

CYCLING THE WAY OF THE ROSES



About the Author

Rachel Crolla is lucky enough to live a few miles from the Way of the Roses. Her early biking memories include learning the hard way how to ride up the local hills on a single-speed BMX. Having lived and cycled all her life in the White Rose county, she was thrilled to write about places which are close to her heart. Rachel started out touring on hybrid bikes, completing rides such as the Coast to Coast (C2C) and a version of the Walney to Wear (W2W). She then explored some of the region's excellent mountain-biking terrain but in recent years has become a convert to road cycling, in which she admits to having a slow and steady approach.

As well as spending time in the saddle, Rachel also enjoys hillwalking, rock-climbing and scrambling. In 2007, she became the first woman to climb the highest peak in every country in Europe. She has worked as an outdoor writer and photographer on three other Cicerone guides.

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CYCLING THE WAY OF THE ROSES

COAST TO COAST ACROSS LANCASHIRE AND
YORKSHIRE, WITH SIX CIRCULAR DAY RIDES

by Rachel Crolla

CICERONE

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Front cover: Superb cycling between the narrow dry stone walls of the road between Cracoe and Burnsall (Day 1)

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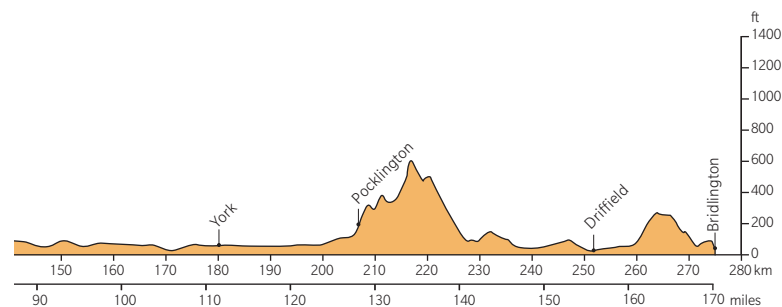
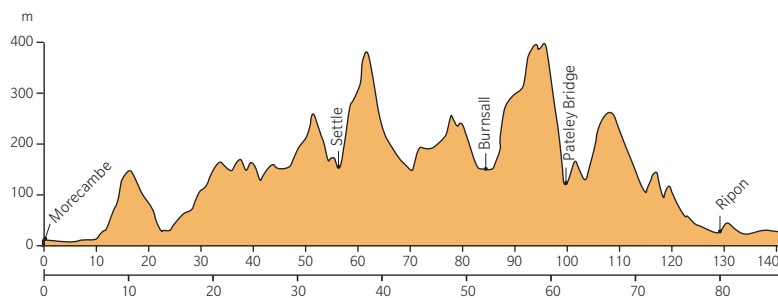
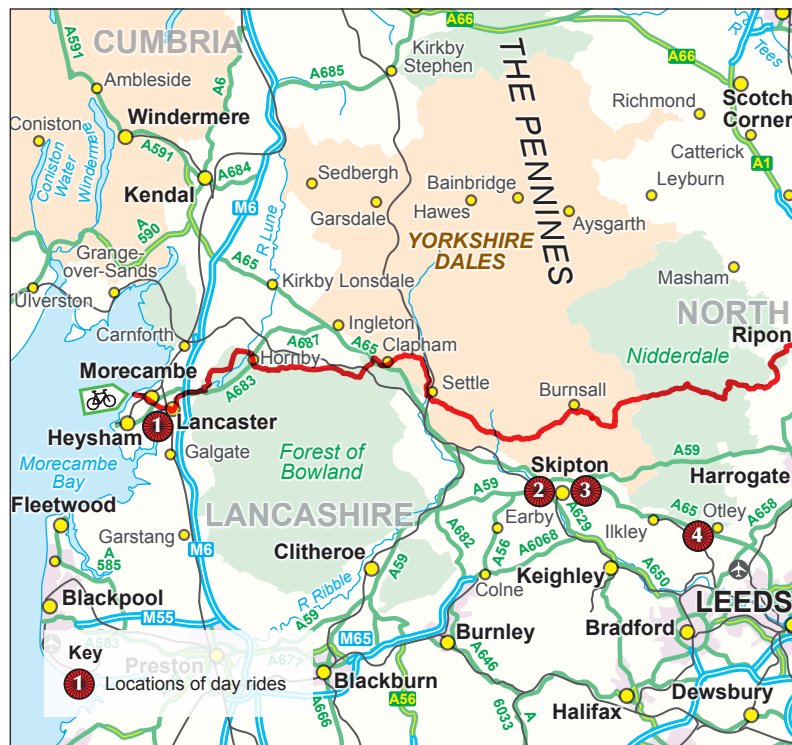
Passing Pen-y-ghent on the Malham Tarn detour (Day 1)

Symbols used on route maps

	route		café
	traffic-free section		public house
	alternative route		bike shop
	start/finish point		all amenities
	start point		caution
	finish point		castle or fort
	alternative start/finish point		church/cathedral
	alternative start point		battlefield
	alternative finish point		point of interest
	route direction		other feature
	steep ascent or descent		
	very steep ascent or descent		

0 kilometres 1 2
0 miles 1

Contour lines are drawn at 50m intervals and labelled at 100m intervals. Route maps are drawn at 1:100,000 (1cm = 1km)



ROUTE SUMMARY TABLES

The Way of the Roses: The three-day ride					
	Start	Finish	Distance	Ascent	Page
Day 1	Morecambe (SD 427 643)	Burnsall (SE 032 613)	53 miles (85km)	980m	42
Day 2	Burnsall (SE 032 613)	York (SE 602 523)	58 miles (93km)	1005m	66
Day 3	York (SE 602 523)	Bridlington (TA 191 675)	62 miles (100km)	450m	90

The three-day ride east to west					
Day	Start	Finish	Distance	Ascent	Page
1	Bridlington (TA 191 675)	York (SE 602 523)	53 miles (85km)	450m	112
2	York (SE 602 523)	Burnsall (SE 032 613)	58 miles (93km)	1000m	88
3	Burnsall (SE 032 613)	Morecambe (SD 427 643)	62 miles (100km)	985m	65

