

TRANS - DALES TRAIL 2



A WALK ACROSS THE YORKSHIRE DALES

FROM GRETA BRIDGE TO SKIPTON

DEvised AND WRITTEn BY

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**ASSISTED BY
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"A PRE-RAMBLE"

Britain's Long-distance Footpaths present a rather daunting challenge for many people. I believe a walk should be a pleasurable experience, not a painful slog. It should allow for a leisurely pace with time to savour the delights of the countryside, with time for pints of beer or cups of tea. This was my thinking when I set about devising my first "Trans-Dales Trail", west to east, from Ingleton to Ripon. This Peter and myself did in September 1995 and the resulting guide book was published in February 1996.

Hard on the heels of that first venture comes this north to south "Trans-Dales Trail 2", from Greta Bridge to Skipton. The same criteria apply, with each day being ideally no more than about 12 miles. This means that the total distance of about 60 miles can be completed in five days with a minimum of four nights B & B accommodation. The weight to be carried in your rucksack need not be more than about 28lbs and this should be well within the capabilities of most people - see Peter's article near the back of this booklet..

Alas, my original idea that Kettlewell would be at the hub of a number of "Trans-Dales Trails" has not been achieved. This is because I have chosen to follow a different crossing of Old Cote Moor to that in first "Trans-Dales Trail". The two Trails cross paths in Littondale, and actually follow a common route for the two miles from Litton to Arncliffe.

For "Trail 2", I have endeavoured to pick a route through this very popular area which avoids the more heavily used paths. Many of the tracks are steeped (and steep!) in history, with some going back to Roman times whilst others were old Drovers Roads and Pack-Horse tracks. By contrast, the last few miles follow the tow-path of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal into Skipton. This brings you right into the centre of this bustling town without having to resort to walking through the streets.

"Trans-Dales Trail 2" starts at Greta Bridge in County Durham, about 7 miles outside the Yorkshire Dales National Park.. Greta Bridge is just off the A66 trans-Pennine road from Scotch Corner to Penrith, 3 miles from Barnard Castle and about 15 miles from Darlington. There is B&B accommodation nearby but

Greta Bridge is not well-served by public transport, although Barnard Castle has bus services from Darlington and elsewhere. Skipton, on the other hand, is very well served by buses and trains and there is also plenty of accommodation.

When planning this route, I decided that it would be easier to be dropped off at Greta Bridge, and then at the end of the walk you could, if necessary, make your own way home from Skipton fairly easily. The Yorkshire Dales are very popular so it is advisable that accommodation be booked in advance. For example, there appear to be only two or three B&B establishments in Arkengarthdale. To avoid a long, hard first day, securing a bed for that night in Langthwaite or Arkle Town is a priority because it's a further 3 miles up and over to Low Row (as we discovered!). Elsewhere there is a greater availability of accommodation - details are to be found at the end of this guide.

I hope this booklet will inspire you into walking across the Yorkshire Dales - you need not follow this guide to the letter, although of course you can if you wish. Peter and I completed this walk in June 1996, and it is that route which is described in detail. Some footpath diversions that were in force at the time may well be changed. The text also mentions other possible variations, in italics, that you may wish to follow, or may have to follow due to availability of accommodation.

So, as the Cliffords of Skipton would say, "Desormais" - henceforth and don't look back (except to admire the views).

Good walking

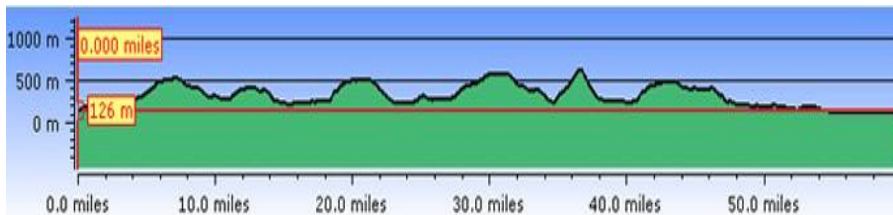
Arnold Underwood & Peter Tomkinson, October 1996

p.s. Thanks again to our wives for being chauffeurs to and from the Trail!

THE ROUTE : GRETA BRIDGE TO SKIPTON



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. North for each map is towards the top of the page. The maps are drawn to a scale of approximately 1:50000, but you are advised to obtain and use the relevant Ordnance Survey Maps as detailed in the text.

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

1:25000 Explorer Outdoor Leisure Sheets 10 and 30.

----->----->----- The described route; other paths

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

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

TRANS-DALES TRAIL 2

Day One

Greta Bridge To Arkengarthdale

10 miles

Ascent 1200ft

Maps: OS Landranger Sheet 92 Barnard Castle Area
OS Explorer OL 30 Yorkshire Dales (North & Central).

If you have travelled by public transport to Barnard Castle, you could start the walk there. Follow the south bank of the River Tees to Rokeby Park. Cross the River Greta and bear right past Mortham Tower. Go under the new A66 bridge to reach Greta Bridge. This is about 3 miles.

1. From the old bridge head east along the road and turn right by the telephone box towards Barningham. Walk up the road with a good view back towards Greta Bridge until it is lost for ever behind the trees. In about a mile you come to a double bend and here take the farm track straight on. The road swings left down to Barningham, visible in the distance. At the beginning of the farm track you pass Wilson House, which offers B&B, and would be an ideal overnight stop before setting out on this trek. You encounter a couple of cattle grids in the half mile or so to Crooks House Farm. At the time of our visit the footpath into North Wood had been diverted to allow for tree felling. The alternative, clearly way-marked led through the farm yard and right, across fields to keep along the outside of the wood. After passing a barn in the third field the path re-enters the wood via a new stile over an unprotected barbed wire fence. At least progress is quick across the fields, but once in the wood it will be less so. The path is quite clear as it twists and turns through the trees - but beware of nettles. Soon you descend towards the River Greta and cross its tributary, Gill Beck, by some uneven and slippery stepping-stones.

