

Whernside (Ribblehead Circular)		
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## Whernside (Ribblehead Circular)

**Start & Finish:** Ribblesdale Station

Ribblesdale Station, map reference SD 765 789, is 336 km northwest of Charing Cross, 85 km southeast of Carlisle, 70 km northwest of Leeds, 315m above sea level and in **North Yorkshire**.

**Length:** 20.7 km (12.9 mi).

**Cumulative ascent/descent:** 592m. For a shorter walk, see below **Walk Options**.

**Toughness:** 6 out of 10

**Time:** 5 ¼ hours walking time.

**Transport:** Ribblesdale is a station on the Leeds - Settle - Carlisle Line, with nine trains per day Mon-Sat and five on Sundays. Journey time to Ribblesdale is 84 minutes from Carlisle, 16 from Settle and 77 from Leeds.

**Saturday Walkers' Club:** The walk is doable as a daywalk from London with a very early start and late finish.

**OS Landranger Map:** 98 (Wensleydale & Upper Wharfedale)

**OS Explorer Map:** OL2 (Yorkshire Dales - Southern & Western Areas)

**Harvey British Mountain Map:** Yorkshire Dales

**Harvey Superwalker XT25 Map:** Yorkshire Dales - South West

### Walk Notes:

An easy route up to the highest point in the Yorkshire Dales, the summit of Whernside. Not as dramatically and iconically shaped as the other two of the Three Peaks, Ingleborough and Pen-y-ghent, and without the dramatic limestone features that Ingleborough woos with, Whernside nevertheless enchants with the initial ascent up the lonely Little Dale and then 'around the back of the hill' along mainly good grassy tracks with fascinating views into Dentdale and to the Artengill Railway Viaduct, as well as across to the mountains further north, including Baugh Fell, Great Knoutberry Hill and with peeks to Mallerstang and into the Upper Eden Valley.

You ascend the slope dominated by mosses, heather and cotton grass, to the plateau with its many tarns and eventually follow an elevated scarp side path to the summit. The southerly tops of the Dales and Upper Ribblesdale are in view from here, as are the Howgill Fells and a glimpse of Morecambe Bay to the west. The following steep descent benefits from being on the Three Peaks Route as it follows an engineered path, but you then leave the Three Peaks Route and follow a quiet loop along farm tracks under Whernside's westerly nose and down to Chapel-le-Dale. Here and along the route back to Ribblesdale, many features typical of limestone country are passed: limestone pavement, shake holes and sink holes, pot holes, dry streambeds and rivers, seasonal waterways. The final stretch leads under the iconic Ribblesdale Railway Viaduct.

Shortcuts are described, but one of the main ones follows the busy Yorkshire Three Peaks route uphill.

## Walk Options:

**Follow the Yorkshire Three Peaks route** (more direct but very busy and considerably steeper) up to Whenside's plateau along an engineered path rather than the scenic and quiet around-the-back route. Cut 3.2 km and 50m ascent.

**Cut the westerly loop through Chapel-le-Dale** and past a couple of pot holes. Cut 4.2 km and 90m ascent.

**An Alternative near the end of the Chapel-le-Dale loop** diverts around the crossing of the Winterscales Beck, which – although usually dry at the crossing point – can become too dangerous to cross when in spate.

**From Chapel-le-Dale**, follow the road all the way to the train station: cut 1.3 km.

## Lunch: Picnic

**Tea** (details last updated 04/06/2024)

**The Old Hill Inn** Low Sleights Road, Chapel-le-Dale, Ingleton, North Yorkshire, LA6 3AR (015242 41256, <https://oldhillinningleton.co.uk/>). The Old Hill Inn is located 120m off route, 4.3 km from the end of the walk.

**Philpin Barn Snack Bar** Philpin Farm, Chapel-le-Dale, Ingleton, North Yorkshire, LA6 3FH (015242 41846, <https://philpinfarm.co.uk/index.html>). Philpin Farm is located 3.9 km from the end of the walk. The Snack Bar is open summer weekends only (Sat 08.30-16.00, Sun 11.00-15.00), but vending machines offering drinks and snacks are accessible at all times.

**Station Inn - Ribbleshead** Low Sleights Road, Carnforth, North Yorkshire, LA6 3AS (015242 41274, <https://www.thestationinnribbleshead.com/>). The Station Inn is located 200m from the end of the walk.

Open all day every day. Food served daily to 21.00.

**Ribbleshead Station Visitor Centre and Tea Room** Low Sleights Road, Carnforth, North Yorkshire, LA6 3AS. The Tea Room is located on the Leeds bound platform. Open daily April-October, 10.15-15.15.

