

Lancashire Walks

Whernside



To mark our 100th contribution to this page our indulgent editor has allowed us to make a foray into That Other Place – Yorkshire; and just to demonstrate what good Lancashire lads can do we climbed to its highest point – Whernside. So if you have your passports ready you can follow in our footsteps. This walk which should be saved for a clear day will take you up to the summit and then visit the Whernside Tarns before returning along the Craven Way.

Start: Ribbleshead. From Junction 34 of the M6 follow the A683 towards Kirkby Lonsdale. After Melling turn right onto the A687. Two miles after Burton-in-Lonsdale this reaches the A65. Cross the A65 to a lane that will take you to the centre of Ingleton. Follow signs for the B6255 to Clapham. Ribbleshead is 5 miles along this road.

Distance: 16 Km or 10 miles

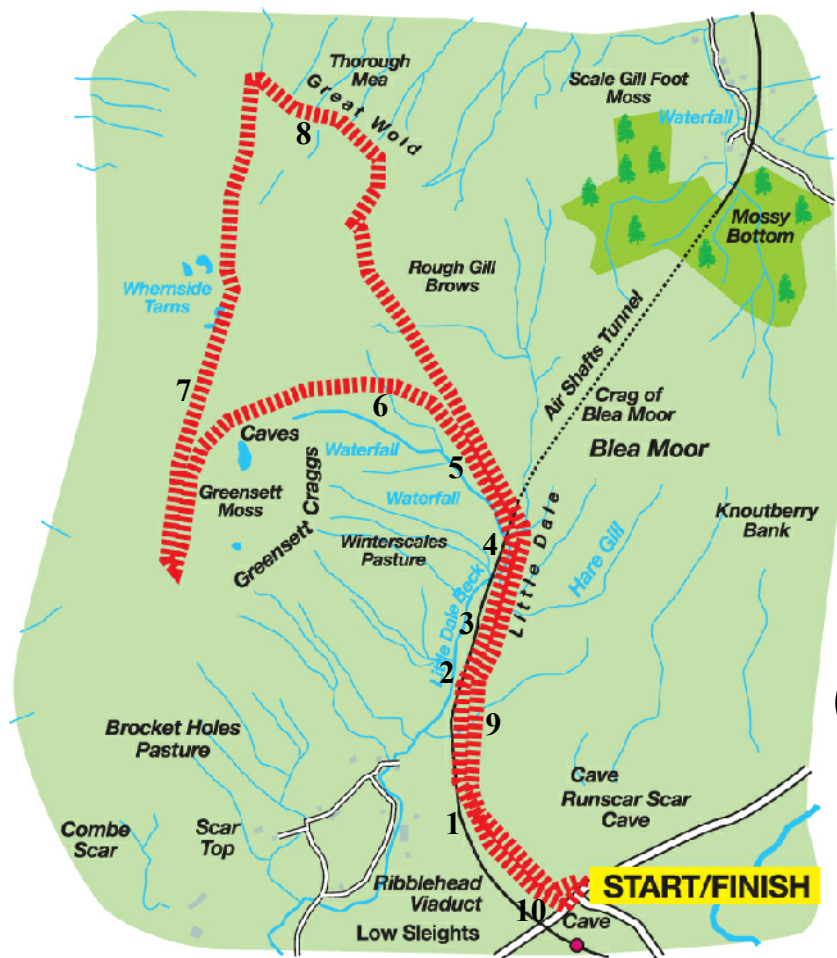
Time: 4–5 hours

Summary: Although the climb to Whernside summit is relatively straightforward it involves over 1200ft of ascent and for this reason must be classified as strenuous. The descent to the Craven Way is less straightforward and if you fail to pick up the faint path may necessitate a degree of ankle twisting off track walking.

Map: OS OL2 The Yorkshire Dales

Directions: On a broad track cross a stretch of common land alongside the Ribbleshead Viaduct. **(Pic 1)** This monumental example of Victorian civil engineering imposes itself on the landscape in much the same way as the temples of ancient Egypt do. Close contact is likely to produce utterances of wonder and awe. Built in 1874 as part of the Settle to Carlisle Railway it required a vast army of navvies to construct it. The route follows the railway past Blea Moor signal box **(Pic 2 & 3)** and then across it 1000m further on close to the southern entrance of Blea Moor Tunnel. **(Pic 4)** As a feat of civil engineering no less impressive than the viaduct, just not as obvious. The path commences a more concerted climb **(Pic 5)** up a spur to reach a junction of paths. **(Pic 6)** This is the point you will come to on your return leg but for now turn left and continue uphill. The path has been “improved” and at various sections stone flags have been laid to assist progress. You are now on route of the popular Three Peaks of Yorkshire challenge walk – a 24 mile circuit taking in Ingleborough and Pen-y-ghent as well as Whernside. The way now is obvious and half an hour of steady climbing should bring you to the steep slopes below the summit ridge. Whernside is a long whale back of a hill and not as distinctive as its neighbour Ingleborough which you can now admire across the valley. Once on the ridge with a wall to your right continue for another 15 mins to reach a gap through which you can reach the trig point. At 736m or 2,419 feet you are now on top of TOP!

After admiring the view and offering platitudes of encouragement to weary Three Peakers retrace your steps along the ridge to the point where you joined it. **(Pic 7)** Then continue across a broad plateau to reach the tarns. These shallow pools are more noteworthy in a district where most water quickly disappears underground. There is a path hereabouts but it is not much used and you may have trouble picking it up for the next part of the walk. Continue northwards and begin a gentle descent towards Dentdale. Aim for a wall corner about 600m (10mins) from the last Tarn. Once reached keep walking downhill on the outside of the wall. In 400m you will arrive at a wide grassy track. **(Pic 8)** This is the Craven Way. Turn right. After the awkwardness of the descent you are at liberty to enjoy the ease of this bridleway as you make your way back to Ribbleshead. Across the valley you will be able to see other engineering wonders of the Settle to Carlisle Railway – not least the airshafts that were created for the Blea Moor Tunnel. In two kilometres (30 mins) you will come to the junction encountered on the outward leg. From there you will know that you have another 50 mins to walk back to Ribbleshead. **(Pic 9 & 10)**



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