2. Gill Beck will be your companion now for about 1½ miles, although it will seem longer and will take you about an hour to cover. Climb steeply up from the stepping stones and at the top, by a way-mark post, turn sharp left to contour round on a narrow path about 50 ft above the beck. Take care along this stretch.

Eventually the path descends to the beck and crosses it - in the next mile the path will cross the beck about six times. There are occasional rocks which could pass as stepping stones but they are often slippery and uneven. It is probably safer to find a shallow spot and ford the stream, as you will have to do later when the path becomes a bridleway. Cross the minor road at Gillbeck Bridge and continue along the path opposite, now described on the map as a bridleway. Between the hazards of fording the beck the path passes through delightful ancient mixed woodland and in early summer the woodland floor is a carpet of bluebells and wild garlic. The path becomes less distinct, but press on upstream. Suddenly the trees end and ahead is open pasture - but your way is barred by a barbed wire fence. Fortunately there is a way, through the fork in the trunk of a tree by the side of the stream. This is of course not the path of the bridleway, which unnoticed by us and by others before us has climbed up away from the beck to where I can only presume there is a gate. Perhaps you will find it.

3. Once in the field bear right upwards to follow the stream from the top of the bank. You will come to a wall and in it a dilapidated bridlegate. Go through the gate and the Stang forest seems only a stones throw away, but there is no access here. In the wall on the opposite side of the beck you will see a gate. Drop down the bank, ford Gill Beck for the last time and go through the gate. A Durham County Council "please close the gate" label confirms that this is a right-of-way. On the map, the bridleway is shown as swinging left across this rough upland pasture towards Haythwaite Farm, visible up the hillside. There is no evidence of a path on the ground. (We kept to the right and followed Woodclose Gill up the side of the forest to meet the track from Haythwaite.) Turn right along the track down into the gill and go through the gate into the Stang Forest. Continue up the track into the forest for about 400yds. The view opens out as much of the forest has been cleared and replanted with young Christmas trees. The farm at East Hope is visible ahead. Turn left past a gate along another stony track which climbs steadily eventually swinging right. There are views north to Barnard Castle and to the Pennines beyond Teesdale. Where another track joins, double back left along it towards a gate on the edge of the forest. This is Black Hill Gate on an ancient route across the moors from Bowes to Richmond. (A notice on the gate details proposals for the construction of a Wind Turbine Farm on this moorland!)

4. Turn right before the gate and continue up alongside the forest edge. Where the young Christmas trees give way to mature trees bear right up a grassy path through the trees. At a junction of paths, bear left still steadily climbing. It can be muddy hereabouts. The path swings right and levels out - you have reached the top of Hope Edge. The path undulates along and at one point the trees give way to provide a panoramic view across the forest. The road from Barnard Castle to Arkengarthdale can be seen climbing through the forest. Continue along the edge until ahead can be seen a gate opening onto the moor. Most walkers of the forest trails bear right before the gate to return to the car park, but you must go straight on and leave the forest by the gate. Continue straight across the moor, there is no obvious path, to the road and turn left. In a few yards you reach the summit for today (515m, 1673ft) and leave County Durham to enter North Yorkshire and the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It is now downhill all the way into Arkengarthdale, a distance of about 3 miles. The road is unfenced for most of the way so you can keep off the tarmac. My original plan was to leave the road and follow a bridleway that contours round the hillside past old mine workings to the delightfully named hamlet of Booze. The position of this path is marked by a bridleway signpost, but there is no evidence of a path across the rough moorland. Further down the road another track leads off to the left and looks more promising, but we were short of time, as we had to press on to our accommodation in Low Row. *If you have booked accommodation in Arkengarthdale you may have time to leave the road and venture round the hillside towards Booze. From there you would drop down to Langthwaite.*

5. If not venturing via Booze then continue down the road which eventually becomes enclosed by walls. Before the road crosses Arkle Beck, go left (FPS Langthwaite) and follow a pleasant path through meadows. *For the Charles Bathurst Inn, continue down the road to the T-junction and turn left.* The field path climbs slightly to a footbridge over a stream before passing through a wooded area to meet a driveway leading to Scar House. Cross straight over and walk up another driveway, passing in front of a house to a gate and stile. Walking again across meadows, Langthwaite is visible ahead, with St Mary's Church just across the beck on the right. Go past a quoits pitch and turn right in the village to find the shop, J.R.Stubbs - provisions, and the pub, The Red Lion - Theakston's, John Smiths, Black Sheep beers and lunchtime bar snacks. If you have ventured via Booze this is where our routes coincide again. There is no pub in Booze!

6. Opposite the pub, a track (SP bridleway - no vehicles) leads between cottages to follow Arkle Beck downstream. In about ¼ mile cross the beck by means of a footbridge and go right and follow the path up across a field towards Arkle Town. You walk through a small field dotted with ancient gravestones - an old churchyard known as Kirk Park Hill - and enter a lane which leads you past a row of holiday cottages to the "main" road down the valley. You have arrived at Arkle Town, not much of a town but it is, if you are lucky, where you have obtained accommodation for the first night of this Trans-Dales Trail. If, as for us, there was no room in Arkle, you must press on towards Low Row, a further 3 miles.

ARKENGARTHDALE is the main side valley of Swaledale. The small villages and hamlets which dot the landscape owe their existence to the leadmining industry. The road up the valley was turnpiked in the 18th century because it linked the lead mines and the Tan Hill coal mines with the town of Richmond.