## Northern Glossary

beck: *stream, brook*; brig(g): *bridge*; -by: *habitation*; cam: *bank, slope, ridge*; carr: *marshy woodland or shrubland*; clough: *narrow valley, cleft in a hillside, ravine, glen, gorge, cliff, rocky precipice*; crag: *steep rugged mass of rock projecting upward or outward*; currick: *cairn, pile of stones, often locations used to keep watch for Scottish raiders*; dale: *valley*; -ey: *island, dry area in a marshy place*; fell: *hill, mountain slope (especially rough moorland)*; firth/frith: *long, narrow inlet of the sea or estuary*; force/foss: *waterfall, rapids*; frith: *area of peace, protection, safety, security*; garth: *small grass enclosure adjacent to a house*; gate: *way, street*; gill/ghyll: *small narrow valley or ravine*; hagg: *part of an area of woodland, especially on a sloping bank*; holm(e): *island, inland promontory, raised ground in marsh, river-meadow*; how(e): *barrow, small hill*; hush: *(Roman era) mine on steep hillside, using dammed up water to wash away topsoil and boulders, revealing the underlying lead or ore veins*; ing(s): *meadow(s), especially water meadow near a river*; keld/kell: *spring or well*; kirk: *church*; laithe/leeath: *barn, agricultural building*; lang: *long*; ling: *heather*; lonning/lonnin': *lane or track, something less than a road, more rural than a street, usually short*; mell: *sand dunes*; mire: *bog*; moss: *bog, marsh*; ness: *headland, promontory*; nick: *shallow notch, cut or indentation on an edge or a surface*; pike: *spike, sharp point, peak*; rake: *slant, incline*; rigg: *ridge*; scar/scaur: *cliff, rocky outcrop with a steep face*; seat/set(t)/side: *summer pasture or dwelling place*; seaves: *rushes*; shaw: *hurdle, gate*; sike/syke/sitch: *small stream or gully, gutter*; stang: *pole, shaft, stake, wooden bar*; stoop/stowp/stoup: *post, gatepost, distance marker (milestone), standing stone*; -sty: *ascent, ascending lane or path, narrow pathway or course*; tarn: *lake or pond (especially in an upland location)*; thorp(e)/t(h)rop: *village or small settlement*; thwait(e): *village or small settlement*; toft(s): *small farmstead with enclosed land, later applied to a village or small settlement*; wath: *ford*; whinny: *gorse, furze, thorny vegetation*; -wich/wick: *village or settlement*.

## Notes

### Settle – Carlisle Railway

The Settle – Carlisle line is a 117 km-long (73 mi) railway line in northern England. The route crosses the remote, scenic regions of the Yorkshire Dales and the North Pennines, running between Settle Junction on the Leeds–Morecambe line and Carlisle, near the English-Scottish borders. It was constructed in the 1870s and has several notable tunnels and viaducts. The line was built by the then Midland Railway to be able to run trains to Scotland, as the then London & North Western blocked access to a short bit of track linking Midland's network to the existing line to the North. The works needed over 6,000 navvies, who worked in remote locations, enduring harsh weather conditions. Large camps were established to house the navvies, most of them Irish, with many becoming complete townships with post offices and schools. They were named Inkerman, Sebastopol and Jericho. The remains of one camp – Batty Green – where 2,300 navvies lived and worked, can be seen near Ribbleshead.

In the 1980s, British Rail planned to close the line. This prompted a campaign to save it, led by the Friends of the Settle–Carlisle Line (FoSCL). The campaign uncovered evidence that BR had mounted a dirty tricks campaign, by exaggerating the cost of repairs and diverting traffic away from the line in order to justify its closure plans, a process referred to as 'closure by stealth'. In 1989, the UK government announced the line would be saved from closure. Since then, passenger numbers have grown steadily from less than 93,000 in 1983 to 1.2 million in 2012. Eight formerly closed stations have been reopened and several quarries have been reconnected to the line and it remains one of the most popular railway routes in the UK for charter trains and specials. The railway's summit at 356m is at Aisgill, just north of Garsdale Station, and is the highest point reached by main-line trains in England. <https://settle-carlisle.co.uk/> <https://www.foscl.org.uk/>

Four of the railway properties are available as holiday lets:

<https://settlecarlisletrust.org.uk/stay-at-a-station/> <http://www.dentstation.co.uk/>

### Yorkshire Dales National Park

The Yorkshire Dales National Park is a 2,178 km<sup>2</sup> (841 sq mi) national park covering most of the Yorkshire Dales (some to the south and east of the national park are located in the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Most of the park is in North Yorkshire, with a sizeable area in Cumbria and a small part in Lancashire. The park was designated in 1954 being then entirely within Yorkshire, and extended in 2016 westwards into Lancashire and Cumbria - encompassing much of the area between the old boundaries of the park and the M6. Over 95% of the land in the park is in private ownership and there are over 1,000 farms in the park, as well as some 23,500 residents (as of 2017). A 2018 report estimated that the Park attracted over four million visitors per year. In 2020, the park was named as an International Dark Sky Reserve.

