

THE DALES WAY

**FROM ILKLEY TO THE LAKE DISTRICT
THROUGH THE YORKSHIRE DALES**



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FROM ILKLEY TO THE LAKE DISTRICT
THROUGH THE YORKSHIRE DALES

by Terry Marsh

CICERONE

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Route mapping by Lovell Johns www.lovelljohns.com
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 NASA relief data courtesy of ESRI

This book is dedicated to the memory of our beloved lab-spaniel, Teal, who walked the entire route at its last revision, vaulted every stile, and, being a wannabe trout, sampled every stream and river until finally she could swim with the ducks and swans in Lake Windermere. Sadly, Teal is no longer with us, but her memory lives on.

Front cover: Heading to Bolton Abbey alongside the Wharfe (Stage 1)

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Updates to this Guide






While every effort is made by our authors to ensure the accuracy of guidebooks as they go to print, changes can occur during the lifetime of an edition. Any updates that we know of for this guide will be on the Cicerone website (www.cicerone.co.uk/943/updates), so please check before planning your trip. We also advise that you check information about such things as transport, accommodation and shops locally. Even rights of way can be altered over time.

If you find accommodation listed here that is closed or unwelcoming to walkers, or know of suitable accommodation that we have left out, please let us know. Similarly, if you are an accommodation provider who would like to be added to the list, or taken off the list, get in touch. The most up-to-date version of Appendix B, based on reader feedback, can be downloaded from www.cicerone.co.uk/943/accommodation.

We are always grateful for information about any discrepancies between a guidebook and the facts on the ground, sent by email to updates@cicerone.co.uk or by post to Cicerone, Juniper House, Murley Moss, Oxenholme Road, Kendal, LA9 7RL.

Register your book: To sign up to receive free updates, special offers and GPX files where available, register your book at www.cicerone.co.uk.

Symbols used on the route maps

-  route
-  alternative route
-  start point
-  finish point
-  direction of route

0 kilometres 1 2
0 miles 1

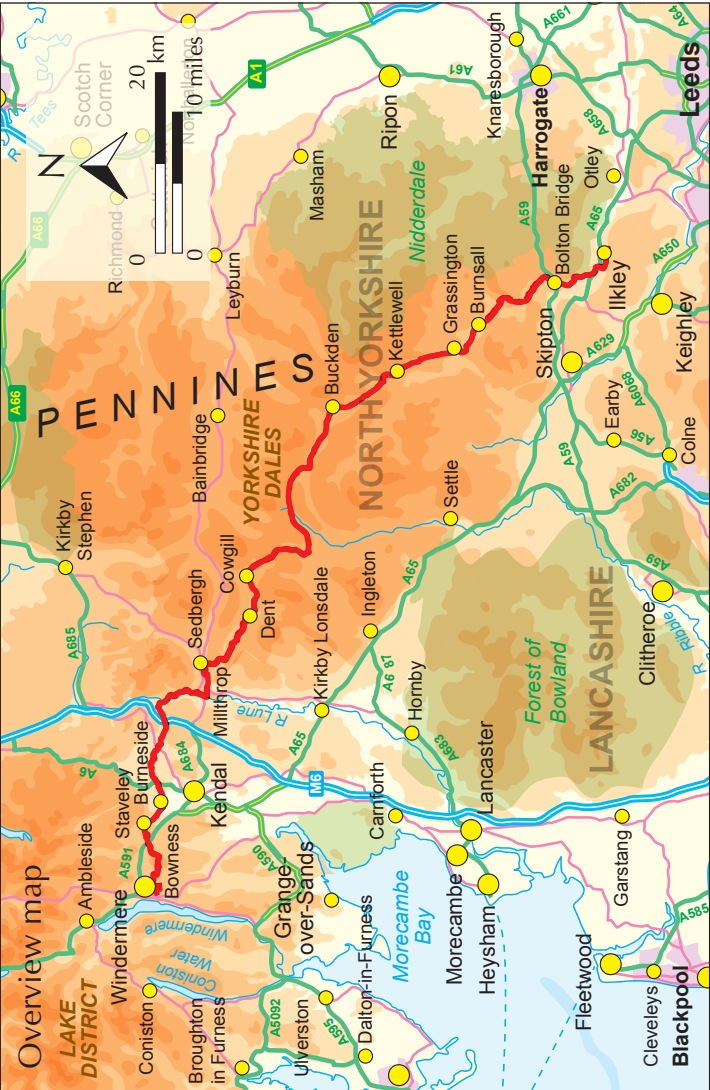
SCALE: 1:100,000

Contour lines are drawn at 50m intervals.

See 1:25,000 map booklet for the key to the 1:25,000 maps



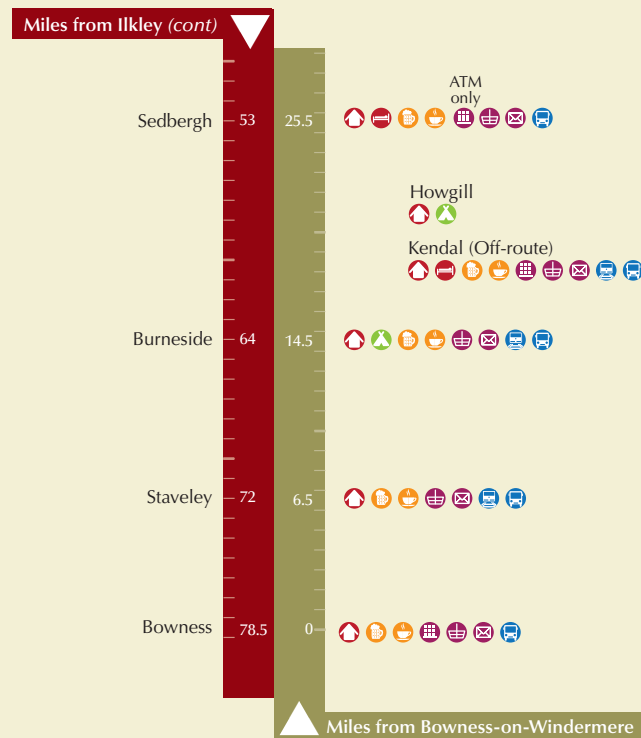
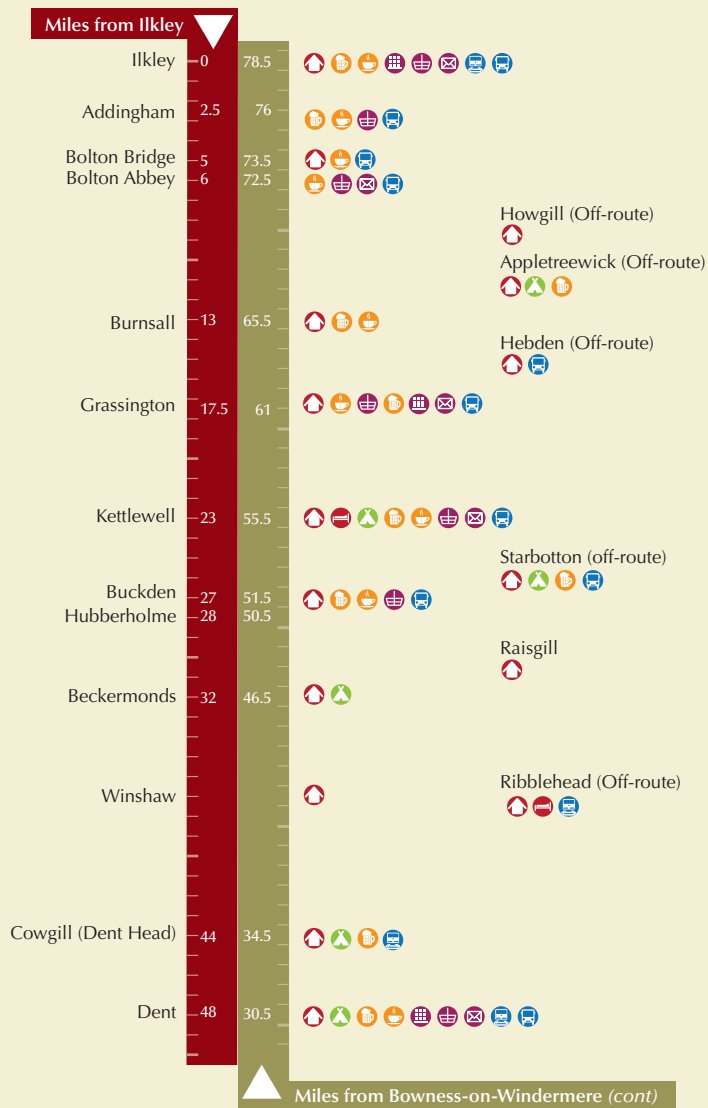
Riverside loveliness along the Wharfe north of Burnsall (Stage 2)



