

Settle Circular via Malham			Gordale Scar and Malham Tarn Options		
1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check	1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check
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Settle Circular via Malham

Start & Finish: Settle Station

Settle Station, map reference SD 817 634, is 319 km northwest of Charing Cross, 101 km southeast of Carlisle, 54 km northwest of Leeds, 156m above sea level and in **North Yorkshire**.

Length: 22.8 km (14.2 mi).

Cumulative ascent/descent: 800m. For a shorter or longer walk, see below **Walk Options**.

Toughness: 7 out of 10

Time: 6 hours walking time.

Transport: Settle is a station on the Leeds - Settle - Carlisle Line, with nine trains per day Mon-Sat and six on Sundays. Journey time to Settle is from 89 minutes from Carlisle and from 59 minutes from Leeds.

Saturday Walkers' Club: The walk is doable as a daywalk from London with an early start and a late return.

OS Landranger Map: 98 (Wensleydale & Upper Wharfedale)

OS Explorer Map: OL2 (Yorkshire Dales - Southern & Western Areas)

Harvey British Mountain Map: Yorkshire Dales

Harvey Superwalker XT25 Map: Yorkshire Dales - South East

Walk Notes:

This is a very rewarding route from the pretty and scenically positioned small market town of Settle, rising steeply out of Ribblesdale straight into one of the best limestone country imaginable and later across the watershed into Malhamdale with its natural wonders. Almost all of those are explored on the various route options. The return is less exciting but still features stunning views of Malham Tarn and Fountains Fell as well as to the Yorkshire Three Peaks and an elevated section through steep pastures high above Ribblesdale, while - in season - you may spot curlews and lapwings.

Across all the route options, you encounter limestone outcrops, crags and pavements, caves, path side springs, shake holes, sink holes and pot holes, water sinks where rivers disappear into an underground cave system, streams re-emerging further down out of other caves, dry valleys which only every few centuries are water-filled, a very steep and dramatic gorge with two waterfalls and an optional 'wet' scramble up it - Gordale Scar, as well as the most impressive limestone amphitheatre imaginable - Malham Cove, with its 70m drop and a beck emerging from a cave at its bottom plus a very large area of limestone pavement at its top, as well as one of the largest tarns in the land - Malham Tarn, also one of the very few upland alkaline lakes in Europe.

Malham, where the optional routes split, has four lunch places, sits roughly half-way and can be reached by bus. The paths and tracks are mostly good to walk and easy to follow, but the going can be hard on the feet and knees over time, as a lot of the route follows gravel farm tracks, and other bits cross stony ground.

Walk Options:

At the highest point of the walk, a bridleway across to the return route cuts the descent into Malham.

Three bus lines serve Malham on a daily basis between them, two of them are summer only though:

- **Bus Line 210/211** (Skipton Railway Station – Malham, The Buck Inn) runs two buses a day each way (Monday-Friday). The second bus of the day leaves Malham early afternoon.
- **Bus Line 75** (Skipton Railway Station – Malham, The Buck Inn – Waterhouses, Malham Tarn Car Park – Settle) runs two buses a day each way (summer Saturdays only). The last buses to Settle and back to Skipton are mid-afternoon.
- **Bus Line 864** (Bradford) – Skipton Bus Station – Malham, The Buck Inn) runs six buses a day each way an hour apart (summer Sundays only). The last bus out of Malham leaves mid-afternoon.

A Variation in Malham leads past **Janet's Foss** (waterfall) to **Gordale Scar and its waterfalls**, then a 'wet' scramble up the gorge and on to the fascinating **Water Sinks**, where the outflow of Malham Tarn (the future River Aire) disappears into the ground. This adds 4.0 km and 30m ascent.

An Alternative within this route avoids the scramble by going up pastures around the gorge (adds 1.7 km).

The waymarked Dales High Way links the two principal routes out of Malham from the top of Malham Cove.

A Variation of the Gordale Scar Option leads around **Malham Tarn**. This adds additional 1.1 km (map-led).

Lunch (details last updated 01/06/2024)

The Old Barn Tea Room Malham, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 4DA (01729 830 486, <https://oldbarnmalham.co.uk/>). The Old Barn is located 10.2 km/6.3 mi into the walk. Open 09.30-17.00 Mid February to early November.

The Buck Inn Malham, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 4DA (01729 830 317, <https://www.vixen-pubs.co.uk/buck-inn-pub-malham>). The Buck Inn is located 10.2 km/6.3 mi into the walk. Open all day every day. Food served daily to 20.00.

The Lister Arms Malham, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 4DB (01729 830 444, <https://listerarms.co.uk/>). The Lister Arms is located 10.3 km/6.4 mi into the walk. Open all day every day. Food served daily to 20.00.

Beck Hall Restaurant Malham, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 4DJ (01729 830 729, <https://www.beckhallmalham.com/restaurant/>). Beck Hall is located 10.4 km/6.4 mi into the walk. Lunch served 12.00-16.00 daily. Drinks served all day. England's first fully plant-based hotel, bar and restaurant.

Gordale Refreshments Gordale Lane, Malham, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 4DL (07737 237 918). The van is located at Gordale Bridge on the Gordale Scar Variant. Open 11.00-16.00 in summer in most weathers.