<https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/>

### Ribbleshead Viaduct

The Ribbleshead Viaduct or Batty Moss Viaduct carries the Settle–Carlisle railway across Batty Moss in the Ribbles Valley at Ribbleshead. Built by the Midland Railway between 1869 and 1874, it is a Grade II\* listed structure, as well as being the longest, third tallest and the most impressive structure on the Settle-Carlisle line.

Hundreds of railway builders ("navvies") lost their lives building the line, from a combination of accidents, fights, and smallpox outbreaks. The Settle to Carlisle line was the last main railway in Britain to be constructed primarily with manual labour.

In particular, building the Ribbleshead viaduct, with its 24 massive stone arches 32 metres above the moor, caused such loss of life (more than 100 out of a workforce of up to 2,300 at any one point) that the railway paid for an expansion of the local graveyard. Memorials along the line, especially those at St Mary's Church, Outhgill and St Leonards' Church, Chapel-le-Dale commemorate the lives of those who died building the line. The land underneath and around the viaduct is a scheduled ancient monument as the remains of the construction camp and navy settlements (Batty Wife Hole, Sebastopol, and Belgravia) are located there.

### Yorkshire Three Peaks (Wharfedale, Ingleborough, Pen-y-ghent)

The mountains of Wharfedale (736m), Ingleborough (723m) and Pen-y-ghent (694m) are collectively known as the Three Peaks. The peaks, which form part of the Pennine range, encircle the head of the valley of the River Ribbles in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Wharfedale is nowadays partially in Cumbria, including its summit trig point, but the whole mountain is within the historic county of Yorkshire.

Geologically, the Three Peaks are carved from an almost flat-lying succession of sedimentary strata of Carboniferous age. The lower slopes of each of the fells are formed from massive limestones while the upper slopes are formed from alternating bands of limestone and mudstone grading up into sandstone. Differential weathering and erosion of the various bands has given Ingleborough and Pen-y-ghent a distinctive, stepped appearance. The summits are capped by Grassington Grit, a variety of Millstone Grit.

Considerable areas of the flanks of each of the fells are covered by peat whilst other areas are blanketed by glacial till notably across the southern and eastern slopes of Pen-y-ghent.

Fringing Ingleborough on each side however are impressive areas of limestone pavement, while there are extensive networks of caves within the limestone strata.

### Shake Holes and Swallow Holes

Shake holes (or sinkholes or dolines) are a depression or hole in the ground caused by some form of collapse of the surface layer. Some are caused by karst processes, for example, the chemical dissolution of carbonate rocks or suffusion processes. They tend to occur in karst landscapes, which can have up to thousands of sinkholes within a small area, giving the landscape a pock-marked appearance. These sinkholes can drain all the water, so that there are only subterranean rivers in these areas.

### Dales High Way

The Dales High Way is a waymarked 144 km (90 mi) Long-Distance Path from Saltaire in West Yorkshire to Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria, roughly parallel to the line of the Settle and Carlisle Railway. The path was conceived as a high-level alternative to the established Dales Way.

### A Pennine Journey

The Pennine Journey is a 391 km (243 mi) waymarked circular Long-Distance Path from Settle up through North Yorkshire, Durham, Northumberland and over to Cumbria and back to Settle. It was developed by David Pitt of the Wainwright Society and is a recreation of a solitary walk Alfred Wainwright made in 1938 through the Pennines, but adapted for today's roads and rights-of-way, i.e.: taking a route that Wainwright might have chosen today. The route traverses the Yorkshire Dales and Durham moorlands to follow Hadrian's Wall for a while and heading back south along the western Pennines, up the Eden Valley and along the Howgill Fells.

<https://penninejourney.org/>

### Limestone Pavement

A limestone pavement is a natural karst landform consisting of a flat, incised surface of exposed limestone that resembles an artificial pavement. The term is mainly used in the UK and Ireland, but similar landforms exist in other parts of the world and are known as alvars.

Conditions for limestone pavements are created when an advancing glacier scrapes away the topsoil and exposes horizontally bedded limestone, with subsequent glacial retreat leaving behind a flat, bare surface. Limestone is slightly soluble in water and especially in acidic rain, so corrosive drainage along joints and cracks in the limestone can produce slabs called *clints* isolated by up to several metres deep fissures called *grykes* or *grykes* (terms derived from a northern English dialect).