The Way of the Roses: a four day itinerary					
Day	Start	Finish	Distance	Intermediate distances	Refreshments
1	Morecambe	Settle	35 miles (56km)	Lancaster 4 miles (6km); Hornby 15 miles (24km); Clapham 25 miles (40km)	Morecambe; Lancaster; Crook o'Lune; Hornby; Wray; Clapham; Austwick
2	Settle	Ripon	43 miles (70km)	Cracoe 12 miles (19km); Appletreewick 18 miles (29km); Pateley Bridge 27 miles (44km)	Airton; Hetton; Cracoe; Burnsall; Appletreewick; Stump Cross caverns area; Pateley Bridge; Fountains Abbey
3	Ripon	Pocklington	48 miles (77km)	Boroughbridge 10 miles (16km); Linton-on-Ouse 20 miles (32km); York 31 miles (50km); Stamford Bridge 42 miles (68km)	Boroughbridge; Linton-on-Ouse; Beningbrough; York; Stamford Bridge
4	Pocklington	Bridlington	44 miles (71km)	Huggate 8 miles (13km); Hutton Cranswick 20 miles (32km); Driffield 25 miles (40km); Burton Agnes 34 miles (55km)	Millington; Kilnwick Percy; Huggate; Hutton Cranswick; Driffield; Nafferton; Harpham; Burton Agnes

The Way of the Roses: a five day itinerary					
Day	Start	Finish	Distance	Intermediate distances	Refreshments
1	Morecambe	Clapham	26 miles (42km)	Lancaster 4 miles (7km); Hornby 15 miles (24km)	Lancaster; Crook o'Lune; Hornby; Wray
2	Clapham	Burnsall	26 miles (42km)	Settle 9 miles (14km)	Austwick; Settle; Airtton; Hetton

The Way of the Roses: a five day itinerary					
Day	Start	Finish	Distance	Intermediate distances	Refreshments
3	Burnsall	Ripon	36 miles (60km)	Pateley Bridge 15 miles (24km)	Burnsall; Appletreewick; Stump Cross caverns area; Pateley Bridge; Brimham Rocks; Fountains Abbey
4	Ripon	Pocklington	40 miles (64km)	Boroughbridge 10 miles (16km); York 22 miles (36km); Stamford Bridge 32 miles (51km)	Boroughbridge; York; Stamford Bridge
5	Pocklington	Bridlington (TA 191 675)	44 miles (71km)	Huggate 8 miles (13km); Hutton Cranswick 20 miles (32km); Driffield 25 miles (40km); Burton Agnes 34 miles (55km)	Millington; Kilnwick Percy; Huggate; Hutton Cranswick; Driffield; Nafferton; Harpham; Burton Agnes
The Way of the Roses: a two day itinerary					
Day	Start	Finish	Distance	Intermediate distances	Refreshments
1	Morecambe	Ripon	77 miles (124km)	Lancaster 4 miles (6km); Hornby 15 miles (24km); Clapham 25 miles (40km); Settle 35 miles (56km); Cracoe 48 miles (77km); Burnsall 53 miles (85km); Pateley Bridge 64 miles (103km)	Morecambe; Lancaster; Crook o'Lune; Hornby; Wray; Clapham; Austwick; Settle; Airton; Hetton; Cracoe; Burnsall; Appletreewick; Greenhow; Pateley Bridge; Fountains Abbey
2	Ripon	Bridlington	93 miles (150km)	Boroughbridge 10 miles (16km); York 31 miles (50km); Stamford Bridge 42 miles (68km); Pocklington 50 miles (80km); Driffield 74 miles (119km)	Boroughbridge; Linton-on-Ouse; Beningbrough; York; Dunnington; Stamford Bridge; Pocklington; Millington; Huggate; Hutton Cranswick; Driffield; Burton Agnes; Bridlington

Day rides				
Ride	Start/finish	Finish (if not a circuit)	Distance	Ascent
1	Arnside and Silverdale tour (SD 473 620)	Lancaster Castle (SD 473 620)	40 miles (64km)	600m
2	The Way of the Dales	Skipton Castle (SD 990 520)	49 miles (79km)	1015m
3	Brontë country and the dark satanic hills	Skipton Castle (SD 990 520)	44 miles (71km)	1430/1600m
4	Otley and Knaresborough round	Otley market place (SE 204 454)	46 miles (74km)	960m
5	Around the Wolds in a day	Huggate (SE 882 550)	47 miles (76km)	870m
6	Bridlington to Scarborough extension	Bridlington (TA 191 675)	Scarborough (TA 045 885)	350m



Passing the limestone scars on the slopes of Rye Loaf Hill above Settle (Day 1)

INTRODUCTION



Crossing Winterburn bridge in front of a sea of buttercups (Day 1)

The Way of the Roses will appeal to just about everyone who loves cycling. The route is a 170-mile (274km) coast-to-coast ride that opened in 2010. It was designed to link the historic Red and White Rose counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire using scenic country lanes, minor roads and traffic-free cycle paths to create a superb ride between the seaside resort towns of Morecambe in the west and Bridlington in the east. Travelling by bike across the country is a hugely satisfying objective, and cycling the Way of the Roses is a challenge within the reach of cyclists of all abilities.

The beauty of the Way of the Roses is that it works equally well

for those wishing to get serious miles under their wheels in some of the best cycling territory in the UK, and also as a more leisurely tour taking in the wealth of attractive sites that are passed. There is so much to see along the route that even the most committed pedal pushers will be tempted out of their saddles.