ROUTE SUMMARY TABLE

| Stage | Start/Finish | Distance miles (km) | Ascent ft (m) | Descent ft (m) | Time (hrs) | Page |
|----------------------------------|---|---------------------|---------------|----------------|------------|------|
| Wharfedale | | | | | | |
| 1 | Ilkley to Burnsall | 13 (20.6) | 1035 (315) | 820 (250) | 6–6½ | 34 |
| 2 | Burnsall to Buckden | 14 (22.3) | 1360 (415) | 1095 (335) | 7 | 59 |
| | Burnsall/Grassington | 3½ (5.5) | 375 (115) | 195 (60) | | |
| | Grassington/Kettlewell | 6½ (10.3) | 755 (230) | 720 (220) | | |
| | Kettlewell/Buckden | 4 (6.5) | 230 (70) | 180 (55) | | |
| Langstrothdale and Dentdale | | | | | | |
| 3 | Buckden to Cowgill | 17 (27.5) | 2000 (610) | 1985 (605) | 7–8 | 81 |
| | Buckden/Beckermonds | 5 (8) | 575 (175) | 245 (75) | | |
| | Beckermonds/Winshaw (B6255) | 7 (11.5) | 885 (270) | 885 (270) | | |
| | Winshaw/Cowgill (Lea Yeat) | 5 (8) | 540 (165) | 855 (260) | | |
| 4 | Cowgill (Lea Yeat) to Millthorpe (Sedbergh) | 9 (14.5) | 575 (175) | 950 (290) | 4 | 100 |
| | Cowgill/Dent | 4 (6.5) | 230 (70) | 525 (160) | | |
| | Dent/Millthorpe (Sedbergh) | 5 (8) | 345 (105) | 425 (130) | | |
| Lonsdale and the Lakeland Fringe | | | | | | |
| 5 | Millthorpe (Sedbergh) to Staveley | 19 (31) | 1985 (605) | 2050 (625) | 8–9 | 115 |
| | Millthorpe/Lowgill (B6257) | 7 (11.5) | 720 (220) | 625 (190) | | |
| | Lowgill/Staveley | 12 (19.5) | 1265 (385) | 1425 (435) | | |
| Into Lakeland | | | | | | |
| 6 | Staveley to Bowness-on-Windermere | 6½ (10.5) | 925 (285) | 1080 (330) | 3 | 147 |
| Total | | 78½ (126.4) | 7880 (2405) | 7980 (2435) | | |

The Dales Way Trek Planner



Hotel/B&B
 Hostel/Bunkhouse
 Camping
 Pub/Inn
 Café/tea room
 Bank/ATM
 Shop
 Post Office
 Railway station
 Public transport*

* Check www.dalesbus.org for frequency of bus services.

NOTE: Locations that are not directly on the Dales Way have not been included in the running totals of distance, and they may not be shown on the mapping.



Lush meadows in Springtime, above Beckfoot (Stage 5)

PREFACE

It is 25 years since I worked on the first edition of this guidebook, and in the meantime, I have re-walked every part of the Dales Way more than once while working on other projects.

When it came to this new edition, I again walked the route in its entirety between October 2016 and August 2017. The enchantment I experienced during that first effort has reduced not one iota – the Dales Way is every bit as beautiful and charming and agreeable as ever it was. In some ways, because odd kinks have been ironed out and some passages improved, the entire route is rather better than it was, although overall little has changed. This still ranks as the finest multi-day walking route in Britain on which to cut your teeth.

Having several long-distance walks under my belt, I know the importance of maintaining daily progress, of not falling behind schedule, especially if time is limited. But I also know that too much progress can focus your mind more on the end of the walk rather than what there is to enjoy along the way. Keeping going, sticking to 22, 25, 28km (14, 16, 18 miles) each day, simply becomes a route march, and if you apply those tactics to the Dales Way you will be back home in no time, and possibly wondering what all the fuss was about, largely having missed the point.

With so much of interest concentrated in so (comparatively) short a walk, for a full enjoyment of the process it is vital to allow time to explore and potter about, to paddle in the streams and rivers, to visit churches (and pubs), to get something of a feel for the lifestyle that permeates the course of the Way and of the history that has fashioned the land it traverses. Generally, it is not a bad idea to take your cue from the rivers you will follow – nowhere do they charge headlong, save for the odd moment of madness, preferring to meander gently, switching this way and that to inspect nooks and crannies, going with the flow. You should do the same.

*Terry Marsh
January 2018*

Easy woodland walking around Brigflatts (Stage 5)



INTRODUCTION

The beauty of upper Wharfedale, from near Buckden (Stage 3)



ABOUT THE DALES WAY

The total distance of the Dales Way is 126km (78.5 miles), give or take a few strides. Officially, the Way begins in Ilkley, but there are links to Leeds, Bradford and Harrogate that introduce a special dynamic of starting in major urban centres and walking out into the countryside, to the shores of England's largest lake. These links are not included in this guide, but details can be downloaded from www.dalesway.org/link_routes.htm.

