



LEFT: Pen-y-Ghent
 BELOW: The Golden Lion Hotel in Horton in Ribblesdale
 MIDDLE: Bench and plaque at the 'sit ye down' at the end of the walk
 BOTTOM: Return path towards Horton in Ribblesdale



Peak walking country

An outing up Pen-y-Ghent from Horton in Ribblesdale, with a visit to Hull Pot
 Words and photographs: Paul Heaton (Fotocraft Images)

The triangle made by Yorkshire's three peaks – Ingleborough, Wharfedale and Pen-y-Ghent – is a magnet for walkers for good reason. There are varied and interesting paths to the summits, and extensive views across the stunning Yorkshire Dales landscapes. This walk of just over six miles tackles Pen-y-Ghent from Horton in Ribblesdale, the most striking aspect of this classic Yorkshire mountain.

The walk starts from the pay and display car park in Horton in Ribblesdale. Turn right out of the car park past the Pen-y-Ghent cafe to a sweeping left hand bend in the road. The Golden Lion Hotel is on the right at this point, and St. Oswald's Church on ►



ABOVE: Summit shelter and trig point, BELOW: Looking towards Ingleborough and Whernside from Brackenbottom scar

the left. Turn left, a few yards after the church along a quiet lane. After a couple of hundred yards there is a footpath sign on the right. Follow this path across a footbridge over a stream and then turn left past the primary school.

Follow the lane which climbs steadily with trees on the left before emerging into open fields. Just before the hamlet of Brackenbottom pass through a gate on the left. A sign 'Pen-y-Ghent summit 1 3/4' points the way. A second gate about 30 yards ahead leads onto the open fellside. The path follows a dry stone wall on the left hand side after passing through this gate for just under a mile. Initially the summit of Pen-y-Ghent is hidden, but as the path climbs its imposing bulk emerges ahead.

Like many of Yorkshire's hills, Pen-y-Ghent has a hard millstone grit cap over carboniferous limestone. Softer sandstone and shale layers within the carboniferous rocks have eroded at different rates giving Pen-y-Ghent its distinctive stepped appearance.

Many three peaks' walkers climb Pen-y-Ghent this way, and the ladder stiles have been doubled to ease congestion. Cross the first of these double stiles when reached, and turn left at the second stile, which is on the ridge line.

The next section of the path is quite steep and rocky. The first part after the left turn has been improved with built stone steps. The next section is steeper and more rocky. Walkers have used ►



The Pen-y-Ghent cafe offers a clock card system to people undertaking the Yorkshire Three Peaks walk. The Three Peaks of Yorkshire Club has been established for people who complete the 24.5 mile walk within 12 hours.





Hull Pot

Information box:

Walk length: 6.3 miles

Maps: OS Explorer OL2 (Yorkshire Dales Southern and Western areas), OS Landranger 98 (Wensleydale and Upper Wharfedale)

Going: The route involves about 1,600 feet of climbing. It is on clear paths, but some sections are rocky. Strong footwear is recommended. It could be significantly cooler at the summit than at the start, so spare clothing and a waterproof should be carried.

Start and finish: National Park Authority car park on Horton in Ribblesdale main street (pay and display - £4 for over 2 hours). There is free on street parking on Station Road after the bridge over the River Ribble

Refreshments: There are two cafes and two pubs in Horton in Ribblesdale

Toilets: Located at the car park in Horton in Ribblesdale

Public transport: Horton in Ribblesdale railway station, on the Settle and Carlisle line is about a quarter of a mile from the start of the walk. The 10, 11 bus service links Clitheroe, Slaidburn, Settle and Horton in Ribblesdale

GPX file: If you would like a free gpx file of the route for this walk, for your walking GPS unit email: paul@fotocraftimages.co.uk

several different routes to cross these natural rock bands. Hands may be needed at a couple of points along here. It is estimated that up to 80,000 people ascend Pen-y-Ghent each year, so the difficulties are not severe, and the steep section is soon passed. The route then opens out to a wide rock strewn path which leads straight to the summit, with its trig point and 'S' shaped wind shelter built into the dry stone wall.

Pen-y-Ghent is the lowest of Yorkshire's three peaks, at 2,277ft (694m), but this in no way detracts from the wide ranging views. On a clear day Ingleborough is prominent to the west and Wharfedale to the north west. Pendle Hill can be seen about 20 miles away to the south. This truly is the backbone of England – streams on Pen-y-Ghent's eastern face drain into Littondale, then Wharfedale and onwards to the North Sea, while those on the western side ultimately join the River Ribble, which

flows into the Irish Sea.

After enjoying the views, and maybe some well earned refreshments, pass through a gate in the summit wall and follow a path signposted 'Pennine Way Horton in Ribblesdale'. This heads initially gently and then more steeply downhill with magnificent views over the Yorkshire Dales scenery. Pass through two gates along this path, the second with double ladder stiles, and continue to reach a crossroad of paths.

The return to Horton in Ribblesdale is on the left at this point. It is however worth making a short detour along the right hand path to visit Hull Pot. This spectacular collapsed cavern has been variously described as the largest natural hole and biggest cave entrance in England. In dry weather no water flows into the pot. When it is wet, however Hull Pot Beck forms an impressive waterfall tumbling to the bottom of the pot and disappearing underground.

Return to the crossroad of paths and follow the Pennine Way down to Horton in Ribblesdale. This part of the route is known as Horton Scar Lane and runs between dry stone walls. It is part of the network of historic packhorse routes which criss crossed the Yorkshire Dales, in this case linking Horton in Ribblesdale with Littondale. Turn right where the Pennine Way meets the main road. Alternatively, cross the road at this point to enter part of a meadow which has been set aside as a 'Sit ye Down' with benches. This provides a pleasant spot to relax, recall the delights of the walk, and maybe even contemplate returning to the area to tackle the other summits making up the three peaks, or even, if ambition runs so far, the complete Yorkshire Three Peaks marathon. ■