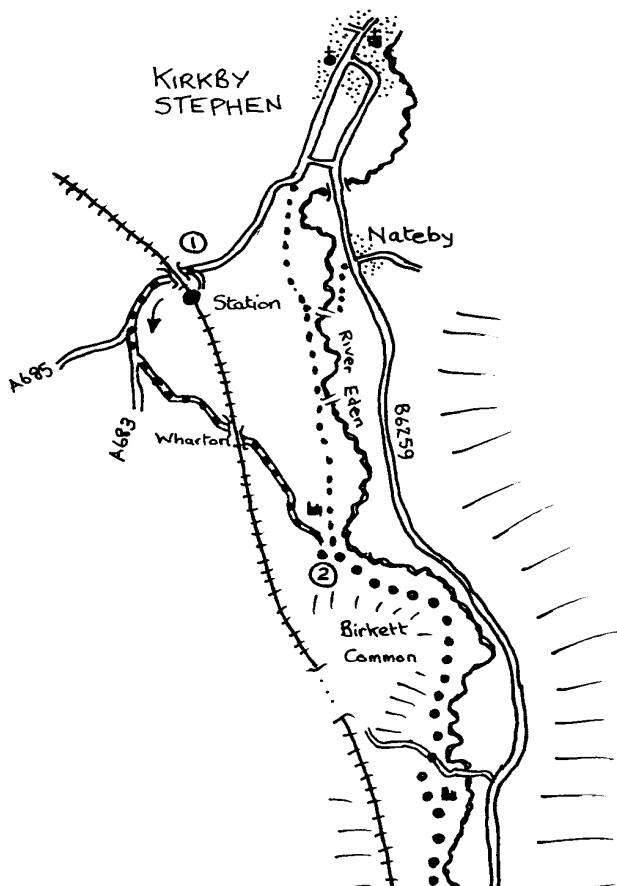
Maps: OS 1:50000 Sheet 92; Barnard Castle Area

OS 1:25000 Outdoor Leisure Sheet 30; Yorkshire Dales (North & Central).

The described route assumes arriving by train at Kirkby Stephen station which is about 1½ miles (2.4km) out of town and 300ft higher. If you begin this walk in the town itself you could follow a low-level route through Nateby to meet the described route just beyond Lammerside Castle. This would add about 1½ miles to the first day's schedule. Take care not to follow any 'Coast-to-Coasters' heading east out of Kirkby Stephen!

1. From Kirkby Stephen station walk up the main A685 road, there is ample verge to keep clear of traffic and at the top of the hill take the Sedbergh road (A683) at the junction. About 50yds along take the second turn on the left, signed Wharton, no through road. This narrow lane leads down to the few farms and cottages that comprises Wharton. Go under the railway-bridge and pass a dog kennel where a sheepdog may be on guard duty, stopping sheep wandering off up the road. There is also a telephone kiosk here. Continue on along the lane and where it swings right to Croop House Farm cut straight down the hillside by the wall to a metal gate. Beyond, the way forward can be seen as a green lane contouring round the slopes of Birkett Common. Over the wall, left, can be seen the ruins of Lammerside Castle, and it is here that the route from Kirkby Stephen via Nateby joins.

2. Through the gate, you are now close to the River Eden as it meanders through meadows, which campers and pick-nickers share with the sheep. The grassy track crosses a stream and undulates along the foot of Birkett Fell, seemingly heading for the farm at Dalefoot, across the river, but the track then swings right to continue along the dale. You pass an old limekiln on the right and arrive at a junction of lanes. Continue straight on (FPS Shoregill) to come to Sandpot Farm. Go between the house and barns to a stile to the right of a gate. Cross the stile and keep along the field side.



MALLERSTANG is a wild and beautiful valley through which flows the youthful River Eden, after tumbling down Hell Gill from the moors above Mallerstang Edge. The dale is sparsely populated with isolated farms, and hamlets such as Outhgill, and railway cottages like those by the summit of the Settle-Carlisle line at Aisgill. There are ruins of two castles, Lammerside and Pendragon - once said to be the home of Uther Pendragon, the supposed father of King Arthur. Pendragon Castle was restored by Lady Anne Clifford in the 17th century. This much-travelled lady was also responsible for restoring the tiny St Mary's Church at Outhgill, and for improving the High Way from Outhgill along Mallerstang Edge into Wensleydale. This was the main route from Kirkby Stephen to Hawes until 1826 when the present road was completed along the valley floor.

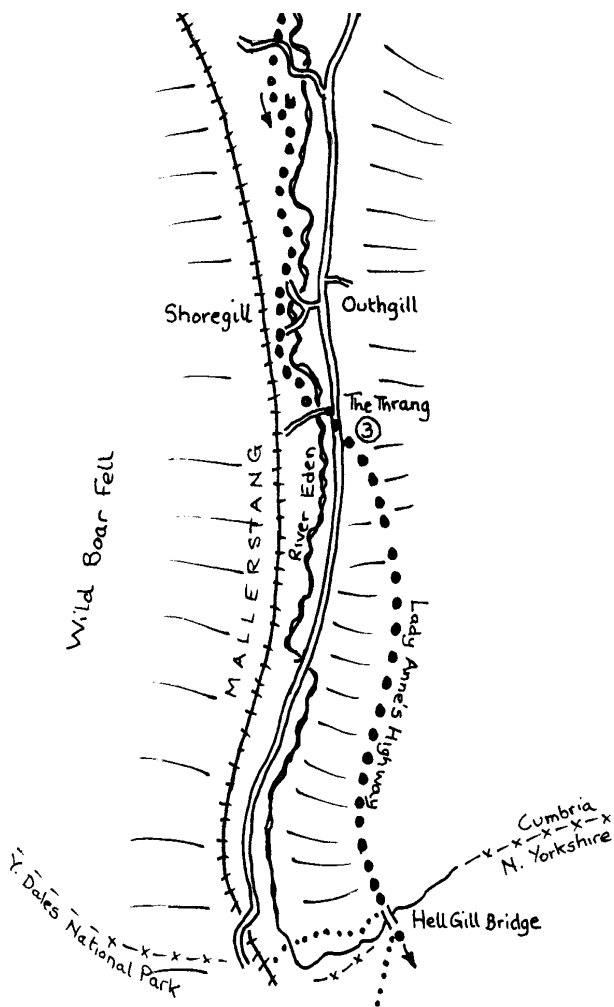
Over the fields to your left can be seen the ruins of Pendragon Castle. Pass a ruined barn. Cross a stream and a wall stile and head straight on over hilly ground. Red topped posts and stiles now lead the way clearly to the tiny settlement of Shoregill. Pass through a gate and follow the lane down to a wooden bridge over the River Eden. Do not cross the bridge but turn right along the river- bank. This is a delightful stretch with the infant river tumbling through woodland. Beyond the woodland, the path cuts across meadows to a farm. Follow the yellow waymarks, passing black barns to come close to the river again. Cross over a wide wall-stile to reach Thrang Bridge and follow the track over the bridge up to the main valley road (B6259). Just along to the left is Thrang Country Hotel.

3. Across the road, a gate provides access to the old High Way, as followed by Lady Anne Clifford on her travels round the country in olden times. This rough track provides a gradual climb up the valley side until it levels off at about the 400m (1300ft) contour. Ahead a silhouette on the skyline appears to be two unmoving people, but as you get nearer it transpires to be a modern sculpture, one of several dotted around Cumbria. If you are graced with fine weather, then the views back down the valley to Kirkby Stephen make this ascent worthwhile. Opposite, a line of cairns marks the edge of Wild Boar Fell. Walking is easy now on short grass, as the path follows the contour to the stone parapets of the bridge over Hell Gill. In a deep overgrown gorge Hell Gill Beck tumbles down the hillside to head north down the valley as the River Eden, bound for the Solway Firth and the Irish Sea. This bridge represents not only the watershed, but also the boundary between the counties of Cumbria and North Yorkshire; it is also where our route enters the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

(At Hell Gill you can if necessary escape the fell side, by descending past waterfalls to the farm and on down to the road at Ais Gill Cottages, near the summit of the Settle-Carlisle railway.)

Otherwise continue along the contour on a faint path, passing another escape route down to Shaw Paddock, and head for a gate in the wall ahead. Do not go through the gate, but keep alongside the wall to its left. The rough path keeps by the wall except where it dips and turns to cross gullies cut by becks running down the hillside, the first of these being the infant River Ure, bound ultimately for the Humber Estuary and the North Sea.