SWALEDALE was once the centre for leadmining, and the side valleys of Gunnerside Gill and Swinner Gill, and the surrounding hills are scarred with mine shafts and spoil tips. The main valley is a green oasis, a patchwork of stone-walled meadows, many having their own stone barn built to shelter cattle and store their winter feed. The village of Low Row straggles along the valley, and until recent years cattle grazed the common land by the roadside here, whilst Gunnerside is more compact, its history more closely linked with the lead mining. There is the Swaledale Pottery at Low Row just up the lane near the Punch Bowl Inn.

Day Two

Arkengarthdale to Askrigg

11 miles

Ascent 1500ft

Maps OS Landranger Sheet 98 Wensleydale & Wharfedale
OS Explorer OL30 Yorkshire Dales (North & Central)

1. Leave Arkle Town along the road towards Reeth. Just past the cattle grid a faint path goes off to the right up the hillside. Take care not swing too far round towards Fore Gill, but keep straight up the hill and you will meet the main track which left the road at a bridleway sign a little further towards Reeth. This good track climbs and contours round the northern flanks of Reeth Low Moor affording good views back up Arkengarthdale. It meets the road to Low Row just above the ford at Fore Gill Gate. Descend steeply by the wall to cross Bleaberry Gill either by the ford or the adjacent footbridge. This location was featured in the opening shots of James Herriot's "All Creatures Great and Small" TV series. You now follow the unfenced road all the way to Low Row in Swaledale. After topping a slight rise you drop down to cross Old Gang Beck at Surrender Bridge. You are in the heart of lead mining country and a few yards to the left is the ruin of Surrender Smelt Mill. About a mile up the gill to the right is Old Gang Smelt mill and its associated abandoned mine workings. After a steep climb from the bridge it is then downhill for about a mile to Low Row. *Alternatively you could branch right along a track just below a line of grouse butts to head across Feetham Pasture to the tiny settlement of Blades. From there continue along the level and then descend through Heights to reach Gunnerside.*

2. At the bottom of the hill you join the main valley road, B6270, by the Punch Bowl Inn. This is open from 8am to 11pm; it has a small shop, and tea and coffee are available all day. The bar serves Theakston's and Black Sheep beers, and a wide range of snacks and bar meals are available. From the Inn, walk along the road towards Gunnerside and in about ½ mile turn left down the road for Crackpot. A narrow stile in the right-hand wall of Isles Bridge provides access to a riverside path which can be followed through meadows for much of the way to Gunnerside. At a metal gate you must rejoin the road but only for a short distance, leaving it again just before the start of a wall to follow a muddy path through the trees. This leads to a ¼ mile stretch along the river bank where you should keep a look-out for kingfishers (- we didn't see any, only a greater

spotted woodpecker!). Where the river cuts into the hillside you must cross a stile (FPS) and scramble up a steep bank by a wire fence. At the road you immediately rejoin farmland at a gate and stile (FPS). Descend again into walled meadows, many with their own individual Swaledale stone barn. The path makes a bee-line for Gunnerside with stiles in each wall. Some fields are used for grazing, others for hay, and these are delightful in early summer with wild flowers. The path enters Gunnerside past the public toilets, how convenient, and the Kings Head Inn.

3. Leave Gunnerside along the lane by the left of the former post office which leads to some old peoples' houses. Go through the gate and walk between the houses to another gate opening onto meadows. Head across the meadows from stile to stile. In the fourth field the ground rises where the river again cuts into the hillside. Do not cross the stile by a footpath sign, but continue up above the river alongside the wire fence. After crossing several more walled fields you come to a footbridge over Shore Gill and arrive in the hamlet of Ivelet. Turn left down the narrow road which bends right to come alongside the Swale. The road then swings left to cross the ancient Ivelet Bridge, a packhorse bridge dating from about 1695. Over the bridge, a footpath to Satron provides access to the river for a good view of the bridge. This is not your route though, so continue up the road to its junction with the B6270. A footpath sign opposite points the way straight up the steep hillside to a stile into the next field. Here bear diagonally right where there is just the slightest hint of path. In the third field, cut across to follow the wall on the right up to a stile, probably hidden from view behind a cattle feeder. Over the stile you set foot on the old Askrigg road over Oxnop Scar.

4. You will follow this track for the next 2 miles, passing through several gates on the way, as it climbs gradually up on to Satron Moor. The old road still serves as access to isolated houses at Gill Head and Hill Top. Opposite Hill Top another track branches left to old mine workings on the moor. Keep to the main track, which contours round the hillside and provides an excellent view down the valley towards Swaledale - even the sheep here seem to appreciate the scenery. A little further and you are on the edge of Oxnop Scar itself, looking down on traffic on the Askrigg to Muker road.

5. In another ½ mile you join that road and a slight rise brings you to the highest point today, at almost exactly 500m (1625ft) above sea-level. It is now downhill for about 2½ miles to Askrigg. Pause a while by the cattle grid to survey

the scene ahead - the wide valley of Wensleydale, the flat topped hill of Addlebrough looking insignificant from up here, a glimpse of Semer Water and the hills beyond, which will have to be crossed tomorrow. Beyond the cattle grid the road becomes enclosed and descends more steeply. Just past the junction with the other minor road from Swaledale you get a view over Askrigg, with Addlebrough now dominating the background. Eventually the gradient eases as you reach the village.

ASKRIGG There are shops, tea-rooms, two inns - *The Crown and the Kings Head*, and a hotel, plus a choice of other B&B accommodation, with more of the same just over a mile away in *Bainbridge*. *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 15th Century church of *St. Oswald*. To the right of the church, a lane leads to the start of a woodland walk to *Mill Gill* and *Whitfield Gill* waterfalls. Time has passed Askrigg by since the *Richmond to Lancaster* turnpike was superseded by the main road across the valley. The elegant houses on the main street date from prosperous times in the 18th and 19th centuries. There has been a revival of fortunes in recent years with the village's fame in the *James Herriot* television series.