If the grykes are fairly straight and the clints are uniform in size, the resemblance to man-made paving stones is striking, but they are not necessarily so regular. Limestone pavements that develop beneath a mantle of topsoil usually exhibit more rounded forms.

Limestone pavement, with its deep fissures and patterned with swirling hollows and runnels sculpted by thousands of years of rainwater, forms an unlikely wildlife habitat. It may contain unusual combinations of plants, with woodland and wood-edge species well-represented in the grykes. The clints support plants of rocky habitats or are often unvegetated. In the absence of grazing, scrub may develop; in oceanic areas scrub over limestone pavement is important for epiphytes. All these habitat niches support a range of invertebrates.

### St. Leonard's, Chapel-le-Dale

St. Leonard's church is a Grade II-listed building, built in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century with some 18<sup>th</sup> century additions. It sits in a small woodland area in the hamlet of Chapel-le-Dale, about 3 km outside of Ingleton, just off the B6255. The church is built using local limestone, giving it its grey colour.

The church began life as a chapel of ease for isolated farming folk and it then served as a graveyard for the Settle to Carlisle railway workers and their families who lived in a nearby shanty town, while building the Ribbleshead Viaduct and nearby Blea Moor tunnel. A white marble memorial to those workers is placed on the West wall of the nave inside the church.

## WALK DIRECTIONS

Alight from the train at **Ribblehead Station**, a stop on the **Settle – Carlisle Railway** in the **Yorkshire Dales National Park**. The exit from the station is from the Leeds bound platform 1. **If arriving on the Carlisle bound platform 2**, use the barrow crossing at the front of the platform to get across to platform 1 (wait for the train to have left first).

You pass the **Ribblehead Station Visitor Centre and Tea Room** and **leave the station through a white gate** on platform 1 to the left of the station building into a gravel car park area and *turn left* downhill for 200m to **Low Sleights Road**, with views to the **Ribblehead Viaduct** ahead. Cross the road to **The Station Inn – Ribblehead** and *turn right* in front of the Inn. In 50m go through a wooden gate to the left of a cattle grid and in 25m *turn left* along a signposted bridleway ('Gunnerfleet Farm  $\frac{3}{4}$  ml') along a car wide gravel track. You have **entered Access Land**. **Whernside** rises behind the viaduct. [Whernside is derived from *cweorn* 'quern' or 'millstone' and *sīde* 'hillside', i.e. "hillside where millstones are found".]

In 230m a path joins from the right behind from a roadside car park and in 170m you ignore a right forking grass track, a former tramway used during the works to build the viaduct and the Blea Moor Tunnel a little up the line. In 90m, by an info panel on a low boulder on the right ('**Ribblehead Locomotive Works and Brickworks**'), **[!]** you *fork right* off the car wide track (which curves to the left) along a gravel path, signed 'Whernside 4  $\frac{1}{2}$  ml' and with a **Yorkshire Three Peaks** marker on the sign. In 90m a stream on the left (can be dry) enters a **swallow hole** (or sink hole) and in 100m you go up an engineered flagged path and at the top of the rise continue along a gravel path, with the railway line to the left above. In 220m ignore an underpass on the left and rise up with the path to and through the level of the tracks and in 90m go through a wooden gate by an apparent boundary stone on the right. There are **good views behind**, back to the viaduct.

In 75m you descend gently back to track level. In 300m cross the **Foul Gutter** (a stream) on the track and in 30m ignore a signposted left turning bridleway under the railway ('Winterscales') and continue in the same direction ('Yorkshire Three Peaks – Dent'). The **Dales High Way** (DHW) has joined from the left. In 250m you pass the **Blea Moor Signal Box** and in another 40m some associated buildings. In 100m ford a stream (can be dry) with an avoidance path to the right and in 110m you come to the **Hare Gill**, follow a parallel grass path to its right for 30m and then cross it with large boulders serving as stepping stones. In 400m, at the top of a small rise (**Blue Clay Ridge** as per the OS map), you can see a river to the left, the **Winterscales Beck**, formed here by the confluence of **Force Gill** down from the flanks of Whernside and **Little Dale Beck**, flowing down the valley ahead. A footbridge is visible ahead crossing the Little Dale Beck.