Tea (details last updated 31/05/2024)

Plenty of options, all within a few minutes walking to the train station: **Bailey's Bar & Grill**, **The Shambles Fish Bar**, **Ye Olde Naked Man** Café & Bakery, **Matteo's Settle** Italian Restaurant, the **Talbot Arms**, **The Folly Coffee House**, **The Fisherman** restaurant, **Royal Oak Hotel** and pub, **The Singing Kettle** Café & Bistro, **The Golden Lion** hotel and pub, **Ruchee** Indian & Bangladeshi restaurant, **Bar 13** wine bar.

Northern Glossary

beck: stream, brook; brig(g): bridge; -by: habitation; cam: bank, slope, ridge; carr: marshy woodland or shrubland; clough: narrow valley, cleft in a hillside, ravine, glen, gorge, cliff, rocky precipice; crag: steep rugged mass of rock projecting upward or outward; currick: cairn, pile of stones, often locations used to keep watch for Scottish raiders; dale: valley; -ey: island, dry area in a marshy place; fell: hill, mountain slope (especially rough moorland); firth/frith: long, narrow inlet of the sea or estuary; force/foss: waterfall, rapids; frith: area of peace, protection, safety, security; garth: small grass enclosure adjacent to a house; gate: way, street; gill/ghyll: small narrow valley or ravine; hagg: part of an area of woodland, especially on a sloping bank; holm(e): island, inland promontory, raised ground in marsh, river-meadow; how(e): barrow, small hill; hush: (Roman era) mine on steep hillside, using dammed up water to wash away topsoil and boulders, revealing the underlying lead or ore veins; ing(s): meadow(s), especially water meadow near a river; keld/kell: spring or well; kirk: church; laithe/leeath: barn, agricultural building; lang: long; ling: heather; lonning/lonnin': lane or track, something less than a road, more rural than a street, usually short; mell: sand dunes; mire: bog; moss: bog, marsh; ness: headland, promontory; nick: shallow notch, cut or indentation on an edge or a surface; pike: spike, sharp point, peak; rake: slant, incline; rigg: ridge; scar/scaur: cliff, rocky outcrop with a steep face; seat/set(t)/side: summer pasture or dwelling place; seaves: rushes; shaw: hurdle, gate; sike/syke/sitch: small stream or gulley, gutter; stang: pole, shaft, stake, wooden bar; stoop/stowp/stoup: post, gatepost, distance marker (milestone), standing stone; -sty: ascent, ascending lane or path, narrow pathway or course; tarn: lake or pond (especially in an upland location); thorp(e)/t(h)rop: village or small settlement; thwait(e): village or small settlement; toft(s): small farmstead with enclosed land, later applied to a village or small settlement; wath: ford; whinny: gorse, furze, thorny vegetation; -wich/wick: village or settlement.

Notes

Settle

Settle is a market town of fewer than 3,000 population in Ribblesdale in the far west of North Yorkshire and at the southern edge of the Yorkshire Dales. Located under the imposing limestone Attermire Scar limestone escarpment with Castleberg crag hovering above the town, Settle sits in a splendid setting at the edge of some dramatic limestone country.

The town is thought to have 7th-century Anglian origins, its name being the Angle word for settlement. Craven in the *Domesday Book* shows that until 1066 Bo was the lord of Settle, but after the Harrying of the North (1069–1071) the land was granted to a Norman, Roger de Poitou.

The railways reached neighbouring Giggleswick in 1847 on the Skipton to Morecambe line, but Settle got its own station only much later, opening in 1876 on the Settle – Carlisle line.

Settle – Carlisle Railway

The Settle – Carlisle line is a 117 km-long (73 mi) railway line in northern England. The route crosses the remote, scenic regions of the Yorkshire Dales and the North Pennines, running between Settle Junction on the Leeds–Morecambe line and Carlisle, near the English-Scottish borders. It was constructed in the 1870s and has several notable tunnels and viaducts. The line was built by the then Midland Railway to be able to run trains to Scotland, as the then London & North Western blocked access to a short bit of track linking Midland's network to the existing line to the North. The works needed over 6,000 navvies, who worked in remote locations, enduring harsh weather conditions. Large camps were established to house the navvies, most of them Irish, with many becoming complete townships with post offices and schools. They were named Inkerman, Sebastapol and Jericho. The remains of one camp – Batty Green – where 2,300 navvies lived and worked, can be seen near Ribbleshead.

In the 1980s, British Rail planned to close the line. This prompted a campaign to save it, led by the Friends of the Settle–Carlisle Line (FoSCL). The campaign uncovered evidence that BR had mounted a dirty tricks campaign, by exaggerating the cost of repairs and diverting traffic away from the line in order to justify its closure plans, a process referred to as 'closure by stealth'. In 1989, the UK government announced the line would be saved from closure. Since then, passenger numbers have grown steadily from less than 93,000 in 1983 to 1.2 million in 2012. Eight formerly closed stations have been reopened and several quarries have been reconnected to the line and it remains one of the most popular railway routes in the UK for charter trains and specials. The railway's summit at 356m is at Aisgill, just north of Garsdale Station, and is the highest point reached by main-line trains in England. <https://settle-carlisle.co.uk/> <https://www.foscl.org.uk/>

Four of the railway properties are available as holiday lets:

<https://settlecarlisletrust.org.uk/stay-at-a-station/> <http://www.dentstation.co.uk/>

Yorkshire Dales National Park

The Yorkshire Dales National Park is a 2,178 km² (841 sq mi) national park covering most of the Yorkshire Dales (some to the south and east of the national park are located in the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Most of the park is in North Yorkshire, with a sizeable area in Cumbria and a small part in Lancashire. The park was designated in 1954 being then entirely within Yorkshire, and extended in 2016 westwards into Lancashire and Cumbria - encompassing much of the area between the old boundaries of the park and the M6. Over 95% of the land in the park is in private ownership and there are over 1,000 farms in the park, as well as some 23,500 residents (as of 2017). A 2018 report estimated that the Park attracted over four million visitors per year. In 2020, the park was named as an International Dark Sky Reserve.

