

SELECTED WALKS IN MALHAMDALE

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INTRODUCTION

Malhamdale offers some of the best walking among some of the finest scenery in the British Isles. The terrain, however, must not be taken for granted and walkers must be adequately prepared, and, in particular, must be properly shod. Proper walking boots giving adequate ankle support are essential for this area as, although some of the most popular paths are now surfaced almost to town centre standards, most paths are uneven if not actually rough. Trainers, for example, are not adequate for most of the walking in the area.

It should also be noted that the limestone of which the spectacular scenery of Malhamdale is composed can be a testing surface on which to walk, and great care must be taken especially when the limestone is wet or has a rime of mud on it when it becomes very slippery.

That having been said, the delights of the walking in Malhamdale are self-evident. A pause for breath at almost any point on any of the walks described here will give the opportunity to look around at some of the most breathtaking scenery you are ever likely to come across!

The backbone of walking in Malhamdale is the Pennine Way which is shown on this map as a broad dotted green line heading more or less North-South. All of the walks described here use the Pennine Way for some part of their journey. Where this is the case the Pennine Way is not overlaid on the map by the appropriate route colouring. The walks described all start and finish at the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority car park in Malham.

WALK 1

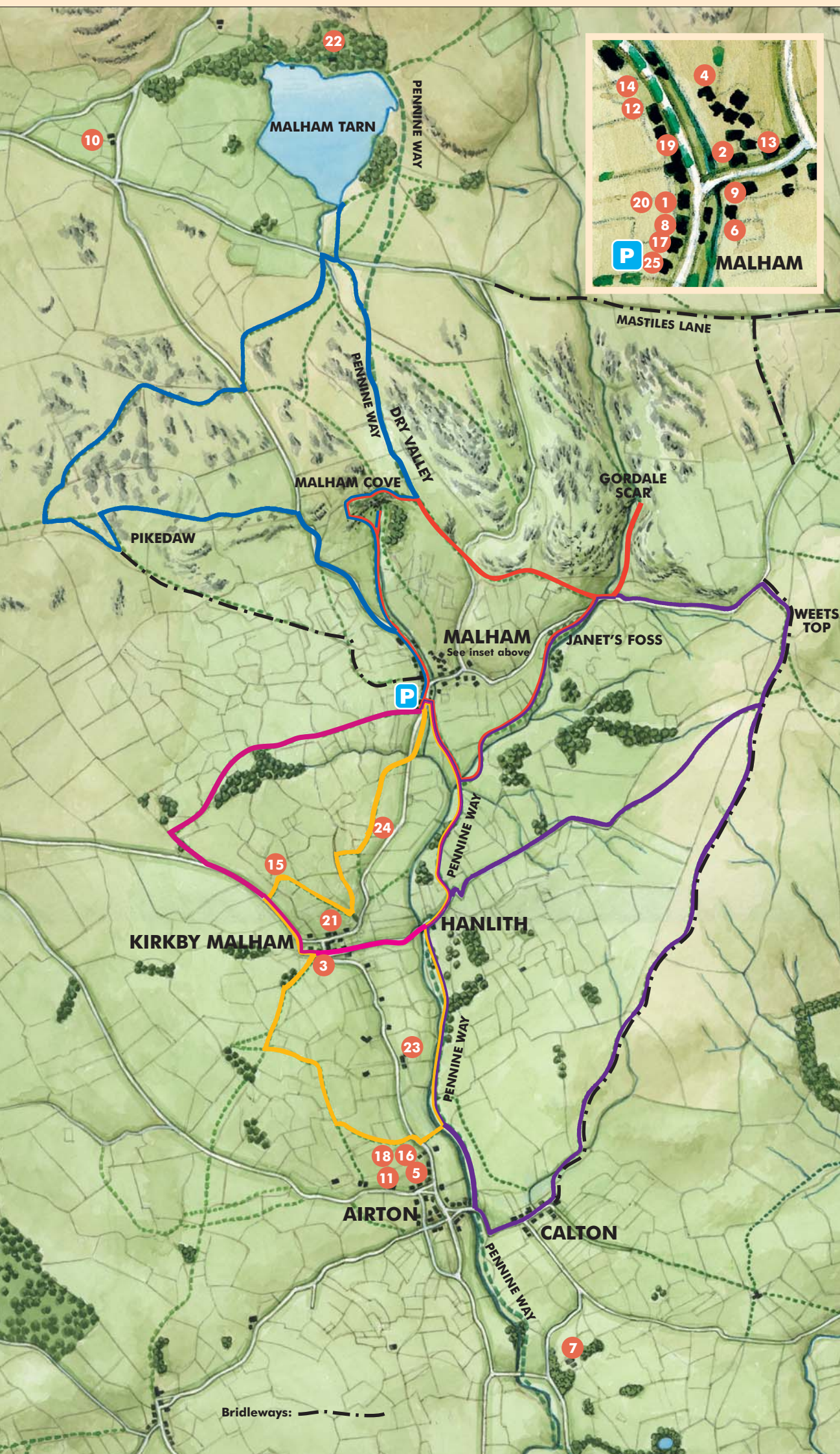
MALHAM LANDSCAPE SPECTACULAR
7.125 kms (4.5 miles)

