

Locations for Floods

A selection gathered from various sources.
Locations in this notes are sometimes approximate.

July 20 2014: Great Whernside massive cloudburst observed by local residents and after-effects recorded by the writer and others. See images and notes on the website.

c **1974 Dry Valley, Yarnbury**: a major flood down tore down the dam that carried Dukes New Road across the dry valley. Embankment repaired by B B Kirk in 1976 to restore access to the moor for the construction of an ethylene pipeline across the moor (pers comm Mike Gill). The scene was visited by Fred Austin and the writer a week or so later but no photographs were taken.

June 1967 Mossdale: Major flood at caused six fatalities on Mossdale Caverns.

1826 Valley of Desolation: devastating flood at – see Story Board at location

1600 –Wharfedale: a great flood that nearly destroyed Kettlewell and Buckden

1954 or 1955 Summer, Grassington Moor when Tom and Fred Austins' dig at Bycliffe was filled in by cloudburst

1970s about, Kisdon Force: a massive flood pulse came down and nearly caught picnic parties on river bank

1979, 1980, 1982 Skipton – 1979 definitely a cloudburst type with thunderstorm rolling around Skipton Moor and Embsay Moor. Great cataracts seen pouring off Skipton Moor bringing down large quantities of rubble that filled many gardens further up Shortbank Road. Seen and photographed by SEW

From Speight H., 1892. "The Craven and North-West Yorkshire Highlands" .

p371:... **1881 Summer. Long Preston – Rathmell Long Preston Beck** where a great flood "swept with terrific fury down from adjoining moors", "the Old Mill Bridge where an ancient corn mill stood.. when it was almost entirely demolished", "an old cotton mill was close by and this also was washed away".

p381: "...there was also another cotton mill.... which was a large three-storey building worked by a man called Armisted... all three building were washed away". .

p 390: 1881 July. **Horton in Ribblesdale**. "during a terrific thunderstorm....In less than an hour, indeed, the waters of the Ribble rose from the condition of a mere 'pebbly brook' to a mighty raging flood more than 20 yards wide and 20 feet deep. ... farmers in the fields ran for their lives believing there was a return of Noah's Deluge; the fields and low lying lands quickly filled, and great waves were seen to leap down the dark lightning-lit face of Penyghent, as if from a reservoir in the clouds, leaving the mountain shattered and scored as we see it today".

p 420: At **Lea Gate, Dentdale**: a steep torrent called Monkey Beck, probably Montey Beck, from *mont* (a mountain) and *ea* (water) has cut deep into the soft Yoredale beds below Dent Head Station, and during the frightful flood in July 1870, the water completely filled the hollow at the bottom to such a depth, that a lad, in attempting to save himself by swimming across, was carried away and drowned.

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"on the morning of August 25th, 1891, the writer witnessed what was, without doubt, one of the biggest floods of the century... Accustomed as one generally is to walking up the almost dry bed of **Flintergill**, the transformation in that umbrageous and precipitous ravine was, indeed, marvelous. It was filled from bank to bank with deep,

tawny foam, and the hurrying rocks rolling and smashing against each other, sounded like subdued thunder, while the tall, dark pines and overhanging foliage added not a little to the grandeur and impressiveness of the spectacle. The bridge at the foot of the gill was inadequate to discharge beneath it the whole of this great torrent, which, washing over the road, filled it as far as **Dent Bridge** to a depth of at least three feet. The water, likewise, rose to within two or three feet of the field-gate below Low Hall, and the **Holme**, too, was under water, a circumstance never known to have occurred before. In several places at the west end of the village, the macadam in the road burst and sent up spouts of water a foot in height, and the same curious phenomenon was observed on the top of a low hill, in a grass field close by, doubtless caused by underground streams collapsing against the hard rock. Water, indeed, came out of places not known before. The cave in **High Gill** was choked from floor to roof, and from its mouth there poured a boiling flood of amber-coloured foam, which, uniting with the swollen torrent in the gill, created such a current of air that it was impossible to breathe while standing within twenty yards of the fork of the waterfall.

As it happened to be Market Day in **Dent**, the market, of course, could not be held, and there were no arrivals. But the postman with the mails from **Sedbergh** fortunately arrived in Dent before the flood was at its height.