View across Wensleydale towards Addlebrough

Day Three

Askrigg to Buckden

13 miles

Ascent 1250ft

Maps OS Landranger Sheet 98 Wensleydale & Wharfedale
OS Explorer OL30 Yorkshire Dales (North & Central)

Today you head for Wharfedale, following in the footsteps of Roman soldiers, crossing the bleakness of Stake Moss at about 560m (1820ft) above sea level. Stock up with rations in Askrigg or Bainbridge.

1. Leave Askrigg along the road to Bainbridge. Opposite the school take to a field path (FPS) that keeps alongside a fence. You are walking alongside the track-bed of the long closed Wensleydale railway line. Soon you pass Askrigg station and goods yard now occupied by an industrial company - the station building appears to be used as offices with a large conservatory built on the platform. Beyond the station limits a stile provides access to the trackbed itself and for about 400yds you walk on a low embankment until it comes to abrupt end at the location of a demolished bridge over Grain Beck. Scramble down the bank to cross the beck by a footbridge. Of interest a few yards upstream and worth a closer look is an old packhorse bridge. This was made redundant by the building of turnpike roads in the late 18th century. Your path across the field to Yore Bridge is along a paved causeway - the original packhorse track. Cross the River Ure by the Yore Bridge, and walk up into Bainbridge.

2. Keep along the left side of the extensive village green, passing the quoits "pitch" (quoits appears to be a popular game in these parts). Across the road is the site of the stocks - now removed for some reason. Follow the main Leyburn road (A684) round the corner and over the River Bain, the shortest river in England, with its cascade of waterfalls. The hill on the left, Brough Hill, was the site of the roman fort of Braccium. Just before the turning for Stalling Busk a signpost indicates a path across fields parallel to that road. This is the line of the original Roman Road from Ilkley to Bainbridge. In places it is raised slightly higher than the surrounding field, and is surfaced with rocks. The path climbs gradually affording a good view back over Bainbridge. At a wall on Bracken Hill you are faced with two stiles. You want the one on the right. (The other one continues along the line of the Roman road to merge with the present day road

which follows the Roman line to Stalling Busk and on towards Stake Moss.) Take the right-hand path, a popular stroll to Semer Water, and descend across pastures to the bank of the River Bain, which is now followed to Semer Water Bridge. This river is so slow flowing that in summer it becomes covered with water lilies.

3. At Semer Water Bridge turn left along the road. In the foreground, on the lake shore, are a few large oddly eroded boulders. Beyond the lake, hills rise to nearly 600m (1950ft) and encircle the head of the valley, from east to west - Addlebrough, Stake Moss, Yockenthwaite Moor, and Wether Fell. Walk along the road and opposite Low Blean farm a ladder stile (FPS) is crossed and a field path takes you close to the lakeside. After an awkward double stile you enter the Semer Water Nature Reserve, dedicated to the memory of one Margaret Watson-Dale. There is no access to the waters edge. Beyond the upper fringes of the lake an area of flat marshy ground extends towards Marsett. The main valley beyond is Raydale with the lesser valleys of Cragdale and Bardale coming from east and west respectively. With the lake behind you the path returns to follow the bottom edge of walled fields. We encountered a Charolais bull with the cows and calves here. It was lying across the path just before a wall stile but it didn't raise an eyebrow as we walked within a yard of the ring in its nose! Over the wall on your right is the ruined chapel which once served the tiny village of Stalling Busk, further up the hillside. Access to the chapel is by means of a narrow wall stile next to a padlocked gate. After exploring the ruin and its graveyard, squeeze back over the stile and head uphill towards the hamlet of Stalling Busk. At a gate the rough path becomes a walled track leading to the centre of this remote settlement comprising a few cottages, farms, and a replacement church for the one down below.

4. Bear left out of the village up the road leading back to Bainbridge. Turn right along a stony walled track, known as Bob Lane, which brings you to another track, High Lane, which is a continuation of the Stake road from Bainbridge. You are now back on the route of the Roman Road. Pause a while to look back over Raydale to Wether Fell where another Roman road, Cam High Road, climbs from Bainbridge on route to Ingleton and Lancaster. Your route gently gains height above the remote Cragdale. At a stile by a gate a footpath sign points across the slopes of the dale. This is the line of the original Roman Road and its faint outline can just be made out on the hillside. *You are welcome to follow this route but it does lose height to cross Shaw Gate Gill where the terrain can be boggy.* The lane, built at a later date to avoid that difficult section,

continues to climb crossing Stake Edge to join another track that has come up from Bainbridge over the shoulder of Addlebrough (By-way signpost). The track swings south across the plateau and in about ¼ mile turns left to rejoin the line of the original Roman road. *The path which followed that crosses a stile in the wall on the right.* At the next gate the track loses its confining walls and crosses Stake Moss with its outcrops of limestone. In places the track is on the bare rock and the suggestion of ruts worn in the rock by the passage of wagons is apparent. The summit for today (561m, 1820ft) is passed and the descent to Buckden begins. The track becomes enclosed again and the gradient steepens. This route, being classified as a by-way, is theoretically open to traffic but only the most robust of off-road vehicles could negotiate the aptly named Hell Gap. This is tricky enough on foot with its surface of loose rocks within a narrow gully. Below Hell Gap the going levels out and the track crosses a cattle grid and joins the Bishopdale road (B6160) at the top of Kidstones Pass.