To begin with you will have the satisfaction of walking a significant length of Wharfedale, arguably the most appealing of the Yorkshire Dales, and later cross the Pennine watershed on Cam Fell, briefly meeting up

with the Pennine Way in sight of the Yorkshire 'Three Peaks'. After that, you are bound through Dentdale to the eponymous village of Dent and on to the market town of Sedburgh. The fringes of Lakeland and some of the most endearing landscapes the region has to offer bring the Way to a satisfying conclusion on the shores of Lake Windermere.

The Dales Way is a monument to cooperation between the Countryside Commission and the West Riding group of the Ramblers' Association (RA). With commendable vision, it was this arm of the RA that in the late 1960s foresaw the unquestionable appeal of a fine line through the valleys of the Dales and across the

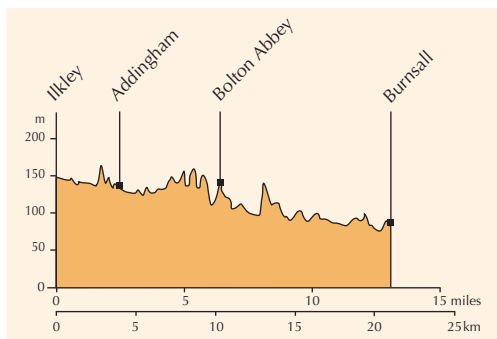
WHARFEDALE

STAGE 1

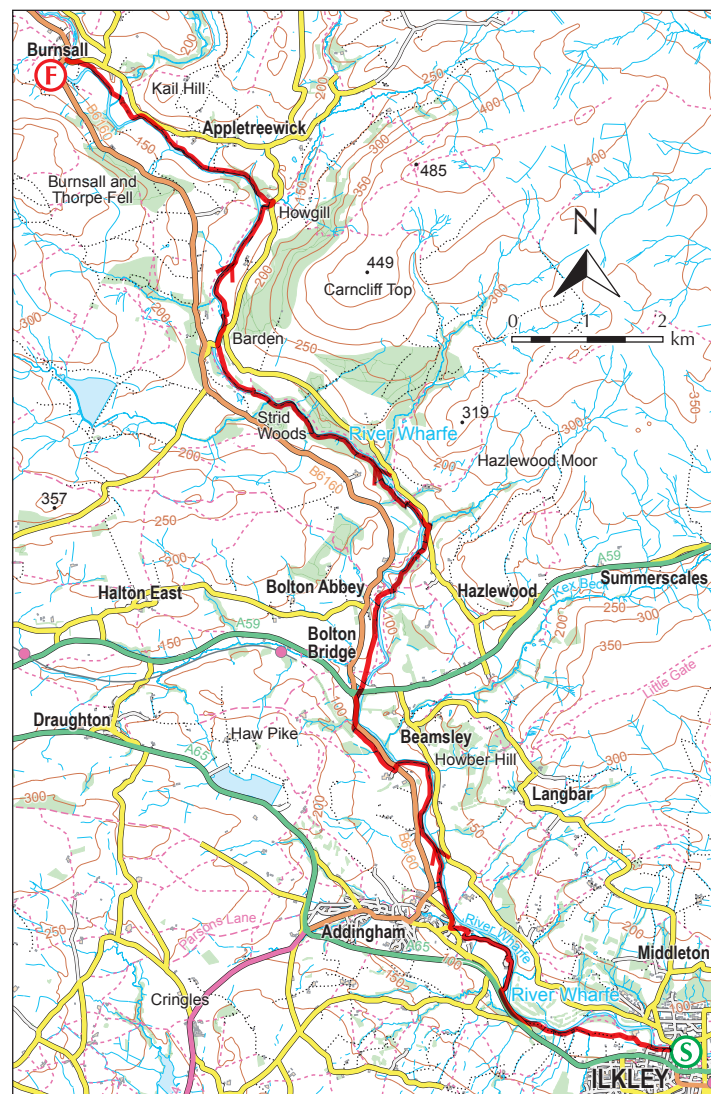
Ilkley to Burnsall

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Start | Old Bridge, Ilkley (SE 112 480) |
| Finish | Burnsall Bridge (SE 032 611) |
| Distance | 13 miles (20.6km) |
| Total ascent | 1033ft (315m) |
| Total descent | 835ft (255m) |
| Walking time | 6-6½ hours |
| Terrain | An easy start to the Way, largely on good paths, tracks and lanes with no significant climbing; woodland, open pasture |
| Accommodation | Addingham, Bolton Bridge, Burnsall |

This first stretch into Wharfedale presents no real challenges other than coping with a surfeit of beautiful landscapes and joyful walking. For the whole way, the River Wharfe is never far distant, and its easy-going nature is a hint to how the walking might best be undertaken: at a leisurely and gentle pace. There are no significant ascents, and for the most part the route crosses low-lying riverside farmland and woodland.



STAGE 1 – ILKLEY TO BURNSALL



ILKLEY

A tour of Ilkley makes a fitting overture to the Dales Way. The whole of the way offers beauty (in all its guises) heaped upon beauty, and Ilkley is an ideal introduction, probably unsurpassed as a setting-off point for any of this country's major walks. It lies near enough to major towns and cities to be easily accessible, and provides a range of accommodation to suit all pockets.

Dominated by the brown dome of Ilkley Moor, with which it is synonymous, Ilkley is a bright, bubbling, attractive town, a destination for walkers from far and wide. It has a considerable history, having been an important centre since the Bronze Age. Known to the Romans as Olicana, it has also been called Olecanon, Illicleia, Hilleclaia, Illelaya, Illeclat, Illeclay, Yelleilaia, Yelkeley and Hekeley. Before the Romans, the land around Ilkley was occupied by the Brigantes, the ancient Celtic tribe whose great kingdom extended roughly to the boundaries of present-day Yorkshire. The Romans built a substantial fort here, and the lines of their roads are still etched across the surrounding moors, indeed many of them will be encountered along the way.

Under the Anglo-Saxons Ilkley became a manor, held for a while by the Archbishop of York and later passed through various ownerships, including serving time as a seat of justice for the great hunting forests of Yorkshire. The manor rolls from the 12th to the 17th centuries still survive and provide interesting reading. One record states that: 'No tenant shall receive or harbour vaccabund or arrogant lyers but which are known to be borne within this wapentake...' Nor, the record goes on, are you permitted to house 'evell condicioned women...'

By the early 18th century, Ilkley had degenerated into 'a very mean place...dirty and insignificant...chiefly famous for a cold well, which has done very remarkable cures in scrofulous cases by bathing, and in drinking of it.' Even so, Ilkley's fame as a 'modest' inland spa brought with it wealth that allowed medieval streets and cottages to be replaced with more spacious houses and thoroughfares. Today, it is a source of much interest for the historian and rambler alike, and a springboard for a host of fine walks, of which the Dales Way is but one.