The route lends itself to making pitstops in idyllic villages and replenishing calories in riverside tearooms. It also provides a great choice of accommodation, pubs and restaurants. Added to that is an impressive array of castles, cathedrals, abbeys and prehistoric sites, along with stunning natural features such as the Three Peaks,

THE THREE-DAY RIDE

DAY 1

Morecambe to Burnsall

Start	Morecambe – The Bastion, Main Promenade SD 427 643
Finish	Burnsall SE 032 613
Distance	53 miles (85km)
Total ascent	980m
Steepest climb	High Hill Lane, Settle – officially 20% (though many cyclists believe it peaks at closer to 30%!) Surfaced cycle path to Crook o’Lune, minor roads to Settle, with three short sections on B roads and one brief section on a gravel cycle path avoiding the busy A65
Terrain	OL41 Forest of Bowland & Ribblesdale, OL2 Yorkshire Dales – Southern & Western Area
OS maps	Morecambe, Lancaster, Crook o’Lune, Hornby, Wray, Clapham, Austwick, Settle, Airton, Hetton, Cracoe, Burnsall
Refreshments	
Intermediate distances	Lancaster 4 miles (6km), Hornby 15 miles (24km), Clapham 25 miles (40km), Settle 35 miles (56km), Cracoe 48 miles (77km)

A great day’s cycling lies ahead – the charms of the route quickly win you over and continue to impress as the miles clock up. From the frequently windblown promenade in Morecambe, stretch your legs by cycling along the seafront to pay tribute to comedy legend Eric Morecambe at his nearby statue. The day starts in a leisurely fashion on the link route to Lancaster and onwards via a disused railway line to the Crook o’ Lune without any traffic or ascent. Here the route takes on a different guise as you climb through the beautiful Forest of Bowland and use peaceful lanes along the side of the Lune Valley. Descend through the pretty Red Rose villages of Gressingham, Hornby and Wray, before leaving the Lune and gaining height

to enter Yorkshire. The White Rose county is heralded by the impressive sight of 723m Ingleborough, one of the famous Three Peaks. From here, the undulating road to Clapham is idyllic and gives surprisingly simple cycling. It is obligatory to stop off in the bustling small market town of Settle to sample one of the many teashops while contemplating the day’s next objective. The climb out of Settle is the steepest of the whole route. It’s undoubtedly the toughest test of the day (and indeed of the whole Way of the Roses), but those who huff and puff up the twisty hill will have their efforts rewarded as a marvellous limestone landscape opens up and the ancient geology of the Yorkshire Dales is revealed. The climb is followed by a superb descent into Airton and continues across undulating terrain through the lovely Dales villages of Winterburn and Hetton to Cracoe. The day finishes with a flourish on a climb over to Wharfedale via a beautiful narrow lane to reach the quintessential Dales village of Burnsall.

The large Way of the Roses sign on the promenade at **Morecambe** is the official start of the route. Some cyclists will no doubt want to go down the nearby ramp to the beach to dip a toe into the Irish Sea (this can be a surprisingly long walk if the tide is out). It is definitely a good

Roses riders stretching their legs on Morecambe’s promenade



MORECAMBE AND MORECAMBE BAY

The Art Deco Midland Hotel from the Stone Jetty

The statue of Eric Morecambe was designed by Graham Ibbeson and was unveiled in 1999 by HM The Queen. Pub quiz aficionados will know that Eric was born John Eric Bartholomew but subsequently took the name of his beloved hometown. The words of the Morecambe and Wise theme tune 'Bring Me Sunshine' are engraved on the steps leading up to the statue. Maybe singing a rousing verse or two will help the weather treat you kindly on your forthcoming ride.

The Stone Jetty is all that now remains of what was once Morecambe harbour. It was rebuilt in 1995 as part of ongoing coastal defence work. It is a good place for a gentle warm-up pedal to view the sculpted seabirds of the Tern Project (see below) and the town's much-vaunted art deco hotel.

There are two distinct kinds of seagull in Morecambe: firstly the swooping, squawking, sandwich-stealing kind and secondly the flocks of metal ones. Thankfully the latter are not flying round and dive-bombing your fish and chips, but have been created as part of a

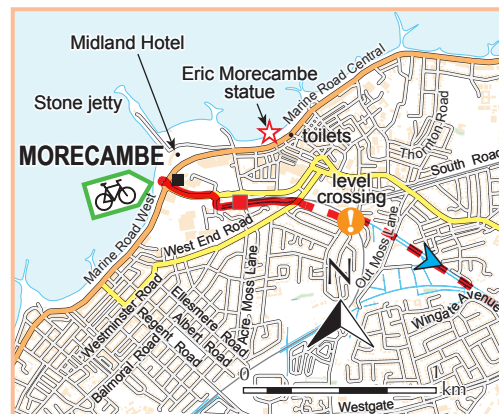


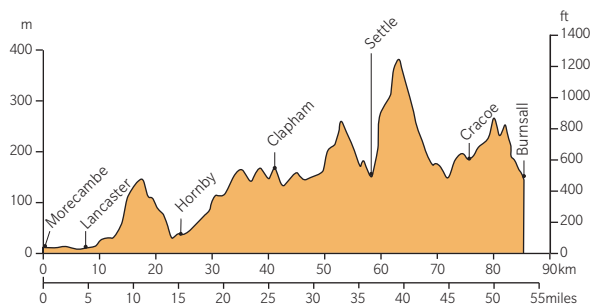
*Bring me sunshine...
the Eric Morecambe
statue on Morecambe
seafront*

large art installation called the Tern Project. As a result, cormorants, gulls and gannets of the steel variety line the railings and fences around the seafront and rusty razorbills perch on the town's several roundabouts.

The mudflats of Morecambe Bay are infamous for both their quicksand and even quicker moving tides. It is possible to walk right across the bay in the company of expert local guides. The bay's notoriety grew after 2004's cockling disaster, in which 23 mistreated and illegal Chinese cockle pickers were tragically drowned here when they were caught by the incoming tide.

idea, before heading inland, to ride up and down a few hundred metres of the refurbished promenade. This gives you the chance to warm up your muscles, double check your bike is in the best working order and perhaps rendezvous with your Way of the Roses cycling companions. As you stretch your legs and breathe in the bracing sea air, make sure to look out across the notoriously treacherous mud flats of Morecambe Bay. Just a stone's throw from the start of the route is the statue of the town's most famous son, comedian Eric Morecambe. Also on the promenade are the art deco Midland Hotel and some public artworks, the first a metal profile of the many (sometimes visible) Lakeland mountains. Right at the start





of the ride, it is worth riding out to sea along the Stone Jetty to view its numerous gull-themed sculptures. The nearest public toilets are 500 metres northwards along the promenade.