The railway line now runs in a cutting on the left, with some trees growing out of it, and you can guess where the **Blea Moor Tunnel Entrance** is at the end of the cutting ahead. In 100m ford another stream with small rocks as stepping stones (these can be submerged) and in 20m **[!]** *fork left* downhill towards the footbridge, ignoring the main path forking right and up the dale. In 30m cross a small stream and in 50m **ford the Little Dale Beck** (or go over the two-railed footbridge somewhat to the right if the water level is too high). Up ahead you can see some **spoil heaps**, they are the remnants of the build of the tunnel and an airshaft. In 150m *turn left* with the track, admiring some cascades in the **Force Gill**, which flows in an **aqueduct over the railway line**. You cross the line to the right of the gill on a bridge, with the tunnel entrance visible to the right some 220m away.

Go through a wooden gate and in 70m pass a two-way signpost and continue in the same direction 'BW Dent Dale 4 ml', ignoring the path to the right 'FP Dent Head 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  ml'. You

rise up towards a wall, in 30m along a flagged path. At the top of the steps, you get glimpses of some **waterfalls on the Force Gill** on the left and go through a wooden gate into the open hillside and follow a good gravel path further uphill (**Slack Hill** as per the OS map). The waterfalls are still on the left and – after a stepped section – the spoil heaps are visible again along the course of the tunnel (SWC Walk Great Knoutberry Hill (Dent to Ribbleshead) follows that line). In 60m you can see the path ahead, going straight up to an apparent brow, and in 40m can see further cascades and smaller falls on the Force Gill ahead to the half left. In 570m the signposted Yorkshire Three Peaks route turns left off the straight path to a nearby double wooden kissing gate.

### Here you have a choice:

**For a Shortcut**, straight up the ridge along the busy Three Peaks route, *turn left* through the gate ('Yorkshire Three Peaks – Whernside 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  ml'), and follow the engineered path for 1.7 km to the ridge, en route for a while up along the drystone wall visible ahead. On the ridge, in the **Knoutberry Hill** part of Whernside, you *turn left* along a fence shadowing the escarpment. In 200m the Main Walk joins from the right over a stile, with the **A Pennine Journey** (APJ) Long-Distance Path. Pick up the directions below at the asterisk \*).

**For the Main Walk**, continue in the same direction along the rising straight path ('Deepdale 5  $\frac{3}{4}$  ml'). This next stretch is less well engineered and a stream can at times take it over. In 340m go through a drystone wall gap and a subsequent wooden field gate, at 510m above sea level. The Three Peaks route is visible a few hundred metres away to the left, there hugging the wall. **You have entered Cumbria**. The valley to the right is the upper reaches of Little Dale, and the hill ahead is **Baugh Fell** (SWC Walk Baugh Fell (Garsdale Circular), with **Wold Fell and Great Knoutberry Hill** to its right. In 180m the terrain levels out, still with some higher ground to the left though, and in 150m you ford or jump the **Rough Gill** stream. The **Vale of Eden** is visible ahead in the distance. The hill to the right, 9 km away, on 85° is **Dodd Fell**. The grassy path gently rises for 130m and in 150m it descends through a shallow dip and in 40m back out of it.

**Rise Hill** is now in view ahead beyond **Dentdale**, with its top on the left of its ridge (**Aye Gill Pike** at 556m above sea level, i.e. of similar height), with **Baugh Fell** rising beyond it (to 678m above sea level), and with **Garsdale** separating the two. In 330m you pass an area of **springs** on the right in the tussocky grass (an infant stream) and follow the pleasant grass path, with some peaty ground away to the left. A ruined building can be seen ahead a little to the right, you will soon pass it. In 160m you pass **another spring** away to the left, with a fully formed stream emerging from it (the main constituent of the **Duncan Sike**) and curve to the right with the path and stream. In 190m a plank bridge crosses the sike on the right, by some **grouse butts** beyond, and in 30m – close to the ruined shooting lodge or farm building – you pass the first of two posts with yellow arrows. *Turn left* here with the marker posts, passing a large **shake hole** on the left.

You follow the good grassy track (the **Craven Way** as per the OS map) through the **Great Wold** in a northerly direction, with parts of **Dentdale** coming into view on the right below, as well as the railway line skirting the flank of Great Knoutberry Hill en route to **Dent Station**, with the **Arten Gill Viaduct** prominent. There is some rougher ground to the left and a look at the map reveals **sinkholes and springs** in equal measure all along the hill flank. The track curves to the left and eventually a drystone wall comes into view, running up the hill to the left from where it meets the track. In 200m from the last sinkhole (on the left of the track) and spring (to the right of the track) combination, you reach the wall corner at the **Boot of the Wold** and *turn left* uphill along the wall with the **A Pennine Journey** (APJ) Long-Distance Path, leaving the DHW. You are at 493m above sea level.