Officially, the Dales Way begins beside the Old Bridge spanning the **River Wharfe**, formerly a packhorse bridge built in the 1670s to replace several previous bridges that failed to stand up to the river. The bridge is located down Stockeld Road, which branches from the A65 on the



west side of Ilkley, just before reaching the town centre. If starting in the centre of Ilkley, walk north along New Brook Street, until you can go left through Ilkley Park, then continue to reach the Old Bridge. Walkers arriving by rail should turn into Brook Street, and then continue north into New Brook Street.

Without crossing the bridge, go left onto a track alongside a house and The Old Bridge Garden centre; note the stone bench at the start, for the benefit of those walking the Dales Way. ►

The track soon meets the river, here broad, fast and shallow, and follows this until it emerges at a road near the Ilkley Lawn Tennis and Squash Club. Go forward along the club's driveway, following it to the main buildings, and there diving left to a metal kissing-gate. Through the gate, follow a grassy path across a meadow, passing a redundant gate to another metal gate next to a large ash tree.

After this, press on beside a fence to yet another kissing-gate beside a hawthorn beyond which the path

The Old Bridge, Ilkley; the official start of the Dales Way

The nearby signpost exaggerates the distance to Bowness a little, as does one for Addingham a little farther on.

continues between fences, and then follows a clear route, at times alongside a narrow stream, finally to emerge once more onto the banks of the Wharfe. Here another redundant kissing-gate heralds a narrow path rising to a footbridge. A little further, from the high point, such as it is, the track descends, travelling along the edge of a small wooded hillock with many glimpses of charming riverside scenes, a characteristic of much of this stage of the walk, and indeed the whole of the Dales Way.

The route rejoins the riverbank after a gate giving into rough, riverside pasture. Eventually, the riverside path runs out to a gate giving onto the old Addingham road, now a quiet back road parallel with the A65. Bear right along the old road as far as Old Lane, and there turn right. The lane leads to a small housing estate, Low Mill Village.

Low Mill is a peaceful retreat of carefully refurbished Industrial Revolution cottages won from the ruins of an old mill on the banks of the Wharfe. Amazingly, the mill seems to have survived the attention of the Luddites, an organisation formed in 1811 during a period of great distress, and opposed to the mechanisation of the textile mills in the industrial centres of the East Midlands, Cheshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire, believing it to be a cause of unemployment. In a five-year period of wanton destruction, the Luddites smashed machinery and destroyed the mills that housed them. The first outbreak was at Nottingham and is said to have been inspired by a young apprentice, Ned Ludd. Compared to what followed, that first upsurge was a mere token gesture, leading as it did to far more serious and organised rioting, especially here in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where many people were killed, mills and machinery destroyed, and rioters tried and executed or transported. Charlotte Brontë's novel *Shirley* is set in this troubled time.

Nearby Addingham received its share of rioting, but Low Mill seems to have escaped and now presents an historically interesting interlude early in the walk.

Follow the road through Low Mill and continue on the other side to the end of an old lane (Low Mill Lane). Continue straight on, passing a row of cottages and the Old Rectory, which adjoins Addingham church, and then turn right (signposted) down a flight of steps to an old packhorse bridge, the parishioners' route to the church. Carry on into the churchyard, there turning left to pass the church, and following its access path out towards the village of **Addingham**. ▶

Follow the path and driveway away from the church, and as the drive bears left, leave it by branching right beside a stone bench and over another bridge into a ginnel (alleyway) between cottages that leads out onto North Street. Turn right and walk gently uphill into Bark Lane.

From the old packhorse bridge it is possible to bear left across a field below the church to intercept the footpath and driveway to the church.

Addingham church



ADDINGHAM

Addingham grew largely during the Industrial Revolution, but its greatest claim to fame is that it sheltered Archbishop Wulfhere of York (from 854 to 900), who fled here when the Vikings began their campaign of terror against Christian people in the 9th century.

The village is situated at the Aire Gap on a principal route through the Pennines, and there was a settlement here long before the archbishop's arrival. It was later known as 'Long Addingham' because it was based around three separate locations – the church, the old school area and the green – rather than a single centre like most other villages. Until the advent of the textile industry in the late 18th century, the village developed as a farming community. The last working textile mills closed in the 1970s, although nearby Low Mill opened for wool processing in 1999.

Communication links improved vastly with the arrival through the village in 1888 of the Ilkley to Skipton railway (which closed in 1966).

There has been a church in Addingham for over 1100 years. The present building, set in an open field, has nave roof, arcade and chancel dating from the 15th century, with a gallery of 1756. The church is dedicated to St Peter and is one of a few in this region with a blue-faced clock. This is a fashion started by the old established clockmaking firm of William Potts and Sons of Leeds. Beginning with Bradford cathedral, the firm has since been asked to paint the dials of several clocks. The blue paint for St Peters is a specially mixed colour known as 'Potts Blue', it having been discovered that numerals in gold leaf are even more legible on a blue background than on black.

From this point, there is a fine view across intervening fields to Beamsley Beacon.

As the road bends, leave it by branching right, down steps, heading back to the Wharfe. Ignore the footbridge on the right, to **Beamsley**, and continue upriver. ◀ When the ongoing path forks, branch right to return to the riverbank. Press on to another small mill redevelopment at High Mill, which for a moment deflects the route away from the river. Just beyond High Mill the route enters the site of Olicana caravan park. Follow the main drive until, at a signpost, you can turn right to return to a Wharfeside path.

Soon, through a gate, the way leaves the caravan site and goes forward across two pastures beyond which the path rises gently onto the top of a wooded slope, and

then to a stile giving onto a narrow path above the river. From the end of the path the route descends steeply back to the riverside grounds of Low Park.

Low Park was once part of the parkland grounds of Farfield Hall. From this stretch of the river, where fishermen try to catch trout or grayling, there are splendid views to the wooded hillside of Beamsley Beacon. The beacon commands the surrounding countryside as a beacon should, and as one of a chain of bonfires was used in medieval times to signal events across the north of England.

The Wharfeside path is never in doubt and requires little description. It leads eventually to a ladder-stile spanning a wall, and then upfield to a low step-stile beyond which the path rises through a small copse to steps leading up to the **B6160**. Cross the road with care and go through a gate opposite to the rear of the Farfield Friends Meeting House.

Farfield Friends Meeting House



Farfield Friends Meeting House is one of the earliest Quaker meeting houses, and is still largely in its original form. It has not been in regular use since the early 19th century.

Walk around the meeting house to follow the access drive to Lobwood House for a few strides. Immediately after a gate, leave the access by branching right onto a permissive path over a through-stile (signposted for Bolton Bridge). Over the stile, keep to the wall on the right, heading down the farm access towards the B6160. Just on reaching the B-road, go left over a stile in a corner, and then pleasantly across two pastures to a gate and stile giving onto a short path leading down to the B-road. Take great care against approaching traffic, and cross to the right-hand side once a narrow and intermittent footpath appears there.

