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WALKING

# THE DALES WAY

Ilkley to Bowness-on-Windermere  
through the Yorkshire Dales

INCLUDES  
**1:25,000**  
ROUTE MAP  
BOOKLET

Terry Marsh

# **WALKING THE DALES WAY**

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**ILKLEY TO BOWNESS-ON-WINDERMERE  
THROUGH THE YORKSHIRE DALES**

**by Terry Marsh**

**CICERONE**

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Route mapping by Lovell Johns [www.lovelljohns.com](http://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.*


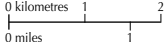




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### Symbols used on the route maps

	route	
	Watershed Alternative	
	start point	SCALE: 1:100,000
	finish point	Contour lines are drawn at 50m intervals.
	direction of route	

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

### Updates to this Guide

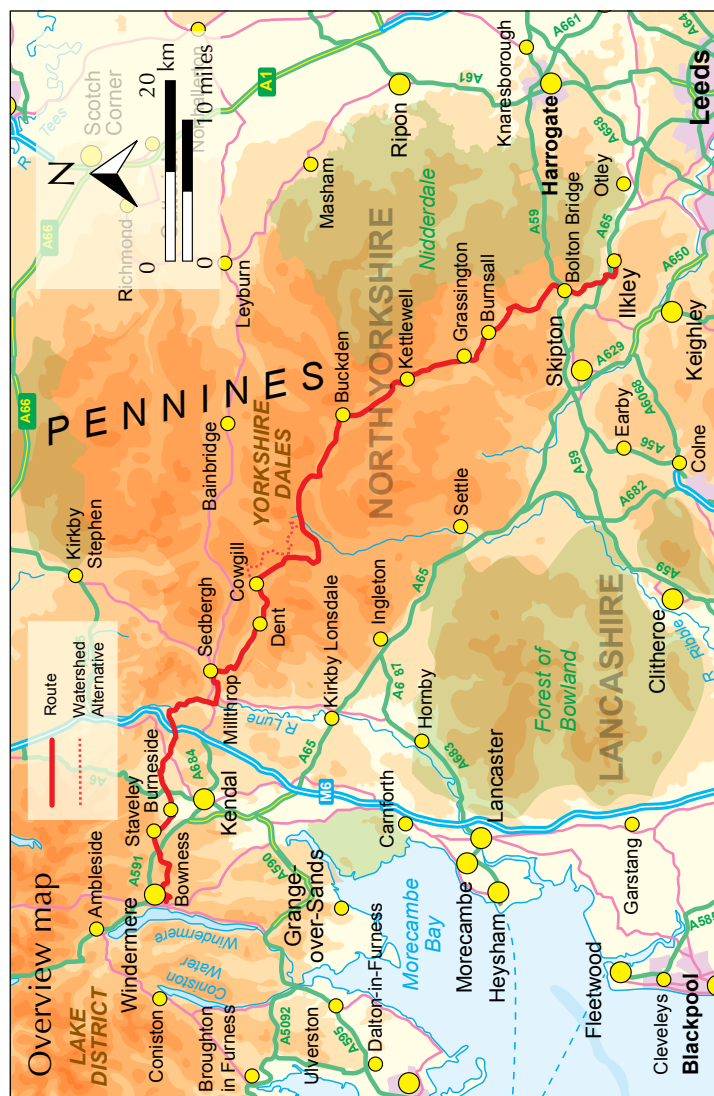
While every effort is made by our authors to ensure the accuracy of guidebooks as they go to print, changes can occur during the lifetime of an edition. This guidebook was researched and written before the COVID-19 pandemic. While we are not aware of any significant changes to routes or facilities at the time of printing, it is likely that the current situation will give rise to more changes than would usually be expected. Any updates that we know of for this guide will be on the Cicerone website ([www.cicerone.co.uk/1093/updates](http://www.cicerone.co.uk/1093/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.

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](mailto:updates@cicerone.co.uk) or by post to Cicerone, Juniper House, Murley Moss, Oxenholme Road, Kendal, LA9 7RL.

