

# Pikedaw Hill and Malham

We start at Malham village, parking at either the National Park visitor centre, or on the road just outside – both are chargeable, the former via pay and display, the latter via an honesty box. If you are using satnav to get to Malham, the address and postcode for the National Park centre is Chapel Gate, Malham BD23 4DA. If you prefer what-3-words, the tag for the on-road parking is **firelight.scouted.healers**. This corresponds to OS grid reference SD90006261 for those who prefer traditional maps.

Just in front of the road entrance to the National Park Centre there is a small lane with a footpath sign - we head up here to start. After just a short distance the path branches, and we take the right hand track to walk around the village with views down onto the rear of the houses. We walk past the car park for the visitor centre and see a minor track on the left, we ignore this, and carry on for a short while until we find a clearer and broader track, called Long Lane, again on the left. We take this uphill toward the water pumping station that serves Malham.

The track branches at the pumping station - we choose the lane on the left which heads Northwest past a series of vary attractive barns: Burns Barn, Field Barns, and finally Great Head Barn are all on the left of the track, and at the last of these we cross a beck via either a ford or a stone slab bridge, to take a stile on the right into the fields. We now see the path head (via a slab bridge over a beck) diagonally across the field to another barn – this is Butterlands Barn, where there is a stile taking us into the final flattish field before we start a steep climb up the valley between Pikedaw Hill (on our right) and Kirkby Fell (on our left).

For the most part, the path remains clear, but there are a number of places where it becomes indistinct – so as a general strategy aim to be in the midline between the hills on either side. As we continue upward, we cross a stile, and then meet a particularly steep rocky outcrop where the route shown on the OS map goes to the right of the ridge which sits in front of us. This route is viable, but we found it easier to walk further to the left and to walk round the contours as we gently climb – the path is clearer this way indicating that most people do this.

After a while, the path levels off, and we see a small tarn ahead of us to the left, and beyond this a gate in the drystone wall – we head toward the gate.

At the gate in the drystone wall we turn right to pick up the Dales Highway, and just ahead of us at this point is Nappa Cross, a Medieval Way Marker that was used as a navigational point by labourers working for Fountains Abbey to the North.

We follow the path, gently downhill, past an outcrop of limestone pavement, to meet a broad track which crosses our path at what is in effect an off-set T junction. We go right and continue downhill until we get to the minor road that links the village of Malham with the Tarn – we are now at Langscar gate.

Our walk continues across the road and along the side of the drystone wall (which we keep on our left). We continue along the wall until we get to a large ladder stile which accesses the top of the dry valley. From here, the going is steep and rocky - the polished surfaces of the limestone can be slippery when wet, so take care.

The path through the valley is clear, even if it is rather hard work, and we follow it down, steeply at first, until we reach a flatter section where we approach the top of the cove.

We cross a drystone wall at one of two stiles – the pairing of stiles here is necessary to cope with the large number of visitors during the peak of the season, and ahead of us we now see the limestone pavement for which the cove is famous. The traditional route up to the top of the cove, and therefore a route directly back to Malham should you prefer, is to the right along the pavement at the top of the cove and then down steps to the river valley below.

We would never take the obvious route, so we head left and through a gate where we climb to gain great views of the Cove and the valley bottom from Sheriff Hill. The broad path we are now on takes us down to a minor road at a ladder stile – we cross and continue on the far side via a gate to take the Dales Highway down to Gordale Bridge.

We go right, and head down the road back toward Malham. Almost immediately though we see a fingerpost on the left showing us the path to Janet's Foss, we take this, and clamber down a number of large stone steps to find the Foss – a waterfall emptying into an attractive pool often used for wild swimming.

The path continues down the valley with the Goredale Beck on our left until we arrive at a flat open area where we get long distance views of the Pikedaw Hill and Kirkby Fell that we climbed at the start of the day.

The path continues down and meets the Pennine way, where we turn right and head into Malham, crossing the top of the River Aire at the famous Smithy Bridge before following the road back round to the left where we find the National Park Centre.

- **Total distance 12.6 km (7.8 miles)**
- **Total ascent 525 m**
- **Moderate walk**