Keep along the B-road to a point about 100m before the roundabout junction with the **A59**, and there leave the road by turning right through a gate and crossing a footbridge to follow a path through a small area of scrubland, after which you pass beneath the A59 road bridge. Keep on across a small paddock to walk alongside the gable of Ferry House, going up steps to meet the former A59 near the original **Bolton Bridge**. A short way to the left lies the Devonshire Arms Hotel, a bar and tea room.

The **Devonshire Arms Hotel** as we see it today (tea room nearby) was built in the early 17th century, although there would have been a place of hospitality on this site for much longer than that given the trade that would have focused on the domain of Bolton Priory.

It came into the ownership of the 4th Duke of Devonshire in 1753 as part of the Bolton Abbey Estate. It was further developed by the 5th Duke, a man well ahead of his time, who realised the importance of visitors to the area and ensured many miles of footpaths were established so that visitors could admire the splendid views. The area attracted



poets and artists alike, including Wordsworth and Turner.

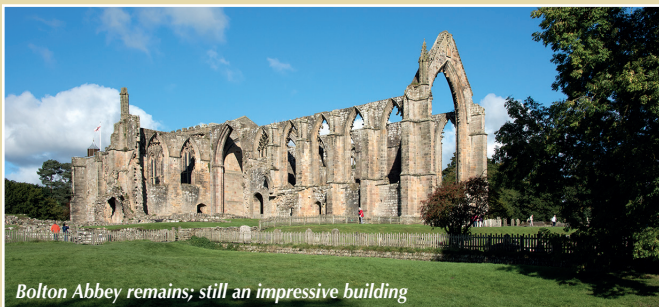
During the 19th century, the Royal Family would stay at Bolton Abbey for grouse shoots and the Devonshire Arms, which was often used for hospitality, expanded, so that by 1840 it could stable 20 horses and four carriages.

Go through a metal gate opposite and onto a riverside path (signposted for Bolton Priory). Keep on to a metal kissing-gate, where the priory comes fully into view, and from the gate continue along a green path that crosses a wide riverside pasture and then rejoins the riverbank. Now simply parallel the river to the bridge that spans the Wharfe close to the priory.

Cross the footbridge spanning the Wharfe at **Bolton Abbey** (there are stepping stones nearby, but they are precarious and rarely passable) and immediately go left, taking the lower of two paths. The lower route cuts across riverside pasture – our first taste of the Wharfe's true left bank – and follows the base of a slope and a line of oak trees to a gate. Beyond, a path continues more clearly,

Canine fun in the River Wharfe

BOLTON ABBEY OR BOLTON PRIORY?



Bolton Abbey remains; still an impressive building

Wayfarers travelling up the Wharfe may be a little confused by the proliferation of signs pointing to 'Bolton Abbey' or 'Bolton Priory', and perhaps wonder if there are two buildings here. This is not so – the village is called Bolton Abbey, but the monastic ruins overlooking the River Wharfe are those of Bolton Priory, although they are often referred to as Bolton Abbey.

There are two possible explanations for how this came about, although there is no evidence for either being correct. Firstly, in medieval times priories were not as important or as rich as abbeys, and so it is possible that a canon, wanting to make a better impression in London or York, spoke of the 'abbey' rather than the 'priory'. The second possible explanation is simpler, namely, that when the railway first came to the region, a mistake was made on the London–Midland Railway timetable, and the name Bolton Abbey has stuck ever since.

Keep an eye open for a 'money' tree – a fallen tree into which people have hammered coins. They have no mystique or legendary significance, so far as I can tell.

directly above the river, to which it shortly diverts, and then heads upriver.

The path stays with the river for a while before climbing into the wooded slopes above to a children's adventure play area, then to follow a route through stands of beech, oak, holly and sycamore. ◀

The ongoing path undulates and finally emerges briefly onto Storiths Lane. Turn left and cross Pickles Beck by ford or footbridge, and immediately go left on a path heading back towards the river, to another path going



right through a gate and onto a broad path leading to the Wooden Bridge at Cavendish Pavilion. Cross the bridge (though there is a perfectly acceptable alternative route following, and then climbing above, the true left bank of the Wharfe, meeting up with the original line at the aqueduct just south of Barden Bridge).

Stepping stones across the Wharfe at Bolton Abbey

The coming of the railway in 1888 and the motor car in the early 20th century placed new demands on the Devonshire Arms Hotel at Bolton Bridge, so the **Cavendish Pavilion** was built by the riverside to provide refreshments, and is now a popular place for visitors of all ages.

Tea and snacks are available throughout the year from 10am (www.cavendishpavilion.co.uk), and with so much attractive scenery, pleasant circular walks, nature trails and an abundance of nearby parking, it is inevitably a honeypot that on fine weekends swarms with visitors quite like nowhere else along the way until you reach Bowness. A small shop here sells a variety of maps, booklets,

sweets etc, and used to levy a small toll for entering the woods, which are private, and its pathways permissive only.

Turn right on crossing the bridge, heading to the gated entrance to **Strid Wood**. As you enter Strid Wood, follow the broad track ahead and basically keep going. There are several colour-coded trails (originally laid out in the 19th century by the vicar of Bolton), but continue following this trail, ignoring deviations left and right, until you reach an information board close to the Strid Gorge, where the river has taken on a new lease of life. A short diversion is necessary to inspect the Strid proper, but take care as the rocks are very slippery.

STRID WOOD

You don't have to be a trained naturalist to recognise immediately that Strid Wood is somewhere quite special, and almost certainly unique. It will be a rare occasion if you have the woods to yourself, for their heavily laden beauty and powerful natural qualities draw people from far and near to potter about among moss-covered grottoes, banks of fern, trees, rock formations and cascading water. Strid Wood is magnificent at all times of the year, but exceptional in spring and autumn, the one when the many wild flowers that colonise this narrow sanctum are bursting through; the other when the burnished bronze colours are at their most intense.

In the 16th century, the forests of Skipton and Knaresborough met here at the River Wharfe, and it used to be said that a squirrel could travel all the way between the two towns without touching the ground. Strid Wood's position in a deep gorge made it unsuitable as farmland, and so protected it from the tree clearances that occurred on the surrounding land.

Not surprisingly, in 1985 the wood was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under the terms of a management agreement with the Nature Conservancy Council, for it contains the largest area of acidic oak woodland and the best remnant of oak wood pasture in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Being an upland site favours the native sessile oak, which can be identified by the lack of a stalk supporting the acorns. Unlike the English, or pedunculate oak, the sessile oak can thrive on the wetter, less fertile acidic soils of the north.



In Strid Woodland, an SSSI of importance

Strid Wood Conservation Area is renowned for its wealth of plants and animals. Most of the trees are broadleaved, either sycamore or beech, the largest of which are between 250 and 300 years old. In addition, there is about 10 per cent ash, 6 per cent birch and a small number of oak. The ornithologist will discover as many as 62 species of nesting bird, while naturalists interested in lichen will find Strid Wood to be unrivalled in Yorkshire, with over 80 species, twice as many as elsewhere. Other surveys list 5 bat species, 97 species of fungi, 40 of Mollusca, 41 of liverworts and 98 mosses, many rare or very local in distribution. Altogether a remarkable place.

