

A CIRCUIT OF KISDON ISLAND

from Keld 5½ miles (9km)

This wonderful walk circles the heather-clad limestone mass of Kisdon Hill. It has a good variety of terrain and scenery. The views are excellent and will certainly be memorable.

Keld is surrounded by some of the wildest countryside in Yorkshire. Nine Standards Rigg, Great Shunner Fell, Lovely Seat, and Rogan's Seat are among the outstanding features. It is a sedate little village, with its collection of cottages huddled around a small open square.

People living in such wild places need to be sturdy and strong minded. This was demonstrated in 1789 when Edward Stillman became pastor of a ruined chapel at Keld. Needing funds for repairs, he embarked on a remarkable walk to London and back, raising £700 from preaching and

begging. Another tribute to Edward Stillman's character lies in the fact that his total expenses for the journey came to only sixpence. After rebuilding the chapel he served the people of Keld for forty-eight years. The chapel was rebuilt again in 1860 with the added features of a bell and a sundial. Near the road junction at the top of the village is the former Cat Hole Inn. This became a private house in 1954, and now serves only diesel from a solitary pump.

From Keld we follow the road down the valley for a short distance where a stile leads onto a meadow path below Angram. Across the valley of Skeb Skeugh Beck is the heather clad Kisdon Hill. This shapely hill, encircled with limestone scars, reaches a mere 1636 feet (499m), but it still gives access to some of the finest views in Upper

Swaledale. It was formed during the last Ice Age, when glacial action widened the valleys and smoothed the hill tops. As the glacier retreated a debris of rocks and boulder clay blocked the valley, diverting the river Swale to its present course, leaving Kisdon as an isolated hill. On Jeffrey's Map of Yorkshire, 1771, it is shown as 'Kisdon Island'.

During our descent to Thwaite, the views are impressive. Lovely Seat directly ahead remains prominent throughout.

Thwaite is a welcome oasis for many thousands of Pennine Way walkers as they descend from the heights of Great Shunner Fell. It is a picturesque village with a small humpback bridge spanning a turbulent tributary of the river Swale. In 1899, a great storm drenched the dale and the normally placid Thwaite Beck became a raging torrent. Dogs, sheep, hen-houses and roofs were swept away by the force of the water. The cottage gardens near the beck were also engulfed by the deluge. It was said 'the flowers planted at Thwaite bloomed the next year at Muker', 2 miles (3km) away!

The village was the birthplace of two famous brothers, Richard and Cherry Kearton. They were pioneers in wildlife photography from the 1890s well into the twentieth century. The cottage in which they lived is marked by a stone lintel carved

with animals and birds. The Kearton's used many ingenious methods to get closer to their subjects including a papier mâché cow, which tended to blow over in strong winds and apparently it once encouraged the attentions of a bull!

Leaving Thwaite we follow the Pennine Way, climbing steeply to Kisdon Farm. Below is the attractive village of Muker with the river Swale disappearing into the distance. Great Shunner Fell, the Butter-tubs Pass and Lovely Seat complete the panorama. Our route continues along the Pennine Way, traversing the higher slopes of Kisdon Hill. Across the valley there are excellent views of Ivelet Moor, Swinner Gill and the forlorn ruins of Crackpot Hall.