5. As you head down the road into Wharfedale beware of traffic rounding the bends. In about ½ mile just before the bridge over Cray Gill a bridleway sign by a gate points the way along the hillside towards Buckden. This is once again the route the Romans followed, along a ledge overlooking Cray and Hubberholme. A notice by the gate explains that much of this area has freedom of access, so you are able to dally a while and investigate the waterfalls that tumble down off the slopes of Buckden Pike into Cray Gill. Remember though, that the land is still used for grazing sheep and cattle. The path keeps to the contour above Cray Gill which drops down to join the River Wharfe. You can look down on the hamlet of Cray, with its White Lion Inn, and as you round the shoulder of the hill you get a panoramic view up Wharfedale to Hubberholme and beyond. Across the valley, the track you will be following tomorrow can be seen climbing up onto Old Cote Moor. You now began to descend Buckden Rake through the last remnants of an ancient forest, the deer forest from which Buckden got its name. The stony track arrives at a gate leading into the car park at Buckden. Much of Upper Wharfedale is now in the care of the National Trust, and one of their recent achievements is to open up a new path to the old leadmines at the head of Buckden Gill - an evening stroll perhaps! Exit the car park past the toilets, and ahead is the white-washed Post Office stores and cafe, whilst around the corner is the popular Buck Inn.

BUCKDEN is a typical Dales village with its stone built cottages. The Buck Inn overlooks the village green and provides a range of Theakston's and Black Sheep beers. The food is excellent and can be taken in the bars or in the restaurant. Luxury en-suite accommodation is available. Elsewhere in the village there is a choice of B&B accommodation. The cafe near the post office provides afternoon teas and evening meals. Across the road are Buckden Galleries where you can view and purchase work by local artists and craftsmen. You are advised to replenish your rations at the Post Office before commencing the next stage of your trek.

Buckden is the terminus of the regular bus service up Wharfedale.

HUBBERHOLME, just up the valley, provides further accommodation. Its church is worth a visit for its exquisitely carved woodwork.



Ruined church at Stalling Busk

Day Four

Buckden to Malham

12 miles

Ascent 2500ft

Maps OS Landranger Sheet 98 Wensleydale & Wharfedale
OS Explorer OL10 Yorkshire Dales (South)

Today, in terms of climbing, is the most strenuous day of this walk with first Olde Cote Moor to be crossed at just over 600m (1950ft), and then the flanks of Clowder at 450m (1460ft), with the welcome oasis of Littondale in between. Route-finding however is generally straightforward.

1. Leave Buckden along the road to Hubberholme. Ignore footpath signs by the river bridge (Dales Way) and continue along the road turning left up the track to the farm at Redmire (SP Bridleway - Litton 3½miles). At the fork bear right up the hillside. The track zig-zags to lessen the gradient and before passing behind the trees it affords a grand view back across the valley to Buckden, with Buckden Gill and Buckden Pike beyond. The track passes through a sheepfold and a little further on you come to a bridleway sign. Here you leave the relatively firm surface of the farm track and bear right as directed up a faint track across bleak moorland. This path climbs gradually towards the summit of the moor, its line being marked by wooden posts. There are several boggy areas to be negotiated. On reaching the ridge you discover it to be a false summit (of course) and there is more moor to cross before reaching the top of the next rise. Here the route is now marked by stone cairns. You are now at a height of about 600m (1950ft), the highest point on this Trail, and the most likely place to be caught in fog and rain.

2. On the level summit you pass through a gateway in a wall, and keep alongside the wall, it should be on your right, for about 400yds. As you begin the descent you come to another gate. Go through this and head straight down the hillside into Littondale. There is still a wall on your right and the descent is quite steep in places. After ½ mile or so the path bears left away from the wall then swings right to a gate in the wall from where a clear track heads diagonally down the hillside towards Litton. You are back on limestone, which can be slippery if wet from rain or mist. The track passes woodland and crosses pastures - remember to close the gates. Cross a beck by the footbridge and maintain

direction, the track now enclosed by walls. After the next gate the track turns down through a farmyard to arrive in Litton by the Queens Arms inn. Alas, it will be too early in the day for a pub stop here!

3. Almost opposite the pub a signpost shows the direction across fields towards Arncliffe down the valley. This path fords the River Skiffare and this ford may be impassable after heavy rain. If there is any doubt walk into the delightful village of Litton and turn left down to a footbridge over the river. Once on the other bank turn left again and follow the clear path towards Arncliffe. You pass the ford, no doubt to discover that you could have come that way after all. The river meanders, but the path does not, and heads straight across meadows (FPS) and through a farmyard to join the road from Malham just outside Arncliffe. There are tearooms just past the bridge over Cowside Beck and the Falcon Inn overlooks the village green in this, the "Capital of Littondale". The quaint pub is worth a visit for its draught beer served by jug, for its lunchtime snacks made to order, and for talking cricket with the landlord, particularly if you're a Yorkshire supporter. (We spent nearly 2 hours there waiting for the rain to stop - it didn't.)

4. Come rain or shine, you must press on - it's still another 6½ miles to Malham. Turn along the lane by the north side of the pub. In about 300yds cross a stile in the wall on your right (FPS Malham) and begin climbing the hillside. The steepness increases as you climb up onto the edge of Yew Cogar Scar with Cowside Beck now far below. Additional obstacles in the form of ladder stiles have to be negotiated at each wall. Still gaining height, but more gradually the path swings south away from the beck and picks a course through the limestone outcrops on the northern flanks of Clowder. At a signpost, a path from Darnbrook joins from the right and at another stile you enter the National Trust land of Malham Tarn Estate. The path becomes a track which passes behind the abandoned buildings at Middle House. A little further, where the track then swings left down to Middle House Farm, the footpath aims straight down the hillside to a stile (FPS) in the fence. Beyond the stile the farm road can be followed to Street Gate. *However 1½ miles on that road is hard on your feet, so if you have time in hand go right at the stile and follow the path, as indicated on the signpost, towards Malham Tarn. This crosses north of Great Close Scar to join the Pennine Way by the shore of the tarn. Turn left to follow the Pennine Way due south across flat grazing land with the limestone cliffs of Great Close Scar on your left.*