SHORE GILL to HELL GILL BRIDGE

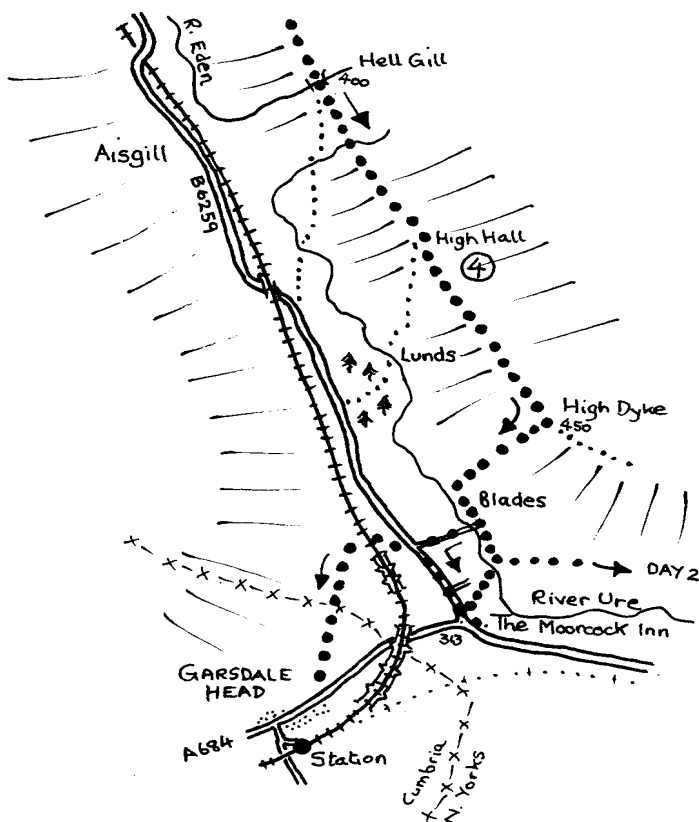


4. Continue to pass the buildings at High Hall just after negotiating Washer Gill. Again there is an option to descend here (SP Lunds) but this path, like most heading down the hillside, appears rather indistinct. A mile or so on from High Hall are the ruins of High Dyke, once a hostelry serving the travellers on this old highway. Today's travellers use the road along the valley floor, and their needs are served by the Moorcock Inn. At High Dyke there is the last opportunity to make the descent. A footpath sign points back down to Shaws (where there was once a Youth Hostel), but our route is straight down to the tiny settlement of Blades. There is no sign of the path. Head down the fields from gate to gate, passing a ruined barn and swing left at the bottom to reach a gate opening onto a track past some barns. (*We made this descent in record time as a thunderstorm rolled over the hills - we joined a chicken in the shelter of a tractor shed as hail stones clattered on the roof, forks of lightning stabbed the hills, and thunder crashed around*). One of the buildings at Blades appears to be an inn-cum-restaurant; alas it was not open in our hour of need. Follow the access road from Blades round, across the Ure and up to the B6259 road. Turn left and the Moorcock Inn is reached in about ½ mile (0.8km) at the junction with the A684 Hawes - Sedbergh road. Accommodation is available at the Moorcock, and more B&B accommodation can be found along the Sedbergh road near Garsdale Station, about a mile from the Moorcock.

If you have accommodation at Garsdale Head you can avoid the road walk via the Moorcock. Cross the road opposite the Blades access, and join a path which goes under the railway and then climbs over Garsdale Low Moor to emerge on the A684 opposite the cottages at Mud Becks.

A pause for thought – Today you have encountered the infant River Ure which flows past Yore House Farm at Garsdale Head; it passes under Yore Bridge near Bainbridge, and on through the heart of Yorkshire, to York. A long-distance path, the Yoredale Way, follows the river throughout its length. Geologists refer to a particular type of limestone rock as the Yoredale Series. So explain why we have the River Ure flowing down Wensleydale, rather than the River Yore flowing down Yoredale?

HELL GILL to GARSDALE HEAD



GARSDALE HEAD

..... is at the watershed of three rivers – the Eden and the Ure, both rising on the moors above Aisgill, and the Clough, originating above Grisedale.

The Eden, heads north down Mallerstang, the Ure turns east into Wensleydale and the Clough flows west down Garsdale itself. Unlike most other Dales' valleys these three are not named after their rivers. Garsdale Head's other interest lies with the dramatically engineered Settle-Carlisle railway, here nearing its 1169ft summit at Aisgill. The railway crosses the boggy head of the valley by the impressive Dandry Mire viaduct, close to Garsdale Station, itself once the junction for Hawes.

Day Two

Garsdale Head to Askrigg

12 miles (15 km)

Ascent 300ft (100m)

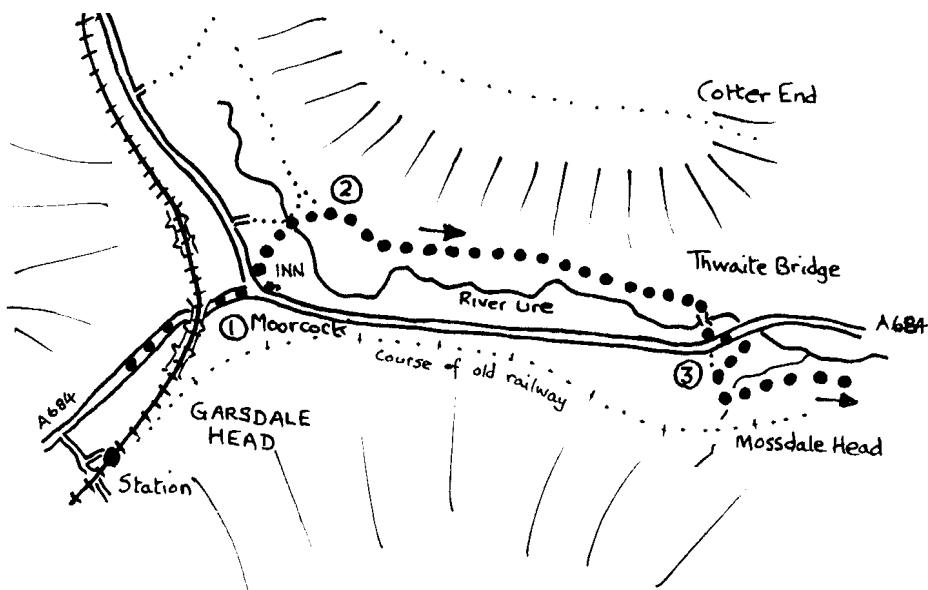
Maps OS 1:50000 Sheet 98 Wensleydale & Wharfedale
OS 1:25000 Sheet 30 Yorkshire Dales (North & Central)

From wherever you rested last night, you must return to the Moorcock Inn to pick up the start of Day Two. This promises to be a pleasant stroll following the youthful River Ure down from the bleakness of Garsdale Head into the pastures of Wensleydale.

1. To the left of the Moorcock's car park, a footpath sign points across a field to a distant farm. Cross the wall and follow a faint path over rough grassland, which can be boggy in places. An alternative would be to use the access drive, about 200yds further up the B6259. The grassy area bordering the river is set aside for camping and caravans. It is a delightful spot with the River Ure tumbling over a series of small waterfalls. Cross the bridge beyond the caravans to arrive at a gate across the drive leading on up to Yore House Farm. Walk on up the drive, passing through the farmyard and into the field beyond.

2. Continue forward along a faint track that contours along the valley side, crossing a stream and passing through a metal gate. Ahead the valley opens out into Wensleydale, whilst looking back you may be able to catch a final glimpse of the Moorcock and the railway bridge at Garsdale Head. *(Note that the fields between here and Thwaite Bridge are used for grazing cattle, which may be accompanied by bulls at certain times of the year.)* Continue towards the right-hand-side of a plantation of conifers enclosed by a stone wall. Go through a gap in the wall and walk through the trees - there appears to be no way out, but as you arrive at the far corner you will discover another gap through which you and a stream are able to leave the wood. Cross this stream and then a ladder stile. Walk on across the next field, where there is just a faint trace of the path, heading now for the left-hand side of a group of trees. There you come to a signpost and a high wall stile.

GARSDALE HEAD TO THWAITE BRIDGE



Country Walking

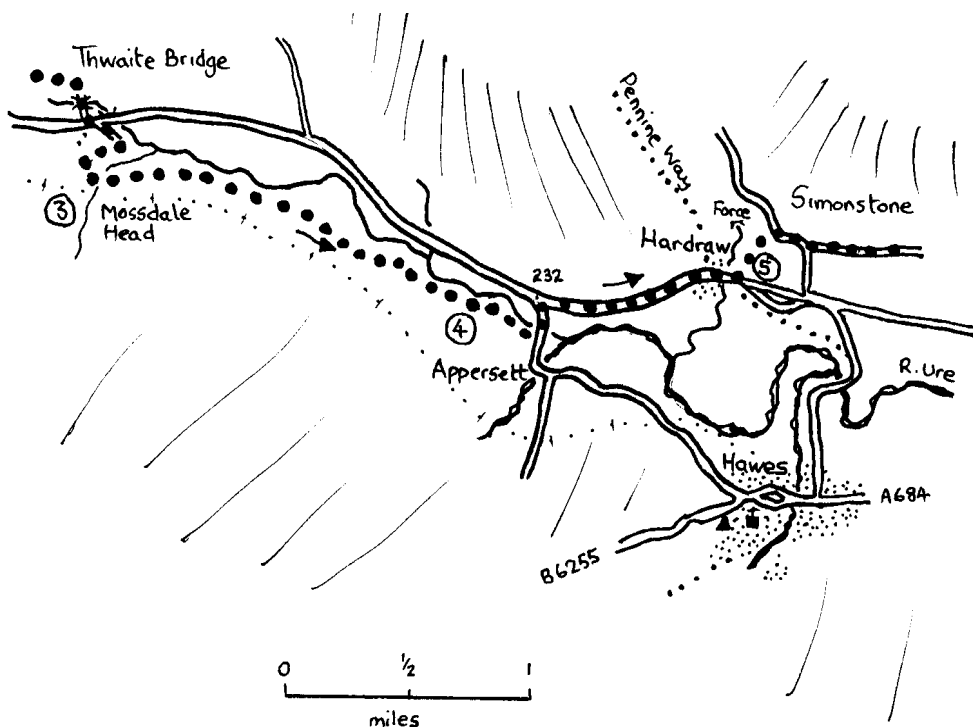
THE BEST WALKING EXPERIENCE
OF YOUR LIFE !