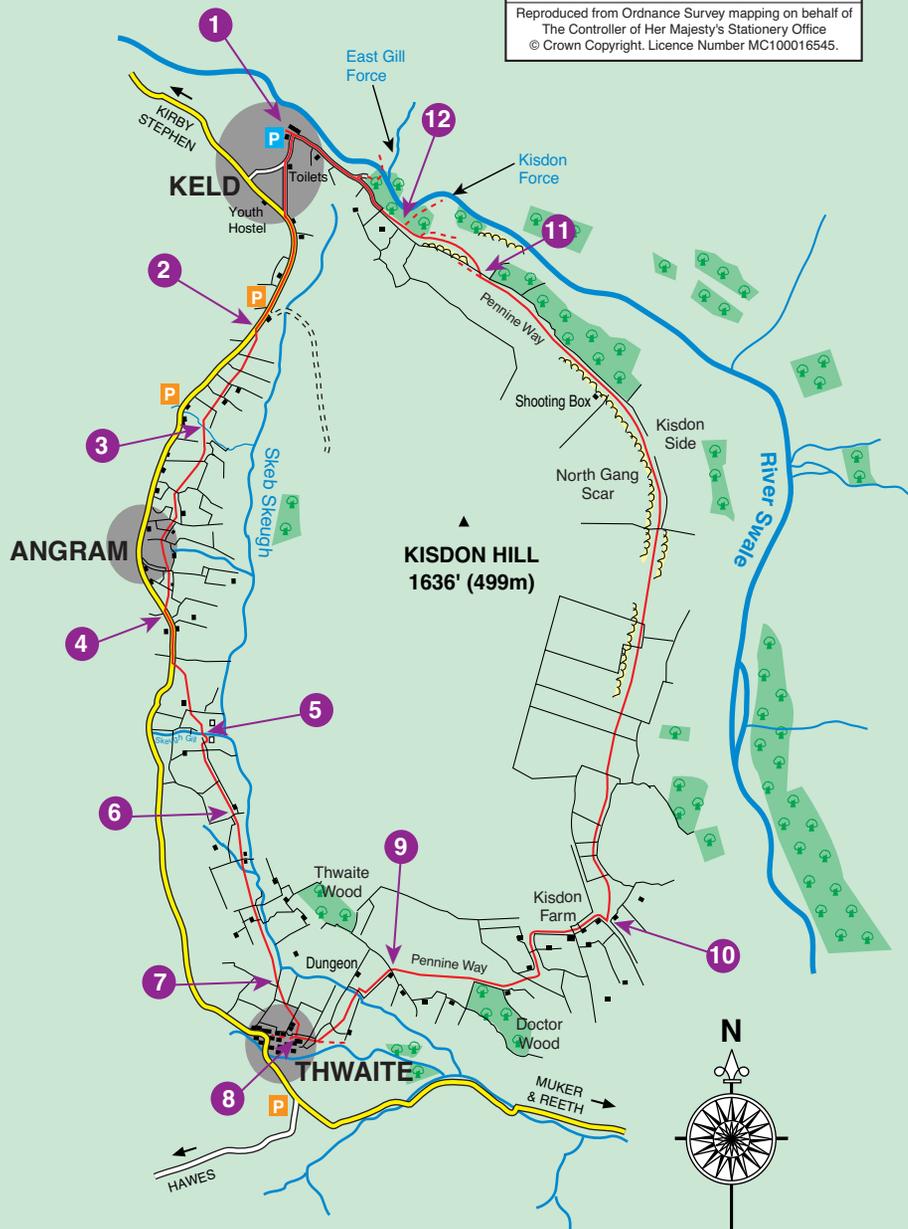
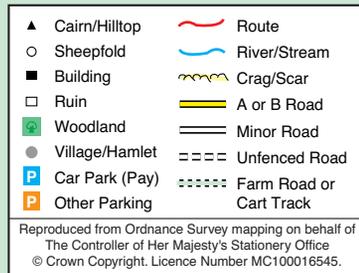
Less than a mile from the finish of our walk, we should, if time allows, make a detour to visit the spectacular Kisdon Force. This has the reputation of being Swaledale's finest waterfall. Here the river Swale plunges 30 feet (10m) over two cascades. It tumbles down a small upper fall into a beautiful tree shaded pool, taking an encore over the lower fall. The area near the falls is often wet and slippery so extra care should be taken.

From the falls we retrace our steps and continue along the Pennine Way path returning to Keld.