5. If you kept to the farm road you will arrive at Street Gate by the start of Mastiles Lane. Turn right along the unfenced road (towards Settle) and in about ½ mile you reach a point where a well walked path crosses the road. This is the Pennine Way - there is no signpost, although I'm sure there used to be one. Turn to head south along the Pennine Way, initially across close-cropped grass. Go over a wall-stile and through the limestone outcrops of Priors Rake and then over another wall and down into Trougate. At another wall stile a sign requests that you keep to footpaths - this means you should not turn right here and follow the wall down to the top of Malham Cove (although people do!). Instead, you should continue straight on until you meet a path coming in from the right. Turn back along this path to arrive at the wall by the edge of Malham Cove. Cross the clints and grykes of the limestone pavement to the stiles at the top of the steps at the western side of the cove. *A word of warning - if conditions are wet, limestone becomes extremely slippery and crossing the top of the cove can be treacherous. Rather than risk breaking a leg I advise you not to turn right down the path to the cove, but to continue straight on and join the road down Shorkley Hill into Malham.* After crossing the Cove and descending the steps follow the surfaced path alongside the delightful Malham Beck. Here there is a further choice of routes - either follow the path up to a gate and then walk down the road into the village, or cross the beck by the stone slab footbridge and follow a faint path up the slope. After crossing several stiles this path becomes enclosed and joins a lane which enters Malham by the Youth Hostel.

MALHAM

Most of the roads, paths and tracks around Malham have their origins as monastic roads. The area through which this trail has passed from Wharfedale once belonged to Fountains Abbey, which owned granges at Darnbrook and Kilnsey, or to Bolton Abbey. The most well known track is Mastiles Lane heading east from Street Gate to Kilnsey. The other tracks radiating from Street Gate were also originally monks trods dating from the 12th century, and more latterly adopted as pack-horse routes.

Little need be said about Malham itself and the dramatic 300ft limestone cliff of the Cove, formed as a result of a geological fault, the Craven Fault, millions of years ago. It must have been an awe inspiring sight seeing the melt-waters from the retreating ice age cascading over the precipice. Now all is quiet, as the water running off the hills has disappeared underground, one stream emerging at the base of the Cove, the other south of the village at Aire Head.

One mile to the east is the gorge of Gordale Scar, and downstream from there is the waterfall at Janet's Foss.

Malham village itself has two pubs, hotels, B&B accommodation, a youth hostel, bunk house, several shops, and a National Park information centre at the car park on the southern edge of the village. Malham is probably the most popular village in the Dales, and by about 10.30 each morning in the summer it will be getting busy as car and coach loads of day-trippers arrive. On a walk like this you will see the village at its best, because you will arrive as the tourists are leaving, and will have left the following morning before the next batch arrives! The morning and evening light also show the limestone countryside at its best.



Malham Cove

Day Five

Malham to Skipton

14 miles

Ascent 250ft

Maps OS Landranger Sheets 98 and 103
OS Explorer OL10 Yorkshire Dales (South)

With the hills and moors behind you, today can be a leisurely ramble through pastoral countryside with sheep and "contented cows" for company (see Wainwright's Pennine Way Companion). Apart from one section, my route deliberately avoids the Pennine Way between Malham and Gargrave by following lanes and bridleways by way of Bell Busk. The upper Aire valley between Malham and Bell Busk is generally known as Malhamdale.

1. Head south by the beck out of Malham and then follow the road for a short distance. Just before the information centre a stile on the left (FPS Hanlith) gives access to the meadows. Over the fence on your left, water that retreated underground above the Cove resurfaces and joins with Malham Beck and Goredale Beck to form the River Aire. Just beyond the birth-place of the river, a man-made channel appears between the path and the river. This is a mill leat that was built to serve Scale Gill Mill just downstream. The leat flows into a millpond beyond which stands the mill, now converted to holiday homes. Pass the buildings to join the access road. By the entrance, an information board tells that the mill was built in 1795 and was in use until the 1980's. Follow the driveway alongside the river to its junction with the Kirkby Malham road by Hanlith Bridge. Turn left over the bridge to a stile on the right (FPS Pennine Way). The route now follows the Pennine Way alongside the river as far as Airton Bridge, with the first mile or so being through parkland associated with Hanlith Hall. This is another good stretch of river for spotting kingfishers. *As an alternative, the river can be crossed at a footbridge and the opposite bank followed between river and another mill leat to the converted cotton mill at Airton.* (On the occasion of our visit this alternative was closed for maintenance work).

2. At Airton Bridge, turn up the road past the mill into the village, keeping to the left of the triangular village green with its 17th century "squatters cottage". At the main road cross over and walk up the lane opposite (SP Hellifield) past the phone box. Take the first lane on the left (SP Bell Busk) and then the enclosed track on the right (SP Kirk Syke Farm). This track is followed

throughout its length, passing Kirk Syke Farm then a group of barns. After a gate the track loses its left-hand wall but the route remains clear and soon enters a large field. Walk with the fence on your right to a gate, after which the fence is on your left. The fields hereabouts are used for grazing sheep and cattle, or as meadows providing silage or hay crops for winter feed. In early summer the hay meadows attract a variety of butterflies and ground-nesting birds, such as skylarks and curlew. At the next gate enter another large field and head down alongside the fence towards a barn. Beyond the barn a bridge crosses Otterburn Beck and leads to a lane which enters Bell Busk past some derelict buildings. The crossing of Otterburn Beck marks the point where this walk leaves the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The remainder of the route to Skipton keeps very close to the boundary but never re-enters the Park.