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

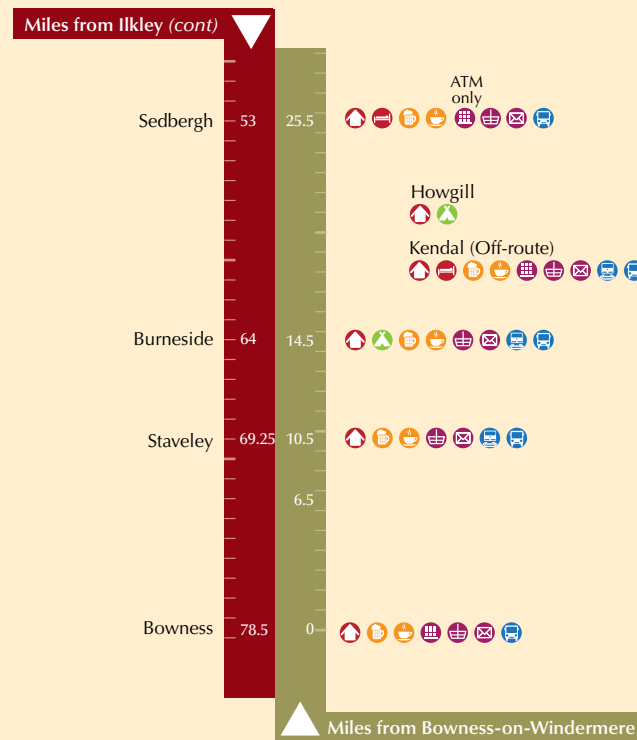
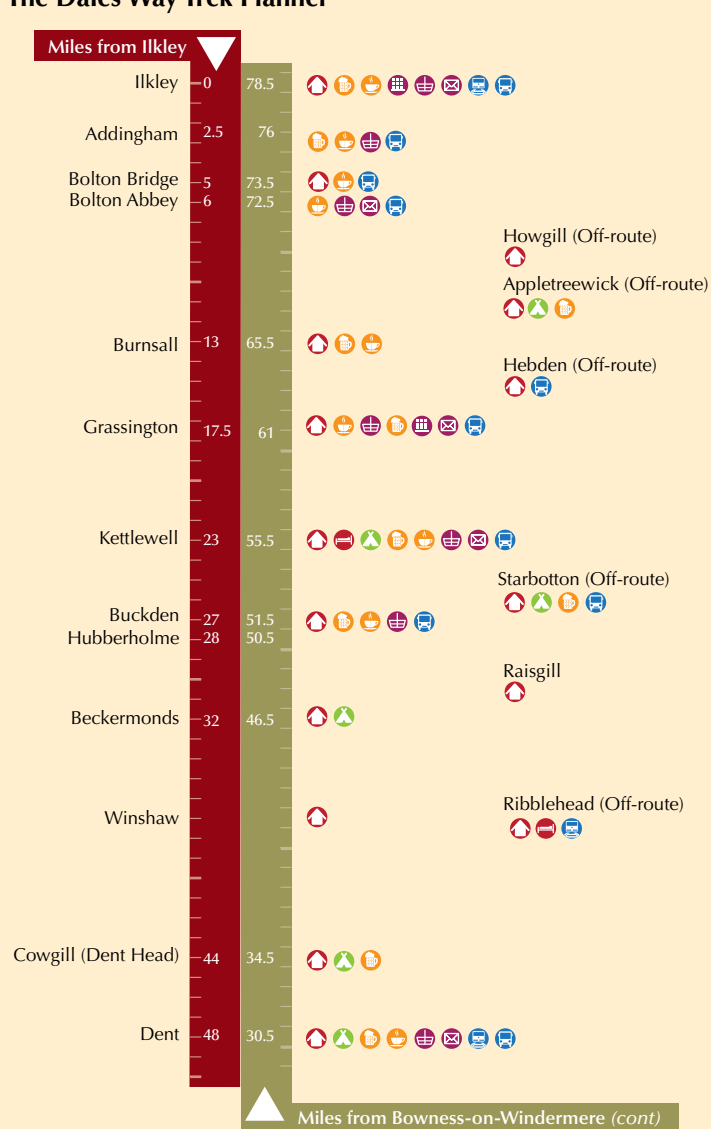


## ROUTE SUMMARY TABLE

Stage	Start/Finish	Distance miles (km)	Ascent ft (m)	Descent ft (m)	Time (hr)	Page
<b>Wharfedale</b>						
1	Ilkley to Burnsall	13 (20.6)	1033 (315)	835 (255)	6–6½	<b>34</b>
2	Burnsall to Buckden	14 (22.3)	1360 (415)	1095 (335)	7	<b>59</b>
	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)		
<b>Langstrothdale and Dentdale</b>						
3	Buckden to Cowgill	17 (27.5)	2000 (610)	1985 (605)	8	<b>81</b>
	Buckden/Beckermunds	5 (8)	575 (175)	245 (75)		
	Beckermunds/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	<b>104</b>
	Cowgill/Dent	4 (6.5)	230 (70)	525 (160)		
	Dent/Millthorpe (Sedbergh)	5 (8)	345 (105)	425 (130)		
<b>Lonsdale and the Lakeland Fringe</b>						
5	Millthorpe (Sedbergh) to Staveley	19 (31)	1985 (605)	2050 (625)	8–9	<b>119</b>
	Millthorpe/Lowgill (B6257)	7 (11.5)	720 (220)	625 (190)		
	Lowgill/Staveley	12 (19.5)	1265 (385)	1425 (435)		
<b>Into Lakeland</b>						
6	Staveley to Bowness-on-Windermere	6½ (10.5)	925 (285)	1080 (330)	3	<b>151</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>78½ (126.4)</b>	<b>7880 (2405)</b>	<b>7980 (2435)</b>		

Distance	Ascent ft (m)	Descent ft (m)	Time (hr)	Page
<b>Cam Houses to Lea Yeat via the Watershed Alternative</b>				
9 miles (14.8km)	1215 ft (370m)	1855 ft (565m)	4	<b>100</b>

# 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](http://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.

## PREFACE

---

It is 30 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.

