

# GREAT WHERNSIDE WALK

## Kettlewell to Providence Pot Circular Route

Visit my website for full details: <https://www.paulbeal.com/great-whernside-walk>

### Introduction to the Walk

This circular walk from Kettlewell climbs through the Dowber Gill Beck valley, passing Providence Pot and Hag Dyke before reaching the summit of Great Whernside. From the high ridge, wide views stretch across Wharfedale towards the Yorkshire Three Peaks, before a long moorland descent and a quieter return along Starbottan Road and Top Mere Road.

### Highlights of the Walk

The first part of the route follows Dowber Gill Beck through a steep-sided limestone valley to Providence Pot, where water disappears underground into an extensive cave system. From here, a steep path climbs through the bracken to Hag Dyke, before continuing over rough and sometimes boggy ground towards the boulder-strewn summit of Great Whernside.

At 704 metres, the summit provides far-reaching views across the Yorkshire Dales, with Pen-y-ghent, Ingleborough and Whernside visible to the west on a clear day. The return route crosses the open ridge before descending towards Black Dike Hole, then follows old bridleways and dry stone walls around the valley, with increasingly broad views down Wharfedale towards Kettlewell.

### Additional Information

**Distance:** 8 miles (12¾ kilometres)

**Duration:** Approximately 4¼ hours (excluding stops and breaks)

**Difficulty:** A fairly demanding upland walk with steep climbs and descents, rough rocky sections and stretches of ground that can become very boggy after wet weather.

**Trail Conditions:** Expect stone tracks, grassy paths, rough moorland, rocky summit terrain and old bridleways, with some wet and boggy sections on the higher ground.

**Recommended Map:** OS Explorer OL30 Yorkshire Dales Northern & Central Area

**Parking:** Yorkshire Dales National Park pay and display car park in Kettlewell, close to the village centre and the start of the walking route.

- **Google Maps Link:** <https://maps.app.goo.gl/7fcpg2K5d5AeW88dA>
- **What3Words:** ///mountain.nuns.expectant

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# STEP-BY-STEP DIRECTIONS

Start your Great Whernside walk in the village of Kettlewell, parking in the **Yorkshire Dales National Park pay and display car park (1)**. Leave the car park by the main exit and turn left, heading into the village. Before you cross the road bridge over Kettlewell Beck, turn right, signposted to Kettlewell Camping. Follow the road past the village war memorial on your left to reach the maypole at a crossroads, where it stands inside a small circular seating area in the middle of the junction.

Turn left at the maypole, signposted to the church, and follow the road up to the King's Head public house. Here the road bends sharply left over a bridge across Kettlewell Beck, but ignore this and carry straight on instead, signposted for the Dales Way. Walk past the houses and cottages with the beck on your left, then continue along the tarmac lane as it gradually leaves the village behind.

Stay on the lane and ignore the public footpath on your right signposted to Conistone. Also ignore the following public bridleway on your right signposted to Whernside Pastures. When you reach the bridge over Kettlewell Beck, take the right-hand footpath signposted Great Whernside via Hag Dyke and Providence Pot. Follow the stone track to a second bridge, cross it, then take the right-hand public footpath signposted Hag Dyke and Providence Pot. Go over a gated stile, where the path splits, and take the **right-hand fork (2)** signposted Providence Pot.

Continue along this footpath through the valley for roughly a mile, following the course of Dowber Gill Beck. The path stays close to the beck throughout this stretch and climbs at a gradual gradient, so it makes for a steady start to your Great Whernside walk. Eventually you reach the **entrance to the Providence Pot cave system (3)**, which is capped with a large concrete slab and easy to spot.

Stand at the capped entrance and face up the valley towards the rock face, then look to your left. You'll see a narrow path climbing steeply up the valley side. Follow it. The climb is very steep at first before it levels out into a pleasant grassy path with excellent views back down the Dowber Gill Beck valley you've just walked through. After about a third of a mile you reach the **rear of the youth hostel at Hag Dyke (4)**, which marks roughly a quarter of the way round your Great Whernside walk.

Keep to the path as it bears right past the rear of the youth hostel, then head steeply uphill on the rocky path with a dry stone wall on your left. This is the first section of the climb, a boulder-covered hillside. At the top the path levels out and turns grassy, and ahead of you the boulder-strewn summit of Great Whernside comes into view. The grassy path is fairly easy to follow and is marked by occasional wooden posts with yellow painted tops, though the ground across this level stretch can be boggy.

Beyond the level section the path steepens again for the final pull to the summit and triangulation pillar. As you draw near, you'll begin to encounter large scattered boulders. If you don't know the area, it's worth getting your bearings here by remembering that your way off the mountain is to the left, which is north. Keep following the path to reach the triangulation pillar at the **summit of Great Whernside (5)**.

Stand at the triangulation pillar with your back to the views and the way you've come, facing the metal gate in the fence line, then look to your left beyond the large cairn. You'll pick out a faint path crossing the ridge and heading north. Follow it across the mountain with the fence line on your right, staying fairly close to it without walking alongside it. Continue between the boulders to reach the first of a series of wooden posts with yellow painted tops, where the path splits, and **take the left-hand fork (6)**, which heads away from the fence line and slightly downhill.

