

Walk the Way in a Day

Walk 30 Upper Wensleydale from Hawes

Pennine Way

50 YEARS

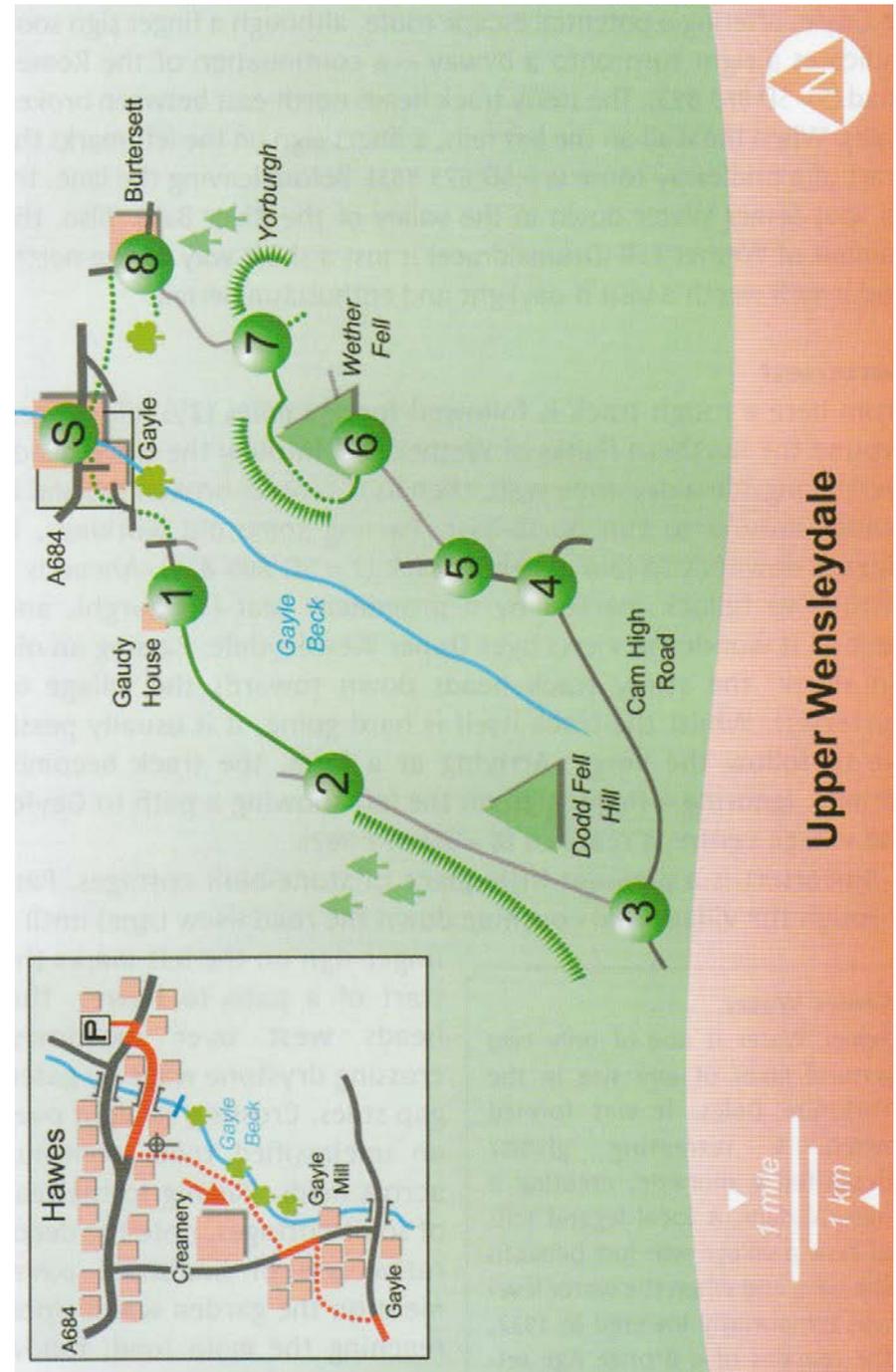


Starting at the bustling market town of Hawes, the route follows a combination of paths and tracks - including a Roman road - along a series of intersecting ridges flanked by deep valleys. The final section is a steep climb across the meadows of Upper Wensleydale, so it is essential to finish before dark.

- Length: 13½ miles (21½ kilometres)
- Ascent: 1,411 feet (430 metres)
- Highest Point: 1,926 feet (587 metres)
- Map(s): OS Explorer OL Maps 2 ('Yorkshire Dales - Southern & Western Areas') (West Sheet) and 30 ('Yorkshire Dales - Northern & Central Areas') (Central Sheet)
- Starting Point: Dales Countryside Museum, Hawes (SD 875 898)
- Facilities: Full range of services.
- Website: <http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way/route/walk-day-day-walk-30-upper-wensleydale-hawes>

Dodd Fell

Hawes is located on the A684, towards the upper reaches of Wensleydale. As well as on-street parking, there is a 'pay and display' car park at the Dales Countryside Museum. Starting from here, follow the main road as it heads into the town centre, crossing Gayle Beck below sizeable cataracts. Passing the churchyard, look for a sign on the left showing the Pennine Way turning along a passageway. Heading up steps beside the churchyard, follow a flagged path across a field, parallel to the beck. Wensleydale Creamery is to the right, while a short way upstream is Gayle Mill (this was built in 1784, and is the oldest unaltered cotton mill in the country).