In the afternoon, as it shewed signs of clearing, I set out for and managed to reach Sedbergh (a walk of 6 miles), although, the venture as it proved, would have been much better postponed. The rain again fell in torrents,* smoking mists hugged the mountain summits, and a thousand white rills descended from them and plunged down the long seething slopes. Large rocks were rolled into the road, fences were washed away, and rushing spouts tumbled at rapid intervals through gaps they had made in the walls by the road side. Opposite **Gate House** the valley was one wide lake, and the garden before the house had the appearance of a miniature reservoir, caused by the overflowing of a fountain, which fell in a broad cascade over the garden wall bounding the highway.

On mounting the road, which was like ascending a waterfall, I stumbled against a drowned calf, and a little further on encountered a deserted cart, with broken shafts, which I was told belonged to a man who had attempted to reach Dent from Sedbergh with goods for the market, but after one or two narrow escapes and a final breakdown, he had been obliged to give up the journey.

At one part of the way, and for a distance of several hundred yards, where the dale was narrowest, a peculiar sulphureous smell pervaded the atmosphere, which I was unable satisfactorily to account for. The rain storm was unaccompanied by either thunder or lightning, but the disturbed electrical condition in the atmosphere had, doubtless, something to do with producing such an odour. The clash of rocks, combined with the rush of waters down the mountains, was sublime, and many were the very striking scenes witnessed on this adventurous trip. But the most remarkable spectacle along the whole route was undoubtedly the waterfall in **Brackengill**, on the opposite side of the valley. Never, perhaps, has mortal eye beheld a more sublime water scene in the county of broad acres! The summit of the towering gill was capped with blooming heather, while close above the soft leaden-grey cloudy loomed mistily. An immense volume of water, that appeared to come out of the clouds, descended in one long, continuous foam white cataract, many yards in width, and visible through its whole descent of more than 500 feet down the lofty umbrageous glen. I could not help being struck by the resemblance which it bore to the famous Giesabach Falls, on Lake Brienz, which are considered by many as the finest falls in Switzerland, yet this even sank by comparison with the majestic, though exceptional, scene in **Dentdale**.

The damage done in the dale was very great, and when the water had subsided, the fields in the valley bottom were filled with a thick deposit of sand, gravel, and stones. On **Rise Hill**, north-east from Hall Bank, the ground was found to have been

curiously ploughed up for a long distance, and a large hole was made in the earth, probably caused by a waterspout. (*At Brigg Flatts, Mr. Handley's rain gauge registered 5.30 inches in 30 hours.*)

This grand dale has been the scene of many another huge flood, destructive alike to life and property. The most awful within living memory was that which occurred on the **9th of July, 1870**, during the construction of the **Dent Head** railway. No one ever remembers seeing the rain fall more densely and heavily, or the river rise and fall more quickly. The men were working on the line, when a violent and terrific thunderstorm broke out; then, all at once, like the crashing of a hundred guns, an immense waterspout burst on the heights between **Blea Moor** and **Whernside**, and the torrent rolling furiously down, converted the gorge into a great river, and in a few minutes **Blea Moor Tunnel** was choked to the roof! One workman, suddenly taken by the in-rushing tide, was lifted off his feet and drowned; another in the tunnel instantly jumped on to a wagon, and raising his head in a cavity in the roof, kept it there until the water had somewhat subsided; he then pluckily swam out and was saved. Some others had narrow escapes, too.

The scene at the precipitous head of the dale was, as may be imagined, appalling; the descending volume spreading over the long declivity and carrying down, like wickets, ponderous beams of wood, and other material from the railway works. As the stream fell from an altitude of about 1100 feet at **Dent Head** to about 450 feet opposite **Dent village**,—a distance of 4 miles,—the very rapid current, with its cargo of wreck, could be easily distinguished amid the wide expanse of water in the valley bottom. Walls and bridges were swept away, trees uprooted, and otherwise considerable damage was done.

July 29, 2015 Ingleton and Chapel-le-Dale: cloudburst brought floodwaters out of White Scar Cave and created difficulties on the roads, including impeding travel for CRO to an incident at Ribbleshead.