Carry on along the path, with more yellow-topped posts confirming you're on the right line as it descends the mountainside slowly but surely. After about three quarters of a mile you reach **Black Dike Hole (7)**, where you cross a stile and begin a very steep descent. This is roughly the halfway point of your Great Whernside walk. As the path flattens out the ground can be boggy, and after another three quarters of a mile or so you arrive at a **minor road right beside a cattle grid (8)**.

Cross the road and take the wide grassy path opposite as it bears round to the left. After about a fifth of a mile you meet a dry stone wall, and although it isn't obvious, you join a grassy bridleway as the path begins to move away from the wall. Keep heading straight ahead for around a third of a mile to meet the wall again and **pass through a gate (9)**.

Stay on this bridleway, known as Starbotten Road, for about two thirds of a mile. It roughly follows the line of the dry stone wall on your left, sometimes running close to it and sometimes further away, but the wall stays in view for most of the way. You'll reach a **wooden signpost where the bridleway splits (10)**, which is about three quarters of the way round your Great Whernside walk. Take the left turn, signposted public bridleway to Kettlewell.

Follow this straightforward bridleway, known as **Top Mere Road (11)**, south towards Kettlewell for around one and three quarter miles. As the track starts to descend more steeply, Kettlewell comes into view below. You'll reach the **bend of a minor road (12)**, where you carry straight on downhill, then turn right at the T-junction at the bottom and follow the road down into Kettlewell to complete your Great Whernside walk.

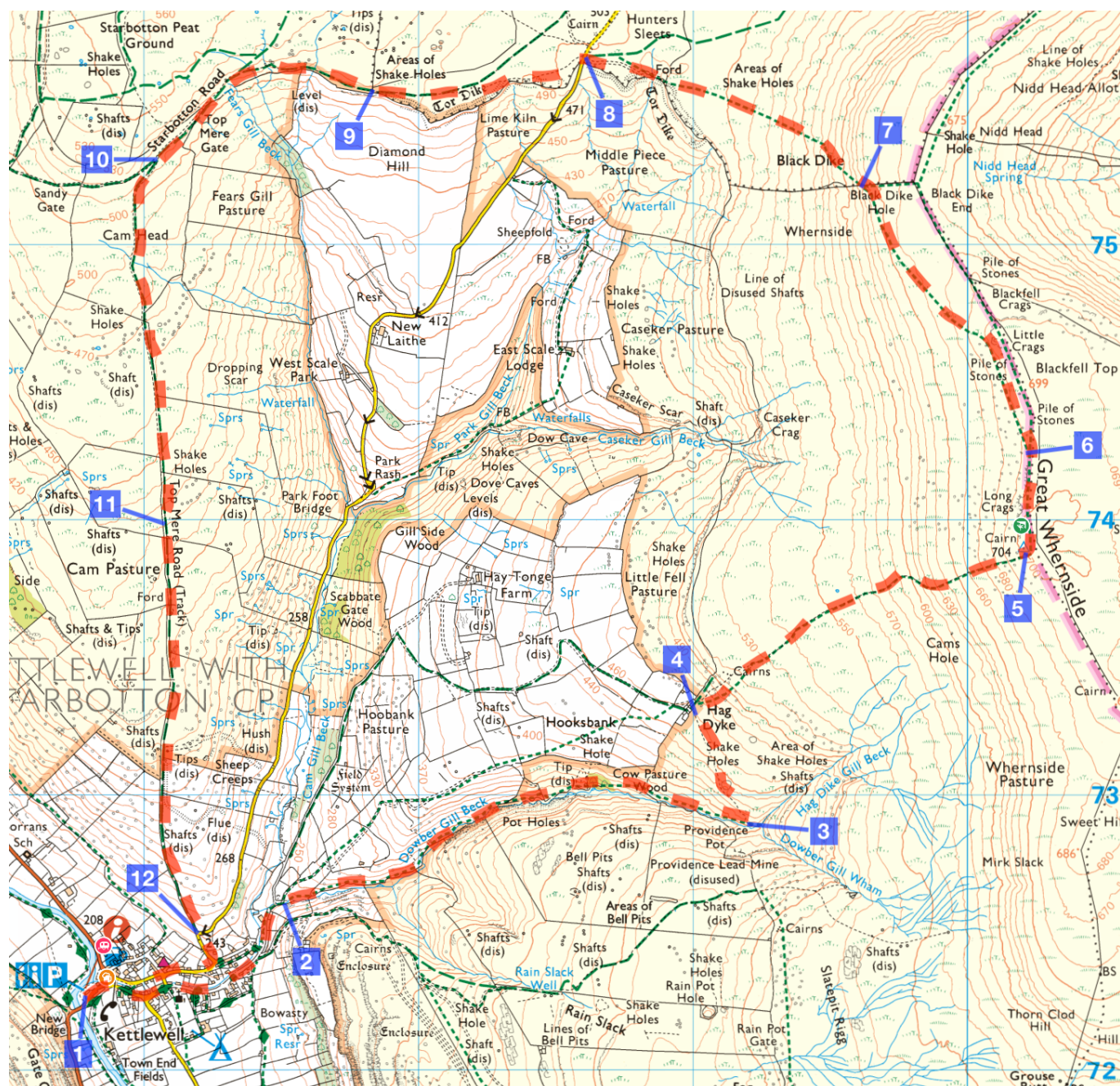
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# MAP OF THE WALK



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