Take the road directly opposite the Way of the Roses start placard, heading inland across the small roundabout. Pass a bowling alley and continue to a larger roundabout adorned by more metal seabirds. Here the route signage, somewhat confusingly, aims to shepherd cyclists across a zebra crossing and onto the pavement on the right-hand side of the roundabout (if you end up at Morecambe train station you have gone too far). The route takes the exit which appears to lead into a restaurant car-park. Thankfully this is not the case and instead a tarmac bridleway materialises on your left. This is the welcome start of the long traffic-free initial section of the route which spans the urban area between Morecambe and Lancaster. The bridleway cuts down the side of the railway and shortly crosses a southern branch line at a gated level crossing. ◀

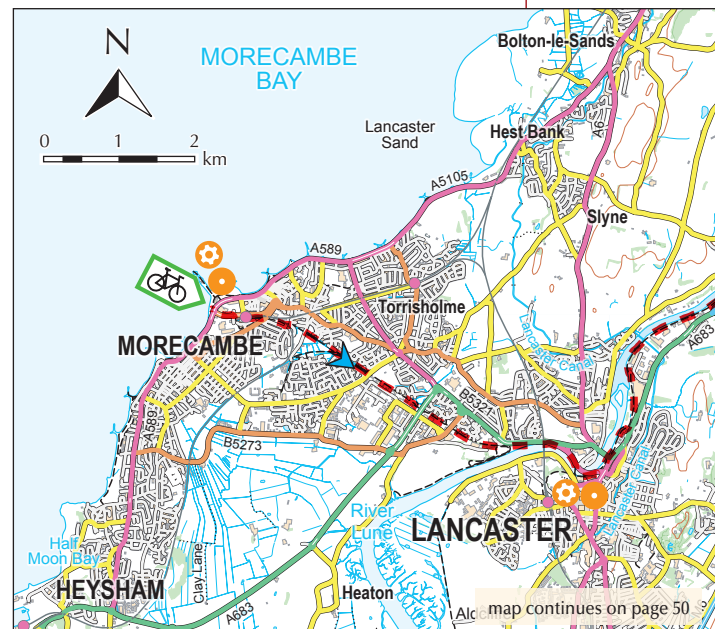
The bridleway is designed so that cyclists use one side and pedestrians the other, and is clearly signed. It is a well-travelled path so keep an eye out for other users. The path becomes more pleasant as the outskirts of Morecambe are left behind and you emerge alongside the River Lune in Lancashire's historic county town of **Lancaster**. This stretch is known as St George's Quay and the river here is tidal and edged by salt marsh. Lancaster's

There is no barrier and cyclists should stop and have their wits about them.

castle can be seen from here and the dome of the Ashton Memorial is also visible high above the town. Turn right over the arcing Lune suspension bridge towards the town centre, then go left and ride up the opposite bank of the river. After the suspension bridge a short detour turning right following cycling signs for 400 metres can be made to see the castle or to visit Lancaster's town centre.

Lancaster's castle is a medieval fortress which served as a prison from 1196 to 2011. During that time, it saw more hangings than anywhere else in the UK outside of London. Nowadays you don't have to be a wrongdoer to pay a visit as it has become a museum.

In the 18th century, shipbuilding was a major part of Lancaster's economy. It took place



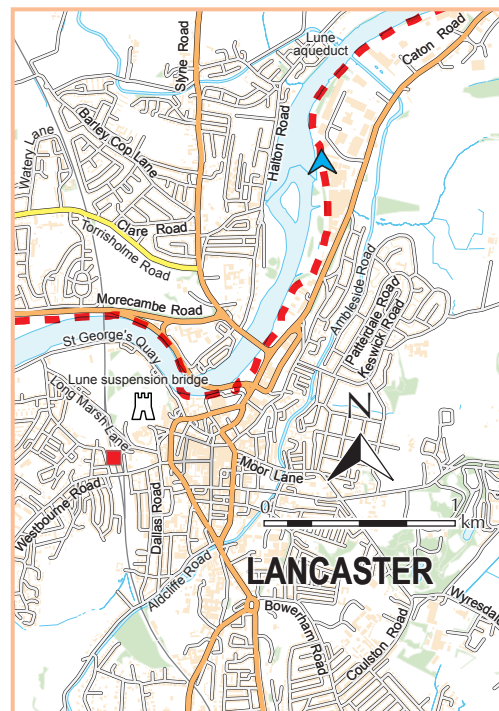
*Making an escape
– the former prison
at Lancaster Castle*



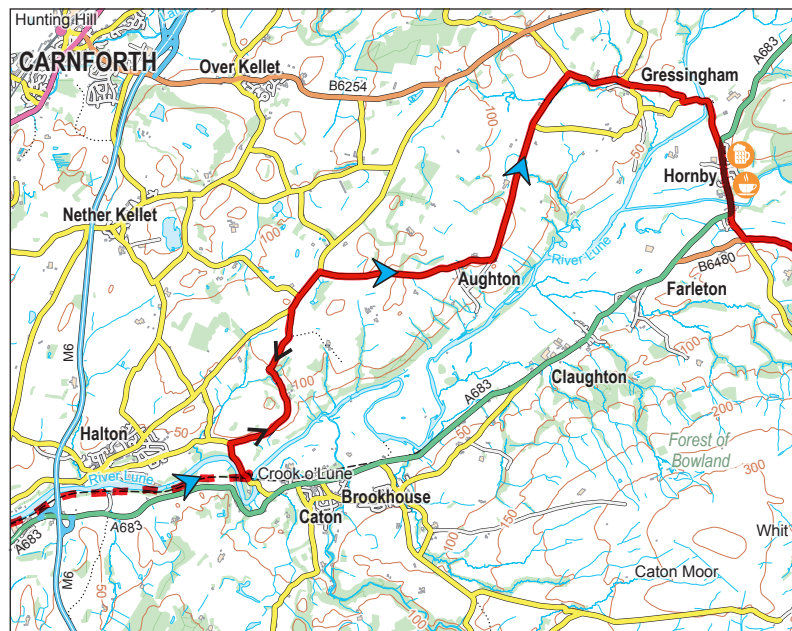
on the north side of the river by the present-day Millennium Bridge, and the Port of Lancaster was a busy place. In the early 19th century, trade declined and Lancaster looked to other industries to revive its fortunes. Lancaster's Maritime Museum, based in the nearby Custom House, has more information about the city's shipping heritage.