Hawes

The bustling market town of Hawes is the capital of Upper Wensleydale. Whilst the area was settled by Vikings, the name is actually Anglo-Saxon and refers to a mountain pass. Hawes received its charter in 1700, and a market is still held every Tuesday. The town grew in importance after the arrival of the Wensleydale Railway in 1878, linking the East Coast Main Line at Northallerton to the Settle and Carlisle Railway at Garsdale. Following closure of the line, the railway station was reopened as the Dales Countryside Museum. Hawes is perhaps best known as the home of Wensleydale Cheese - of 'Wallace and Gromit' fame. The art of cheese-making was brought to the dales by French monks, who used ewes' milk. However, today it is produced at the creamery using cows' milk.

Crossing over a road, the Pennine Way heads down a ginnel between council houses. Through a gated gap stile, a flagged path runs diagonally over fields towards another road. Following this past some farm buildings, a finger sign points through a gated gap stile, with a path running across fields. Existing into a lane, a short way to the right the Pennine Way turns onto an access road. Just before this reaches Gaudy House farm, a finger sign points over a fence stile on the left (1 = SD 860 887).

Upper Wensleydale

Wensleydale is broader than its northern neighbour, although the valley sides are equally steep. It was once known as Yoredale, after the River Ure - the current name being related to the village of Wensley, which in 1202 was the first place in the dale to be granted a market charter. Wensley failed to recover from an outbreak of the plague in 1563, and it remains a village of modest size. Upper Wensleydale is reckoned to start at Aysgarth, which is the location of an attractive series of cataracts. Associations with James Herriot have helped to establish Upper Wensleydale as a popular tourist destination, with the village of Askrigg being the location for scenes in the television series 'All Creatures Great and Small'.

From here the Pennine Way heads 4 miles (6½ kilometres) up a trailing ridge of Dodd Fell Hill. The summit reaches 2,192 feet (668 metres), although we avoid the peaty mires blanketing the Millstone Grit cap. Climbing steadily through a landscape characterised by the vague enclosure of rough grazing, there are good views over Upper Wensleydale towards Great Shunner Fell and its neighbours. Passing through a gate, a rough track continues to the right of a drystone wall, swinging around to head south-west. Turning across the foot of a steep slope, continue above the deep valley of Snaizholme Beck, joining a stony track coming up from the right (2 = SD 843 868).

The track is an old pack-horse route known as West Cam Road, which is followed as it contours around the side of Dodd Fell Hill. Looking across the valley, the slopes of Great Knoutberry Hill are marked by angular conifer plantations. A small lake on the valley floor can be seen among a scattering of farm buildings. Eventually the track runs onto the crest of the broad ridge, following this south-south-west until an access road is met (3 = SD 830 834).

Cam High Road

This is Cam High Road, which is followed east then north-east along a broad ridge for 3¾ miles (6 kilometres). Taking a moment to enjoy the distant views of the three peaks, turn through a gate and head along the road. In the deep valley on the right is the ill-defined watershed between Oughtershaw Beck, which feeds the River Wharfe, and Cam Beck, which joins the River Ribble - their waters being destined for the North Sea and the Irish Sea respectively. Passing an area of limestone pavement, the road runs between walls of white limestone towards a junction (4 = SD 861 847).

Cam High Road

Cam High Road was once known as the Devil's Causeway. It was part of a Roman road originating at the regional headquarters at Lancaster, running north-east via Ingleton to the fort at Bainbridge (Virosidum) in Wensleydale, reaching 1,926 feet (587 metres) on

Dodd Fell. Later it served as a droveway and pack-horse route. Cam High Road is one of the famous 'green lanes' of the Yorkshire Dales, although like many of these historic routes, recreational use by off-road vehicles has left the un-surfaced sections so badly eroded that the term is a misnomer.

Turning left, head along the unclassified road. This leads down to Gayle, offering a potential escape route, although a finger sign soon indicates a right turn onto a byway - a continuation of the Roman road (5 = SD 863 853). The stony track heads north-east between broken walls. When the wall on the left fails, a finger sign on the left marks the start of a bridleway route (6 = SD 873 865). Before leaving the lane, try to spot Semer Water down in the valley of the River Bain. Also, the summit of Wether Fell (Drumaldrace) is just a short way to the north, and is well worth a visit if daylight and enthusiasm permit.

Semer Water

Semer Water is one of only two natural lakes of any size in the Yorkshire Dales. It was formed when a retreating glacier deposited a moraine, creating a natural dam. A local legend tells of how a village was lost beneath the lake, and when the water level was temporarily lowered in 1937, the remains of a Bronze Age settlement were indeed discovered.

Burtersett

From here a rough track is followed for 1½ miles (2½ kilometres) around the northern flanks of Wether Fell. Initially the track heads west alongside a drystone wall, then as it crosses broken ground it swings around to run north-east. Passing some old workings, it zigzags downhill to join another track (7 = SD 883 875). Ahead is a distinctive hillock marked by a prominent scar (Yorburgh), and beyond it wonderful views over Upper Wensleydale. Passing an old tin shack, the stony track heads down towards the village of Burtersett. Whilst the track itself is hard-going, it is usually possible to follow the verge. Arriving at a farm, the track becomes tarmac. Ignoring a finger sign on the left showing a path to Gayle, the

village centre is reached (8 = SD 891 892).

Burtersett is a pleasant little place of stone-built cottages. Passing through the village, continue down the road (New Lane) until a finger sign on the left marks the start of a path to Hawes. This heads west over meadows, crossing drystone walls by gated gap stiles. Crossing straight over an unclassified road, continue across fields. Passing to the rear of some cottages, note the decorative use of limestone pavement on the garden walls. Upon reaching the main road, follow the pavement back to the town centre.

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