THE STRID GORGE

The chasm of the Strid is a great attraction. This is a good place to look for birdlife along the river – little grebe, mallard, dipper, goosander, kingfisher, and a gathering of mandarin duck that must have escaped from a wildfowl collection. Long-tailed tit, coal tit, goldfinch, great spotted woodpecker, nuthatch and tree creeper may be seen among the trees. Here the river, intense, agitated, laden with the waters of a dozen mountains, squeezes itself through a narrow channel between the rocks, setting up forces that have claimed many a life. Indeed, legend has it that it was the drowning of Alice de Romille's son,

the Boy of Egremond, in the early part of the 12th century that caused his sorrowing mother to found the first priory of Augustinian canons that in 1154 was to become Bolton Priory. But this is an easy legend to dispute, since the lad's signature appears on the deed of endowment of the land on which the priory now stands. Nevertheless, it is a powerfully dangerous spot, and no place for a quick dip, however much you might need it.

At one time the Strid flowed in a small waterfall or rapids over the outcrop of rock lower downstream. To begin with the erosion of the softer rocks formed a series of potholes which in time linked to produce a deep chasm and underwater system. The danger lies in its great depth, not quite so obvious when viewed from above, and the sheer force of water. In 1984, a group of sub aqua divers from Leeds University carried out an underwater survey, despite experiencing great difficulty in standing against the strong current and flow of debris. Although they were unable to reach the base of the main waterfall, its depth was calculated at 9m (30ft).

Just beyond the information board, a path curves left and leads out to the Strid car park and tea room (but also signed for Barden Bridge). Follow this for just a few strides, before branching right onto a path above the river, resuming the upriver direction. The path climbs high above the river, but soon descends to run along the riverbank and through the lightly wooded northern end of Strid Wood.

A footbridge spans inflowing Barden Beck, beyond which the path continues upriver. On reaching the next bridge – an aqueduct carrying Nidderdale water to Bradford taps – go left, up steps to cross to the opposite bank. There turn left, returning to the true left bank of the river for an easy stroll along a surfaced pathway to **Barden Bridge**, en route passing Barden Tower partially concealed in woodland on the opposite bank. At Barden Bridge the Way emerges onto the road at a gate.

Barden Bridge is a delightful monument, narrow and not at all suited to modern traffic, while its neat pedestrian alcoves offer a splendid vantage point looking east to Earl Seat and west to Barden Moor.

There is a lovely inscription on the easterly retaining wall of Barden Bridge which says that it was repaired in 1671 (or thereabouts), although part of the legend is illegible.

Alternative route from the aqueduct to Barden Bridge

I have a slight preference for passing beneath the aqueduct and remaining on the right bank as far as Barden Bridge, because it provides a better view of the river sweeping away to Barden Bridge. Just before leaving the woodland that gathers close to Barden Bridge on the true right bank, a metal notice indicates that the woodland was substantially replanted in 1894 – which gives some idea of what 125-year-old trees look like.

BARDEN TOWER



A short deviation from the way is needed to visit Barden Tower. In its early days just another hunting lodge in the Forest of Barden, the tower grew in stature when the feudal baron at Skipton, Henry Clifford, the 'Shepherd Lord', one of the Clifford line who for four centuries were lords of Skipton and Craven, rebuilt the lodge and made it his principal residence. During the Wars of the Roses, while hiding from the Yorkists who had killed his

father and grandfather, Clifford spent his youth in the Cumbrian fells tending sheep. He was restored to his Skipton estates by Henry VII, but chose to live in the more rural setting at Barden Tower.

In 1658, the formidable Lady Anne Clifford restored the building, which had decayed to a ruin, and the result is a complicated blend of 15th- and 16th-century architecture. It is difficult to discern between the different builds, but a 15th-century fireplace has been cut in half by a 17th-century wall.

Following Lady Anne's death, it was taken over by the Earls of Cork, but fell into decline in the late 18th century. Now the tower is a ruin, as it has been for over 200 years. Once it was an awesome construction, built very much with marauding Scots in mind, although there is no evidence that its defences were ever put to the test.

Many of the steep-sided and overhanging riverbanks accommodate nesting sand martins in season, while the river is patrolled by mallard, dippers, grey wagtails, goosander and the occasional cormorant.

After the gentle pasture by which the Way came finally to Barden Bridge, the route continues with the true left bank and presses on past a roadside parking area to squeeze between a wall and the river. A signpost ('Howgill: 1m') marks the path's return to the riverbank and the start of an easy-to-follow stretch courting the sparkling river closely. Wide-open views expand ahead, with Barden Moor and the wooded slopes of Earl Seat remaining prominent. ◀

The path is never far from the river, and is sometimes accompanied by a fence, sometimes by a wall. But as Howgill, yet unseen, is approached the path swings away from the river, passing farm buildings, to reach a lane. Go left to cross in-flowing Fir Beck.

Not quite on the Dales Way, **Howgill** lies a short distance down a lane. It is a scattered community nestling at the base of Simon's Seat, and in 1310 was the site of one of six hunting lodges comprising the ancient Chase of Barden. Now it is the gateway to Skyreholme valley, the limestone gorge of Trollers Gill and the house and grounds of Parcevall Hall, to which a short excursion, if time permits, is well worthwhile. Although built in the 17th century, Parcevall Hall has much of an Elizabethan

look about it, and the craftsmanship of this country's ancient masons, displayed here, is a wonder to behold. The landscaped terraces, too, are quite splendid, and the woodlands and rock gardens, rather like Ingleborough Hall near Clapham, host a fine collection of rare and exotic plants from many parts of the world.

Over the bridge spanning Fir Beck, turn immediately left onto a path (signposted 'Appletreewick' and 'Burnsall') which shortly bears right across a riverside pasture into a delightful wooded ravine. Here the path is sandwiched for a while between Haugh Wood and the river before resuming a more open aspect, with nothing now to lead you away from what is delightful scenery, until Woodhouse Farm intervenes.

To reach Appletreewick or Howgill

Anyone heading for **Appletreewick**, on reaching the bridge spanning Fir Beck, should continue up Stangs Lane to its junction with Hazler Lane, and there turn left into the village. Those bound for **Howgill** should, from the same bridge, leave the road and turn right (east) onto a minor lane leading to the hamlet.

APPLETREETWICK

Appletreewick for its size has more than its share of claims to fame, although most visitors find its name fascinating. Once, but apparently no longer, it was known colloquially as 'Ap'trick' – which is a good deal easier to say – and was a village of some importance in medieval times. Of Norse origins, it is recorded in the Domesday Book as being owned by the English thanes Dolfin and Orme.