The route bends with the river; look out for a sharp right turn leading through an underpass to emerge at a small riverside park, still following the course of the Lune. The amenable cycle path becomes the Lune Riverside Walk and is well used – expect to share this section with hikers and dog walkers. Ride through a small tunnel under the Lune Aqueduct.

The **Lune Aqueduct** carries the Lancaster canal over the River Lune. It was designed by John Rennie, whose other works include four of London's famous bridges: Waterloo, Southwark, the old Vauxhall Bridge and London Bridge itself.



*Passing the Lune
Aqueduct on the
riverside path*

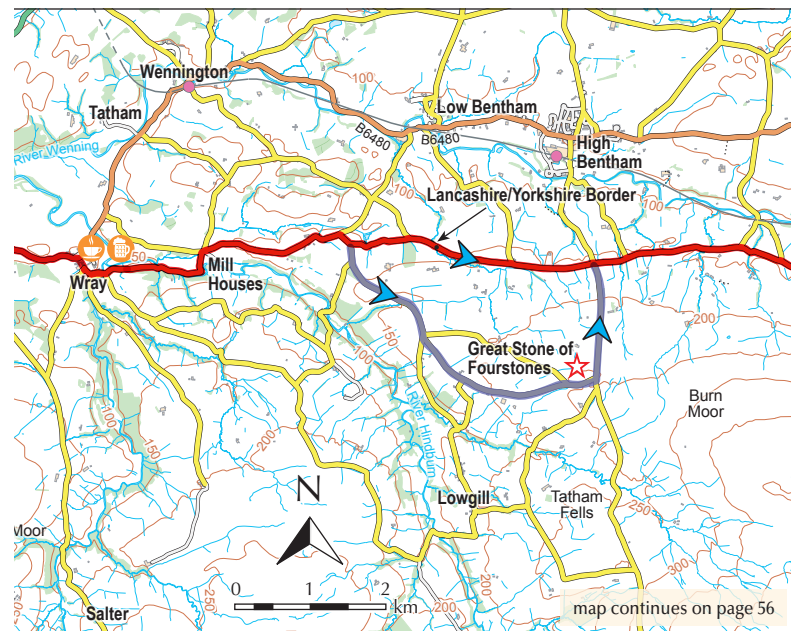


Continue amid pleasant wooded scenery. The route then takes the abandoned railway line under the M6 (though you'll scarcely notice) past the former Halton station and eventually across one half of the Lune Viaduct.

The disused Skipton–Morecambe railway line was known as the **Little North Western Railway**. The section crossing the two Crook o' Lune viaducts opened in 1849 and was run by the Midland Railway until it was condemned to closure for passengers by the Beeching Report of 1966. The striking double viaduct has thankfully now had a new lease of life as a footpath and cycleway.

The route forks left shortly afterwards up a little rise to the **Crook o' Lune** viewpoint. ◀

Here a large kiosk sells hot drinks and the usual egg and bacon sandwiches and might be welcomed by cyclists who had an early start.



The **Crook o' Lune** is the romantic name of a sharp bend in the River Lune where the rise of the land allows superb views across the open valley. A painting by J M W Turner in 1816 immortalised the scenery at the Crook o' Lune. The original artwork can be seen in London's Courtauld Gallery.

Leave the Crook o' Lune car-park and turn right onto a surprisingly busy road for 400 metres until forking off right uphill on a quiet surfaced lane over a cattle grid. The rest of the Lancashire section of the route goes through the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. As you embark upon the first climb of the day, the spectacular nature of the Way of the Roses reveals itself as the views expand over the Lune Valley. The climb is steeper than might be expected and the route takes a



The pastoral view at the Crook o' Lune, painted by J M W Turner

Gourmets might associate the name of the village with Gressingham duck meat. Although the duck – a cross between a mallard and a Pekin – did originate in the village, it is now exclusively bred and farmed in East Anglia.

right near the top. Just as cyclists will be relishing their first downhill of the day, there is another right turn sign-posted to **Aughton**, which is easy to miss. This minor road undulates through lovely pastoral scenery for 3 miles (5km) until it takes a right onto a wider road to the pretty village of **Gressingham**, with its 12th-century church. It is well worth pausing here for a swig of water. ◀

It will soon become obvious that the **Forest of Bowland** is not actually a forest. The name comes from the medieval definition of the word: an area reserved by the king for hunting. The Forest of Bowland is an upland of gritstone fells and peat moorland surrounded by the lush Ribble, Hodder, Lune and Wyre valleys. It covers a 202sq km section of Lancashire and North Yorkshire.

Go straight through Gressingham and soon cross the Lune on a picturesque bridge and continue into **Hornby**, filtering right onto the main road through the village

where there are two pubs and a great little tearoom (as well as a privately owned castle). The River Lune is left behind here but the straightforward and enjoyable riding continues. Where Hornby's main street bends, take a left (straight ahead) and then turn left again to reach the pretty village of **Wray**, where there is a post office, pub and the Greenfoot Farm café. Turn right in Wray and, after a mile, start to gain height, with the expansive vista of the Three Peaks area of the Yorkshire Dales opening up before you. The peak of Ingleborough is most prominent in the view to your left.

Whernside (736m), Ingleborough (723m) and Pen-y-ghent (694m) were arguably the original Three Peaks. As it became increasingly popular to invent challenges involving the British peaks of Ben Nevis, Snowdon and Scafell Pike, the 'Yorkshire' epithet was added to distinguish the two summit trios. As a result, the mountains are now most commonly known outside the local area as '**The Yorkshire 3 Peaks**'.