<https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/>

Pennine Bridleway

The Pennine Bridleway is a 330 km (205 mi) waymarked linear Long-Distance Path and National Trail from Carsington Water, Derbyshire, to Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria. In its southern part, it follows the High Peak Trail along the track bed of the former Cromford and High Peak Railway. The idea for it was launched in 1986 by Mary Towneley, who rode on horseback 402 km (250 mi) from Corbridge, Northumberland to Ashbourne, Derbyshire. It took a mere 9 years for the trail to be approved.

It is not to be confused with either the Pennine Way or the Pennine Cycleway.

A Pennine Journey

The Pennine Journey is a 391 km (243 mi) waymarked circular Long-Distance Path from Settle up through North Yorkshire, Durham, Northumberland and over to Cumbria and back to Settle. It was developed by David Pitt of the Wainwright Society and is a recreation of a solitary walk Alfred Wainwright made in 1938 through the Pennines, but adapted for today's roads and rights-of-way, i.e.: taking a route that Wainwright might have chosen today. The route traverses the Yorkshire Dales and Durham moorlands to follow Hadrian's Wall for a while and heading back south along the western Pennines, up the Eden Valley and along the Howooden gateill Fells. <https://penninejourney.org/>

Dales High Way

The Dales High Way is a waymarked 144 km (90 mi) Long-Distance Path from Saltaire in West Yorkshire to Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria, roughly parallel to the line of the Settle and Carlisle Railway. The path was conceived as a high-level alternative to the established Dales Way.

Shake Holes and Swallow Holes

Shake holes (or sinkholes or dolines) are a depression or hole in the ground caused by some form of collapse of the surface layer. Some are caused by karst processes, for example, the chemical dissolution of carbonate rocks or suffusion processes. They tend to occur in karst landscapes, which can have up to thousands of sinkholes within a small area, giving the landscape a pock-marked appearance. These sinkholes can drain all the water, so that there are only subterranean rivers in these areas.

Malham Cove, Gordale Scar, Malham Tarn, River Aire

Malham Cove is a large amphitheatre shaped limestone formation 1 km north of Malham. Formed along the line of the Middle Craven Fault, it has been eroded backwards from the line of the fault by the action of water and ice through the last Ice Ages over at least 1 ½ million years. Glaciers stripped rocks and topsoil away, exposing the limestone to erosion from a large Ice Age river carrying meltwater. The water drop was 70m high and more than 300m wide and it created the curved shape of the cove as the lip was more heavily eroded than the sides. Today it is a well-known rock climbing crag. A large limestone pavement lies above the cove. A stream named Malham Beck originates on Malham Moor and emerges from a cave at the bottom of the cove. This is a different stream from the one that flows out of Malham Tarn 2.4 km north of the cove, drops underground into 'Water Sinks' about 1.6 km before the top of the cove and does not emerge until Aire Head, as springs south of Malham. Their routes cross, without their waters mixing apart from when in flood. The cave system is still only part-explored, but big enough to take all water away without it reaching the waterfall, apart from in very wet periods. 6th December 2015 was the first recorded instance since 1824, when for a few hours the dry valley from the Water Sinks to the cove was filled with a stream and the fall became the highest "single drop waterfall" above ground in England.

Gordale Scar is a 100-metre high limestone ravine with two waterfalls, which has been most likely been created by water from melting glaciers, aided by cavern collapses. The stream flowing through the scar is Gordale Beck, which on leaving the gorge flows over Janet's Foss before joining Malham Beck and the River Aire 3 km downstream. A right of way leads up the gorge, including a 3 metres climb of tufa at the lower waterfall.

Malham Tarn is a glacial lake and one of only eight upland alkaline lakes in Europe (i.e. with a pH of 8.0-8.6). At 377 metres above sea level, it is the highest marl lake in the UK. A glacier scraped away the limestone top layer to the underlying impermeable slate, and a later glacial moraine dammed the mouth of the tarn. With water sources at a premium in a limestone environment, the tarn became a favourite gathering spot for animals and thence Stone Age hunters. Many pre-historic camps or settlements are shown on the OS map. The lake is up to 4.4 metres deep and it takes about 11 weeks for water to leave the lake after it has entered. Its current size is only about half what it was due to it silting up at the western end, forming Tarn Moss. The outflow stream goes underground after about 500 metres and emerges south of Malham as the River Aire.

The River Aire is 148 km (92 mi) long from Malham Tarn to the River Ouse at Airmyn. From south of Gargrave to Leeds it is shadowed by the Leeds – Carlisle railway. Part of the river below Leeds is canalised, and is known as the Aire and Calder Navigation.

The Pennine Way

The Pennine Way is a waymarked 429 km (267 mi) National Trail running along the Pennine hills, sometimes described as the 'backbone of England'. It starts in Edale in the Peak District National Park and runs north through the Yorkshire Dales and the Northumberland National Park and ends at Kirk Yetholm, just inside the Scottish border, and features 287 gates, 249 timber stiles, 183 stone stiles and 204 bridges.