Turn left out of the YDNPA Car Park and follow the road through the village and for the first 100 metres of its uphill climb. Pass through the gateway on the right to follow the well-made and well used footpath, part of the Pennine Way, to Malham Cove. On approaching the Cove, continue straight ahead to gain a view which gives a striking impression of the grandeur of the feature. Back-track to the footpath junction and turn right to follow the path which climbs steeply up the western end of Malham Cove. The path has been stepped for much of the climb. At the top follow the path to the right as it crosses the limestone pavement. At the far side of the pavement continue ahead and then to the right on the Pennine Way uphill towards the corner of a wall. [§] Continue with the wall on your right for about 250 metres when you will encounter a road which you should cross, going downhill for a few metres to cross a stile to your left. The path proceeds slightly downhill to pick up the corner of a wall which it then follows, passing a barn on your right. The path turns right and passes through a gate. Cross the field to the stile, after which the path leads downhill, following yellow waymarks, until it reaches the road. Turn left along the road, crossing a small bridge, to a gate on your left giving access to Gordale Scar. Pass through the gate on your left and follow the path into the gorge of Gordale Scar - a spectacular demonstration of the power of the natural elements. Retrace your steps back to the road, turn right and continue along the road for about 100 metres to access the footpath on your left to Janet's Foss, an attractive waterfall. Continue past the waterfall as the path follows the Gordale Beck (on your left hand side) through the wooded gorge, carved out of the limestone by the Beck, and out into the fields on the floor of the valley. The path crosses two stiles and passes a barn on your right, following a wall on your right. At the junction with a farm track, the footpath continues ahead, but with the wall now on your left, to its junction with the Pennine Way where you should turn right, immediately crossing the first of three stiles. As you come back into the village, turn left over the clapper bridge, cross the road by River House and follow the road to the left to return to the Car Park.

WALK 2

MALHAM COVE, DRY VALLEY, MALHAM TARN AND PIKEDAW 12.25 kms (7.6 miles)

Follow the route of Walk 1 as far as the top of Malham Cove, indicated by the symbol [§]. At this point turn left to follow the Pennine Way which leads uphill, crossing three stiles, through a remarkable area of limestone pavement. At the top of the limestone pavement area and after crossing a fourth stile, take the left fork in the path, deviating away from the Pennine Way which continues ahead. Your path leads past the area, on your left, where the stream flowing from Malham Tarn sinks underground, emerge at the foot of Malham Cove. Cross the road by the small car parking area and follow the path to Tarn Foot, where lovely views can be had of Malham Tarn and its surroundings. Retrace your steps back to the road and turn right along it for a few metres, crossing the stream. Turn left off the road on to a broad track (bridleway) which curves to the right around the hillside, and bears left after passing through a gateway to lead up to a road. Bear left along the road for a few metres and, immediately after the cattle grid at Langscar Gate, turn right through a field gate on to a broad, well-defined track which leads uphill, curving to the right. Turn left once through the next gateway, and follow the path, still well-defined, uphill through other gateways until you reach the junction with the Malham to Settle bridleway where there is a prominent finger-post beside a field gate. Turn left through the field gate, and bear right off the main bridleway on to a well-defined footpath which passes on your right the remains of spoil tips associated with the former mining activity in the area. Follow the path until it appears to be about to plunge steeply downhill at a point where a less well-defined footpath crosses at right angles. Turn left on to the crossing footpath, but not before you have paused to take in the



spectacular view across Malhamdale and down the Aire valley beyond Skipton. Continue along the footpath, passing a limestone outcrop, until you regain the bridleway. Turn right on to the bridleway and follow it downhill until it joins the Cove Road at a gate and stile. Turn right and follow the road downhill. After a kilometre or so you will pass the point at which the path you took to Malham Cove takes off, on your left. Follow the road back through the village to your starting point.