Maintain the same direction past the trees Do not turn down to a gate on your right but continue towards the far right corner of the field, where there is a stile and signpost. This corner is initially out of sight beyond a slight rise in the land. Drop down the bank, to follow the path by a wall, crossing several stiles to pass Thwaite House Farm. The farm road bridges the river and joins the main A684 road.

3. Directly opposite, a signpost indicates a path straight up the hillside. This is the direct route to Mossdale Head, but we opted for a gentler but slightly longer route up the access road about 50yds (45m) down the main road. This farm track leads round to a farm, which you walk past to the right of the buildings. A little further are the derelict buildings of the farm at Mossdale Head. Here our route meets that of the more direct path. The track crosses a bridge over Mossdale Beck, which here tumbles over a waterfall. The farm buildings were undergoing restoration when we passed this way. Yellow waymarks on the walls guide you between the buildings to a footpath sign, which points the way across meadows. With the River Ure close by, waymarks and signs guide you onwards. After passing through a new footpath gate, keep along the right side of the next field to join and go left along a farm track (FPS). You now follow this track for about a mile as it skirts the right-hand side of Birk Rigg (The river opts for the other side). Where the track swings left (to cross the river and join the main road) go right (FPS Appersett) along a field path. Prior to haymaking the path was confined to the field boundaries by posts and rope, but this enforcement may be relaxed at other times.

4. At the far corner after passing a barn you will be confronted by the confluence of a beck with the river. Cross the beck by stepping-stones and climb the wooded bank to a stile. Go along the field sides, with the river down to your left, to reach Appersett Bridge where the A684 crosses the river. Climb up to the first gap stile in the bridge wall onto the road. Turn left over the bridge and then cross the road to take the minor road to Hardraw. The road climbs to top a slight hill from which there are views across the valley towards Hawes. Soon, Hardraw is reached, where our route crosses the Pennine Way. Here you will have the opportunity for a break either at the café or at the pub and, if time permits, visit the dramatic waterfall, Hardraw Force.

THWAITE BRIDGE TO HARDRAW



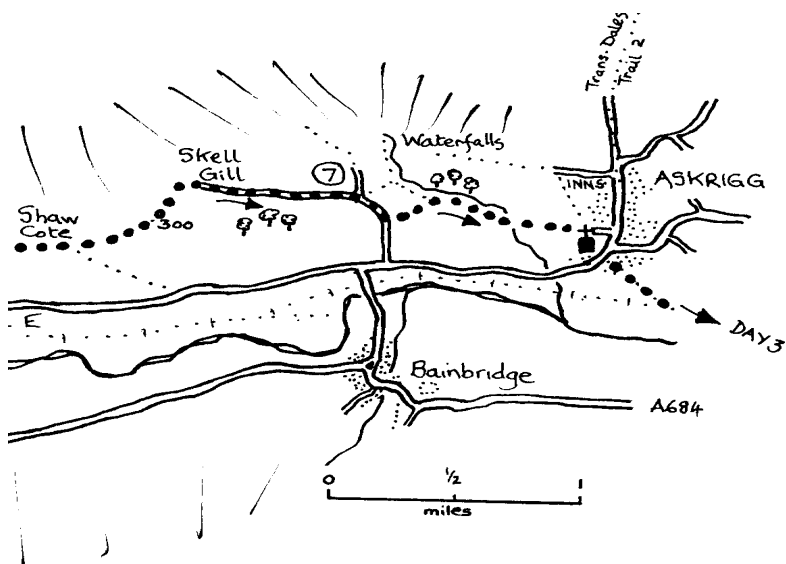
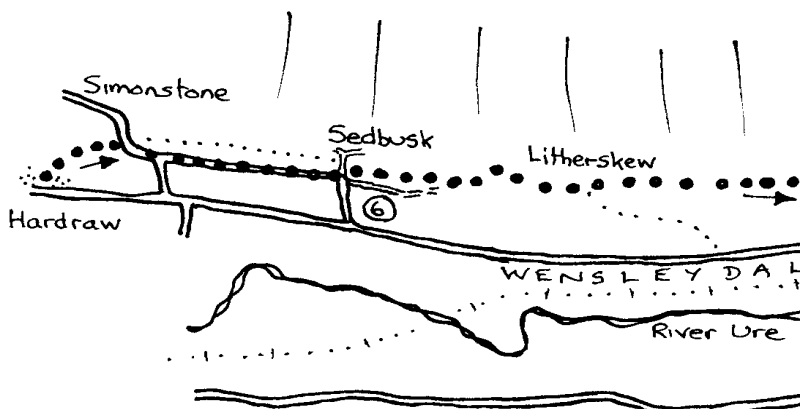
HARDRAW

A small village whose claim to fame is the 96ft (30m) high Hardraw Force, England's highest above-ground waterfall. Access to the waterfall is through the Green Dragon Inn where a small fee is payable. The gorge forms a natural amphitheatre whose acoustics are ideal for brass band concerts.

5. Just past the pub in Hardraw take to a footpath that climbs steeply up the hillside towards Simonstone. This path commences at a gate on the left and passes through the garden of a cottage before gaining the grassy hillside. For much of the way up the path is paved with flagstones. As the gradient eases the path swings right and emerges onto the access drive of Simonstone Hall, now a hotel. Go right down the drive to the road. Opposite, a footpath sign points across the fields towards Sedbusk. However a glance at the 1:25000 map will reveal that this route crosses many walled fields in the next mile. A less tedious option is to follow the road round the bends and continue along the narrow lane through the delightful hamlet of Sedbusk.

6. Where this lane leaves the village, a footpath (signed to Litherskew) continues along the contour. It is now easy walking along the contour for about 2½ miles (4km). After passing through a small wood, several fields are crossed to arrive at Litherskew. More fields are crossed until you reach a metal gate opening onto a walled lane. Go left along this lane but after the next gate keep alongside the wall, do not follow the track up hill. Continue by the wall, passing cattle sheds and sheep pens and the buildings at Shaw Cote. (FPS - Skell Gill Lane). Keep on alongside the wall, passing a derelict barn until, about ½ mile beyond Shaw Cote, the track swings left away from the wall, over a rise, to a gate. There is no right of way through the gate so bear left by the side of the wall. This stony track descends to a gate after which it becomes enclosed by walls and soon joins Skell Gill Lane, which you follow, through the hamlet of Skell Gill to a T-junction. *There are views right over Wensleydale towards Bainbridge with the flat-topped summit of Addlebrough beyond.* At the junction turn right down hill. Just round the corner enter the field on the left (FPS Mill Gill) and initially follow a rutted track before cutting across to a wall stile. Cross the stile and enter the wooded gorge of Mill Gill. *A path to the left leads down to the 70ft (22m) high waterfall, Mill Gill Force, which is worth a visit.* The way to Askrigg is right, alongside the wall and through the trees. Mill Gill Beck is at this point far below, but as you continue the gorge opens out and the path descends to cross the beck by a footbridge, just upstream of the old mill, now a private residence. Go left of the house and follow the paved footpath across the meadows towards Askrigg. Continue along a lane which brings you into the centre of the village, by the church of St. Oswald.