You are separated from the wall by a wire fence and walk up the mostly good grass track, not without some areas of standing water though or short peaty sections. In 450m you pass the upper corner of the wall, at 548m above sea level, and follow a distinct path uphill in a similar direction. In 370m the gradient eases at about 600m above sea level, and you can see a large cairn and a storm shelter away on the right (both on the OS map). In 90m pass a small pile of stones on the left and in 250m cross a small stream by a small tarn on the right and a large cairn visible beyond. In 100m you pass the first of the larger **Whernside Tarns** and pass it to the left on (briefly) a good gravel path. The top of Whernside, with its steep scarp on the left, is visible ahead. At the far end of the tarn, the path meanders a little but then steadies out on 170° until in 240m you pass a smaller tarn on its left (at 636m above sea level), with **Pen-y-ghent** now in view to the left ahead. In 80m, at the far end of this tarn, *veer to the right* with the path, staying to the left of the top of the ridge and way to the right of the dropping ground.

You pass a smaller tarn away to the right in 100m and in 150m cross a boggy stream down from the right. Continue on a bearing of 195° across the slightly boggier plateau of **Knoutberry Hill**. [Knoutberry is vernacular for cloudberry.] In 70m, at about 645m above sea level, you pass a low pile of stones and continue slightly to the left of the highest ground gently uphill. Away to the left, you can see a fence coming up the hill flank and turning to run along some wall remnants parallel to the path. You are now following the path towards the top-left corner of this enclosed part of the hill, where the fence on the left meets a wall across the plateau (**in low clouds**, the fence and the walls may not be evident until late), en route veering to the left with the path. Close to the wall, you *turn left* over a stile in a fence line and *turn right* onto a gravel path, now back in **North Yorkshire**. The path has been running unseen along the fence for a while and it carries the Yorkshire Three Peaks Route, i.e. the **Shortcut** of this walk.

\*) You are at 680m above sea level and continue uphill with the steep scarp of **Whernside** on the left, providing for glorious views into Little Dale and to the Ribbleshead Viaduct (weather permitting). The path has some flagstone sections and in other stretches it is sandy, stony or bouldery and it rises gently for 800m to the trigpoint and a couple of storm shelters either side of the drystone wall at 736m above sea level (the **highest point in the Yorkshire Dales**), with the trig on the Cumbrian (far) side of the wall, reached through a tight squeeze stile. You continue in the same direction along a good gravel track, still with the scarp on the left and in 130m start the descent off the hill.

In 120m go through a double wooden kissing gate where the wall bears away to the right (and with it the county boundary). The track is now a bit rougher and in 200m another wall joins from the right. In good weather, on the half right (on 240°) you can see the cooling towers of the **Heysham Nuclear Plant on Morecambe Bay**. **Ingleborough** dominates the view ahead across the valley. In 500m the track briefly veers away from the wall and in another 270m, at the 600m height line, you *turn left* with the stepped path to commence the steep part of the descent and follow the engineered path for 1.4 km to the **exit from the Access Land**, a wooden gate to the left of a wooden field gate in a drystone wall at 320m above sea level, close to some farm buildings. En route you go through a wooden gate, cross a few streams and go through a last wooden gate and finally continue to a three-way signpost at a T-junction 25m away.

**Here** (by an occasional **ice cream van**) **you have a choice:**

**For a Shortcut to the Station**, *turn left* through a wooden gate to the right of a metal field gate along a public bridleway ('Winterscales 1 ¼ ml') and pick up the directions below under **Afternoon Shortcut**.

**For the Main Walk**, *turn right* along a car wide farm track ('Hill Inn 1 ¼ ml') and in 30m continue in the same direction ('Scar End 3 ½ ml'), ignoring a left turning bridleway and with that leave the Three Peaks Route. In 50m pass the first building of **Bruntskar Farm** and stay on the broad track through the farm for 170m, where you go through a metal field gate and follow the track with the brunt scar (a rockface) away to the right. In 240m go over a cattle grid to the left of a wooden field gate. In 50m you pass a little plantation up on the right and in 240m go over another cattle grid to the left of a wooden gate, level with the end of the plantation. You have five views up to the right to the ridge of the **West Fell** nose of Whernside, which still rises to 576m above sea level here. The track *bears to the right* uphill to a crossing of a stream 130m away and in another 100m, by **Ellerbeck Farm**, [!] you *turn left* with a signed permissive path through a wooden gate and then through pastures around the working farmyard, ignoring the right of way through the yard.