WALK 3

JANETS FOSS, WEETS TOP, CALTON, AIRTON AND HANLITH 13 kms (8 miles)
Shorter route 8.6 kms (5.3 miles)

This walk commences by following the last part of Walk 1 in reverse. Turn left out of the Car Park, cross the road by River House to cross the clapper bridge, turn right on to the Pennine Way and follow it to the third stile. Over the stile turn left on to the path sign-posted to Janet's Foss and follow the path over two stiles and alongside the Gordale Beck, through the wooded gorge and past Janet's Foss to the road. Turn right along the road and follow it (steeply) uphill until, just below the crest of the road, a walled, rough track is sign-posted to the right. Take the track to Weets Top and pass through a gate, adjacent to which are the remains of an ancient wayside stone cross, on to the open moor. Just

beyond the gate where the footpaths fork, take the right hand path signed to 'Calton 2³/₄ miles'. The bridleway over the open moor has recently benefited from repair and surfacing work carried out by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, and places where it was previously boggy or indistinct have now largely been alleviated. Follow the footpath downhill for about 450 metres at which point the track from Hanlith joins.

If you wish to follow the shorter route, bear right and follow the waymarked track downhill over the open moor. After about 1100 metres the track passes through a gate and continues as a lane between two walls (Windy Pike Lane). Just over 1200 metres further on the track acquires a tarmac surface as it descends steeply into the hamlet of Hanlith. On the second of the downhill hairpin bends look for the signpost to the right for the Pennine Way, and follow the Pennine Way back into Malham.

For Calton, continue gently downhill following the bridleway across the open moor, taking in the splendid views of Malhamdale and beyond, and after 3.25 kilometres (2 miles) you will descend quite steeply via a zig-zag path into the wooded Foss Gill. Here the track runs beside the beck, crosses a ford and rises slightly between stone walls to enter the hamlet of Calton. Turn right down the road and continue ahead, following the road down and around a right angled bend to the river bridge below the village

of Airton. Before crossing the bridge turn right over a stile to pick up the Pennine Way footpath. On the opposite side of the River Aire you will see a former mill building (now converted into residential accommodation), which serves as a reminder of the hidden industrial past of this and similar rural areas. The Pennine Way continues alongside the river, and after passing left through a stile, crosses a footbridge over a stream. The footpath turns right to pick up the riverside again. (The footbridge ahead of you gives access to a path leading to Town End at Airton, where refreshment is available.) Follow the Pennine Way along the side of the river to Hanlith Bridge, where turn right over the stile and follow the road steeply uphill to the right-hand hairpin bend. On the left at the apex of this bend the signpost indicates the continuation of the Pennine Way to Malham. Follow the path, now somewhat up the hillside from the river, crossing five stiles, which will return you to the point at which the path to Janet's Foss turns off, on which you started this walk. Continue along the Pennine Way and re-cross the clapper bridge as you enter Malham to return to the Car Park.

WALK 4

MALHAM, KIRKBY MALHAM, AIRTON, HANLITH 9 kms (5.6 miles)

Turn left out of the YDNPA car park, and cross the road opposite the Chapel to a stile giving