HARDRAW TO ASKRIGG



Day Three

Askrigg to Carlton-in-Coverdale

12 miles (19km) Ascent 1300ft (400m)

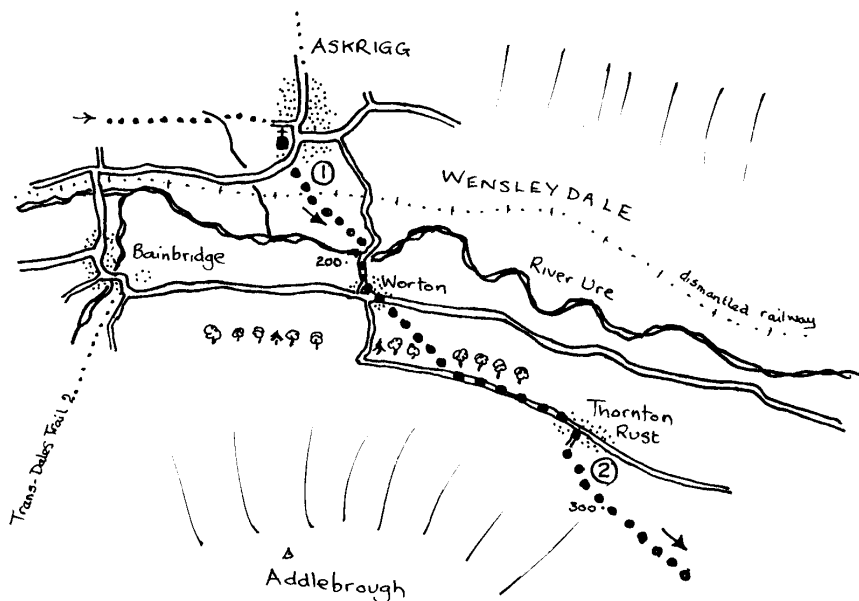
Maps OS 1:50000 Sheets 98 Wensleydale & Wharfedale
OS 1:25000 Sheet 30 Yorkshire Dales (North & Central)

Today you will cross the low hills between Wensleydale and its side valleys of Bishopdale and Waldendale before tackling the climb over the shoulder of Penhill, followed by the long gradual descent into Coverdale. A tedious morning followed by a steep climb in the afternoon make for a fairly strenuous day, but the views from Penhill make it worthwhile!

1. Leave Askrigg by the narrow Cringley Lane opposite the church, alongside “James Herriot’s house”, (FPS Worton) bearing right at the end to descend across a field to the formation of the old railway, which is crossed via old metal “kissing gates”. A flagstone path leads straight across three meadows to the road at Worton Bridge. Turn right over the bridge and walk up the steep hill into the village to the main A684 road. Turn left and cross over and in about 50yds find a stile to footpath, which heads diagonally up the side of the valley. *Look out for orchids in early summer.* This path climbs steadily from stile to stile across the grassy hillside until it reaches the edge of the woodland strip that is a feature of this side of the valley above Worton. There the path changes its character and turns to tackle the hillside directly, climbing Worton Scar amidst nettles and wild garlic, up through the trees. Loose, damp rocks make the going even more tricky, and eventually a bit of a scramble is needed to negotiate a steep, narrow crevice through the rock face. This brings you out onto the Thornton Rust road.

2. You can now recover your breath with a nice gentle stroll for almost a mile (1.6km) along this level stretch of minor road with good views across the valley. As you near Thornton Rust you pass a hospital on your right and then enter this quiet village which stretches along the 250m (810ft) contour line on the southern side of the valley. In the middle of the village turn right up a track (SP Car Park). Ford a stream near where cars can be parked and bear left up a walled, stony track. Leave this track at a gate by a broken footpath sign. The path, not obvious on the ground, heads across fields towards a brick barn. Cross the left-hand of two stiles near to this barn. From now on route finding can be a bit tricky as these paths are not frequently walked.

ASKRIGG TO THORNTON RUST



ASKRIGG

There are shops, tearooms, two inns - The Crown and the Kings Arms, and a hotel, plus a choice of other B&B accommodation. The Kings Arms masqueraded as The Drovers Arms in the James Herriot programmes whilst almost opposite, Cringley House provided the exterior scenes of Skeldale House. A market cross stands on the cobbled area in front of the 12th Century church of St. Oswald. Askrigg was once the market centre for upper Wensleydale. But time has passed Askrigg by since the new turnpike road was built in 1795, on the opposite side of the valley. The village retains an air of town-like prosperity with elegant houses on the main street dating from the grander days of old - quite unlike other dales villages.

There has been a revival of fortunes in recent years with Askrigg's new found fame as 'Darrowby' in the James Herriot television series, and the village's unspoiled charms are being appreciated by an ever increasing number of visitors.

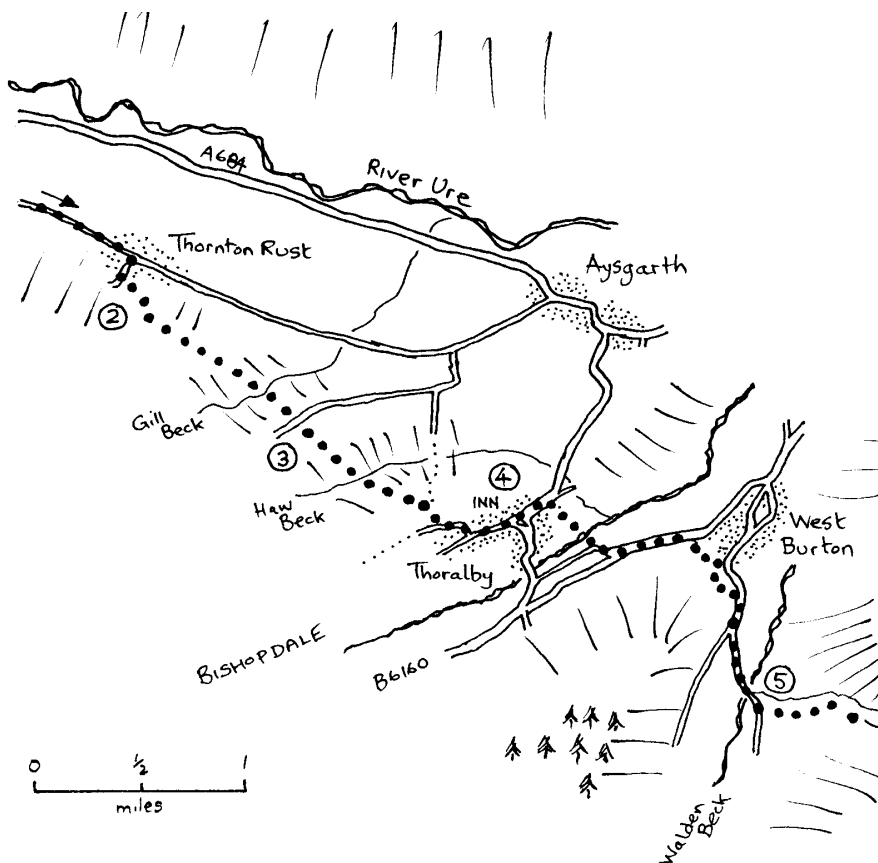
Waymarks and signposts are never where you need them most. Basically you now have to cross pastures, occupied by sheep and cattle, from stile to stile. The large-scale map showing field boundaries is essential, but even this does not allow for the temporary wire and electric fences used by farmers. Also undulations of the land often means your immediate target may be out of sight.

Having crossed two fields with gap stiles in their walls you reach an expanse of grassland grazed by sheep and cattle. At the time of writing this area was divided by wire fences – head straight across from gate to gate, marked with blobs of yellow paint. The land ahead dips towards a gully. Do not veer too far right (as we did) and you will come to a wall by a stream, Gill Beck, in the gully. If you are on course there should be a gap in the wall where you can cross the stream (yellow arrow). Keep alongside the wall up the bank to reach a gate onto a lane, Flout Moor Lane. (FPS)

3. Cross straight over, heading for Thoraby, and re-enter walled fields. Again the path heads diagonally across the fields and again the land dips into a gully. This time your hidden target is about 100yds (90m) upstream (right) of a clump of trees. Climb up from the stream and head towards two or three trees just visible over the hill (At the time of our visit, this field was also subdivided by a wire fence, with stile). Go through a gateway near the trees and bear right down hill to follow a bridleway to Thoraby. *Directly ahead, beyond the parallel valleys of Bishopdale and Waldendale, rises the mass of Penhill. A dip in the skyline marks the path of your eventual route over to Coverdale.* After passing through a metal gate, the way becomes a stony track. At the bottom turn left into the village, where the George Inn will be a welcoming sight.

4. From the George Inn walk on through the village past the green and take the second right near the end of the village, down a lane. This takes you down past the sewage works, after which the track becomes narrower and more overgrown. Bishopdale Beck is crossed by a footbridge then you join a minor road which you follow to its junction with the B6160. Turn left along this road towards West Burton. In about ¼ mile (400m), just beyond a bridge over a small stream, take a footpath on the right up through fields to emerge at the top of West Burton above its large village green. The shops and pub are down to the left, but, unless you need to make any purchases, the route of this Trail is to the right followed quickly by a left turn along a rough track (SP Dame Lane). Turn right at the road and then take the left fork (SP South Waldendale).

THORNTON RUST TO COTE BRIDGE



5 Walk down past a caravan site crossing Cote Bridge over Walden Beck, and turn left up a walled track, just past Cote Farm. This stony track climbs steeply out of the valley heading for the dip in the hills between Penhill and Harland Hill, which now appear far more intimidating than they did when viewed from the other side of Thoraby! *Buzzards might be seen soaring on the currents of air above the ridge. At the gate at the end of the walled lane take a well-earned breather and take in the view back towards Wensleydale.*

Now turn to face the second stage of this climb. Ahead, beyond a lone tree, the line of the path can be seen climbing the hillside above Thupton Gill. To reach this it is best to turn up by the wall to gain height then bear left along a faint track. This contours along above the lone tree to merge with the path seen from below. The upward climb continues with remnants of a wall to the left. Eventually the gradient eases and a gate is reached in the wall running along the summit.