Start/Parking:	Keld, there is a good sized car park at Park Lodge Farm just off the village square.
Location:	Keld is situated on the B6270 Richmond to Kirkby Stephen road 23 miles (37km) west of Richmond.
Grid Ref:	893 012.
Distance:	5½ miles (9km) circular. Allow 2¼ hrs plus an extra 30 mins if you wish to visit Kisdon Force.
OS Maps:	Explorer OL30 (1:25,000) or Landranger 91 (1:50,000).
Refreshments:	Park Lodge Farmhouse at Keld, the Kearton Guest House at Thwaite.
Public Toilets:	Keld, between the road junction and the village square.
Other:	The United Reform Church, youth hostel, bus service, telephone.

DANGER

The paths to Kisdon Force are often very slippery and **extra care** should be taken between the upper and lower falls.



2 A Circuit of Kisdon Island

- 1** (GR: 893 012) Leave the car park, turn right and follow the road to the junction by the telephone box at the top of the village. Turn left and continue along the road towards Muker and Thwaite.
- 2** (GR: 892 005) After about ½ mile (0.8km), go through a gated stile on the left (SP Thwaite). Bear right and go over another stile (SP Footpath), continue ahead on a waymarked path through four gap stiles (watch your head at the 3rd stile especially if you are over 5 feet (1.5m) in height), to reach a wooden footbridge at Ay Gill.
- 3** (GR: 890 002) Cross the bridge, climb a few steps and continue on a more obvious route through the pastures, passing below Angram, to the main road.
- 4** (GR: 889 996) Turn left and follow the road between two barns. About 50 yards (46m) past the barns leave the road through a gated stile on the left (SP Footpath), bear right and begin descending to Thwaite. Pass to the left of a barn and go through a stile near the corner of the wall. Continue descending and cross a stream.
- 5** (GR: 890 992) Follow a faint track and pass through a gated stile behind a tree. Turn left and keeping to the wall side go through two gated stiles to reach a barn.
- 6** (GR: 891 989) Go through a gated stile (watch your head, another stile with height restrictions), continue through three gap stiles and then follow the beck downstream. Leave the beckside and follow a flagged path to go through a gap stile in the wall corner.
- 7** (GR: 892 984) Head diagonally across the next field and go through a gap stile, bear half left and go through another gap stile. Bear right and follow a farm lane past the barns and go through a gap stile onto a narrow lane.
- 8** (GR: 893 982) (Thwaite village can be visited via a gap stile to the right). Turn left and follow the lane through two gap stiles. Turn left and pass through a gate, continue across the meadow, cross a bridge and go through a gate. Head to the right wall and climb up steeply to a gap stile in the top right corner.
- 9** (GR: 896 984) Turn right and follow a narrow track climbing gradually through the heather. Go through a gap stile, follow the left wall and go through a gate. Now follow the right wall, turn right at the wall corner and continue to Kisdon Farm. Continue through two gates and along a walled lane to a junction. Turn right (SP Pennine Way) and descend a short distance.
- 10** (GR: 904 986) Turn left (SP Pennine Way). Climb up a broad track, leading over a wooden stile and a ladder stile. The path levels out and is very easy to follow along the shoulder of Kisdon Hill.
- 11** (GR: 899 007) Turn right (SP Pennine Way), through the wall and descend to a junction. Take the left track (SP Pennine Way) and continue descending.
- 12** (GR: 896 009) Turn right (SP Kisdon Upper Falls) and follow a narrow track to visit Kisdon Force. Retrace steps to point 12, continue along the track and go through a gate. This track leads back to the village square at Keld.

NEDDY DICK - THE WORLDS FIRST ROCK STAR!

In the 1890s Richard Alderson, known locally as 'Neddy Dick', was climbing near Kisdon Force when he dislodged a rock. This struck another rock with a musical sound. Realising different stones produced different notes of music, he scoured the bed of the river Swale for other melodious stones, eventually creating his own 'heavy rock band' which he played with two wooden sticks. Neddy was encouraged by the local community and even made plans for a tour of the country. Sadly, he died just a few days before his debut.