The hen harrier – emblem of the Forest of Bowland at Hornby

Crossing the Lune bridge between Gressingham and Hornby



Take a right at a stone bus shelter towards Lowgill and 150 metres later a left signposted to Settle (12 miles/19km) along a superb minor road where views of Ingleborough dominate. The route shortly crosses the border from Lancashire into North Yorkshire and this momentous change is heralded by a road sign.

Great Stone of Fourstones Detour

For those keen to mark their passage from Lancashire into Yorkshire in a more memorable fashion, this is a well worthwhile short detour (adding less than 2 miles to the main route) with a little extra height gain to see a massive glacial erratic which historically marked the county border. By climbing the 15 carved steps to the top of the stone you gain superb views of the impressive trio of Yorkshire's Three Peaks.

The **Great Stone** is situated just 10 metres from the modern county border (actually on the Yorkshire side). Legend has it that the devil himself dropped the huge stone on his way north to make the Devil's Bridge at Kirkby Lonsdale. Another tale is that it was

The Great Stone of Fourstones, marking the Lancashire/Yorkshire border



hurled in anger across the Irish Sea by the giant Finn McCool, whose other works include The Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland. It is believed, as the name suggests, that there were once four stones in a natural circle. The others may have been broken up and used to make tools or buildings.

To visit the stone, turn right at the stone bus shelter on the main route, but continue straight ahead instead of turning left to Settle. This is marked as the 90 cycle route to Lowgill and Slaidburn. Continue, climbing gently for less than a mile, then take a left, still on the 90 towards Slaidburn. After another mile turn left at a T-junction in open moorland. This is signed to Bentham and the 90 is left behind here. The stone becomes apparent to your left – there is a path to it about 100 metres after the junction. After your visit carry on down the same road for nearly a mile to re-join the main Roses route by turning right (to Settle) at a crossroads with a small petrol station.

Main route continues

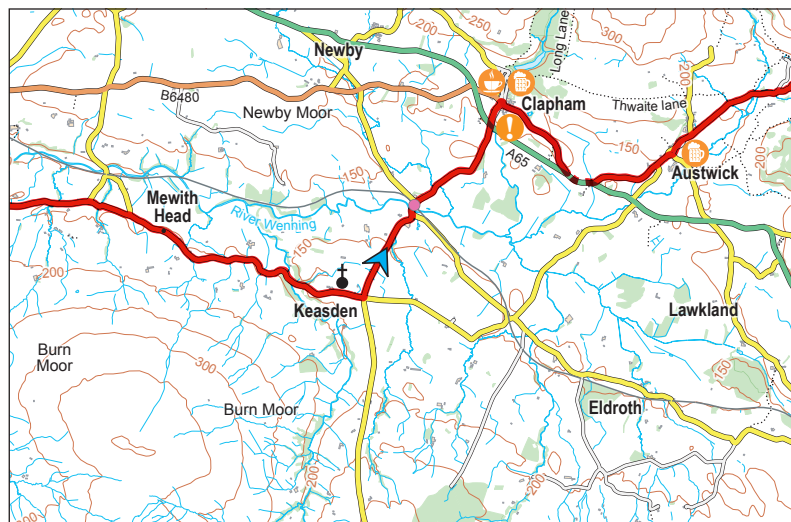
Keep straight ahead (to Settle) at a small crossroads where there is a petrol station with a basic shop. ▶ Continue ascending to **Mewith Head** where the road goes through beautiful moorland to the hamlet of **Keasden** and its remote church; 100 metres later turn left and descend steeply to a lovely stone humpback bridge. Climb slightly under the arches of the railway line and then enjoy the easy cycling to **Clapham**.

Just before Clapham village, the route crosses the busy A65. Take care here or use the signed underpass to get across into the village centre.

In **Clapham** there is a visitor centre, café, pub, post office and cave rescue centre. This area of the Yorkshire Dales provides some of the best caving in the country.

Turn right just after the bridge in Clapham towards Settle. After a mile, this brings you out leftwards onto a

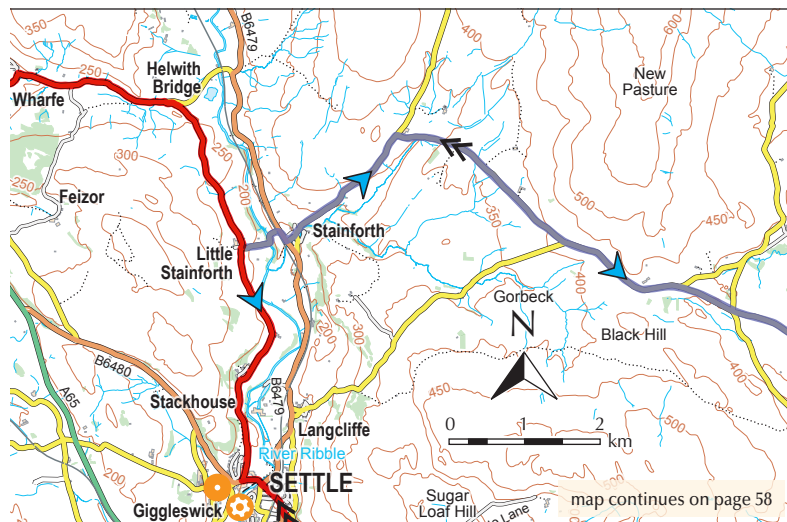
Take care on the sporadic descents on this road which can be covered with farm dirt and grit on the bendy dips, requiring a cautious approach.



crafty section of segregated gritty cycle path which runs alongside the A65 for 400 metres before shepherding you leftwards onto the minor road to Austwick. It is on this section that the route enters the Yorkshire Dales National Park. As the road winds into **Austwick**, the hillsides bear the scars of the limestone outcrops that form the bedrock of this part of the county.

The story of the **Yorkshire Dales** began 350 million years ago, when the Dales would have been a warm shallow sea with coral reefs. Fossilised sea creatures produced the beautiful limestone, and coarse windblown sand formed a layer of gritstone on top. The dales (valleys) were then carved out by Ice Age glaciers.

