

THE WALK

Beacon Fell Country Park is a well known, popular beauty spot to the north east of Preston. Positioned between pastoral farmland and the wild moorland of the Forest of Bowland, its 75 hectares combine a variety of habitats – woodland, grassland and heathland. This route crosses the highest part of the fell and after reaching the remote hamlet of Bleasdale returns alongside the heavily wooded river Brock, which in high autumn is aflame with colour.

Start: Beacon Fell Visitor Centre.

From the Visitor Centre to Bleasdale

3k 2m: With the centre on your left, turn right along a well laid trail. At next junction of paths turn left and soon you reach open moorland and the trig point. After admiring the views keep ahead on a good path that drops towards woodland. When it joins a wide track turn left. On reaching a wooden sculpture, turn right.

The track leads down through densely planted conifers to the fell road. Cross and take footpath diagonally opposite. After a stile the path reaches a junction of paths shown by a waymarked post. Turn right and walking along a grassy track arrive at a stile next to wooden gate before a farm. After crossing it turn left and walk down to the lane. Turn right and follow it to Wickens Barn. Just beyond the property turn left onto a footpath that skirts its grounds. With the fence on your left keep ahead to reach a stile by a metal gate on the left. Cross into adjoining field and continue in same direction with the fence on your right. The route enters a verge of woodland and after crossing a stile drops down to a lane. Turn left. This scattered community is Bleasdale.

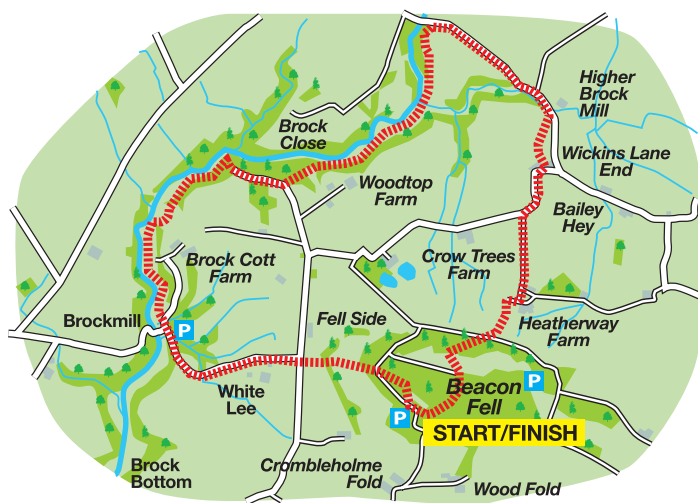
Bleasdale to Beacon Fell. 5k 3m: Keep on the lane for 800m.

On reaching Weaver's Farm on right look for an almost obscured signpost on the left. Follow this to edge alongside woodland above the River Brock with a fence on your left. At the first stile in the fence cross it and continue with the fence on your right.

As you cross next two fields the route begins to drop gently. After a wooden stile the rocky path descends sharply to the valley bottom, crossing wooden footbridge. Keep ahead crossing pastures with woodland on your left and river on your right. Path enters the grounds of Waddecar scouting centre. Look for waymark sign indicating the path forking slightly to right. After crossing a stretch of open ground path enters woodland. At this point the path is not always clear. However with river to the right and by



Fall for this Fell



keeping ahead the remains of a bench is reached. A little ahead is a memorial oak tree dedicated to renowned walker and writer Cyril Spiby. The way turns sharply left at this point to reach a broad track that leads up, past another bench, and comes to a wooden gate. This gives onto narrow tarmac Snape Rakes Lane. Turn right. Tarmac peters out as the track descends back to river. At signpost in front of wooden bridge, turn left. After 200m path comes to open ground with a white building ahead. The track

FACTFILE

Distance: 8k 5m

Time: Allow 3 hours

Summary: Mainly easy, steep ascent from River Brock back to car park. Route prone to mud after rain.

Map: OS OL41 Forest of Bowland

passes this on its left to reach a wider more substantial lane. Bear left slightly uphill. After the track levels out look for a footpath sign pointing right back towards the river. Follow this downhill through trees and with the river on the right follow the path that will bring you to Brock Mill. Turn left along White Lee Lane. Keep on it for almost 1k (15mins) to reach Bleasdale Lane. Here turn right then left onto a footpath that leads across a field to a wooden bridge. In the plantation beyond bear slightly right along an indistinct path that begins to climb the fellside. It continues more steeply still to a wall which is crossed by a stone stile. Keep ahead and soon the fell road is crossed as the path enters conifer woodland along a broad track that will soon bring you back to the visitor centre.

Walk devised John Griffiths and Bob Clare. Hit www.lancashirewalks.com for more walks exploring the diversity of the Lancashire countryside.



NATUREWATCH

with Kate Humble

Summer seems to give way to Autumn at the drop of a hat in September, so enjoy the rest of the warmish evenings associated with the 'indian summer' we are promised every year.

It can be a glorious time in the garden and I can't wait to watch the colours become more subdued as the seeds and fruit ripen and the first hints of red and brown appear on leaves. Before it gets too chilly, people often want to start clearing up their gardens for winter and tidying up scruffy, tired looking plants and shrubs. If you want to encourage more wildlife, I'd recommend saving yourself a job and adopting a slightly more natural approach. Obviously no one wants their garden to be totally unruly but small measures like leaving seed heads on plants like teasels and sunflowers and allowing your plants to die back naturally could provide food and shelter for birds through the winter. There are good and bad times to trim conifers and hedging and if you have managed to wait until now then thank you! So often gardeners and local authorities use the summer months as the time to wield their trimmers and shears and risk destroying an active nest but most garden birds will have raised their young now so its a good time to cut back. If you do find accidentally disturb any late nesters try and replace the foliage exactly where you found it and revisit the job in a few weeks. It will mainly be pigeons and doves at this stage but they should all be finished by the middle of the month. If you've been thinking about creating some borders and flower beds in and around your garden, now is a great time to do it. It can seem like a big job but they don't have to be big or creative shapes to be effective. The soil will be right to ensure roots grow well and there is usually enough rain to ensure plants don't dry out. Plant native shrubs as opposed to flowers at this time - things like cotoneaster and pyracantha will be great for birds. Looking ahead, you could also plant some lavender which is great for bees and butterflies throughout summer into autumn, or crocuses and pansies, for early in spring.