You re-join the gravel track in 80m and *turn left* along it, away from the farm. In 170m go over a cattle grid to the right of a wooden field gate and in 10m ford the **Ellerbeck Gill** (can be dry here), with a small waterfall away on the right. You have **re-entered Access Land** and at a signposted three-way track junction, *turn left downhill* along the beck (in an unsigned direction, but with the DHW). In 400m you pass an area of **Limestone Pavement** away to the right. In 130m you can spot a fence about 60m away to the right, this is protecting the **Pot Hole** shown on the OS map. In 50m go over a cattle grid with a wooden gate on the left, **leaving the Access Land**, and continue in the same direction between drystone walls. In 120m the track curves to the right, by a wooded strip on the left, and in 50m you pass the drive from **Gill Head Farm**.

In 60m go over a cattle grid with a metal gate to the left and in 75m pass a **metal sculpture** by Charles l'Anson on the right (it is worth reading the attached sign with a short story about it). The descent along the track down the tight valley is quite fascinating, most boulders are being covered in mosses, and also with plenty of wild garlic being present (in season). In 370m a track joins from the right from **High Scales Farm** (just after a signpost backwards for 'BW Ellerbeck 1'). You continue along tarmac and in 120m pass the **Hurtle Pot** on the left (a flooded pot hole linked to the nearby **Jingle Pot**, and down which that sculpture had been thrown; an access gate is located 20m back on the left). In 20m cross another cattle grid with a wooden field gate to the left and in 90m you reach a road T-junction in **Chapel-le-Dale**, with **St. Leonard's, Chapel-le-Dale** on the left. *Turn left* along the road to the churchyard entrance.

[A memorial plaque for the navvies that died at Ribbleshead Viaduct is located on a tombstone on the right-hand side, beyond which are the graves of those workers.]

Continue along the road and in 50m you cross a usually dry-on-the-surface section of the **Chapel Beck** (the continuation of the Winterscales Beck crossed later). You pass through a small wood (wild garlic in season) and in 70m *turn left* at a T-junction with the **B6255**. The semi-busy road rises relatively steeply for 375m before easing off. In 80m you pass the **Old School House**, followed by a bunkhouse. In 30m, **Philpin Lane** turns left, signed 'Broadrake Bunkbarn' and 'Philpin Farm Campsite 300 metres', while **The Old Hill Inn** is 120m away along the main road. *Turn left* along Philpin Lane. You are briefly reverse-walking a part of the Three Peaks Route. [**Alternatively**, you could follow the semi-busy road all the way to Ribbleshead Station: this cuts 1.3 km.]

Go over a cattle grid to the left of a wooden field gate and in 140m pass a house on the right. In 40m go over another cattle grid to the left of a wooden field gate and in 75m go through **Philpin Farm**, where in 50m you find the **Philpin Barn Snack Bar** in a barn on the left. The **Winterscales Beck** runs below to the left, but is dry-on-the-surface here at most times. In 270m you curve to the left with the road and in 20m reach a ford (only in



very wet periods) or crossing of the (usually dry) streambed just before another cattle grid. A bridgeway signpost points to the right along the streambed. **If the streambed to the right is flooded**, it is likely that the upcoming crossing of the Winterscales Beck 300m away is going to be too dangerous, as the rushing beck could easily flush you down a deep drop into a very large pot hole.

### **Here you have a choice:**

**In case of the stream being flooded**, continue in the same direction along Philpin Lane over the cattle grid and in 350m and in another 300m go over more cattle grids. In 170m *turn right* along a gravel car wide track just before another cattle grid with a wooden field gate to the right. This is not a right of way, but is signed here for the 'Broadrake Bunkbarn'. In 160m, where the track turns to the left, you *turn right* with a public bridgeway along the fence on the left. In 60m continue in the same direction where the fence turns left and in 60m *turn left* with a bridgeway signpost along a grassy track. In 60m you go through a wooden field gate in a drystone wall and in 200m reach a ford across the Winterscales Beck. On the far side follow a grass track to the right which in 250m meets a road where you *turn left*. Pick up the directions below at the double asterisk \*\*). [Should the ford here be impassible, *turn left* along the beck, in 270m jump over a stream and in 80m meet the same road on the far side of a road bridge mentioned below.]

**If the streambed is dry**, *turn right* along it. In 50m ignore a metal field gate up on the left, unless the following stretch is flooded and impassable. In 125m *turn up to the left* and through a wooden gate into a pasture and continue to its far-right corner. In 120m leave the pasture through the right of two wooden field gates and continue for 20m to a wooden gate to the left of a sheep barrier stretching across a (usually) dry river bed. This is the **Winterscales Beck** and a **detour to the right** across grassy and bouldery rough ground enables views of a large pot hole into which the beck discharges water from a resurgence a few metres below the (usually) dry surface. Continue ahead through the gate to the left of the sheep barrier and in 20m *bear right* to cross the dry river bed and continue along a clear grass path to in 70m pass to the left of a clump of trees growing out of a **shake hole** below. In 50m you pass a drystone wall corner on the right and rise to a brow in 180m. In 65m go through a wooden gate in a drystone wall and follow a path for 100m through a grassy area to a tarmac lane. *Turn left* across a cattle grid to the right of a wooden field gate. In 30m a grass track joins from the left, this is the flood diversion.