The undulating road from Austwick to Settle continues to delight. After 4 miles (6.5km) the route turns off right gently uphill onto an even quieter road, passing the limestone-topped hump of Smearsett Scar to your right.



After **Little Stainforth** the descent to Settle is gradual and relaxing, with the strange quarried hillside and Stainforth Scar to the left.

The Malham Tarn Detour

This superb alternative route leaves the main Roses itinerary at Little Stainforth, 2 miles before Settle, and re-joins it at Ayrton. It follows part of the Yorkshire Dales Cycleway, which is signed with a Swaledale sheep's head logo. As well as being a superb alternative in its own right, the detour offers the opportunity to visit the jaw-dropping Malham Cove and avoid the testing High Hill Lane climb out of Settle. ►

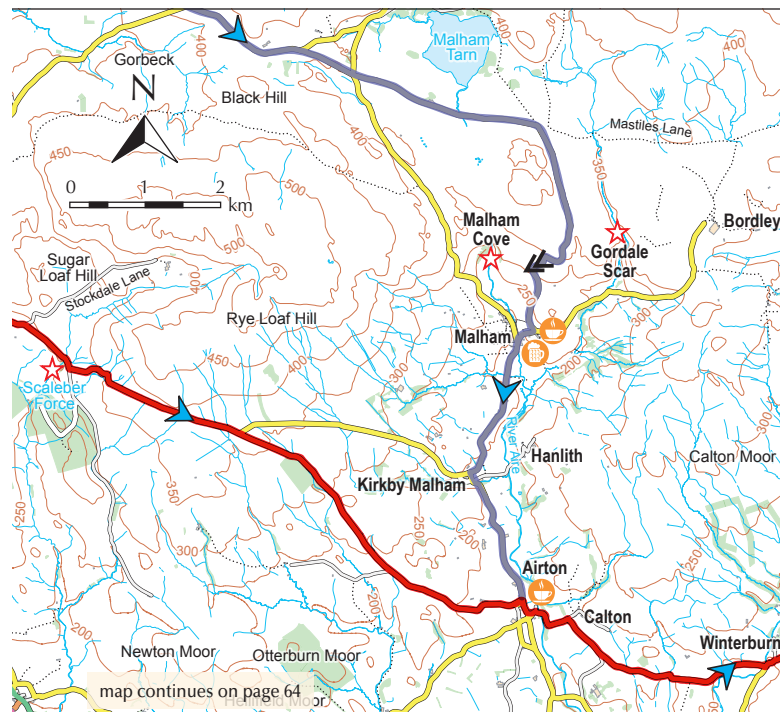
Leave the main Roses route at Little Stainforth, turning left signed as the Malham Tarn detour. After 200 metres cross the River Ribble on a narrow stone bridge and then climb to cross the B6479, turning right then left 50 metres later into **Stainforth** village (toilets). Here turn left and tackle the stiff climb out of the village. After 1½ miles take a right turn down a cruel dip and steeply up

This route does not have consistent signage so a little care is needed.

again to reach the huge limestone plateau which houses the high glacial tarn. Continue with superb views of Pen-y-ghent to your left then merge left at a junction after nearly 3 miles (5km).

After another mile take a right fork signed only to High Trenhouse, crossing a cattle grid after 20 metres. In 700 metres the main route into Malham turns right at a crossroads, but continue straight ahead to skirt the southern side of the visible Malham Tarn, passing a small chimney to your right. The road eventually curves right at a wooden signpost and begins a long descent. Here there are good examples of the clints and grykes of natural limestone paving, the most stunning example of which can be found at the top of Malham Cove. Turn right at the T-junction after a

Passing Pen-y-ghent high on the Malham Tarn plateau



long steep downhill to enter the pretty village of **Malham** (another good choice for refreshments should they be needed). The route heads out left after crossing the river. The breathtaking limestone edifice of Malham Cove can be visited on foot by turning right here and following signs for about 20 minutes.

Malham Cove is a natural wonder – an 80m-high sheer curving cliff formed by a waterfall of glacial meltwater after the last Ice Age. Sport climbers can often be seen swinging from the bolts that someone has seen fit to drill into this immense piece of rock.



The short walk to visit Malham Cove is well worth the effort



The market town of Settle is a popular stop for cyclists

Head out of Malham (following signs to Airton), climbing slightly, with views of the cove behind you. Continue through Kirby Malham on to **Airton**. Here the route re-joins the Way of the Roses (straight ahead).

Main route continues

At the end of the road turn left into the small market town of **Settle**.

Around the bustling market place there are numerous shops, cafés and pubs vying for your custom and **Settle** seems a sensible choice for a pitstop to recharge the batteries, as the toughest climb of the whole route is tackled next. The Singing Kettle on the main street is unbeatable value, whereas many cyclists seem to be tempted by the unusually named Ye Olde Naked Man café a few doors away. Whatever refreshments are taken on board, be careful not to overdo it on the cake as you'll pay for it on the hills ahead.

Follow signs behind the large building in the market place to take a road aptly named High Hill Lane. This quickly steepens over a short initial cobbled section and then climbs out of the village through a few bends with an exceptionally evil gradient. This steep section goes on further than you might think, so pace yourself accordingly and watch out for descending vehicles particularly if you're using the full width of the road in a bid to stay on your bike (don't worry if you end up pushing – you won't be the first and you certainly won't be the last cyclist to be defeated here).

Eventually there is some brief respite and a chance to rest the legs before a final kick up to the summit. On the way views of Pendle Hill (back in Lancashire), over to the right, provide a brief distraction. Console yourself in the knowledge that there is nothing else this tough on the remainder of the route. It might sound like hell, but the pain is more than made up for by the stunning scenery – and the chance to climb into a dramatic landscape with only a few sheep for company.

Scaleber Force is easily accessed from a dip with a signpost near the final climb of High Hill Lane.

Taking on the Roses ride in winter might be a much tougher undertaking – near Scaleber Force, high above Settle





The otherworldly clints and grykes on top of Malham Cove

The 12m fall cascades over limestone into a small plunge pool just below the road. It might be a good place to stop and let tired party members catch up.

