

THE DALES WAY:

The Dales Way is a 73 mile long-distance footpath from the edge of the industrial West Riding through the heart of the Yorkshire Dales National Park to the Lake District National Park. It is the first long-distance footpath to be proposed following the 1968 Countryside Act, which gives Local Authorities the power to create access to riversides by access agreements, in addition to the powers to create long distance routes under the 1949 Act.

The route is a result of nearly three years' work by members of the West Riding Area of the Ramblers Association, who have carefully surveyed the required paths, and have devised this route as a means of access to some of the finest riverside scenery of the north of England. It is hoped to have connecting paths from the centres of Bradford, Leeds and Harrogate which will then link these towns by footpath, directly to the Lake District.

Accommodation along the route is plentiful. Good youth hostels exist at Burley Woodhead (near Ilkley), Linton, Kettlewell, Dent and Kendal, and there are several hostels in the Ambleside-Windermere region. It is advisable to book in advance and make a careful note of closing nights. There is good guest-house and village Inn accommodation in most towns and villages along the route (see the Ramblers Association Bed, Breakfast and Bus Guide, price 3/6, issued free to members). A minimum of 4-5 days is suggested for the walk. The route through easy rambling country for most of the way, with possible exception of the stretch of 20 miles between Buckden and Dent, between which there is little accommodation.

At present there are very few signposts along the Dales Way, and not all paths are on current One Inch Ordnance Survey Maps, which are indispensable. Much better pathfinding, however, will be achieved by the use of 2½" sheets, which have much more accurate detailing of the available paths. One Inch Sheets required: 89:90:96:. 2½" Sheets required: SE04: SE05: SE06: SE14: SD96: SD97: SD87: SD88: SD68: SD69: SD59: SD49.

Although the Countryside Commission have not yet finalised the route of the Dales Way, the National Park authorities have approved the route in principle, and the Dales Way should officially exist within about two years. But as 90% of the route is along existing definitive Rights of Way, the public have a right to follow most of the Way without further action. In order to avoid trespass, temporary diversions have been suggested where negotiations are still taking place, and should be used by ramblers until further notice.

Walkers are reminded that even though the suggested paths are public, they go through private land. Always respect the Country Code and peoples' property. Leave no litter, close all gates behind you. Do not pick wild flowers nor light fires. For details of YHA accommodation and membership write to YHA (Yorkshire Region), 1 Undercliffe St, Bradford. For further details of the work of the Ramblers Association and details of membership, write to The Secretary, The Ramblers Association. 124. Finchley Rd, London. N.W.3.

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THE ROUTE:

The Dales Way commences at the Old Bridge, Ilkley. This can be reached from Ilkley Bridge, by taking the footpath through the little park at the south side of the river. The Way soon goes along a clearly-marked fieldpath, parallel to the river, and eventually emerges on the old Addingham road, below the now dual carriageway. Take the next turning right, by the concrete shelter and wire fence, to Addingham Mill. Go straight through the millyard, past some early-Industrial Revolution cottages to Addingham - a footpath over a tiny hump bridge goes through to the churchyard and the village centre. From Addingham suspension bridge to Bolton Bridge rights of way have not yet been agreed. Walkers should avoid the dangerous B6160 road, and the following attractive diversion via Haw Pike is suggested. Continue through Addingham village, past the Fleece Inn, taking the first turning right past the old railway arch, by the new public convenience.

At the track end go left for a few yards, and then right by a farm. Look for a wicket gate on the left, the path is parallel to the track, but where the track bears right, the path continues straight ahead by Highfield House. Continue to Hag Head Farm, straight ahead, and at this farm look for a step-stile on the right of the farm buildings. Now walk across a shallow dip in the field to another stile and farm buildings straight ahead. Skirt round to the left of those, and along the track, soon leaving it to follow the wall on the right, reaching a stile on the corner of the field. There are fine views over Wharfedale and along the Dales Way from this point.

Taking a bearing from Bolton Bridge below, descend to another corner stile, which leads into Lob Wood. Go right for about 25 yds, then strike a small slippery path (left) that edges along a ravine and passes under a viaduct to reach the road. Turn left (take care with traffic) and walk along the road for a hundred yards or so; then pass through a gap, right, to a

wooden footbridge and a cottage by Bolton Bridge. Cross the road here for the riverside walk to Bolton Priory.

Cross the footbridge, and take the footpath that climbs to the right, through woods. This is through the Chatsworth Estate, and a small fee must be paid, but the views are ample reward. At the lane across the ford, look for the stile in the wall to the left which leads to the riverside and Cavendish Pavilion (refreshments). Continue along the broad track that leads past the dramatic Strid, where the full force of the Wharfe is channeled between a few feet of treacherous rock. The path emerges at Barden Bridge. A few hundred yards above left is Barden Tower, an old Hunting Lodge of the old Norman Forest of Barden - built by the famous Cliffords of Skipton Castle, and extended when the Shepherd Lord Clifford decided to live by the beautiful Wharfe.

