

THE YORKSHIRE DALES
THE NORTH AND EAST
THE HOWGILL FELS, MALLERSTANG, SWALEDALE,
WENSLEYDALE, COVERDALE AND NIDDERDALE
by
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CICERONE

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Second edition 2015
ISBN 978 1 85284 798 2
Reprinted 2018 and 2020 (with updates)
First edition 2009



Printed in China on responsibly sourced paper on behalf of Latitude Press Ltd
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.
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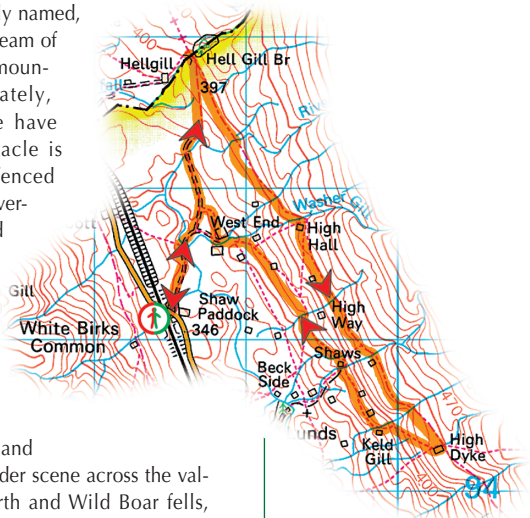
Front cover: *The Nab above Mallerstang Gorge (Walk 12)*

WALK 38 – THE HIGH WAY

The deep and spectacularly narrow chasm of **Hell Gill** is aptly named, and brings the source stream of the River Eden off the mountain above. Unfortunately, what would otherwise have been a dramatic spectacle is hidden from sight by fenced banks thick with trees overhanging each side, and the high parapet walls of the bridge. Anyone other than the exceptionally long-legged will need a bunk-up to peer over, but do not be too enthusiastic, for it is a seriously long and rocky way down. The wider scene across the valley, dominated by Swarth and Wild Boar fells, however, offers compensation, and is a view that now accompanies you for much of the walk.

The **High Way** is an ancient pack-horse route that connected Wensleydale with the Eden Valley, taking an elevated course to avoid the marshy terrain of the flat valley bottom balancing the watershed between the rivers Ure and Eden. It has been associated with Lady Anne Clifford since the middle of the 17th century, when she regularly travelled, until well into ripe old age (she died at 86), between her main seat at Skipton and her outlying properties in Westmorland.

Go back to the fork with the rising track and now take the left branch, which undulates easily across the hillside. The track soon twists across a stream, the fledgling River Ure, which has sprouted from the hillside some 250m higher up near the summit of Lunds Fell. Further on is **Washer Gill**, running through a secluded



The bouldery rocks are draped in the luxuriant green of mosses and ferns, and almost every crevice is burgeoning wild flowers.

Contour on across the hillside below the scar, re-crossing becks passed on the High Way that have breached the limestone cliff, as well as one or two more springing from lower down.

Reaching a signpost by a strip of wood, follow the wall around to the right to discover a wooden footbridge across **Lambfold Gill**, which here drops through an endearingly pretty gorge below a waterfall. ◀ The ongoing path climbs a flight of steps opposite to reach a gate, where a second waterfall is then revealed above.

Go left above the buildings of **Shaws** to another signpost and bear left again, descending to a gate in the bottom wall. Through that, swing right to a small gate, opening into a compact plantation of pine.

Breaking from the trees, head on across open ground towards a dilapidated barn. Even here, the rough pasture can be speckled with colour, marsh marigold and celandine erupting from the coarse tussock. Through a gate by the ruin, bear right to the corner of the upper wall. Cross a stream and climb to another gate.

Make your way through successive enclosures across the slope of the hill, heading for buildings set in a nest of trees, marked as **Low West End** on the map. Through a final gate a track winds down towards the farm.

After the first building, turn off right at a footpath sign to go between West End Farm House and the adjacent ruin. After crossing Lockshaw Gill, turn immediately left through a gate and head away by the right-hand wall. Beyond a fence stile bear left to a track, your outward route. Follow it left back to How Beck Bridge and keep left again back to the road at **Shaw Paddock**.