



RUNNING A DALES HIGH WAY! - 90 miles in under 21 hours!

Friends of A Dales High Way

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Friends of A Dales High Way

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BACK TO THE FELLS



With around 1000 people walking ***A Dales High Way*** each year, there have undoubtedly been some frustrated walkers thumbing through their route guides over the past 16 months in anticipation for the time they were permitted and comfortable with setting off on an adventure.

Throughout the past year we have constantly heard not only about the safety of being outdoors, but the benefits and enjoyment felt through engaging in nature rich spaces. What better way to do this than to set off and walk for a week or so through a glorious 90 mile stretch of Yorkshire and Cumbria. However, with some restrictions remaining in place until at least 19th July, there is still need to take extra care in your planning.

As with other periods during the pandemic, the restrictions do not prohibit you undertaking a long distance walk, but it does mean that you need to make sure you are up to date with accommodation and double check which places are offering meals along the route. The details on the accommodation page of our website are as up to date as possible.

You can read some accounts of the people who have walked the route over the past year on the forum. Perhaps it will inspire you to dig out your bivvy, or alternatively take advantage of baggage courier services.

Whilst out checking recent path improvements (see page 9), it was nice to have a brief chat with a couple who were just setting out on their second walking of A Dales High Way. They had loved their first experience but it had been during a wet August. So not only was the hope to have better weather (I think they will have been pleased), it was an opportunity to see the route with a different outlook - the yellow of the meadows, the bird song, the cotton grass across the moors.

Whilst I'm not about to fetch my rucksack and set off to do the entire route, I have been enjoying some of the sections, and in particular the alternative route to Ingleborough on Sulber Nick. Here the flowers continue to benefit from an altered grazing regime replacing the sheep with cattle. So, if it's your second outing, or you don't fancy the tops, and you are walking in May or June, you could do worse than immerse yourself in the meadows of Bird's-eye Primrose* and Early Purple Orchids.

- Julia Pearson (Chair of the Friends)

**In the last newsletter I boldly claimed that Bird's-eye Primrose was the county flower of Yorkshire. Turns out that it might just be my county flower, as Plantlife lists the harebell. Whilst of course this is also a lovely flower, I'm sticking to my original claim!*

DALES HIGH WAY ULTRA



An ultra-marathon race covering the whole 90-mile Dales High Way was run for the first time in May this year. The route has been described as "stunningly brutal" by one runner after a recce of the route for the organisers last July.

Runners had up to 36 hours to complete the race, with an optional additional 10-mile loop up to High Cup Nick at the end, for those wanting to push the limit to 100 miles.

The race had been initially planned for May 2020, but had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

With ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, all checkpoints had to be organised outdoors, and only 21 runners were registered to participate. They were due to leave Saltaire on Saturday morning, May 8th on a staggered start from 6 a.m. onwards.

The race was organised by Punk Panther Ultra Marathons UK, led by Ryk and Bev Downes. Their races are professionally organised, with established checkpoints along the route and qualified medical support. Each runner also carries a tracker so that their progress and position can be followed throughout.

Competitors could gain 5 or 6 points towards qualification for the prestigious Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc (UTMB). The UTMB race involves around 106 miles (170km) of running and a circumnavigation of Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in Western Europe.

Members of the Friends of a Dales High Way volunteered to organise the race checkpoint at Settle on Saturday afternoon.

Fastest Known Time

Unknown to the race participants, a new Fastest Known Time (FKT) record for running the route of A Dales High Way had been set just hours before the Punk Panther Ultra marathon set off!



Mark Kerry (centre) approaching the finish.

The record - an incredible 20 hours 31 minutes was set by Mark Kerry as he ran into Appleby at 7.45 pm on Friday night. Mark, a "Montane Ambassador", had set off from Saltaire in the dark at 11.13 pm on Thursday night, running with a support crew including a rota of pace runners.

He was blessed with good weather conditions.

After Chris Grogan congratulated him on his achievement, Mark replied "Had such a great day out. Fantastic route."

Meanwhile, the first Punk Panther runners left Saltaire just after 6 am Saturday morning, as rain started to fall. Heavy rain was forecast for the duration, making this a very tough challenge, but the runners were all cheerful and in good spirits.