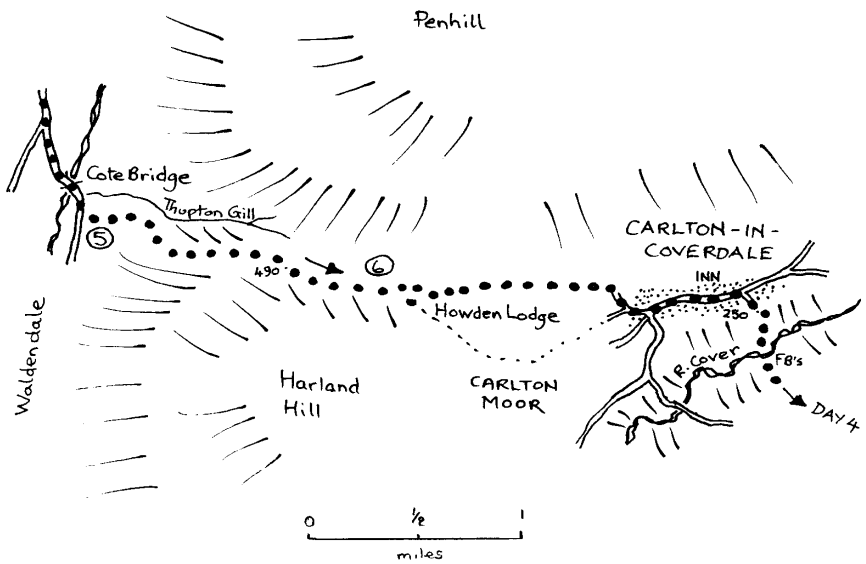
6. Once through the gate it is now down hill all the way into Coverdale. At first the track is rutted and boggy, but it improves as you descend towards a clump of trees that shelters Howden Lodge. Ahead the track can be clearly seen stretching into the distance. Keep left along by the boundary wall of Howden Lodge, which is still used in the grouse-shooting season. For about a mile (1.6km) the going is gradually down hill on a track that was once enclosed by walls all the way, but some sections are now in ruin. Cattle and sheep may well be encountered along here. The gradient steepens and the track turns down towards Carlton-in-Coverdale. *Across the valley can be seen tomorrow's challenge – the climb up and over West Scafton Moor. The bumps on the skyline are the spoil tips of the long gone West Scafton colliery.* Now your pace quickens as Carlton, the end for today comes into view at last. This village straggles for nearly a mile along the minor road which has come over the hills from Kettlewell.

CARLTON-IN-COVERDALE

A long, straggling village overlooking Coverdale, with some attractive 17th and 18th century stone houses. One house, on your left as you enter the village, has a stone tablet over the door stating that here lived Henry Constantine the 'Bard of Coverdale'.

There is a choice of B&B accommodation here, and a pub, the Foresters Arms.

COTE BRIDGE TO CARLTON-IN-COVERDALE



Looking west from above Thrupton Gill

Day Four Carlton-in-Coverdale to Middlesmoor

9 miles (13½ km)

Ascent 1375ft (425m)

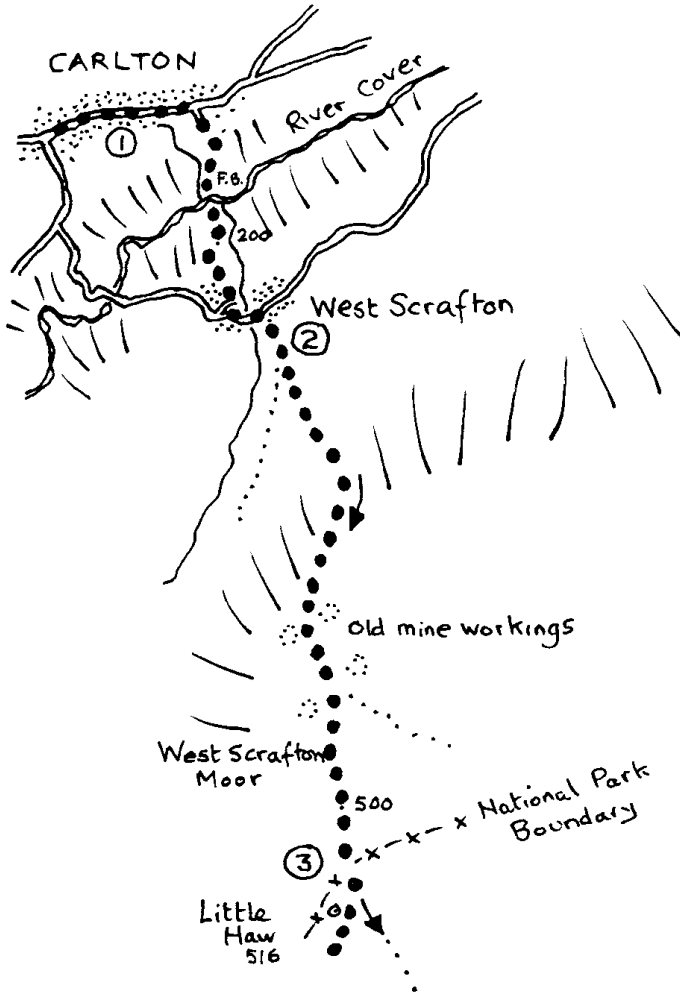
Maps OS 1:50000 Sheet 98 Wensleydale & Wharfedale
 OS 1:25000 Sheet 30 Yorkshire Dales Central

Today is probably the most strenuous day of this walk even though the distance covered is the shortest. The problem lies with the crossing of the moor beyond the site of the West Sraffton colliery. Although paths and bridleways are shown on the map they do not show on the ground, and “heather bashing” is a slow and tiring business.

1. Set off down the road through Carlton, passing the Foresters Arms and turn right into a lane (SP Quaker Lane, River Cover, West Sraffton). West Sraffton can be seen, less than a mile away, across the valley from Carlton. However, the River Cover has cut a surprisingly steep sided gill in the valley floor. Go through the gate at the end of the lane (FPS) and bear right across the field towards a wall corner. Maintain direction to arrive at the trees along the edge of Goodman Gill and walk down by the trees to the bottom corner of the field. There the path descends steeply through the trees to footbridges across the Gill and the River Cover. This is a delightful spot with the dappled sunlight through the leafy canopy reflecting on the water of the river. From the footbridge the path climbs steeply up the left-hand side of a field to a gate. From there bear right up to a footpath sign, and on up to the right-hand corner where a kissing-gate opens onto a walled lane. This leads you round the back of houses into West Sraffton. Although a footpath indicates a route straight on, we turned right to the road and then left, passing the tiny chapel near to the bridge over Great Gill. (*The footpath straight on will bring you to the same point*)

2. By the bridge, a gate gives access to a track heading for West Sraffton Moor. The signpost indicates this as a bridleway to Nidderdale and Colsterdale – most reassuring – but if signposts could be sued under the Trades Description Act, this would be one. This track was once the route followed by horses and wagons taking coal from Sraffton Colliery, up on the moor, down to Jervaulx Abbey. For much of the way up the hillside this track is still clearly defined.

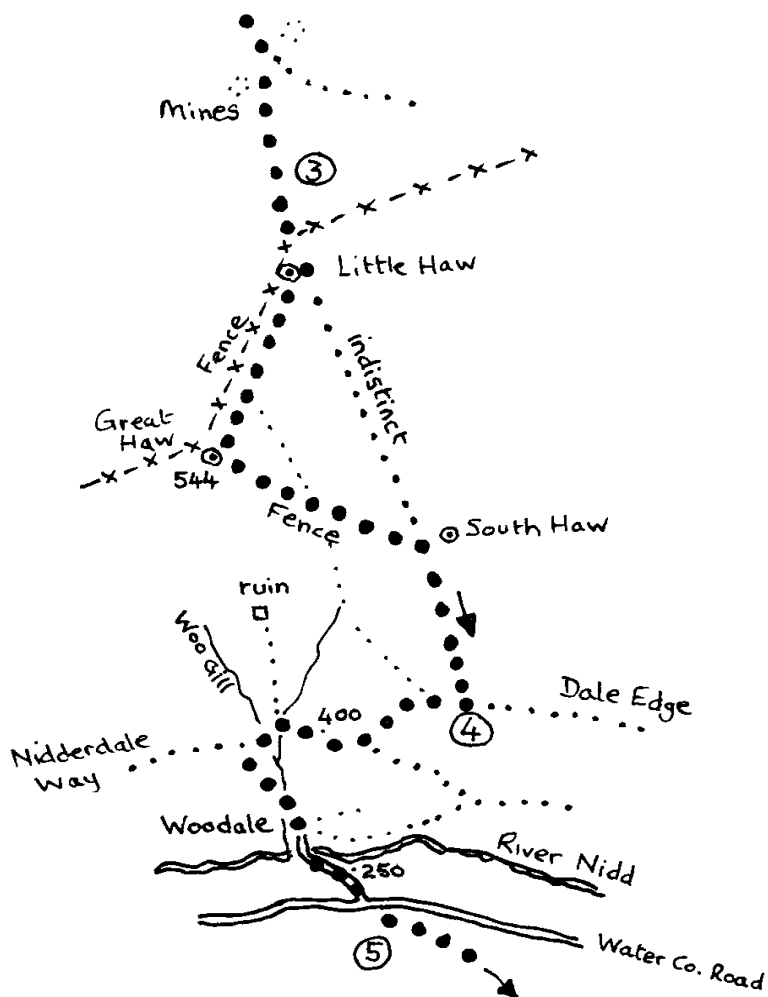
CARLTON TO WEST SCRAFTON COLLIERY



You are faced with a steady gradient, first by a wall and then, right, across the face of the steepening hillside. As the first spoil tips are neared, the ground conditions become boggy. The track, now only a faint depression in the rough grass, bears left above these tips where the ground becomes even wetter as the gradient eases. Pick your way carefully through this boggy area keeping to the right of another spoil tip and then bearing right to reach the site of the mine itself. The foundations of buildings and the sealed shaft are fenced off. Pass to the left of the mine and follow a faint path through the heather to a line of grouse butts. Beyond the last grouse butt you will see a wire fence. Walk alongside the fence to a stile. A stile - this is supposed to be a bridleway!