**\*\*)** In another 350m you cross the (often dry here) **Winterscales Beck** on a road bridge and in 70m *fork right* along a tarmac drive, in 20m passing a three-way signpost on the left ('Ribblehead 1 ¼ ml'). In 600m you reach a bridge on the right across the beck at a three-way tarmac lane junction.

**\*\*\*)** *Turn right* over the bridge across the beck (usually not dry here), a signposted bridgeway ('Ribblehead 4/5 ml'). You immediately get a fine view of the **Ribblehead Viaduct**, initially framed by a farm shed and a farm cottage. In 30m go over a cattle grid or through a wooden gate to the left of it and follow a concrete track through the farmyard. The track bears to the right, passing the cottage and you continue along gravel, now with full views of the viaduct. In 200m go through a metal field gate **back into Access Land**, just before the track curves to the right, and in 250m a track joins from the left. In 100m you go through one of the 24 arches of the viaduct and on the far side pass a memorial for the navvies that built it and the Blea Moor Tunnel and also various info panels.

Continue in the previous direction, ignoring a tempting right turn, and in 110m *curve to the right* with the main track by a two-way signpost, where a gravel public footpath joins from the left (the outbound route). On one of the first low boulders on the left, there is an info

panel for the **Ribblehead Locomotive Depot and Brickworks**. In 90m a grass track joins from the left behind, a former **tramway** during the building works, and in 170m you ignore a left fork towards a car park on the valley road. In 240m you reach **Low Sleights Road** and *turn up to the right* along it. In 30m go through a wooden gate to the right of a cattle grid and in 50m reach the **Station Inn – Ribblehead**. *Turn left* across the road and up along a gravel drive and in 200m reach **Ribblehead Station** with its single platform and waiting room, as well as the **Ribblehead Station Visitor Centre and Tea Room**.

Leeds bound trains depart from the near platform 1, Carlisle bound trains from the far platform 2, reached via a barrow crossing at the far end of platform 1.

### Afternoon Shortcut

The **Ribblehead Viaduct** dominates the view straight ahead as you cross a pasture along a narrow gravel path towards a farmhouse. In 180m go through a wooden gate and pass **Broadrake** and its bunkhouse (with some outdoor benches) to the right across a gravel forecourt (ignore an unsigned bridleway turning right). As you approach some barns, stay to the right of them with a sign for 'Viaduct' and continue along a gravel path through another pasture. In 140m go through a wooden gate in a drystone wall into the next field and follow a gravel path through it along a wall on the left. In 70m go through a wooden gate in a drystone wall into a larger field and follow a clear path in much the same direction along a wide grassy path, which veers to the right after a while. In 240m go through a wooden gate in a drystone wall and – having noticed the waterfall on the left (but which may well be seasonal) – *veer right* with the path towards a line of trees ahead, with a couple of farmhouses visible ahead now.

In 60m you cross a stream and then follow the line of trees, with a crag face away on the left ('The Scar' as per the OS map). In 160m go through a metal field gate and continue towards a farm ahead, with a holiday cottage up on the left. At **Ivescar Farm**, go through a couple of metal field gates and pass the farmhouse to the right. At a signpost at a track junction, **[!]** you *turn right* along a bridleway along a track, passing a barn to its right. *Turn left* immediately after the barn over a stile in a barbed wire fence to the right of a metal field gate and through a pasture. Aim for the bottom-left field corner where three drystone walls meet and in 100m go over a stone slab stile into the next field.

You follow a left-hand wall slightly uphill and at the brow, by a lone tree on the left on **Lockdiddy Hill**, continue in the same direction downhill. Go through a wooden gate and a subsequent small pasture and *turn left* through a wooden gate (ignore a right turning public footpath). *Bear right* in this moorland pasture towards some electricity poles ahead, with the viaduct directly behind. In 130m go under the wires and in 30m go over a stile in a drystone wall and follow a wall on the left towards a tarmac lane. In 90m *turn left* along the lane, with the **Winterscales Beck** on the right. In 120m you reach a bridge on the right across the beck at a three-way tarmac lane junction.

Pick up the direction in the main text at the triple asterisk **\*\*\***).