

# Wharfedale and Malhamdale

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## Bolton Abbey and the River Wharfe

**Distance** 11km (or 3km shorter loop)

**Time** 3 hours (or 1 hour shorter loop)

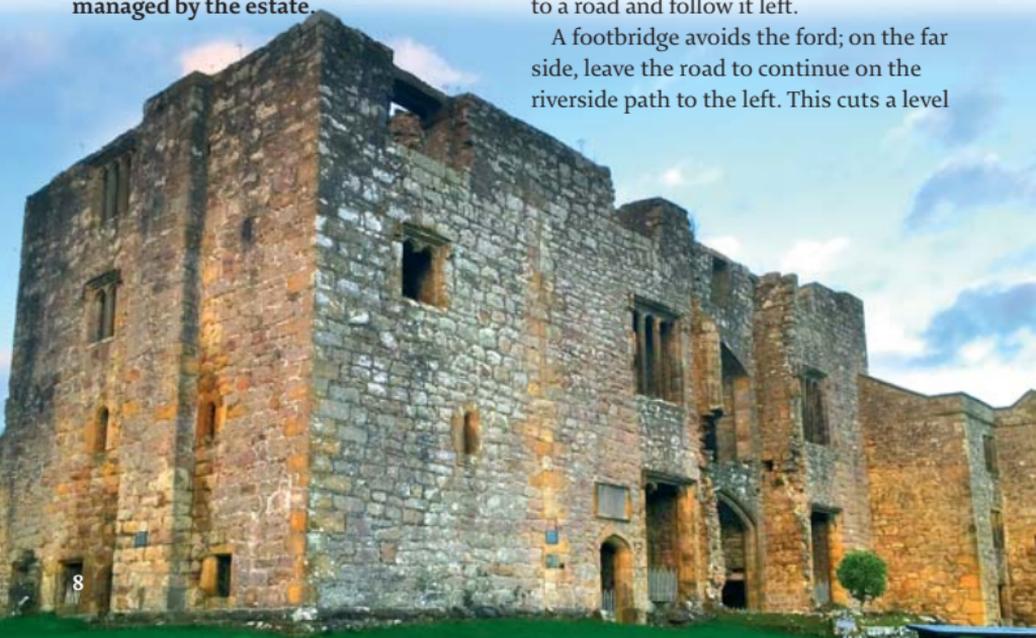
**Terrain** riverside and woodland paths

**Map** OS Explorer OL2 **Access** buses from Ilkley and Grassington and Sunday DalesBus from Ilkley and Leeds to Bolton Abbey village

Bolton Abbey is a popular destination for day visitors from West Yorkshire and the surrounding area. The ruins of the 12th-century Augustinian Priory, closed in 1539 as part of Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries, lie in a loop in the River Wharfe. The abbey has given its name to the attractive village and to the Duke of Devonshire's Yorkshire seat. The grounds are still owned and managed by the estate.

Leaving the car park in Bolton Abbey, turn left onto the B6160 to follow this for a short way to the village green. On the right-hand side of the road, go through the gap in the wall just to the left of the Tea Cottage. On the far side, a gate opens out to a magnificent panorama of the abbey ruins with the River Wharfe beyond. Follow the path down towards the river, walking through an area that was once used by medieval monks for fish ponds. Cross the river on the bridge. Bear left on the far side, following the rising path through woodland and away from the riverbank. A well-engineered route climbs along the top of the bank through beech woodland, with fantastic views across the river and around the abbey ruins. Descend to a road and follow it left.

A footbridge avoids the ford; on the far side, leave the road to continue on the riverside path to the left. This cuts a level

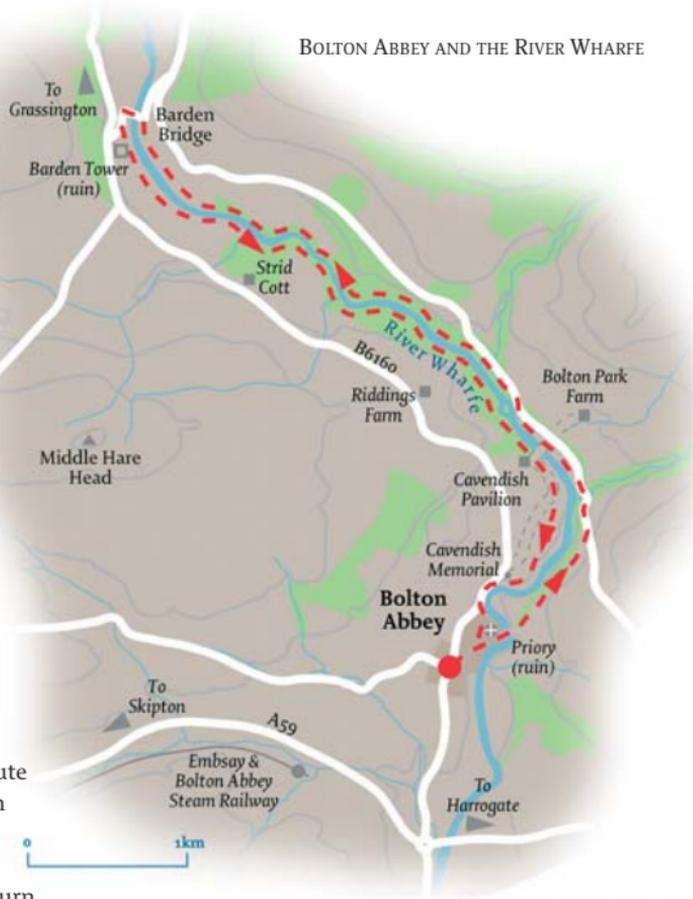


course across waterside meadows to reach a wooden bridge opposite Cavendish Pavilion. (For a shortcut, you can cross the bridge to the Pavilion, which includes a café and extensive gift shop.)

To reach Barden Bridge, do not cross but carry on along the riverside path, passing through woodland and briefly joining the road before continuing on a permissive waterside route for another 3.5km. Reach the road and cross the Wharfe on Barden

Bridge. On the far side, turn left along a permissive path to follow the opposite bank downstream. The path goes through the Strid, where the river has forced a narrow cutting through the rock and descends a sequence of rapids. In just under 4km reach Cavendish Pavilion.

From here, follow the riverbank south, through the parking area. At the end of this, take the path heading uphill towards the Cavendish Memorial on the skyline. The elaborate drinking fountain honours Lord Frederick Cavendish who was murdered in Dublin's Phoenix Park in 1882 on his first day of duty as Chief



Secretary for Ireland. His assassins were members of the Irish National Invincibles, a radical splinter group of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a secret oath-bound organisation dedicated to Irish independence from the United Kingdom. It is an excellent viewpoint over the loop in the river and the abbey.

Continue alongside the road for about 250m, before bearing left along a driveway towards the priory. Pass the ruin, part of which is still used as the parish church. Keep ahead on the driveway to return to the road and Bolton Abbey village.