Limestone Pavement

A limestone pavement is a natural karst landform consisting of a flat, incised surface of exposed limestone that resembles an artificial pavement. The term is mainly used in the UK and Ireland, but similar landforms exist in other parts of the world and are known as alvars.

Conditions for limestone pavements are created when an advancing glacier scrapes away the topsoil and exposes horizontally bedded limestone, with subsequent glacial retreat leaving behind a flat, bare surface. Limestone is slightly soluble in water and especially in acidic rain, so corrosive drainage along joints and cracks in the limestone can produce slabs called *clints* isolated by up to several metres deep fissures called *grykes* or *grykes* (terms derived from a northern English dialect).

If the grykes are fairly straight and the clints are uniform in size, the resemblance to man-made paving stones is striking, but they are not necessarily so regular. Limestone pavements that develop beneath a mantle of topsoil usually exhibit more rounded forms.

Limestone pavement, with its deep fissures and patterned with swirling hollows and runnels sculpted by thousands of years of rainwater, forms an unlikely wildlife habitat. It may contain unusual combinations of plants, with woodland and wood-edge species well-represented in the grykes. The clints support plants of rocky habitats or are often unvegetated. In the absence of grazing, scrub may develop; in oceanic areas scrub over limestone pavement is important for epiphytes. All these habitat niches support a range of invertebrates.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train at **Settle Station**, a stop on the **Settle – Carlisle Railway** in the **Yorkshire Dales National Park**. **Leave the station** on the Leeds bound platform 1 through the station building or to the side of it into a car park and *turn left* towards **Station Road**, en route passing the historic **Water Tower**. *Turn right* up the road along its left-hand pavement, signed 'Town Centre'. In 70m you cross the main road through town (the **B6480**) and *turn left* along its opposite pavement. In 80m pass **The Golden Lion** and in 40m cross Cheapside (road) with the **Town Hall** on the right and in 20m enter the **Market Place**. There are various cafés, pubs and restaurants, but you *bear right* across the market place and ascend a road between **The Shambles** and a supermarket. In 90m ignore Castle Hill (road) on the right and *curve to the left* with **Constitution Hill** (road). In 60m you pass the locked entrance of the long-ruined **Castlebergh Plantation** with an info panel and **[!]** *fork up to the right* off the road along the car wide gravel **Banks Lane** (unnamed here), in 10m passing a two-way **Pennine Bridleway** (PBW) signpost ('Langcliffe 1 ½ m') with a marker for **A Pennine Journey** (APJ).

In 80m you pass the far end of the plantation and have steeply sloping pastures on the right and fine views on the left into **Ribblesdale** and across to **Giggleswick**, Settle's neighbour. Continue steeply uphill along the track. The gradient eventually eases a little and in 250m you go through a wooden field gate **into Access Land**. You get first partial views of **Ingleborough** half left ahead (320°). In 110m by a three-way signpost, *turn steeply up to the right* with the **Dales High Way**, a public footpath ('Malham 5'), while leaving the PBW and APJ. Initially you follow a grass path along the right-hand wall but *veer left* with the path a little higher up, still going up steeply. In another 120m you pass a drystone wall corner on the left, with the limestone **Blua Crags** looming above to the left. You keep ascending and in 180m *veer right* away from the wall with the path to in 220m leave the walled field through a metal gate to the left of a metal field gate.

Initially follow the left-hand drystone wall, now on flat terrain at about 355m height, with the impressive limestone scarp (or 'scar' in local vernacular) of **Warrendale Knotts** towering above. It contains several caves at a higher level. In 80m *fork either way*, as the paths pass a couple of stranded perpendicular pieces of drystone wall and in 730m reunite in the far right-hand corner of the narrowing field. After the second stranded piece of wall, you descend steeply with the pointy **Rye Loaf Hill** ahead, and the southerly end of the impressive **Attermire Scar** up on the left. You leave the walled field over a ladder stile where a **spring** oozes water close-by to the left. In 60m you pass a ladder stile in the right-hand wall by a four-way footpath signpost and continue in the same direction ('Stockdale Lane 5/8 ml'). The left turn leads along the **Attermire Scar** past the **Attermire Cave** to **Victoria Cave**. Ignore! You continue along the wall and in 50m pass an overgrown spoil heap with some rusty metal bits scattered nearby.

[These are remnants of a 19th century **rifle range**, created when there was the fear of war with France. The metal bits are what is left of some **cast iron target panels**. And if you look closely, at least one bears the marks '(...) 1800, **Bishopsgate, London**'.]

You continue under the imposing crag and in 120m go through a wall gap into open land and follow a good grass track bearing right. In 230m cross a stoney and tussocky section, mud-prone at times (springs are causing the wetness) and in 130m cross a spring-fed stream and in 30m leave the walled field through a wooden field gate. You now go uphill through three smaller fields, separated by wooden field gates in 40m, 75m and in 150m. In 280m **Stockdale Lane** joins from the right behind by a footpath signpost ('Settle 2 ml' backwards) and a wooden gate and continues along the right-hand side of the wall.