access to the footpath signed to Hanlith Bridge. Follow the path across the field to a footbridge, after which turn right along a farm track which will return you to the road. Cross the road diagonally to the left to a stile in the wall opposite. The footpath is not very distinct in the field you have now entered so aim towards the left around the right shoulder of the hummock in front of you and go uphill, navigating to the left of the left side of the barn and farm buildings which appear on the skyline. Two wooden step stiles cross a wire-fenced farm track. Continue ahead across the next field keeping the fence to your right, follow the curve to the right to the next stile, and after crossing keep ahead to a ladder stile. Follow the path slightly downhill to another ladder stile to the right of a field barn. Bear left over the next field to a stone stile, after which bear slightly right to cross the field to another stone stile set to the right of a large tree. Over this stile turn to the right to follow the wall side uphill, and continue in this direction passing to the right of a field barn and downhill slightly left to a field gate leading on to Thorpe Lane, a walled green lane. Turn left and follow the lane downhill towards Kirkby Malham. When nearing the village, after a field barn on the left, look for a footpath finger post to 'Cow Close Lane' on the right. Cross the stile to follow this path (which almost doubles back on your previous route), keeping a stream bed to your left towards a field gate which appears to the left of a disused small quarry. Once through the gate continue ahead, curving round to the left in front of a farm house (New Close) and crossing a stile to climb slightly uphill to the right to access the farm track. Turn left along the track and follow it to Cow Close Lane, where turn left again and go downhill to Kirkby Malham. At the commencement of the village houses turn right to follow the roadway to the front of the parish church. (If refreshment is needed at this point the Victoria Inn is about 75 metres ahead.) In front of the church, by a parking/turning area, follow a signpost for the footpath to 'Otterburn 2³/₄ miles' over a footbridge and up some steps to a wooden gate. Turn to the right, uphill, to a stone stile, and continue uphill keeping a small plantation on your right. Cross another stile, on the far side of a farm track, into a field and navigate diagonally left over the crown of the field down to a stone footbridge alongside Deepdale Plantation. Uphill and slightly right will bring you to a stile in the right hand wall, adjacent to a field gate. Cross the stile and turn left, following the wall on your left uphill to a walkers' gateway on your left signed to 'Airton 1/2 mile'. Through this gate, the path drifts slightly left, down hill to Deepdale Barns where, after passing through the field gate, look for the stile (with a 'Footpath' finger post) over the wire fence on your right, the stile being to the left of another field gate. Bear left around the corner of the field wall, and, before reaching the gateway ahead, turn right to follow a more distinct footpath along the wall side and over stone stiles. Immediately after the third stile, follow the fork in the path diagonally to the left which picks up another field wall on your left. Follow this footpath over five more stiles, the last one of which drops you into the main road along the valley, where turn right to follow the road slightly uphill for about 70 metres. Here a footpath on the left through a gate is signed to 'Malham 2¹/₂ miles'. (If refreshment is required at this point continue along the road for another 50 metres for Town End Farm Shop and Tea Room at Airton.) Follow the footpath down to the footbridge over the infant River Aire, cross the bridge and walk ahead towards another footbridge but turn left before the second bridge to follow the Pennine Way as it follows the riverside to Hanlith Bridge. Turn right on to the road and continue uphill through the hamlet to the acute right-hand bend of the road, from the left of which the Pennine Way continues up the valley to Malham. On entering the village turn left over the stone clapper bridge, cross the road and return to the starting point.

WALK 5

MALHAM, HANLITH, KIRKBY MALHAM, ACCRAPLATS, MALHAM
5.9 kms (3.65 miles)

Turn left out of the Car Park, cross the road by River House, cross the stone clapper bridge and turn right to follow the Pennine Way to Hanlith. Follow the Pennine Way downhill along the road through Hanlith and continue ahead over Hanlith Bridge into Kirkby Malham. At the junction with the main road cross straight ahead, passing (or not!) the Victoria Inn and the parish church on your right, and curving to the right. At the junction with Cow Close Lane, turn left (towards Settle) and proceed uphill for just under a kilometre. Where the road bears about 30 degrees left a farm track continues ahead (stile on the left of the gateway) signed to 'Malham 1¹/₂ miles'. (This gateway is the one referred to in the last pages of Bill Bryson's 'Notes from a Small Island' from which he took his last look at Malhamdale.) Go ahead along the track to turn right as directed by a footpath finger post, over a stone stile and downhill across the field to another stone stile, and continue downhill, passing to the left of a ruined barn to a wooden step stile which gives access to a footbridge over the beck in a wooded gully. Cross the next field keeping the modern farm buildings about 50 metres to your left, to a ladder stile. Cross the stile and continue with the wall on your right to Ploughleys Barn. Cross the next ladder stile, and follow the track as it curves to the right behind the barn and through a gateway into the next field. Here the path is not too distinct but it goes straight ahead, downhill, to pick up on the right the corner of a field boundary which is a mixture of wall and fence. Follow around the corner of the wall to a gate giving access to a farm track which passes the rear of Hall Close. Follow the track as it slopes down to meet the main road, turning left before the road into the Car Park.