ULTRA



The first runners set off from Saltaire.

17 runners set off on the first Dales High Way Ultra, with 12 finishing the gruelling race on Sunday morning.

Jason Millward set a blistering pace throughout the race, and as he was tracked dropping from the Howgill Fells it looked certain that he'd smash the FKT record set only 2 days before. Alas, Jason was forced to withdraw at the final stage.

First to finish was Daniel Hendriksen, in just 20 hours 56 minutes. Given the bad weather this was a remarkable achievement, though just short of the record set by Mark Kerry. Daniel then went on to complete the 100 mile circuit taking in the additional High Cup Nick circular! Afterwards Daniel said: "that was a fabulous event. The route is wonderful, and the loop at the end an act of evil twisted genius (in the nicest sense!). But what made this event was the checkpoints and the volunteers - couldn't have asked for a better, more supportive bunch, complete with home baking that beats any technical nutrition

in my book. Thank you very much all for making this one of my favourite ever events".



Daniel Hendriksen takes the winners' trophy (cover picture).

Second place on the Dales High Way went to Mark Kennedy, who came in 2 hours later. Second spot on the long race went to Andrew Merrick, who came in alongside the first woman to finish, Jane McCarthy, who set a new woman's record for the route at 23 hours and 2 minutes. Both also went on to complete the 100 miles.



Second overall trophies to Jane McCarthy and Andrew Merrick.

Javid Bhatti was the other runner to complete 100 miles, with a further 7 runners completing the 90-mile Dales High Way: Caroline Turner, Ritchie Wilkinson, John Levesconte, Graham Yare, Stephen Ball, Stephen Dillon and David Coulthard.

Race organiser Ryk Downs said: "The race started in torrential rain, which lasted until Settle, and the timing meant everyone had to go through the Howgills in the dark, which was a huge challenge. All runners thoroughly enjoyed themselves saying that the route was stunning, yet brutal to run, especially in the conditions. They all said they would be back next year, several experienced runners saying it was the best race they had ever done!"

And he added: "Next year we will take that FKT!"

Friends of A Dales High Way members who ran the Settle checkpoint - Chris Grogan, David Halsall and Bridget Izod - had a great time. The Friends received a generous donation of £170 from the race organisers.



The Friend's Bridget Izod and David Halsall at the Settle checkpoint.

News updates

Glovershaw Beck

A recently repaired section of path alongside Glovershaw Beck, near the start of A Dales High Way, has been improved further.



Contractors from midlands-based Geogrow Ltd. had originally helped install a deep "green" revetment - a "Vegetated Wall System" called Rootlok - to support the path.

Rootlok is described as "a soft engineered system that is a competitive alternative to concrete, gabion and other hard revetment systems that do little to benefit the natural environment."

Permeable geotextile bags filled with gravel form the lower layers, with bags containing a seeded mixture of soils, compost and sands forming the upper layers. The bags are bound together and back filled to form

a stable revetment that will grass-over in time. This was completed last August, after floods had washed away a section of banking.

But further flash flooding over the winter had caused a partial collapse of the new banking. The original contractors returned to fix the problem, and over two days re-engineered and extended the revetment with a more contoured face.

The beck floor has also been cleared.

It is hoped the new look revetment will better carry the surge of flood water when it returns. The repair came just as walkers begin to return for the new season.

New footway beside busy Otley Road

A potentially dangerous short road section near the start of A Dales High Way has been made safe, thanks to work by Bradford Council's Highways department.



The 200 metre road section leads from Weecher Reservoir onto Bingley Moor. Traffic along this stretch is very fast and the only verge on one side was difficult on foot due to a drainage ditch. This has now

been stabilised and filled over with gravel, and bollards have been erected to separate it from the traffic.

The improvement had been requested by walkers from the local Walkers are Welcome groups and the Friends of A Dales High Way. The section is used by other local trails, including the Welcome Way and Bradford Millenium Way.

Originally it was anticipated that walkers' groups would raise money towards the cost of the work, but in the end the council received additional government funding to cover the full cost.

This means a much safer passage for walkers. Our thanks must go to Kevin Whittaker of Bradford Highways in particular for making this happen!