Clinging to the flanks of Kail Hill, Appletreewick is a one-street village, but few come better than this. Fine old buildings line the street on both sides, climbing from Low Hall, past Mock Beggar Hall halfway up the street to High Hall, not surprisingly at the top. High Hall has a minstrel gallery in its main room where musicians would perch to provide the Baroque equivalent of background music, and only a little imagination is needed to tease

the thin-noted strains of Thomas Tallis, William Byrd, Dowland and others from the silent walls. Mock Beggar Hall, originally Monk's Hall, housed the monks in charge of Bolton Priory's property hereabouts, and is the smallest of the three halls, but most certainly the oldest. Outside, a flight of stone steps leads to an attractive old door and doorway, more than likely the stairway to someone's bedroom.

They used to grow fine onions in Appletreewick, and Onion Lane testifies to this fact, but it is the story of William Craven, born here in a cottage in 1548 (now part of St John's Church), distinguished by the generous and loyal service he gave to his beloved Wharfedale, that inspires one more telling. Around 1562 William was sent to London by carrier's cart to be bound apprentice to a merchant tailor. By the time he was 21, he was a member of the Merchant Taylors' Guild, and in due course entered into business at a great mansion house in Watling Street. He became increasingly successful and popular, and in 1594 gave the enormous sum of £50 towards the building of St John's College, Oxford. In 1600, he was elected Alderman for Bishopsgate, and a year later was chosen Sheriff of London. His success continuing, he was knighted by James I in 1603, the year of the king's succession to the throne, and in 1611 became Lord Mayor of London.

A less well-authenticated tale is that of a giant hound named the 'Barguest' or 'Mauthe Dog'. Spectral hounds haunt every corner of Britain; indeed one will be encountered further along the way at Cam Houses, and the Barguest seems to have been real enough to those who encountered it. Fortified as we are by 21st-century realism, such legends have a hollow ring, but the tale survives. There is a story of a motor cyclist chased to Appletreewick from Skyreholme by a huge, fierce-looking dog. On reaching Appletreewick the hound disappeared down a side lane, yet locals assured the young man that no such lane had existed at that place for at least 100 years! It is not known what became of the youth, but an encounter with the Barguest usually meant death.

The way now continues with the river until guided towards Woodhouse Farm.

Woodhouse Farm is a 17th-century manor house that was once the home of an almost forgotten Wharfedale poet, John Atkinson Bland. Styled 'the Wordsworth of Wharfedale', Bland was a

picturesque figure who left a lasting impression as a cultured, kindly old gentleman, proud of 'Bonnie Burnsa' (Burnsall) and the long lineage of Dalesmen that he represented. He was, in his day, the best-known man in Wharfedale, and very much a champion of Wharfedale's causes, great and small. His letters to the Skipton press were endless, but as they were invariably anonymous, people were left guessing as to their origin, until another writer gave away a clue by observing, 'It was with a bland smile I read', etc.

Continue straight ahead past Woodhouse Farm, then left to a narrow footbridge spanning Barben Beck, and on across a field to a gated stile in a wall corner, which gives onto a path above the river.

Close by rises Kail Hill, one of many reef knolls around **Burnsall**. These rounded green limestone hills lie along the North Craven Fault, and were formed as the land to the south slowly subsided.

One final gate above a loop in the river gives into a large pasture which in summer is used as a car park. Cross this, heading for a gated stile beside a field gate. Turn left along the lane beyond, and soon cross Burnsall Bridge to enter the village. There is a range of facilities in Burnsall, but anyone with a taste for home-made cakes, scones and sausage rolls might be forgiven for heading for the open-all-year (Thursdays to Sundays) Riverbank café in the small car park at the far end of the village green (toilets, here).

BURNSALL

With its meandering river, five-arched bridge, village green, inn, church, and Tudor grammar school with diamond-paned windows, many consider that Burnsall, which squats comfortably beneath the gritstone moors of Burnsall and Thorpe fells, is all that a Dales village should be. The picture is beautiful from every angle – the easy contours of the hills, their slopes covered with pine and beech, purple-hazed heather and bracken – everything just right.



In the village of Burnsall

Burnsall is almost certainly of Norse origin, for its name means ‘Bjorn’s Hall’. There has been a bridge across the Wharfe here at least from the 13th century, with rebuilding in 1612 under the benefaction of Sir William Craven, and on into the 19th century.

But once more it is Craven’s generosity that provides perhaps the finest building in Burnsall, the grammar school, now the village primary school. It was founded in 1603 as a free grammar school for poor boys, and endowed by Craven with £120 a year for a master, and £10 for an usher. It continued as a grammar school until 1876 when it became Mr Stead’s School, with several boarders, notably from Leeds and Bradford.

The church, however, has a more ancient past: it has an evocative lych gate, its font bears Norse pagan symbols, and in the graveyard, there are carved Viking tombstones in the form of a ‘hog’s back’. These were meant to represent a Danish house, carved with tiles and with a dragon’s head at their ends. There is a dedication to St Wilfrid, who was abbot at Ripon in 671, and another inscription reads: ‘This church was repaired and butified at the only costes and charges of Sir Wm Craven knight & alderman of the cyttye of London, & late Lord maior of the same, anno Domini 1612.’ Not content with that, Craven ‘did cause all the church & chancel to be furnished with stalles and seates of waynscote’, walled the churchyard and constructed a ‘causey’ from his birthplace at Appletreewick to the church.

On the hillsides above Burnsall can be seen cultivation terraces, or ‘lynchets’, which were ploughed by inhabitants of the village more than 1000 years ago.

SOUTHBOUND: BURNSALL TO ILKLEY

Cross Burnsall Bridge, following the Appletreewick road. Take the first gate on the right after the bridge and strike across a riverside pasture onto a bank just above the river. From a gate, the path runs on alongside the river, and in due course brings the hamlet of **Appletreewick** into view.

Just before reaching Woodhouse Farm, bear away from the river and follow a green track to a footbridge spanning Barben Beck. Continue until you reach the farm buildings, and continue straight on over a stile. After the last of the farm buildings, cross a field to a gate, and then go around the edge of the next pasture, rejoining the Wharfe in the process.

The ongoing route is never in doubt; follow the river closely until it reaches constriction of Haugh Wood, just before the hamlet of Howgill. Once through this lovely wooded gorge, bear left across a riverside pasture. The path soon swings left alongside Fir Beck and leads out to a lane. Turn right, crossing the beck, and almost immediately leave the lane by branching right onto a farm track (signposted for Barden Bridge). Continue straight on, and then go to the right of farm buildings and onto a track leading down to a couple of wooden chalets on the riverbank. Here, bear left alongside a wall. The ongoing route now remains clear, and simply accompanies the river downstream.

Eventually, the Way climbs above the river to reach the Appletreewick road. Turn right on a narrow path to the right of a low wall (or simply follow the road, taking care against approaching traffic). The wall ends at a parking area near **Barden Bridge**.

Go forward to pass through a gate to the left of the bridge, noting Barden Tower partially concealed among trees on the opposite bank. Continue on across a flat riverside pasture to gain the riverbank alongside a fence, which



The River Wharfe from the Wooden Bridge at Cavendish Pavilion

is followed to a kissing-gate just below an aqueduct. Through the gate, walk on to the bridge and cross to the true right bank of the Wharfe, descending steps to reach the riverbank. Now continue with the flow of the river, soon entering **Strid Wood**.