[!] *Turn right* through the wooden gate **to leave the Access Land** and *turn left* along the tarmac lane, to the right of the wall. The PBW runs along it. In 570m by a two-way PBW signpost, the lane enters the grounds of **Stockdale Farm** as a gravel track through a metal car gate, and you *veer left* through a metal field gate with a PBW signpost ('Malham 3 ½ m') back **into Access Land**. Follow the right-hand wall along a mostly good stony track, with occasional springs in evidence. In 550m go through a wooden field gate in a drystone wall and in 300m pass the far end of the walled farmland away to the right, at 430m height. The stony then grassy track now rises up the dale head to the shallow saddle between **Rye Loaf Hill and Kirkby Fell** on the right and the **limestone upland** on the left, and in 800m (having forked either way en route) you go through a wooden field gate in a drystone wall (currently broken on the ground, at 505m above sea level). The cairn and trigpoint on Rye Loaf Hill (now to the right behind) can be seen from here.

You follow the track ahead, still a little further uphill, with **caves and shake holes** to the right. In 380m go through a wooden gate in another drystone wall at 522m above sea level. This is the **highest point of the walk**. In 230m you start the descent into **Malhamdale**, which has become visible ahead, as have **Malham Tarn and Fountains Fell** to the left. In 60m you reach a wooden gate in a drystone wall by a three-way signpost. *Turn left* here with the PBW Settle Loop ('Langscar Gate 1 ¼ m') **for a 180m each-way out-and-back** to the restored **Nappa Cross** (a monastic way marker linked to Fountains Abbey, this was originally a wayside cross and is believed to have stood at the junction of two bridle roads but is now relocated into a dry stone wall). **Else**, go through the gate with a public bridleway ('Cove Road 1 ¼ m') and follow the stony grass track to the left of a grass path, gently downhill. A water-filled pot hole is visible away to the right. In 100m you pass a large concrete slab on the left and in 260m *turn right* along a grass path, leaving the bridleway and in 10m pass a footpath signpost ('PF Malham 1 ½ ml').

The path meanders through the grassy terrain, but in 250m it starts a steep descent, with a drystone wall now visible deep below. About 10 metres below the start of the descent, there is a **cave entrance** on the left behind. Follow the path zigzagging downhill to meet the wall at its lowest point, with an infant stream (can be dry) just to the left of the path, and go over a stone slab stile with a wooden gate on top. You go down a steeply descending pasture and in 320m descend to a crossing of the stream 80m away with **Hooper Edge** on the left above and views of **Malham village** ahead. In another 180m you leave the field through a wooden field gate or over a ladder stile to its right (with a wooden gate on top) to **leave the Access Land**. *Veer left* with the path towards **Butterlands Barn** in the bottom-right corner of the pasture and in 400m ford a stream and go through a wooden field gate or over a stone slab stile with a wooden gate on top. You follow a clear track through the next field and in 150m cross a plank bridge by a wall to the left of a ford to cross over into the right-hand part of the field, which you leave in 100m through a metal field gate or over a stone slab stile with a wooden gate on top.

Turn left with a signpost for 'Malham' along a car wide gravel track between drystone walls, in 30m use a clapper bridge to the side of a ford to cross a beck and follow the undulating track for another 400m to a T-junction with **Long Lane** (on the OS map), with initially part-views, then full views of **Malham Cove**. At the T-junction *turn right*. In 430m at a T-junction on the fringes of **Malham**, *turn right* between drystone walls. In 300m, at another (signposted) T-junction, *turn left* along a wall with a large car park behind it. In 40m cross the drive into the car park and pass a toilet block and the **Malham Visitor Centre** and *turn left* along a road into the village. In 30m ignore a signposted footpath turning right through a wall gap ('Hanlith Bridge 1 ml') and pass a chapel on the left. There is a river away to the right, this is the **Malham Beck**, which a little further downstream, after having been joined by Trandale Beck and Gordale Beck, joins the **River Aire** which re-emerges at **Aire Head**, after disappearing into the ground at Water Sinks near Malham Tarn. In 40m

on the left you pass **The Old Barn Tea Room** and in 30m you come to a clapper bridge on the right across the river by a two-way footpath signpost.

Here you have a choice, as the two onwards routes split, although the other lunch options and the bus stop are still ahead, all within 280 metres though: **The Buck Inn** and the bus stop (50m ahead at the road fork), **Beck Hall Restaurant** (230m along the left hand fork), **The Listers Arms** (100m along the right road fork).

For the Variation of the Walk past Janet's Foss and up or past **Gordale Scar** and on to **Malham Tarn**, *turn right* across the bridge with the **Pennine Way** (PW). Pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Gordale Scar Variation**.

For the Main Walk via Malham Cove, continue along the road. In 50m you pass **The Buck Inn** on the left, with the **bus stop for services to Skipton** on the right (buses to Settle depart from the left though), and in 60m go through a gate on the right into a narrow woodland strip and follow a permissive path parallel to the road and the beck. 160m leave the woodland back onto the road and in 10m pass the right turn across the beck to the **Beck Hall Restaurant**. In 100m ignore a signposted footpath to the right and in 170m, just after passing **Town Head Barn**, *veer right* through a wooden gate and past a National Trust – Malham Tarn Estate sign and continue with a **Pennine Way** (PW) two-way footpath signpost ('Malham Cove ½ ml', 'Malham Tarn 1 ¾ ml') along a gravel path. In 130m pass an info panel on **Malham's Ancient Fields** and go through a wooden gate. In 50m the trees discontinue that were part-blocking views to the cove wall and in 300m you go through a wooden kissing gate to the right of a wooden field gate.