Ingleborough path repairs

The steep section of footpath between Chapel-le-dale and Ingleborough, which rises from Humphrey Bottom to the foot of the Swine Tail summit section, has been completely refitted by contractors.

This tricky section has provided many a hair-raising moment for walkers on A Dales High Way, but the new blocked paving is much easier to negotiate.

The former stone pitching, in place since 1986, was crumbling and has been removed, to be replaced with large gritstone



blocks. The blocks were sorted by the contractors - Terra Firma Environmental Ltd - from a nearby boulder field on the flanks of Ingleborough, stacked in helicopter bags and airlifted onto the public footpath at the end of July 2020.

The works then started in August 2020 along with a closure of the steepest section of the High Lot public footpath. A temporary diversion 1 km further along the north-eastern ridge proved unpopular with 3 Peaks Challenge walkers.

Rob Ashford, National Park Area Ranger for Malhamdale & Ribblesdale who is overseeing the project, said "Removal of the existing stone pitching, installation of the new stone pitching with the large gritstone blocks, drainage and associated landscaping has been ongoing since August and we're coming to end of the project.."

The initial project was completed just before Christmas, with further landscaping work expected to be finished by this summer.

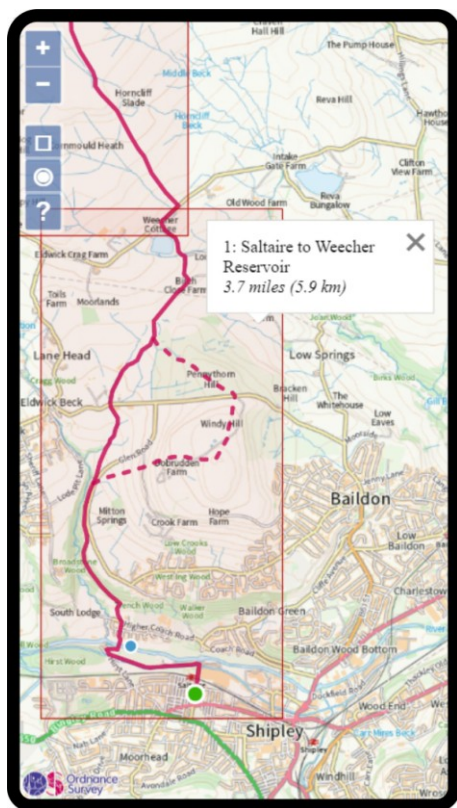
This is just one of many ongoing projects to improve and maintain the busy Yorkshire Three Peaks footpath.

New Free Online Tools to aid navigation

Some new online map tools have been developed to help those planning to walk A Dales High Way.

The new map features have been developed by Skyware Press, who publish the Dales High Way Route Guide and Companion, and are free to use on this website.

Tony Grogan, co-author of the books and a director of Skyware, said: "We have been offering an online map of the route for some time, which allows people to zoom in and pan around and explore the route in detail. But, taking advantage of the current lockdown restrictions, we have spent some time adding new features, which we hope will help those planning and walking the route in the future."



The online map uses *Ordnance Survey Map API* mapping which shows topographical detail at several different zoom levels and allows users to explore the whole route with ease.

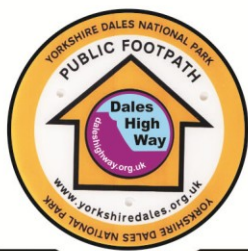
"There is a new feature which shows the Skyware strip-map coverage, as shown in the Route Guide, allowing the coverage to be seen in a wider context.

"There is also an new Geolocation Tracking feature, which is aimed at users of mobile devices like modern smartphones, which are GPS enabled. This allows you to track your position relative to the route, and hopefully will help reassure walkers when needed."

There are a couple of caveats: the geolocation tracking feature uses mapping which requires a good strong signal to download - which may be sometimes unavailable along the trail, especially in more remote locations. This feature also tends to drain battery charge quicker when in constant use, so should be used sparingly.

"These are still in early development, so we'd very much appreciate any feedback. Email us at "friends (at) daleshighway (dot) org (dot) uk and let us know what you think" said Tony.

These tools should only be used as an aid; walkers on the route should use the Route Guide or map and a compass for primary navigation.



For regular news about A Dales High Way go to our website:

daleshighway.org.uk