For the 2018 edition, I 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.

Between the 2018 edition and this new edition, the route has been walked again in several stages, and a new variant crossing between upper Wharfedale and Dentdale added that makes use of the Pennine Bridleway. This is marginally longer than the original route, and rises to a new high point for the Dales Way, and passes Dent Railway Station, the highest mainline station in England at 1150 feet above sea level, located on the famous Settle to Carlisle line.

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 14, 16, 18 miles (22, 25, 28km) 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  
2021*



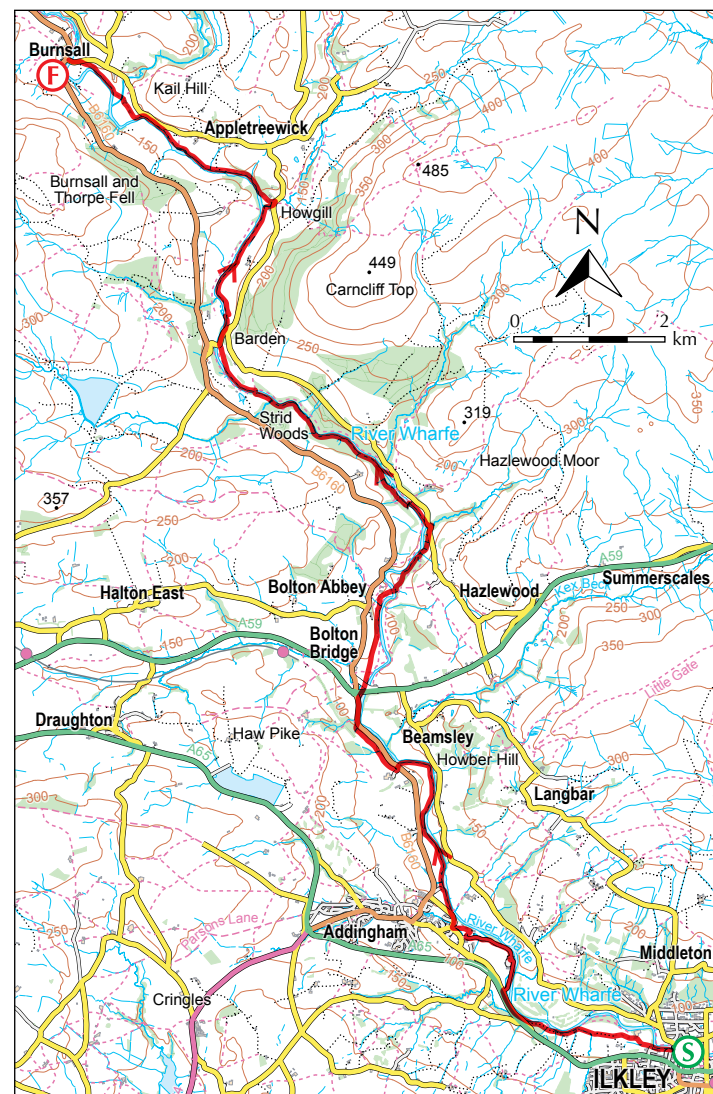
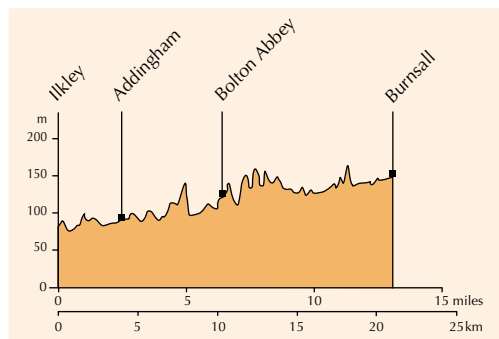
## WHARFEDALE

## STAGE 1

*Ilkley to Burnsall*

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



## 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 conditioned 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*





- 79 miles (126km) through the Yorkshire Dales National Park to the Lake District National Park
- Wharfedale, Cam Fell, Dentdale, Sedbergh



The Dales Way is an ideal route for anyone wanting to attempt their first multi-day trail. To walk it is a constant delight as it threads its way through the limestone landscapes of the Dales. The route follows the rivers great and small, crossing farmland and a little moorland, before entering the Lake District, England's newest World Heritage Site, with a final descent to Windermere lakeshore.

- the trail can be walked within a week and at any time of year
- includes a route summary table, maps and a map booklet, profiles and a trek planner
- unspoilt scenery and delightful Dales villages and towns
- start and finish points easily accessible by public transport
- includes the Watershead variant, Wharfedale to Dentdale

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