In 70m the beck is on your right and in 90m you ignore a clapper bridge across the beck (a public footpath joins across it). In 100m go through a wall gap and you follow a flagged section and in 50m ignore a left fork (gravel) leading to a stepped path (which will be the onwards route in a few minutes). In 80m you pass the next left turn leading to the stepped path and in 40m go through a wooden gate and continue over uneven ground (or through the usually shallow waters) to the bottom of the cliff face of **Malham Cove** 70m away, where the Malham Beck emerges from a wide gap. Return to the wooden gate and in 40m *fork right*. In 60m a path joins from the left and you *bear right* up the stepped path, through a gate and ever upwards to the level of the top of the cliff face of the cove (that is approximately 400 steps). Go through a wooden gate at the top **back into Access Land** and pass an info panel on **Limestone Pavement**.

You climb a little higher up, over or around some limestone boulders, and *turn right* to cross a very large area of uneven serrated limestone pavement running down to the right to the lip of the former waterfall that is now the Malham Cove. The pavement stretches for 220m to a drystone wall, but this has **deep and dangerous fissures** and needs full attention in dry weather and **can be treacherously slippery in wet conditions**.

[!] In that case, skirt the limestone to the left over a part-grassy area.

At the drystone wall, by a three-way footpath signpost, **ignore** the route through a wooden gate ('Gordale 1 ¼ ml') **unless** you want to walk along more of the lip of the cove or even go all the way to Gordale to look at the gorge and waterfall there or even switch over to the other route option up Gordale Scar and on to Malham Tarn.

Turn left instead with the DHW, signed 'Malham Tarn 1 ¼ ml', with the wall on the right. In 150m walk through a wall gap (a missing gate) and pass a National Trust – Ewe Moor – Malham Tarn Estate sign. You follow a path through a grassy bouldery strip to the left of the wall, with the **Raven Scar** rising up on the left. In 200m the track curves gently to the left and the end of this usually dry valley (**Watlowes**) is visible some way ahead. Limestone escarpments are rising on both sides (**Ing Scar** and **Comb Scar**) and you follow

an engineered path for a stretch but eventually the terrain is all boulders. Go up a few steps and in 130m go over a stile, at the narrowest point of the valley. An amphitheatre-like area follows, surrounded by rock faces, and you can see a stepped path 80m ahead, leading to a stile at its top. Go up the steps and over the stile (fine views back from here). In 10m you reach a three-way signpost at a footpath junction. The Alternative route via Gordale Scar joins from the right with the PW ('Malham Tarn 1 ml').

*) Continue ahead ('Langscar Gate') and in 25m *turn left* over a ladder stile and continue a little to the right uphill along a grass path to the left of a drystone wall in a westerly direction ('PF Langscar Gate 300 YDS'), i.e. not hard left ('Cove Road 1 ml'). In 260m you go through a wooden gate to reach a road by a cattle grid on the right at **Langscar Gate**. Cross the road and go through a wooden field gate with a signpost ('Byway Cow Close, Langcliffe 4 ml'). Ignore the restricted byway shown on the map along the right-hand side wall (rough ground) but follow the DHW along a car wide gravel track *curving to the left* in 80m, while rising steadily. In 200m the gradient eases and you *curve to the right* with the track and in 400m you have the wall back to your right. In 70m go through a gap in a drystone wall and continue in the same direction at a three-way signpost ('Langcliffe 4 ¼'). The shortcut from the highest point of the walk has joined from the left.

) The DHW has turned left and you continue uphill with the PBW Settle Loop along the restricted byway along the wall. In 640m go through a wooden field gate in a drystone wall, at 464m above sea level, this is the **highest point of the afternoon route. **Ingleborough** is in view half left ahead, with **Whernside** to its right, and **Fountains Fell** is the big lump of a hill to the right. It is now 1.4 kilometres to the next gate at the far end of this area that the OS map calls '**Outside**': there are quite a few shake holes to the side of the track, while **Fountains Fell** is rising to the right and eventually **Pen-y-ghent** becomes visible to the left of Fountains Fell. About 90m before a wooden field gate, the Extension via Malham Tarn joins from the right along a grass path.

) You leave **Outside through a wooden field gate with a ladder stile to the right of it. The track initially continues between fences then meanders a little and in 660m you go through a wooden gate in a drystone wall. In 20m you ford a stream, which – same as subsequent ones – is a **tributary to the Cowside Beck**, which joins the Catrigg Beck just before they tumble down Catrigg Force (waterfall). In 550m you pass a perpendicular drystone wall starting down the hillside on the right towards **Cowside** and immediately after that ignore a ladder stile on the right leading to a footpath through tussocky ground. You continue uphill and in 270m go through a wooden field gate with a ladder stile to the left and go further uphill. In 540m you are level with an unnamed plantation away on the right. In about 800m, in a noticeable left-right turn in a rocky bluff, and just when the track starts to descend, a faint path on the left leads up to the **Jubilee Cave** 40m away.

In 60m a path forks to the right to a stone slab stile with a wooden gate in a drystone wall 25m away. [That public footpath re-joins the track much lower down and is a softer alternative if your knees are hurting.] In 160m **ignore** a left forking public footpath, signed for '**Victoria Cave** ¼ ml', which had up to 130,000 year old bones inside when excavated, of **hippos, elephants, hyenas and rhinos** (the path ultimately leads along the Attermire Scar back to the outbound route) and **instead** go through a wooden field gate and *downhill to the right* with the track. In 250m you pass a two-storey stone barn on the left and in 400m pass to the right of **Clay Pits Plantation**. In 90m (that footpath across the grassy ground joins from the right), you go over a cattle grid or through a wooden field gate to the right of it. You continue for 100m to a road at a bend by a three-way signpost on the left. The Fountains Fell and Catrigg Force walk joins from the right along the road. You have **left the Access Land**. *Turn left* through a wooden field gate with the PBW ('Settle 2 m') and follow an elevated path to the right of the irregularly walled plantation.