The Way continues over the bridge along the Appletreewick road. Go up the hill and through the first fieldgate on the left. This soon gives access to the riverside. At Howgill the path emerges on the lane - the continuation is an opening just over the bridge, left, and back to the riverside, along behind Appletreewick village and on to Burnsall. Burnsall is a particularly lovely Dales village - set in an arc of the river, in a ring of green and wooded fells.

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It has a pretty green, a fine bridge, old grammar school and church. The way continues between the Red Lion and the river, past the limestone gorge of Loup Scar. Cross the river at the little suspension bridge near Hebden, and continue along the riverside till the spectacular Linton Falls, just below Grassington, passing Linton Church on the opposite bank. Grassington is the natural centre of Upper Wharfedale. Though now a busy but unspoiled tourist centre, it was once an important lead-mining town, with a history that stretches back to pre-Roman times. It has a cobbled market square and sturdy grey houses and shops, behind the town are remains of Iron Age fields and settlements.

It is hoped that it will soon be possible to continue the "Way" alongside the river from Grassington, but as rights of way do not exist at present beyond Grass Wood, it is necessary either to walk along the lane to Kettlewell, or take an attractive high level diversion. Turn left along Chapel Street, at the top of the old market square. Where the lane bends left, at the de-restriction sign, go straight through the farmyard opposite to pick up a track and footpath through

narrow stiles which climbs up behind Grass and Barstow Woods, a famous nature reserve.

At a large opening on the wall on the left enter the wood, but bear right to a stile. The path now drops down to a steep ravine, climbing to a stone-stop stile opposite. Bear left parallel with the ravine. The path soon bears away right - this soon becomes a field track which emerges at a gate in Coniston village. Coniston has a fine maypole. Note the massive outline of Kilnsey Crag across the river, a favorite overhang of climbers.

Continue towards Kettlewell, but look for a track right, which leads to Mossdale, scene of the pothole tragedy of two years ago. Take the path off left roughly parallel with the 1,000 foot contour - this gives access to high outcrops of rock above Throstle Nest. One can either continue to join the path from Kettlewell leading up towards Great Whernside, and descend to the village that way, else descend via a track near Scargill, by the Norwegian style church.

The Way leaves Kettlewell along the far bank of the river, commencing at Kettlewell Bridge, passing close to Starbottan, and through the foot of a huge rampart of woods and high moorland which blocks the valley like a great dam. Going through the old deer park the way enters Langstrothdale Chase, and shunning pretty Buckden village, with Buckden Pike high at the back, bears left to Hubberholme.

As a new section of footpath is needed here, it is easier to follow the lane to Hubberholme bridge. Hubberholme is a tiny Langstrothdale hamlet with a very ancient inn and a small, sturdy church, looking as if it was fortified against the advances of marauding Scots. Cross the bridge, and, to avoid a landslip, take the farmtrack above the church a short way, before veering off left to the riverside. This is a beautiful path, dotted with celandines in Spring, and soon reaches Yockenthwaite, site of a Viking settlement. There is the ruins of an ancient stone circle shortly past Yockenthwaite, before Beckermonds is reached by the noisy infant river. No path yet exists from Beckermonds to Oughtershaw, and walkers must use the verge of the road. The Way now follows Oughtershaw Beck along a track through Swarthgill, which becomes a path climbing up to Cam Houses and the Cam High Road.

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This part of the old Roman Road was built by Agricole between Ribchester and Bainbridge, where there was an important Fort.

It is now part of the Pennine Way, the 260 mile path between Edale and Scotland, with which the Dales Wey merges for just over a mile. At the cairn on Cam End, which will soon become one of the most important ramblers' cross roads in England, with paths leading north, south, east & west, the Dales Way leaves its more famous big brother, bearing straight ahead with the Roman Road, which drops in classic manner down to the ford over the infant River Ribble. The footbridge has been destroyed and the crossing of the river can be difficult in rainy weather. If necessary a small farm bridge can be reached a short way up river. At the road turn left for 300 yards (a new path needed), half way to Gearstones, where the farmhouse by the roadside was once a famous Droving Inn used by Scottish drovers in the eighteenth century. Cross the road and follow an obvious bridle path for 3 miles, over Gayle and Blea Moor to the head of Dentdale, below Newby Head.

Follow the left bank of the beck, under the huge Denthead railway viaduct of the Settle-Carlisle railway via Cow Dub (2½ miles of new path needed here) and on to the chapel at Lee Yeat, below Dent Station, on the right bank – one mile of new path is required here. Enter the road at the side of the chapel – the Friends' Meeting House. Now cross the river to the left bank, over the stile and by the river to the bridge at Ewegales.

Dentdale is one of the loveliest of all the Yorkshire Dales. In springtime the hedgerows are white with blackthorn, yellow with primrose, pink with campion. Find the footpath that climbs above Ewegales, on the left, linking the farms via Little Town and Clint, to Whernside Manor. Cross the road and turn right for a few yards to find the path that leads to Tommy bridge and the right bank of the river DEE for 1½ miles. The last 2/3 of a mile is not a right of way, but the lane is easily reached to enter the old town of Dent.