3. Bell Busk is a small scattered community behind which passes the Settle - Carlisle railway line, crossing the Aire on a low 7-arch viaduct. Turn left along the road and at the junction for Airton turn left to re-cross Otterburn Beck (National Park Sign). Immediately turn right along a lesser lane to cross another bridge, this time over the River Aire. This lane heads uphill, past an isolated dwelling, to a gateway ahead leading to a farm. Do not go through the gate but turn left to continue up the walled track. Where this track turns right there is a view north back up Malhamdale to the Cove. The track now levels out to follow the 180m (585ft) contour for about ½ mile before beginning the descent to Gargrave. That short climb was the last hill on this Trans-Dales Trail. Views become restricted as you continue with the track enclosed by high banks and trees, where it can be also muddy underfoot. Then the surface improves and the track becomes a metalled lane and the Pennine Way joins, having come over Eshton Moor from Airton, for the mile into Gargrave. You pass some luxury homes built in the grounds of Gargrave House, which is itself a retirement and nursing home. Gargrave is entered at the bridge over the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, where you can pause awhile and watch the activity around the locks. A canalside signpost indicates Skipton 4¼ miles, but as you will no doubt be in need of refreshment, continue into the village where there is a choice of cafes, pubs, a fish & chip shop, and other shops to provide for your needs. Across the busy A65 the River Aire flows through delightful surroundings - a pleasant spot for a picnic on a sunny afternoon. It's a pity to think that in just a few miles these clear waters will begin their journey through the heart of the industrial West Riding.

4. To join the canal towpath for the last leg of this Trail you could retrace your steps to the bridge you crossed upon entering the village. Alternatively, and useful if you have wandered through the village towards Skipton, a footpath from opposite the Post Office heads diagonally through a housing estate to meet the canal near the bridge carrying the road to Hetton and Malham. Now all you have to do is follow the towpath to Skipton. Initially the canal is dead straight for about ¼ mile to Ray Bridge (no. 172) with its characteristic white painted arch and the hillside of Flasby Fell providing a backdrop. Beyond the bridge the waterway turns to pass over Eshton Beck by a recently rebuilt aqueduct and then heads for Holme Bridge which carries the A65. At first the canal is at about the same level as the road but Holme Bridge Lock drops the level just before the bridge. This is the last of several locks near Gargrave - it is now an uninterrupted run to Skipton (However, canal boats have three swing-bridges to contend with). The canal now moves away from the noise of traffic on the main road and once past the first swing bridge (Highgate Farm) all is peaceful. This is the Aire Gap, that path through hills carved by the river and followed by road, railway, and canal. There is a good view across the Aire valley to Pinhaw Beacon and Elslack Moor. The canal swings back towards the road and then after Thorlby swing bridge turns south to contour round the hillside. Now with canal running parallel with the railway you pass under the A59 and for ¼ mile keep close company with the railway and another busy road linking Skipton town centre with the A59. Here, the waterway is considerably higher than the railway which is down to your right. The road crosses the railway to come close to the canal, so much so that the towpath doubles as a footpath for a short distance. Canal, road and railway pass under the sweeping concrete viaduct carrying the A629 by-pass from Keighley up to the A59, after which the houses of Skipton come into view. The canal, at bedroom window level, passes the ends of several streets of terraced houses and under a bridge providing access to Aireville Park and schools. The street down to the right from here leads to Skipton railway station. Continuing along the towpath, the tower of the Parish Church can be seen over the rooftops ahead and after passing one more bridge you arrive at the canal basin in the centre of town. This area has undergone much restoration in recent years to cater for the canal's new lease of life as a major leisure amenity. There are pubs, cafes, and a fish & chip shop in the area of the canal basin. To the north a short arm of the canal continues towards Skipton Castle (¼ mile) whilst the canal proper swings south, under the road, and heads for Leeds. But you need only head for the nearest pub or cafe to relax and celebrate completing this Trans-Dales Trail, 60 miles in five days from Greta Bridge (where?) to Skipton.

AIREDALE - GARGRAVE is a busy village on the A65 and an important staging post on the Pennine Way with a choice of shops, cafes, and inns. The banks of the River Aire provide a peaceful scene away from the main road, as does the tow path and locks of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. The tower of St. Andrew's Church is thought to include stones from a Roman villa that existed near the site of the church. The tower is all that remains of the church built in 1521, the rest being rebuilt in 1851.

SKIPTON

Skipton is a bustling market town, described as the "Gateway to the Dales", although in the context of this walk it is the gateway through which you will leave the Dales.

As you will probably be arriving in Skipton at around tea-time you will probably not have the time or energy to do much exploring. So visit the Tourist Information Centre at the Old Town Hall in Sheep Street (off the High Street) and fix up an extra night's B & B and plan some exploring for the following morning.

There is the Castle, of course; one of the best preserved and most complete mediaeval castles in England despite enduring a three-year siege in the Civil War. The Castle has guarded the market town for over 900 years and for centuries was the home of the Clifford family, the most notable member being Lady Anne Clifford. Their family motto, "Desormais" (Henceforth), on the Castle gatehouse, is one that could be adopted by walkers of this Trail. Near the Castle at the top of the High Street is the 12th century Holy Trinity Church, burial place of many members of the Clifford family .

Skipton's street market borders the High Street on four days each week. Also in the High Street is the Town Hall and the adjoining Craven Museum, which contains Bronze Age and Roman relics found in the area.

Having walked alongside the canal, why not take a trip on the canal? Pennine Boat Trips operate from the canal basin, daily from April to October. Transport of a different kind, steam trains, can be found at Embsay Steam Railway and Museum, about 3 miles north-east from Skipton town centre.

Is one extra day enough?

SOME THOUGHTS ON B & B's

by Peter Tomkinson.

