



Walden Round

NIDDERDALE LDWA



A 24 mile (38.7 km) circular Anytime Challenge walk with 4,200 feet of ascent from Kettlewell in Wharfedale (SD969723). The walk passes over the ridge between Great Whernside and Little Whernside into the head of Nidderdale then crossing Coverdale, over into Waldendale before ascending the shoulder of Buckden Pike and returning to Upper Wharfedale. The Walk should be completed within 12 hours to qualify for a badge and certificate.

The Walden Round was originally devised by founder members of the Nidderdale Group, Derek Jennings, David Taylor, David Megginson and Tony Lickard. It was held as a challenge event on the second Sunday in August from 1989 – 1998 with a time limit of 10 hours (and a pre-GPS estimated distance of 26 miles). The event attracted an average of 180 walkers and runners from all over Great Britain, many completing all 10 events.

The walk is not recommended as a winter walk. If supported, vehicles could park at Horsehouse, at the cattle grid in Waldendale and at Starbotton. Parking in Kettlewell is available at the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's car park (with toilets) just next to the river. Tickets (06:00-midnight) cost £5.00 (2022).

Wharfedale is considered a delight in summer. A very different story in winter, particularly in late January 1942. The route of the Walden passes a 7' high memorial cross just south of Buckden Pike trig point. This was erected by the only surviving member of a Polish crew flying a Wellington bomber for the RAF. He managed to crawl away from the crashed aircraft and come upon tracks in the snow that he recognized as those of a fox. Realising that the fox would be heading out of the adverse weather down to human habitation for food, he followed the tracks eventually to safety. In 1972 the same Polish airman erected the memorial in thanksgiving for his own escape, setting a bronze head of a fox into the base of the cross alongside fragments of the fuselage. The Nidderdale Group decided to commemorate this poignant story into the badge.

Route description using OS Outdoor Leisure 30

Kettlewell to Park Rash Road at SD986757 – 3.2 miles (5.2 km)

From Kettlewell car park take the road towards Park Rash. At the sharp RH bend in the road SD972725 go straight ahead up the stone track, Top Mere Road, to the finger post at Cam Head SD970753. Bear right and follow the path, Starbotton Road, past Tor Dike to cross the metalled road at SD986757.

Park Rash Road to Horsehouse – 7.0 miles (11.2 km)

Take the faint path traversing the hillside of Hem Gill Shaw to reach the wall at SE009764. Go through the gate and follow the indistinct path across Angram Pasture keeping fairly high, through gates in four walls and descend to the sheepfold at SE047773. Turn left and ascend the rutted track to the boundary gate at SE044782. Go through the gate and continue descending on the track to join the metalled road at Arkleside SE043804. Follow the road, crossing the river at Arkleside Bridge and turn right towards Horsehouse (pub).

Horsehouse to Waldendale Cattle Grid at SE017837 – 3.3 miles (5.3 km)

Pass the pub on your right and turn left immediately up a short metalled side road, following the bridleway up High Gill. Ascend to the gate at SE038818 (pause here to admire the extensive views). Go through the gate and turn with the wall on your left to follow a faint path to gate at SE027815. Go through this gate, bear right and descend on a stone track across Fleensop Moor. Continue on the track and descend into Waldendale and the Cattle Grid at SE017837.

Waldendale Cattle Grid to Memorial Cross (nr Buckden Pike) – 5.5 miles (8.8 km)

Turn left along the metalled road as far as Nell Bank SE011824 continuing along stone track to Ashes SE008821 (this section is not a right of way – check with the farmer if a large party). Pass through the farm then turn right to find an access gate above the cottage. Follow the path crossing fields, passing to the right of the stone barn to the metalled road at SD998815. Follow the road passing Grange Farm and then Kentucky House at SD986807. At the end of the road go through the gate onto the farm track which curves to the right, follow and cross Walden Beck. Turn left at the gap in the wall keeping the beck on your left. At the end of the plantation go through a gap in the wall onto bracken and open moorland. Cross Deepdale Gill and follow a few marker posts across Walden Moor (this path is very indistinct in places and hard to find in poor visibility). Continue skirting the hillside until you reach the ridge wall at SD965776. Turn right up the very boggy path to the Memorial Cross at SD962778.

Memorial Cross to Starbotton – 2.5 miles (4.1 km)

Retrace your steps to SD9656776, turn right through the gate and follow the rough track, Walden Road, descending to Starbotton.

Starbotton to Kettlewell – 2.5 miles (4.1 km)

Go through the village and cross the B6160 at SD954747 to a gate and signpost. Follow the enclosed stone track to the River Wharfe, cross the footbridge and take the path straight ahead following a line of trees between broken walls. Continue diagonally left up the hillside through trees and gates to reach a field gate at SD951735. Go through and turn left following the path to Moor End and then onto a stone track that zigzags down to the bridge at Kettlewell. Turn left over the bridge to cross the river and return to the car park.

THE FINISH - WELL DONE FOR COMPLETING THE WALDEN ROUND

See Nidderdale Group webpage for details of how to get your certificate and badge