At the far end of the plantation, continue in the same direction across a pasture towards another smaller plantation and in 150m go through a wooden gate between two distinct walled parts of this plantation. You follow a clear gravel path through the next steep pasture, with **Langcliffe** village down on the right in the dale. In 100m go through a wooden gate in a drystone wall and follow the path down to a wooden gate in another drystone wall 300m away. **Back in Access Land**, you now follow the wall on the right. The **Blua Craggs** are prominent on the left above and in 400m you meet a drystone wall down from the hillside and continue between walls. In 110m go through a wooden field gate and in 130m you pass a three-way signpost (the Settle Circular walk turns up the hill here in the morning, the **Dales High Way** joins from the left). In 110m, by a ruined farm building on the right, go through a wooden field gate and continue between walls. In 250m you have the **Castlebergh Plantation** on the left and in 100m *turn left* along a road into **Settle**. In 60m *turn right* with the road, immediately ignoring a left turn (Castle Hill).

In 100m you pass a supermarket on the right at the top of the **Market Square**. **Royal Spice** and **The Waffle Cone** are on the left, the **Talbot Arms** and **The Folly Coffee House** are away to the left along **Victoria Street**, and 20m along in The Shambles building on the left, are **The Shambles Fish Bar** and **Matteo's Settle** Italian restaurant. Continue across the Market Square to the main road through town. **The Fisherman** restaurant is away down the right, past **Bailey's Bar & Grill**, the **Royal Oak Hotel** and pub is opposite. *Turn left* along the road. You pass **Ye Olde Naked Man Café & Bakery** and **The Singing Kettle Café & Bistro** on the right, opposite the **Town Hall**. Next up comes **The Golden Lion** hotel and pub on the left, with the award-winning **Ruchee** Indian & Bangladeshi restaurant opposite it down an alleyway to the right. In 40m pass **Bar 13** wine bar on the left.

In another 50m *turn right* along **Station Road** and in 140m *turn left* towards **Settle Station**. Leeds bound trains depart from the near platform 1. For Carlisle bound trains use the overbridge to platform 2.

Gordale Scar Variation

On the far side of the clapper bridge, *turn right* and follow the engineered gravel path alongside Malham Beck and in 70m go through a wooden gate then follow a flagged section of the path and in 100m go through a drystone wall (a missing gate). Continue along gravel and in 200m go through a metal gate or a metal kissing gate to the right of a three-way signpost. *Bear left* away from the PW ('Janet's Foss 1 ml') and in 40m go through a wooden gate by the two-storey **Mires Barn** and continue between a drystone wall and a fence. **Gordale Scar and Malham Cove** dominate the view to the left. In 200m go through a wooden gate and in 20m through another one. You have the **Gordale Beck** on the right now and in 400m pass **New Laithe** on the left, a three storey barn.

In 80m go through a wooden gate to the right of a wooden field gate and ignore a bridge on the right across the beck and in 300m you pass another three-storey barn on the left (**Mantley Field Laithe**). The valley narrows with steep ground on both sides and you go through a wooden gate in a drystone wall and in 100m through a wooden kissing gate and past a National Trust – Janet's Foss welcome sign. You now follow the clear path through the narrowing **Little Gordale Wood** (plenty of **wild garlic** in season), in 150m passing a rock face on the left, and in 90m go up some steps. In 50m **Janet's Foss** comes into view, 60m away. There is a plunge pool at the bottom of the drop, and **Janet's Cave** is on the right-hand side, but the path winds up to the left where a side path leads to the top of the waterfall. Continue for a further 25m to a wooden kissing gate and onto a road.

Turn right along the road. In 100m you pass a layby on the left (the old **Gordale Bridge**), with the **Gordale Refreshments** van usually parked here, and where a public footpath turns left through a wooden kissing gate ('Malham Cove 1m'). This is both the **Link Route to Malham Cove**, as well as the start of the **Scramble-Avoidance Route** around Gordale Scar, **but not until after** having a look at Gordale Scar. So, first: follow the road across the beck and *turn right* with it, but immediately *turn left* through a wooden gate and follow a broad gravel track towards the gorge. In 220m *fork either way*, right with the gravel track or left across a clapper bridge over an arm of the beck, fed from springs to the right. You pass those springs in 50m and more in another 80m and in 210m you reach a narrow point of the gorge and *turn right* to the bottom of the lower of two waterfalls, 60m away.

Now, either scramble up the 3 metres or so of tufa (limestone) covered rock, straight up the middle, which is often slippery. You will also get wet if water levels are high. You emerge at the top of the scramble more or less in the riverbed and pick a route across the water to the left to pick up an intermittent, stepped path, with the (higher) upper waterfall away to the right, and steeply ascend (mind your steps and your head at all times) out of the tight gorge to an area with a more amenable gradient, then follow a gravel path to a stone slab stile in a drystone wall.