It's my belief that bed & breakfast accommodation provides the best overnight stops for our Trans-Dales Trails. It has the advantage of being fairly cheap (about £15 - £17 per person) and at the same time provides those home comforts that other forms of accommodation cannot. Camping might be cheaper, but the disadvantages of having to carry tents and all the necessary paraphernalia for your overnight stops makes me think that travelling light is the only way. By using B & B's, my rucksack weighed no more than 30lbs for this walk - containing just a few spare clothes, waterproofs, trainers, some food and drink, and a camera.

Those who provide B & B in the Dales expect the intrepid walker to arrive tired and wet through. Invariably tea and biscuits will be provided to revive flagging spirits, and there will be plenty of hot water for an early bath or shower. Yes, it is at the end of a wet day that a B&B really comes into its own, with a warm room and somewhere to dry boots and clothes so that you do not have to face a miserable, squelchy start the next morning.

Suitably revived it's then off to the local pub for an evening meal and a couple of pints of Yorkshire ale.

These days you often find a TV in your B&B room (for those who can't get away from it all!) and there will always be the means of making tea or coffee. I usually find interest in the books and magazines, often about the history, wildlife, and geography of the Dales, that B&B establishments provide for guests. Some have even been known to interest Arnold enough for him to put down the map!

But the best part of staying at a B&B is the breakfast. Yorkshire folk know how to provide you with the best start for the day with a large appetising breakfast. We actually eat little during the day so we rely on a hearty breakfast which typically consists of grapefruit or fruit juice, cereals, cooked breakfast, toast & marmalade, more toast, and tea or coffee.

To keep us going up hill and down dale there's nothing to beat a good nights sleep and a Yorkshire Dales B&B breakfast.

Accommodation - this is just a selection of places near to the route. Further accommodation details are available from Tourist Information Centres at Richmond (01748 850252) and Skipton (01756 792809).

Greta Bridge (01833)	Morritt Arms Hotel	(627232)
	Wilson House	
ARKENGARTHDALE (01748)		
Langthwaite	The Charles Bathurst Inn	(884567)
Arkle Town	The White House	(884203)
	The Ghyll	(884353)
SWALEDALE (01748)		
Low Row	Peat Gate House	(886388)
	The Punch Bowl Inn	(886233)
	Hatters Garth	(886322)
	Rowleth End	(886327)
Gunnerside	Dalegarth House	(886275)
	Oxnop Hall	(886253)
WENSLEYDALE (01969)		
Askrigg	Lucy's House	(650586)
	Thornsgill House	(650617)
	Milton House	(650217)
Bainbridge	Hazels Roost	(650400)
Stalling Busk	Home Farm	(650360)
WHARFEDALE (01756)		
Buckden	The Buck Inn	(760228)
	Westwinds Cottage	(760883)
	Romany Cottage	(760365)
LITTONDALE (01756)		
Litton	Litton Hall	(770238)
MALHAMDALE (01729)		
Malham	Eastwood House	(830409)
	Malham Cafe	(830348)
	Youth Hostel	(830321)
Bell Busk	Tudor House	(830301)
AIREDALE (01756)		
Gargrave	Old Hall Cottage	(749412)

SKIPTON - see Skipton & The Dales accommodation guide, available from Tourist Information. (01756 792809)

Inns - those on or very near to the Trail.

Greta Bridge	Morritt Arms Hotel
Langthwaite	The Charles Bathurst The Red Lion
Low Row	The Punch Bowl
Gunnarside	The Kings Head
Askrigg	The Crown The Kings Arms
Bainbridge	The Rose & Crown
Buckden	The Buck Inn
Litton	The Queens Arms
Arncliffe	The Falcon
Malham	The Listers Arms The Buck Inn
Kirkby Malham	The Victoria Inn
Gargrave	The Masons Armsand others.
Skipton	LOTS!

Many of the above offer evening meals and accommodation.

Public Transport (updated Jan 2015) - Many bus services are infrequent and operate only on particular days and/or times of the year.

2014 saw severe cuts in rural bus service due to withdrawal of subsidies by North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC)

Teesdale

Arriva NE 75&76 from Darlington (daily)
Barnard Castle Scarlet Band 85 from Bishop Auckland (Mon-Sat)
Barnard Castle Hodgsons 79 from Richmond (Mon-Sat)
Greta Bridge

Swaledale

Low Row Dalesbus 830 - summer Sundays & Bank Holidays)

Wensleydale

Askrigg Dales & District 156 (Mon-Sat);
Bainbridge Dalesbus 856 (Sundays & Bank Holidays)

Wharfedale

Buckden Pride of the Dales 72 from Grassington & Skipton (Mon-Sat)
Dalesbus 872/874 (Sundays & Bank Holidays)

Airedale

Malham NYCC 210 & 211 from Skipton (M-F);
York Pullman 75 (Sats)
Gargrave Kirkby Lonsdale 580 from Skipton
Dalesbus 883/4 (Sundays & Bank Holidays)

Skipton

Buses & trains (Northern) from Leeds and Bradford
Frequent buses from the surrounding area
Trains (Northern) to/from Lancaster and Carlisle

Timetable booklets are available from Tourist Information Centres

For 'on-line' information, www.getdown.org.uk/bus/ or www.dalesbus.org



Don't follow me, I'm lost!

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. Over the years he has walked the Pennine Way, the Ridgeway Path, the Dales Way, and the Lyke Wake Walk. He has walked much in the Yorkshire Dales, Moors, and Wolds, and to a lesser extent in the Peak District, Lake District, & North Wales. His first Trans-Dales Trail guide, with valuable assistance from Peter Tomkinson, was published in February 1996. Peter was an assistant Scout Leader and as such has done much walking in all terrains and in all conditions. He has walked the Cleveland Way, Ebor Way, Wolds Way, and Dales Way to name but just a few.

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



DALES TRAILS

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