

Lancashire Walks



Leck Fell

Of course Conistون Old Man is not the highest point in Lancashire as we stated last week, at least not since 1974. Leck Fell is. Leck where? Well Leck Fell is on a slither of Lancashire that is wedged between Cumbria and North Yorkshire to the north of the A65. Topographically it part of the Western Yorkshire Dales and indeed lies on the boundary of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. This walk will take you within metres of the border close by Gragareth, the highest point in Lancashire (as presently constituted!)

Start: Car park by St. Peter's church. Please contribute to the courtesy box. From junction 34 M6 take A683 to Kirkby Lonsdale. On reaching the A65 turn right towards Settle and Skipton. At Cowan Bridge turn left for Leck. After ½ mile turn right. The church car park is on the left side of the lane, just before the church.

Distance: 14 Km or 8½ miles

Time: 4 - 5 hours

Terrain: To undertake this walk you have to be fit, well equipped, well provisioned; and it would be best to wait for a spell of dry and settled weather.

Map: OS OL2 Yorkshire Dales Southern & Western areas

1. Car park to summit of Gragareth (7 Km or 4½ miles: 2 - 2½ hours)

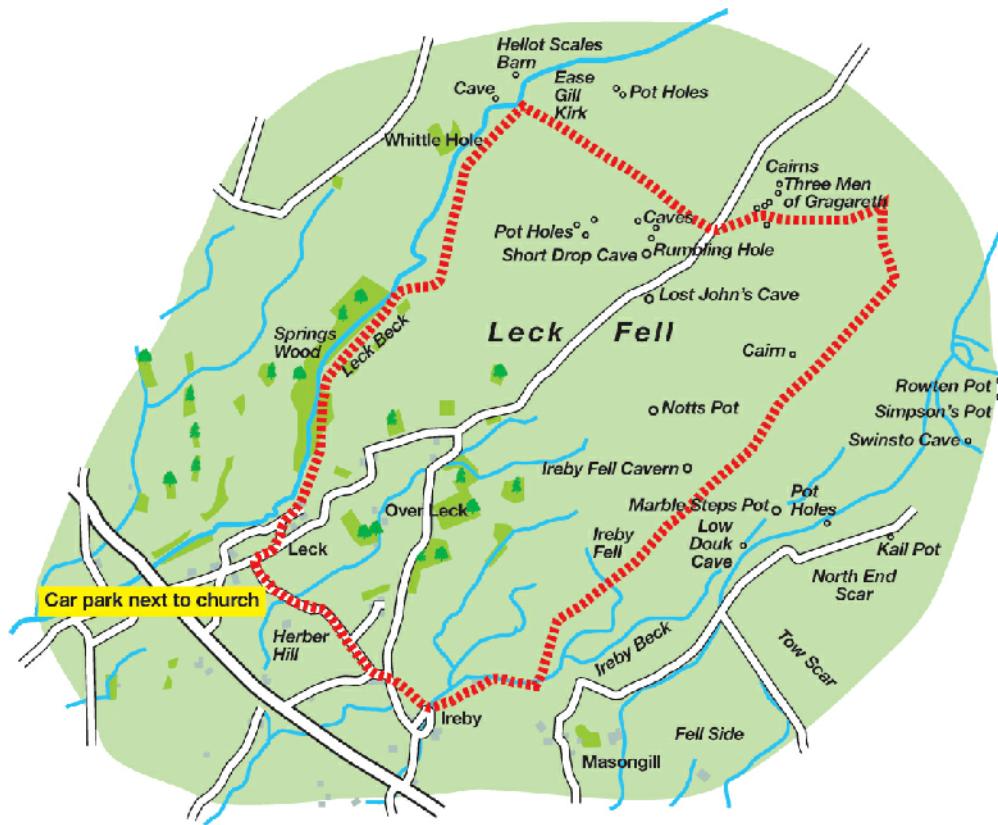
From the car park turn left and walk past the church along the lane for 1000m. Pass the substantial Todgill Farm on your right. Just beyond it where the road bends to the right, take a footpath across fields to Ireby. On reaching a lane turn right **(Pic 1)** and then cross a bridge and turn left walking up to Over Hall. Just inside its grounds take a footpath on the right. **(Pic 2)** This leads to Ireby Beck. After passing through one gate but before reaching another cross the beck. **(Pic 3)** You may question the wisdom of this with thigh high spike rushes and no obvious path, but as you gain elevation a track of sorts can be picked out. The key to the route is the wall over to the right **(Pic 4)** – the County Boundary Wall between Lancashire and that other place. The higher you climb the nearer you come to it, so that by the time you attain the summit plateau you are right beside it. The final push to the trig. point necessitates a short diversion into that other place, recrossing into Lancashire over a ladder stile. **(Pic 5)** A path breaks to the left and will bring you to Lancashire's highest point. **(Pic 6)**

2. Summit to Ease Gill (3 Km or 2 miles: 45 - 60 mins)

Take a faint path leading from the trig point down to the left so you begin a descent of the fellside. After 500m on the edge of a shelf the renowned Three Men of Gragareth appear. **(Pic 7)** These are cairns of such antiquity that they are identified on the OS map. From here there is a sharp descent to Leck Fell House. **(Pic 8)** At the bottom turn left and after the second of two gates turn right. Now begins a very awkward traverse of moorland to gain the gill. With the wall to your right you should be able to discern something of a path through bog and marsh heading towards the depression before you. **(Pic 9)** When you reach it the first thing that will strike you will be the fact that the gill is dry. Then you will notice the remarkable geology of Ease Gill Kirk, **(Pic 10)** an impressive dry waterfall cut into the limestone. Finally you may be struck by the tranquillity of your surroundings. Compared with open moorland crossed in reaching it, this part of the walk will seem like an oasis.

3. Ease Gill to Car park (4 Km or 2½ miles: 1½ - 2 hours)

On reaching the gill turn left and pick up a path that takes you above a narrow defile and then the waterfalls of Leck Beck Head. With Leck Beck on your right follow the path back to the village. Now "path" is a rather elastic term here. This is not one of your well worn, way marked routes found around Silverdale or Bowland. Adhering to it will take some concentration. Beyond a ruin (marked Anneside on the map,) an alternative is offered at a wooden stile. **(Pic 11)** This route will bring you back to the riverside. Keep ahead if you wish to reach the village more quickly.



**Map by
Chris Wyatt
at the
Blackpool
Gazette**

Pic 1



Pic 2



Pic 3



Pic 4



Pic 5



Pic 6



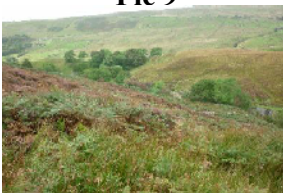
Pic 7



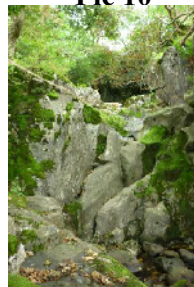
Pic 8



Pic 9



Pic 10



Pic 11