3. A notice by the stile requests that you follow the marker posts across the moor. This is again reassuring, but alas is short-lived. Indeed, wooden posts do lead the way across the moor – for about 300 yds (275m). There, on the flanks of a rise shown as Little Haw on the map, the posts end. This you will note from the map is the National Park boundary. All around is a sea of heather. You could or perhaps even should, take a compass bearing here (approx 170°) and bash on across the moor along the line of the erstwhile bridleway. Or you could do as we did and swing right, round Little Haw to find the fence and keep alongside it for about ¾ mile (1km) to the summit of another rise, Great Haw. (There is no sign either of another path shown on the map crossing the fence near here.) On Great Haw you meet another fence at which you turn left and keep alongside. After another rough ¾ mile (1km) - it will seem much further - you should reach a corner, at South Haw, where you rejoin the line of the bridleway on its descent into Nidderdale. Cross the fence and either descend again on a bearing of about 170°, or keep by the fence heading almost due South. Either way as the downward gradient increases you will come across a distinct track, Dale Edge, which follows the contours round Upper Nidderdale. The valley itself, with its patchwork of green pastures and woodland, lies before you in stark contrast to the desolate moorland you have just crossed. The Dale Edge path once served mines and quarries and the shooting cabins for those intent on bagging a few grouse.

4. For this guide, the day's target is Middlesmoor, which, from Dale Edge, is out of sight behind the shoulder of the opposite side of the valley. As the crow flies it is only about 2½ miles (4km) away, but we are not crows and a glance at the map shows that there is no direct way down from the Edge hereabouts.

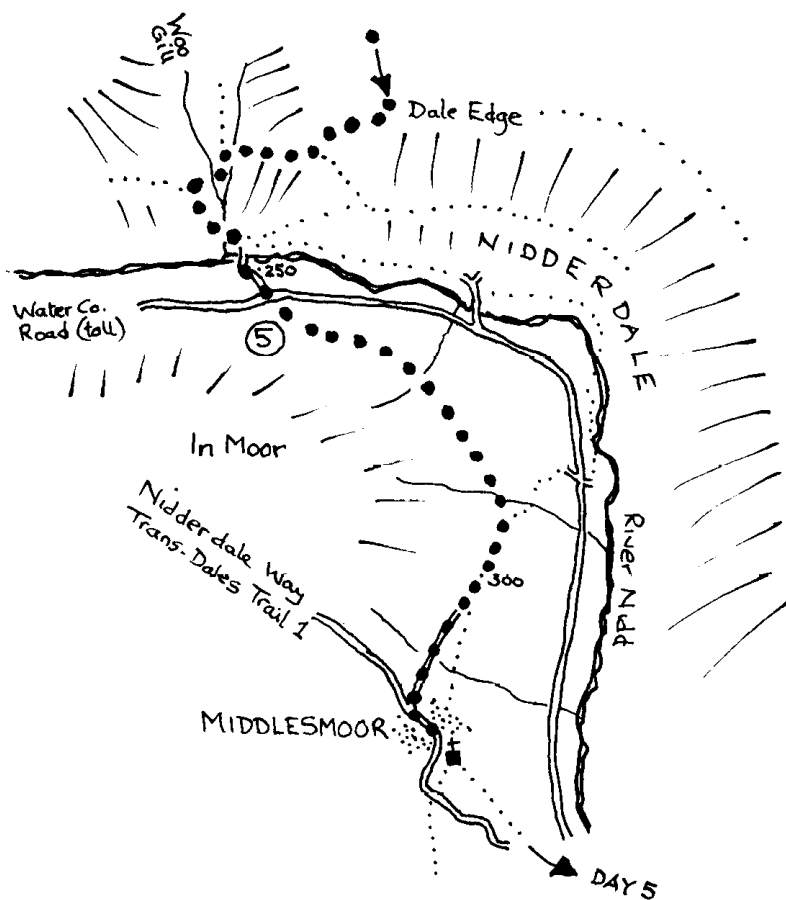


There are several possible options. Ours was to head west along the track turning down past an old shooting cabin, and cross the delightfully named Twizling Gill and Woo Gill. For a short distance this route coincides with the Nidderdale Way, but where the Nidderdale Way swings right, bear left keeping by the wall. (Signed 'Teas' when we passed this way). Go through a gate and bear left down the side of a field to another gate in the bottom corner. Here the track also appears to double as a stream. Continue down two more fields to reach Middle Woodale farm. Follow the track round past Low Woodale, across the River Nidd and up to the road.

5. Compared with other paths and tracks that criss-cross the moors, this road is modern. It is the Water Company toll road built on the track-bed of the railway which served the construction of Scar House and Angram Reservoirs up the valley (see Trans-Dales Trail 1). Before this road was built, access to the remote farms of Upper Nidderdale was by a lane over the hill from Middlesmoor. This old track is not shown as a right of way on older maps but newer maps show it as an 'other route with public access'. It begins at a gate diagonally left across the reservoir road and climbs across rough pastures, through open gateways, and past crumbling walls. It can be boggy underfoot on the hillside, but as the terrain levels out, conditions improve. After passing through a gate the track keeps by a wall through two fields. Here we met a farmer on the ubiquitous buggy, essential equipment for all hill farmers these days. At the next gate the track becomes enclosed by walls, and continues as such to Middlesmoor. *An alternative riverside footpath can be followed to Limley Farm, then up the hillside crossing How Gill to join this walled lane.* It is now a pleasant stroll along the lane past a couple of farms and pockets of woodland. Just past Northside Head, a footpath strikes off left across the fields towards Middlesmoor. However, it is probably easier to do as we did and continue along the track to its junction with In Moor Lane and there turn left, down past the small car park, into the village.

MIDDLESMOOR

A delightful, unspoilt cluster of stone buildings on the site of a monastic settlement, commanding a superb view down Nidderdale towards Pateley Bridge. The pub, The Crown where you can get bar meals and accommodation, claims to be 1000ft above sea level. Alas the adjoining Post Office is no more. Cobbled paths lead to the church, built as recently as 1865, and to Dovenor House where teas, snacks and B&B accommodation are also available.



LOFTHOUSE, down in the valley, has a pub, also called The Crown, a Post Office and further B&B's. It is an unexceptional village but has one attractive corner by the war memorial fountain.

Day Five

Middlesmoor to Masham

12 miles (15km) Ascent 750 ft (240m)

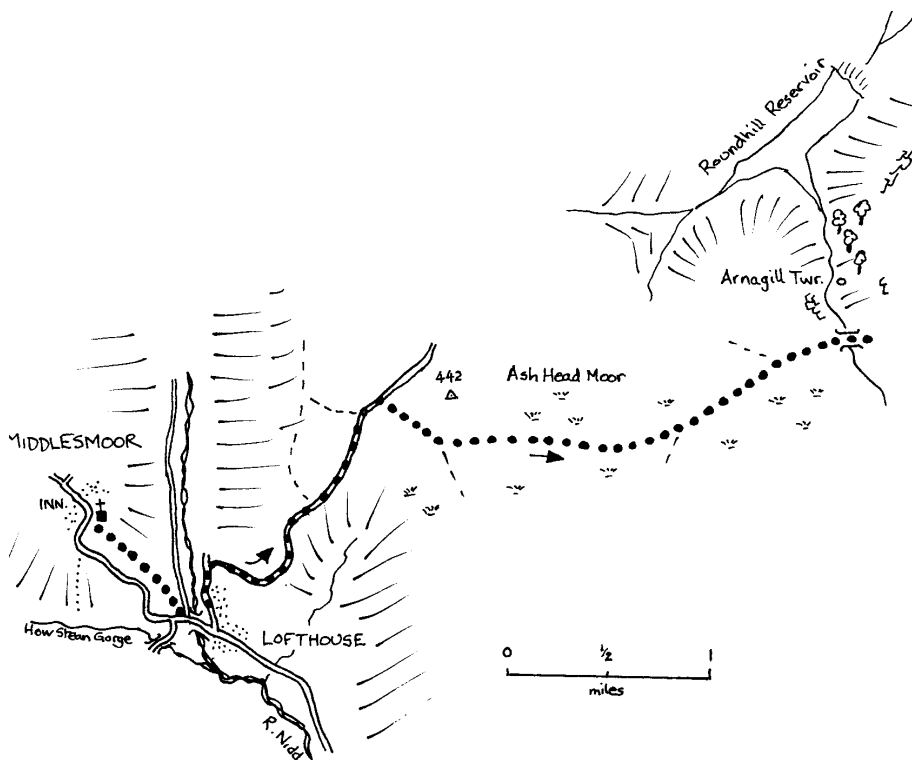
Maps OS 1:50000 Sheet 99 Northallerton & Ripon
OS 1:25000 Sheet 10 Yorkshire Dales (South)