There is a very good spacious café in Airton, just a few hundred metres off route towards Malham.

The climb eventually ends at a cattle grid – sit back and relax, or at least assume a comfy position for the long descent into Airton. This should be relatively trouble-free, but near the steepest section care is needed at a cattle grid on a bend. Further caution is advised close to the bottom of the descent where the road surface deteriorates slightly through tree cover. Turn right at the village of **Airton**, then quickly left over the River Aire (after which the village is rather obviously named). ◀ Make a short climb up to **Calton**, followed by a short descent to cross a bridge at **Winterburn** and a final pull over to **Hetton** (with its famous gastropub, the Angel Inn). Here the ridge of fells on Embsay Moor can be seen more clearly and the rock has changed from the limestone of the Settle area into Yorkshire gritstone country. The crags of Rylstone, Rolling Gate and Crookrise are all visible, along with the Cracoe war memorial tower on the end of the ridge.

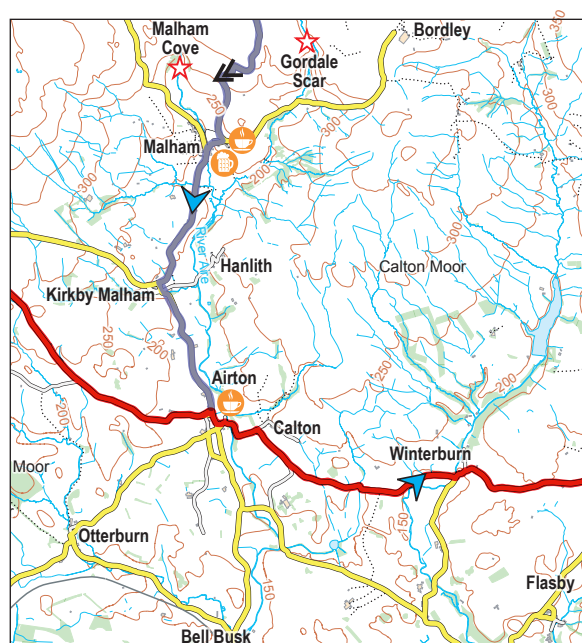
The distinctive white limestone which is predominant around Clapham and Settle in the western dales stands atop a dripping network of **caves and sinkholes** which permeate the hills nearby. East of Airton gritstone becomes predominant and the heathery moors are crowned with its generally smaller and darker buttresses.

Rise slightly out of Hetton to cross a barriered level crossing and continue to join the busy B6265 going left through **Cracoe**. About 300 metres past Cracoe there is a sharp bend in the busy road. Here the route turns off right and much care must be taken at the awkward junction.

Once on the minor single-track road to Thorpe it is simple cycling once again as you climb gently between snaking dry-stone walls and fantastic Dales landscapes. The road surface is somewhat gritty so take care as the lane drops to a dip. The route is technical enough to put the onus on safety rather than speed, and this allows time to take in the wonderful surroundings. The lane goes right to join a slightly more well-used thoroughfare at the hamlet of **Thorpe**. After this the craggy-topped fell of

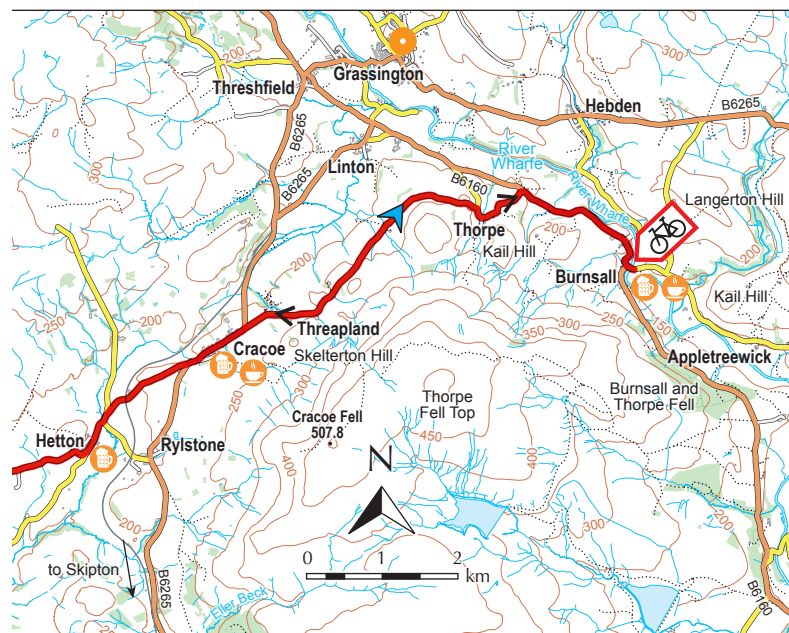
Cyclists enjoying the scenic stretch of narrow walled road between Cracoe and Burnsall





Simon's Seat is a feature of the view ahead. Take care on the descent here, as the sharp bends are unmarked and the dry-stone walls are not forgiving to cyclists who get it wrong. Turn right at a T-junction to continue the descent into the picture-postcard village of **Burnsall** and a satisfying end to the first stage of the route.

The **lovely village of Burnsall** with its five-arched bridge has long been a popular spot for day-trippers who come to paddle in the river, walk along the banks of the Wharfe and take advantage of the tearooms in the village which are frequented by Yorkshire's Olympic triathlon heroes Alistair and Johnny Brownlee. There are also two pubs with accommodation and food, a few B&Bs, and the village hall also serves as a bunkhouse.



There is camping a mile further along the route at Appletreewick, where you can stay in an on-site VW campervan or a yurt, as well as pitch your own tent.

EAST TO WEST

This section of the route is arguably even more rewarding in this direction. The hills are tackled early on and the climb from Airton to Settle is much less punishing than its opposite number. There are very few opportunities for going wrong, and this is also the shortest day section of the ride.

Take care on the extremely steep and winding descent into Settle down High Hill Lane. Test your brakes before descending.

Make sure you take the road to Hornby out of Wray (the signs are not obvious).