Cobbled streets of Dent are not yet engulfed by Macadam, and a huge boulder of Shap granite in the centre of the village commemorates the birth of Adam Sedgwick, the great geologist, born in Dent and 55 years professor of Geology at Cambridge: Dent was once a much larger and important town, celebrated far and wide as the centre of one of the most important cottage industries, – knitting.

Every man, woman and child in Dent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was an expert knitter – not only housewives, but men taking beasts to market and children going to school – Dent had a little Grammar School – knitted as they went. In winter evenings children sang songs round the fire to traditional words as the needles clicked – all to help slender family income.

From Dent along the left bank of the river a pleasant pastoral scene is unfolded to the eye, small hamlets, farms and barns dot the foothills at both sides of the valley. A quietness pervades the valley. It is not difficult to imagine the past history of this old Quaker stronghold, for the Society of Friends found ready listeners to their way of life in Dentdale. Keep to the left bank, on a small road or track Rash Bridge, & cross the river here to road.

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From here the "Way" is more intricate and needs more care to find the exact route. Across the roads, fields and woods rise up, and at the top of the first field is a bridleroad to Millthrop, just below Sedbergh.

Sedbergh, standing at the junction of Dentdale and Garsdale, is a superb centre for rambling. It is a small, pleasant town, not as old as Dent, but with an old and famous public school, at which Hartley Coleridge, the poet-son of the great Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, was once a teacher.

Places to visit from Sedbergh include the magnificent fells at the western edge of the National Park - Brent Fell, Baugh Fell and Wildboar Fell, Howgill and Cautley Crag and Spout.

From Sedbergh follow the right bank of the Rawthey, passing an old mill, then over the disused embankment of the old Ingleton-Tebay railway, to Brigflatts, a name made famous by the Northumbrian poet, Basil Bunting, who knows this area from his boyhood and has used the title in his recent autobiographical poem.

Continue to Holme Ford, and up the bridle path to the road, (the last 100 yards private but obviously well used). After 150 yards along the road a footpath leads right to High Oaks Farm. There is now a bridle path to Luneside and Bridge End.

Follow the left bank of the Lune to the viaduct, then leaving the river to pass Low Braithwaite, enter the bridleway, with the Howgill Fells high on the right. Follow these lovely narrow bridleways to Nether Bainbridge and Hole House.

The Way is behind the farm and in front of a neat cottage gradually descending to the river from here, then along the left bank to Crook of Lune Bridge.

Cross the narrow bridge to walk up into the hamlet of Beckfoot, and here follow a footpath on the left of a stream to Lakethwaite; between here and Lambrigg Head the motorway is being constructed and the "Dales Way" footpath will pass over a footbridge into Lambrigg Head.

The "Way" is now west and south-west, to Holme Park Farm, and west to Hardrigg via Moresdale Hall, from Hardrigg north-west to Grayrigg Foot, and the Kendal-Tebay road.

Cross the road, bear right to stream and cross bridge; bear left and cross River Mint at a footbridge below Shaw End. Pass left of Shaw End and cross the road to Biglands.

Turn left for Black Moss Tarn and, passing north end of tarn, meet a lane under the Electric Power Lines. South-west along this lane, becoming wider and macadamed, to the Kendal-Penrith road, passing Skelsmergh Tarn on the way. Cross and turn left 50 yards, then right down lane to farm - Burton House.

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At left, south-west corner of the farm, turn left and follow the path down to, and alongside beck for 100 yards to footbridge. Forward and west to right hand side of hill in front. Round the other side to a gate and across a field, down the next field to a corner of the road.

Turn right, and after one field length, left (well before the cottages at Oak Bank) to Sprint Mill, turn left, then follow River Sprint to the bridge.

Cross and follow the road 100 yards to the cross roads, turn left and take the first road on the right to a factory at Burneside.

At Burneside the "Way" is again along the riverside, along the left bank of the River Kent, a pleasant walk to Bowston and Hag Foot wooden cattle bridge. Cross here and walk along the right bank to the outskirts of Staveley.

Almost immediately a minor road on the left, which passes under a railway bridge, where a green bridle track, and then a footpath takes the "Way" to the Crook-Staveley road at Moorside Farm. 150 yards along here and right at Field Close on a minor road, then a green road, the "Way" joins a narrow metalled track before New Hall. Following this old track over a hill to Waingap, the "Way" then turns right, up a minor road, then left on a green bridle road to Crag House.

Passing in front of the Crag on the right, into a minor road, to turn off on left to Hag End Farm, passing Outrun Nook at the road. A pleasant moorland track on the left takes the "Dales Way" to Scout Beck, here turning left for Cleabarrow.

Now the "Way" turns right in the road, then right again part way along a drive, bearing left away from the drive to pass over the high part of a small wood.

Through a gate, bearing slightly right, crossing road by two gates near Matson Ground, and passing a large farm below on right, the "Way" crosses a narrow road, then a path to another road, turning right for 100 yards, bearing left on well-marked paths through stiles and gates and narrow wood to pass through a gate into beginning of a wood at the bottom of which is the centre of Bowness-on-Windermere, and across the road, Lake Windermere.