An ancient track, the corpse road from Nidderdale to Kirkby Malzead, crosses the “no-mans land” to the east of Nidderdale. Once you have scaled the steep climb out of the valley you can stride out along this clear track. Unfortunately when we passed this way in June 1997 we had to contend with continuous rain and low cloud, with visibility down to about 20 yards at times! If you happen to walk this stretch on a good day perhaps you could let us know what we missed!

1. To the right of the Church lych-gate in Middlesmoor, a paved path (SP Lofthouse) descends alongside the graveyard wall to the open hillside. The path maintains an almost straight course down the hill to Halfway House Farm and on alongside field walls to the cricket field at a corner of the Middlesmoor to Lofthouse road. Here we continued along the road to Lofthouse *although there is a path from the cricket field, crossing the reservoir road and a footbridge over the river*. Our route along the road took us past the site of the station on the long-gone Nidderdale Light Railway, where the ‘new’ toll road starts.

2. Turn left in Lofthouse (road sign Masham 10 miles) passing the Crown Hotel and the village hall. This old part of the village with its narrow street has an attractive cluster of stone buildings around the war memorial. Once clear of the buildings the Masham road begins its steep climb onto the moor. To lessen the gradient the road zig-zags up the hillside. The unfenced section ends at the wall and for the next mile you plod on upwards with little respite. Unfortunately there is no real alternative to this section of tarmac bashing to reach my planned route across the moor to Masham. At a bend the track to Dale Edge leads off to the left and a little further another track (not suitable for vehicles) heads off to the right. This marks the end of serious climbing and the start of the moorland crossing by the ancient corpse road.

MIDDLESMOOR to OUSTER BANK



DOVENOR HOUSE
Middlesmoor-in-Nidderdale

Tea-shop, Bed & Breakfast in an unspoilt village

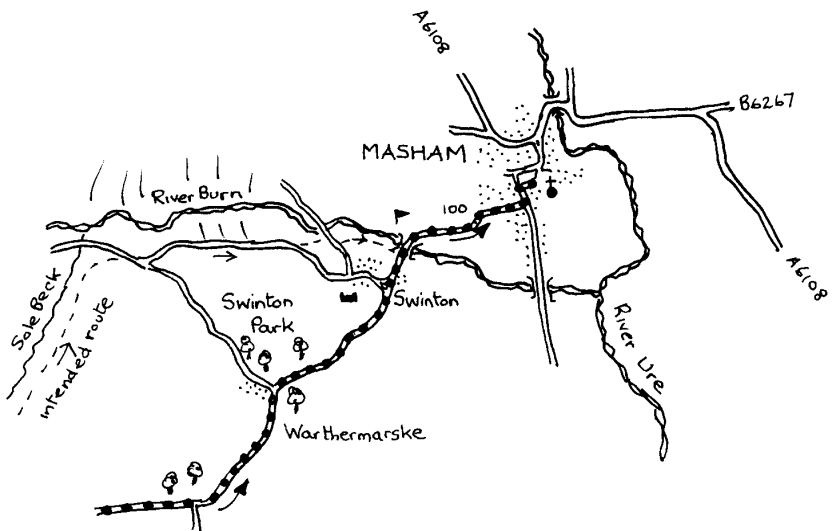
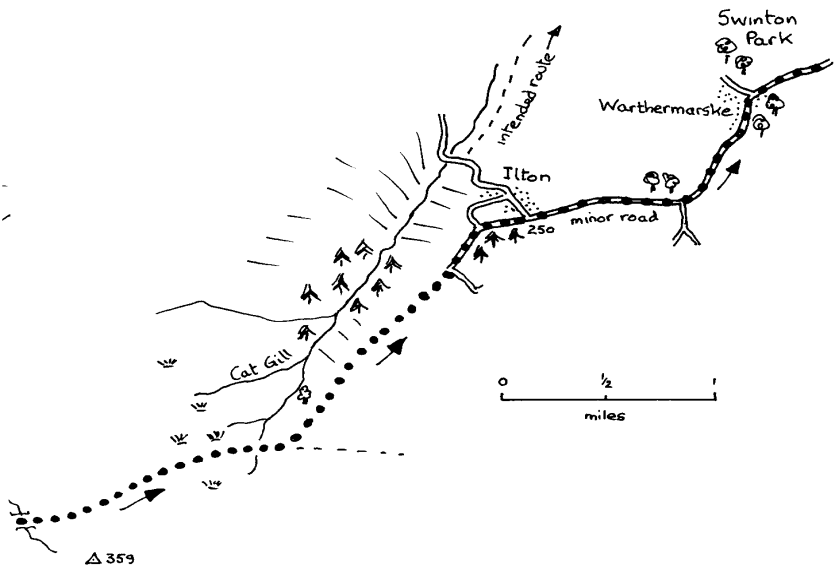
☎ 01423 755697

3. Head east along this track which is enclosed by walls until a gate is reached in about 400yds (370m). A little further, at a height of 1360ft (420m), bear left where the track forks. The trend is now downhill, all the way to Masham! There should be no navigational worries either, as for nearly 4 miles (6.4km) the clear track heads straight across this expanse of moorland. For a mile or so the surroundings are rather monotonous with heather moorland in all directions. Your presence will no doubt disturb the occasional grouse or curlew. After passing other tracks from the right and left, a landmark in the form of Arnagill Tower comes into view to the north. (*We never saw this – the visibility was so bad*) The track dips to cross a bridge over a deep gully cut by a stream feeding Roundhill Reservoir. The steep sides of this ravine are wooded and overlooked by the Tower. It makes a refreshing contrast to the moorland and an ideal spot at which to take a break.

4. Continuing eastwards the track climbs gradually from the beck for about ½ mile (0.8km) before levelling off and then resuming its descent towards Masham. After another mile of moor you reach a dividing of the ways. After crossing a small bridge, take the left fork to descend more steeply down the side of Cat Gill, passing a lone tree on your left. The sight of a wall ahead heralds the end of the moorland. The track continues through gates along the edge of grassland where cattle will be grazing. The surface improves after passing the entrance to Brandwith Howe Farm. By a copse of coniferous woodland the track joins a minor road into Ilton. Bear right down the lane to a road junction by a bus shelter (but no buses). *Our intended route was to go left here down through Ilton, then following a path by Sole Beck towards Masham. A mile of country lane then leads to another footpath by the River Burn as far as the road by Masham Golf Course. However, at the time of our walk there had been almost 24 hours of continuous rain. The roads were like rivers so we decided that using riverside paths was out of the question.*

5. So our route continued, not left at the bus-shelter, but straight on down the road to the few cottages that make up the hamlet of Wathermarske. There the road bears right and you continue down hill. Behind the wall on your left is Swinton Park and just past the cottages at Low Swinton is the east gateway to the Park. Through the gates a driveway leads to Swinton Castle, actually an early 19th century castellated mansion built for William Danby, now used as a management training college. Opposite the gateway, bear right down the road to the 18th Century bridge over the River Burn, near the golf course. (*This is where the intended route joins– see above*)

OUSTER BANK to MASHAM



The last ½ mile (0.8km) or so to Masham is slightly uphill from the river. In the town, as you approach a T- junction, the spire of the church can be seen above the houses ahead. At the junction, which confusingly is sign-posted Ripon both ways, turn left and then in about 100 yds go right into Chapmans Lane. This brings you out onto the spacious market-square with its old market cross. The market-square is overlooked by 17th and 18th century houses, inns and shops. In the corner there is the large parish church with its 15th century spire.

Unless you intend visiting one or other of the breweries, Masham market square marks the end of this Trans-Dales Trail. So go and celebrate with a drink in one of the pubs or a cream tea in a café.



Congratulations on completing another Trans-Dales Trail.

MASHAM

Masham is a small town on the A6108 midway between Ripon and Leyburn. It has a large market square, which some say is reminiscent of provincial France – on a sunny summer's day! But Masham is best known these days for its breweries – the independent Black Sheep Brewery and the Theakstons Brewery. Both have visitor centres with brewery tours, restaurants and gift shops.