Or, take the Scramble-Avoidance Route: return along the path back to the road and to that layby (the old road bridge) and *turn right* through the wooden kissing gate ('Malham Cove 1 ml'). You follow a gravel then grass path uphill, in 40m with a drystone wall on the right. In 80m the gradient eases and you can admire the impressive terracing visible in the field ahead on the left. In 210m go through a wooden kissing gate and the footpath now bears right to a wooden gate up some steps about 110m away. This is the **right-of-way route** (the gate leads into Access Land and you *turn right* along a drystone wall and in 160m go over a stone slab stile), but there is also a clearly used-by-locals more direct route, a **deemed permissive path**: *turn right* to a wall gap 125m away (a missing gate) and **enter Access Land**.

Follow the left of two paths steeply uphill, which soon continues as a grassy shelf. In 130m ignore a left turn and in another 170m you emerge near the top, in a grassy area with some scattered limestone boulders, a low rockface 30m ahead (with a low gap within it) and a drystone wall away to the right. The route will continue through the gap in the rockface **but first turn right** through a part-collapsed part of the wall and follow a grass path curving to the left for 30m for a **stunning view of Gordale Scar!** On the grassy top plateau (**New Close Knotts** as per the OS map), follow a clear grass path in the previous direction, staying somewhat to the left of the drystone wall. Shortly, a grass path joins from the left behind. From the highest point of the plateau (at 370m height), you still get a part-view of Gordale Scar, but also views to the left to **Malham Tarn and Fountains Fell.**

Go over the brow and soon after, *fork left* away from the wall, which veers to the right. In 120m ignore another right fork (both these right forks also lead you onto the path out of the gorge, but with a severely steeper descent). In 100m the path drops down to the public footpath rising out of the gorge. **It is worth the effort** (and it is quite some effort, both the dropped height of about 100m and the steepness and slipperiness of the 'path') to walk down the path for at least a view of the top of the upper waterfall, but really you want to be at the level of the top of the lower waterfall for a view of both. This involves an intermittent, stepped path close to the rockface which will be slippery after rain! Else, *turn left* uphill out of the gorge along the public footpath and go over a stone slab stile in a drystone wall.

Both routes continue: A signpost shows 'Malham Tarn 2 ml' and you continue through a broad grassy strip between crags. In 320m the terrain levels out and you have limestone boulders on the left and a steep crag on the right. A higher crag is up on the left (**Broad Scars** as per the OS map). In 340m you pass a cairn on the left at a slightly higher level, after which the path veers to the left. You stay to the left of a limestone outcrop and move away from the valley of the Gordale Beck and have some limestone pavement on your left. The path slowly converges with the drystone wall on the left over the next 600m or so and when the wall is about 30m to the left, you *turn left* to go over an easy-to-miss stone slab stile and *turn right* along a tarmac lane by a signpost pointing back to Gordale Scar ('Steep and difficult descent at Gordale 1 ml'). You follow the wide grassy margin, veering away from the wall on your right. There are some small plantations visible ahead, to the right and just beyond Malham Tarn, and **Great Close Hill** rises to the right of the tarn. In 420m you reach a four-way junction of three tarmac lanes and a gravel track ahead.

Here you have a choice:

For a loop around Malham Tarn (add x.x km), continue ahead along the gravel track and follow the route as per the route map (not yet walked). This rejoins the main walk in an area named **Outside** on the OS map, just before a wooden field gate. Pick up the directions above in the main text at the triple asterisk ***).

For the continuation of the Gordale Scar Variant, *turn left* along the tarmac lane. You can see a chimney some distance ahead, this belonged to a 19th century **Smelting Mill**, part of a lead mine and is located **on Malham Moor** in the area where the infant Malham Beck disappears underground into a sinkhole and then the cave system before re-emerging at the bottom of Malham Cove. In 700m, a signposted grassy footpath crosses ('Waterhouses 1 ¾ ml', 'Malham Cove 1 ¼ ml') and you keep descending gently to a car park 250m ahead. There are some info panels in the car park and a footpath, a bridleway and the PW turn right here, but you ignore all of those paths and continue along the lane, passing the **bus stops for services to Settle or Skipton** (summer Saturdays only).

In 50m go through a (usually open) wooden field gate across the lane and in 25m cross the **outflow of Malham Tarn** on the lane. In 30m *turn left* through a wooden kissing gate ('Pennine Way Malham Cove 1 ½ ml', 'Public Bridleway Langscar Gate ¾ ml') into a field corner and go towards a three-way signpost 80m away. There *fork left* along a grass path with the PW, with the beck about 60m away to the left this side of a drystone wall. In 120m you are next to the beck and in 70m you pass the '**Water Sinks**', where the beck disappears into fissures in the ground and then the cave system to re-emerge south of Malham at Aire Head (apart from every 200 years or so when it briefly continues as a stream from here all the way to the lip of the cove). [**Note**: the exact location of the drop into the ground varies with recent rainfall levels.]

In 10m ignore a stone slab stile in the drystone wall on the left and *bear right* along the wall through grass with some scattered rocks. The path narrows in this (usually) dry valley and the ground becomes more rock strewn and harder to negotiate. In 110m, in a grassy bowl, ignore a track up to the right and *bear left* with the path and the wall. In 60m you go through some more rocky ground and a grassy path then continues raised above the bottom of the dry valley. In 150m follow a sharp right turn, now high above the dropping valley, and in 40m *turn further right* with the path. In 100m you reach a stile on the left and a three-way signpost away to the right. The Main Walk joins from the left over the stile out of **Watlowes**, the continuation of the dry valley towards Malham Cove. *Turn right* to the three-way signpost and pick up the directions in the main text above at the asterisk *).