A clear path runs through the wood, from which other paths occasionally divert. Ignore these and maintain a course roughly parallel with the river. At times the path is undulating, but then it finally leads down to the riverbank just at Strid Gorge, beyond which it resumes a riverside route through Strid Wood and on to Cavendish Pavilion.

Just opposite the pavilion, go left over the Wooden Bridge and then right on a riverside path. Follow the riverside path to a gap-stile in a wall, and over this go left to meet Storiths Lane. Cross inflowing Pickles Beck by a ford or nearby footbridge, and almost immediately leave the lane by branching right onto a path (signposted for Bolton Priory).

When the ongoing path forks, it matters not which you take, but that on the right is the official line, leading down to rejoin the river. A brief uphill section leads to a step-stile beyond which you bear left along a line of oak trees at the base of a slope, heading towards **Bolton Abbey**. A green path leads across riverside pasture to Waterfall Bridge, where the Wharfe is re-crossed.

Over the Waterfall Bridge at Bolton Abbey, leave the obvious path and bear left alongside the river to a slender footbridge spanning a narrow stream, beyond which the way simply parallels the river.

When **Bolton Bridge** comes into view just head straight for it. Pass through a metal gate to the right of the old Bolton Bridge. Cross the lane and

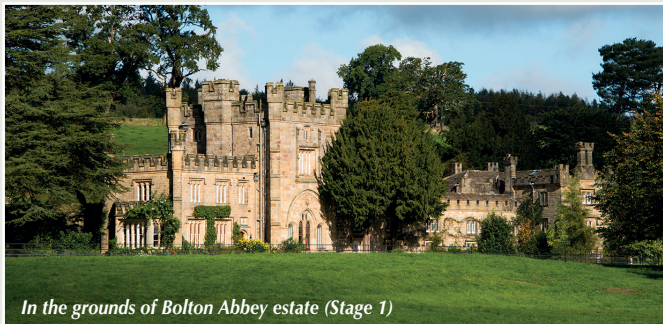
go down steps opposite to pass Ferry House. Cross another brief paddock and then go beneath the new road bridge (**A59**), after which a narrow path leads through a small area of scrubland to a footbridge and gate giving onto the **B6160**.

Turn left, and taking care against approaching traffic, stay along the left-hand side of the road where there is an intermittent narrow footpath. Continue along the road as it climbs and bends to the left. When the footpath ends, near the top of the rise, cross with care to the opposite side and walk on as far as a path on the right, to a gate/stile. Continue alongside the road wall on the left and across two pastures. Stay with this permissive path which leads on eventually to a stile in a corner, giving onto the edge of the B-road, just at the access to Farfield Farm. Walk up the farm access, then, just after a yellow waymark, bear left with a wall to a through-stile in a corner. Over this, turn left and almost immediately branch left again to pass around the rear of Farfield Friends Meeting House.

Carry on to meet the B6160 at a small gate. Cross the B-road with care towards buildings opposite, and immediately turn left down steps into a small copse at the base of which a step-stile gives into the riverside pasture of Low Park. Now walk down to a ladder-stile spanning a wall, and then simply follow the course of the river crossing several pastures ending as the path breaks away and climbs steps to a step-stile giving onto a narrow path across the top of a lightly wooded slope to a low step-stile. In the ensuing pasture, keep to the left before descending to a stile by the riverbank and continue easily across a couple of pastures to reach the edge of Olicana caravan park. Pass through a wooden kissing-gate onto a riverside path and shortly enter the caravan site. Turn left along its main drive to reach the entrance, and there go forward, passing a small mill redevelopment (High Mill) and village green beyond which you rejoin the riverbank.

The path briefly climbs and runs on above the river, and then by steps up to meet the road on the edge of **Addingham**. Turn left and go down the road (Bark Lane) which merges into North Street. Just opposite Church Street, branch left past cottages (signposted) to a small bridge giving into the grounds of Addingham church.

Continue towards the church and then bear right on a path leading to the church gate. But before reaching the gate, branch right again onto a broad grassy track leading to a neat packhorse bridge and a flight of steps leading up alongside the grounds of the Old Rectory, and then to a quiet lane (Low Mill Lane).





Looking back along the Wharfe as it passes Low Park

Go left, passing the Old Rectory, and keep following the lane until it enters Low Mill village. Walk through the village and then continue beyond on a lane (Old Lane) that leads out to meet the old Addingham road at a T-junction.

Turn left and follow the old road until it starts to rise, and there, at a signpost on the left, go through a gate and continue on a broad path that rejoins the riverbank and follows it downriver to a gate.

A short climb leads to a footbridge on the left. Cross the bridge and continue on a gently descending path through light woodland. Tackle another small bridge and go past a redundant metal kissing-gate, just after which, as the path forks, bear right alongside a stream to begin a grassy, obvious and gated route across several fields to reach the grounds of the Ilkley Tennis Club at a kissing-gate.

Turn right and walk out along the club driveway, but, as this bears sharply to the right at a STOP sign, continue onto a broad path from which the Old Bridge in **Ilkley** – the end of the way – comes into view ahead. Carry on to reach the bridge.

To head for the town centre, either turn immediately right up Stockeld Road, and left at the A65, or go forward for a little longer, then take the next on the right, which also leads up to the A65, near the turning into Ilkley town centre.

STAGE 2

Burnsall to Buckden

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Start | Burnsall Bridge (SE 032 611) |
| Finish | Buckden (SE 939 773) |
| Distance | 14 miles (22.3km) |
| Total ascent | 1360ft (415m) |
| Total descent | 1095ft (335m) |
| Walking time | 7 hours |
| Terrain | An easy start alongside the river on a good path as far as Grassington; then open moorland above the dale to Kettlewell, before more riverside walking with the Wharfe as far as Buckden |
| Accommodation | Grassington, Kettlewell, Starbotton, Buckden |

Between Burnsall and Buckden, the Way has some appealing moments; first as it sticks by the river through the lively, rocky defile of Loup Scar, and later as it climbs high onto the moors above Grassington, before surrendering to a peaceful riverside saunter up to Buckden.

Only the middle section, on the moors, is likely to present a challenge. This is an ancient area with many field settlements and the remains of hut circles evident to a diligent eye. But it is wild moorland, with few features, and the need for good navigational skills if the weather should close in. The beauty of this stretch, however, is the splendid view it gives of the upper dale, especially from the isolated summit of Conistone Pie; it was a touch of genius to inject this high-level stretch, but in truth, there wasn't a lot of choice.

As if wanting to distance itself from the clamour that is **Burnsall** on a fine weekend, the Way hastens to regain the banks of the Wharfe as soon as Burnsall Bridge is crossed, descending immediately right, just before the Red Lion pub, and following a constructed path (sign-posted for Hebden Suspension Bridge) around attractive cottages and houses and along the riverbank.