The large church at a corner of Masham's market square has some interesting features. The tower is Norman, but the spire was added much later, and there is part of the shaft of a carved Anglo-Saxon cross near the south porch. Inside there is an effigy of Sir Marmaduke Wyvill, and a painted arch thought to be the work of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

There are inns, a fish & chip shop, cafés and other shops around the square.

The town hosts two annual attractions - a Steam Engine & Fairground Organ Rally in June and the Sheep Fair in September.



Masham Market Square

SOME THOUGHTS on PUBS, CAFÉS – places to rest,

by Peter Tomkinson

On our travels we all need time to rest and recuperate, particularly on a walking journey over several days. We need to stop from time to time not only to rest, but to replace lost fluids. A couple of pints of Yorkshire ale is my preferred drink, but most pubs in the Dales also have a variety of lagers, bottled beers, wines and spirits. Although a pint or two has a restorative effect at the end of a hard day, too much alcohol at lunchtime is not a good idea, as it can slow your progress in the afternoon, and leave you more de-hydrated.

Nevertheless a decent break around lunchtime is advisable particularly if the day's journey is hard and the weather is unkind. Many Dales pubs and cafes are well prepared for walkers – who may turn up wet and bedraggled – having stone floors and roaring fires (even in summer on cold, wet days). Whilst you sit in relative comfort with your drink and a sandwich you have a chance to study the map and check on your progress.

Dales pubs and cafés can be fascinating in themselves – The landlord at the Crown in Middlesmoor claims that his pub is exactly 1000ft above sea level – this pub has such a small local clientele it must rely heavily on the tourist trade in the summer. Then there was beer served from the jug on a memorable wet day at Arncliffe on Dales Trail 2. We had arrived so wet we had to leave our outer clothes in the hallway, and then stand dripping by the bar drinking our beer and talking cricket. We were also wet when we arrived at the pub at Masham at the end of this Dales Trail 3 and although we left our boots in the hall our socks left wet footprints across the floor. Catering in pubs can vary from the basic lunchtime pie and chips to the more exotic dishes such as at the Buck Inn at Buckden. People frequently travel many miles for an evening meal at this popular Inn. The village pubs give you the opportunity to share an evening with the locals – and you might be surprised who might drop in.

It is fortunate for us that there is such a variety of cafés in the Dales where walkers will always find a warm welcome. There is nothing better than a pot of strong Yorkshire tea to revive weary limbs and flagging spirits. A quiet rest can be normally guaranteed over a pot of tea – providing as much as three cups each – whilst you browse through the local literature on hand. Its good to read how the local mountain-rescue team is doing – just in case you might need them later!

So enjoy your days in the Dales with their cafés and pubs – at least when you are walking you have no fear of the breathalyser.

Accommodation - this is just a selection of places near to the route. Further accommodation details are available from Tourist Information Centres at Kirkby Stephen Upper Eden Visitor Centre (☎ 017683 71199), Richmond (☎ 01748 850252) and Skipton (☎ 01756 792809).

KIRKBY STEPHEN (☎ 017683) Many B&Bs including....

Fletcher House	(71013)
Bollam Cottage	(72038)
Old Croft House	(71638)
Kirby Stephen Hostel	(N/A)

MALLERSTANG (☎ 017683)

Ing Hill Lodge	(71153)
The Thrang Country Hotel	(71889)

GARSDALE HEAD (☎ 01969)

Garsdale House	(667096)
Moorcock Inn	(667488)

WENSLEYDALE (☎ 01969)

Hawes

Many B&Bs - See Tourist Information guide

Youth Hostel	(667368)
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Askrigg

Thornsgill House	(650617)
Milton House	(650217)
Manor House	(650986)

BISHOPDALE (☎ 01969)

Thoralby

Low Green House	(663623)
Pen View	(663319)

COVERDALE (☎ 01969)

Carlton

Abbots Thorn	(640620)
Middleham House	(640645)

West Scafton

Curlew Cottage	(640406)
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NIDDERDALE (☎ 01423)

Middlesmoor


Dovenor House	(755697)
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MASHAM (☎ 01765)


Bank Villa	(689605)
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Inns - those on or very near to the Trail.


Kirkby Stephen-The Kings Arms Hotel (B&B, Meals)

 01768 371378

The White Lion (Bar Meals)

Garsdale Head- The Moorcock (B&B, Bar Meals)  01969 667488

Hardraw- The Green Dragon (B&B, Meals)  01969 667392

Askrigg - The Crown (Bar Meals)  01969 650298

The Kings Arms Hotel (B&B, Meals)  01969 650258

Thoralby- The George (B&B, Meals)  01969 663256

West Burton- The Fox and Hounds (B&B, Bar Meals)

 01969 663279

Carlton-in-Coverdale The Foresters Arms (Bar Meals)

Middlesmoor- The Crown (B&B, Meals)  01423 755204

Lofthouse- The Crown (B&B, Bar Meals)  01423 755206

Masham- The Kings Head  01765 689295

The Bay Horse  01765 689276
and others

Some Public Houses do not serve meals every day – check first!

(Any listing of Accommodation or Inns should not be taken as a recommendation)

Public Transport - Many bus services are infrequent and operate only on particular days and/or times of the year.

KIRKBY STEPHEN

Trains on Leeds – Settle – Carlisle line.
(Northern Rail)

Grand Prix Coaches 563 links with Appleby and Penrith.

Service 564 links with Oxenholme Station & Kendal.

GARSDALE HEAD (Station)

Trains on Leeds – Settle – Carlisle line
(Northern Rail)

Little White Bus 855 connection to Hawes
Dalesbus 855 (Sundays)

WENSLEYDALE (Hawes , Askrigg, Bainbridge, & West Burton)

Dales & District 156/7 from Leyburn &

Dalesbus 856 (Summer Sundays & BH)

Dalesbus 800 from York & West Yorkshire
(Summer Sundays & BH)

COVERDALE (Carlton)

NIDDERDALE (Middlesmoor, Lofthouse, How Stean Gorge)

Dalesbus 825 (Summer Sundays & BH)

Connects with Service 24 at Pateley Bridge

MASHAM

Dales & District 159 from Ripon /Leyburn

144 to/from Bedale

Dalesbus 821 Bradford – Wensleydale
(Summer Sundays & BH)

For full details of buses in the Yorkshire Dales visit the Dales Bus website
www.dalesbus.org or www.getdown.org.uk/bus

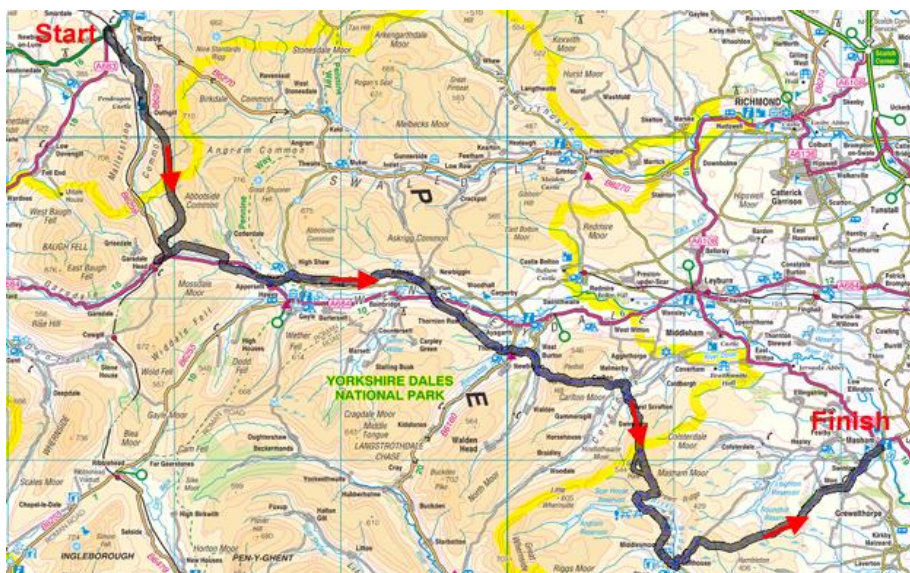


The Authors

Arnold Underwood is an experienced walker and a leader of his local walking club. He lives near Beverley and is the East Yorkshire correspondent for Country Walking magazine. He has walked the Ridgeway (1983), the Pennine Way (1990), the Dales Way (1993), and A Bowland – Dales Traverse (1994), the latter two with Peter Tomkinson. He has walked much in the Yorkshire Dales, Moors, and Wolds, including completing the Three Peaks, Lyke Wake, and Saltergate challenge walks - the last two again with Peter.

Peter is a former Scout Leader and as such has done much walking in all terrains and in all conditions. In addition to those walks mentioned above he has also completed the Cleveland Way, Minster Way and the Ebor Way.

[Note - Whilst the route description was correct at the time of going to print, details may change with time, and the authors cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that may arise.]



TRANS-DALE TRAIL 3 - THE ROUTE



DALES TRAILS
41 THE ORCHARD,
LEVEN,
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HU17 5QA

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