

SUMMIT WALKS | ACCESSIBLE WALKS | NATURE WALKS

# MOUNTAIN WALKS

# YORKSHIRE

# THREE PEAKS

15 ROUTES TO ENJOY ON AND AROUND PEN-Y-GHENT,  
INGLEBOROUGH AND WHERNSIDE



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### THE ROUTES

01 Ingleborough Estate Nature Trail from Clapham ●○○○ 4.8km/3 miles	1
02 Around Ribblesdale ●○○○ 6.2km/3.9 miles	5
03 Stainforth Scar & the lime kilns ●●○○ 5km/3.1 miles	9
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## **/ INTRODUCTION**

Pen-y-ghent, Ingleborough and Wharfedale – commonly known as the Three Peaks – sit within the Yorkshire Dales National Park, designated as such in 1954, but they only cover a tiny part of the park as a whole. It's a very special and splendid part, along the south-western boundary and just north of the Forest of Bowland, noted for its particular geology which gives the landscape its distinctive feel.

It's really the limestone that makes it quite so special. Whereas in other areas the limestone is well buried, faulting and geological shifts have brought it to the surface here. The bedrock south of Ingleton, for instance, is older than the gritstone capping on the top of Ingleborough which is 600 metres higher but only five kilometres away. To the base limestone and the Yoredale Group of banded sandstones, shales and limestone above it, add the sculpting power of water and ice. That gives us the limestone pavements, the distinctive stepped shape of the hills and a whole separate landscape beneath the surface. Glimpses and the odd foray into that underground world are possible even by those who have no desire for caving or potholing. There have been show caves in the area since at least the Victorian period, and both White Scar and Ingleborough show caves allow safe and easy access to the subterranean landscape. There are also a couple of free options if you take a good torch on your walks.

There have been people living and working here since the last retreat of ice over 10,000 years ago, and evidence for animals long before that – the oldest bones found in Victoria Cave are 130,000 years old. There are traces of prehistoric settlements, along with evidence of Romano-British-era settlements and travel. The Welsh, Old English and Old Norse place names describe how the area was farmed and lived on. There are clearings, shielings, shelters, pastures, boggy bits to be avoided, places to acquire useful materials; everything for living. Later, the great monastic houses left their marks, particularly notable for us are their trade routes. And, of course, the Settle–Carlisle Railway is always present in the area, especially distinctive at Ribbleshead with the great Batty Moss viaduct. It's interesting to muse what would have changed if the line had been shut in the 1980s as planned.

It's a breathtakingly beautiful area that is worth exploring in detail, even underground. These walks, from the short and accessible through to the challenge of the full Three Peaks, are designed to help you discover why this is such a special and justifiably popular part of the country.

**Hannah Collingridge**

*Ingleborough from the aqueduct over the Settle–Carlisle line. © John Coefield*



10.2km/6.3 miles

## 05 / STAINFORTH & FEIZOR

A cracking lower-level walk through great limestone scenery.

### / ESSENTIAL INFO

GRADE ●●○○

DISTANCE **10.2KM/6.3 MILES**

ASCENT **250M**

TIME **2-4 HRS (WALKER)/1.25-2.25 HRS (RUNNER)**

START/FINISH **STAINFORTH YDNP PAY & DISPLAY CAR PARK**

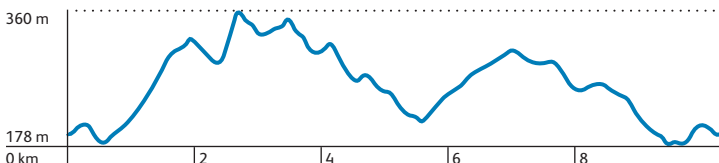
START GRID REF **SD 820 672**

START GPS **54.1003, -2.2767**

OS MAP **OL2 YORKSHIRE DALES: SOUTHERN & WESTERN AREAS; OL41 FOREST OF BOWLAND & RIBBLESDALE (BOTH 1:25,000)**

### / OVERVIEW

A steady climb from the River Ribble brings you to Happy Valley then a short ascent takes in the Celtic Wall before crossing the valley to wander over Smearsett and Pot scars. The halfway point at Feizor includes a classic tea room before a choice of return journeys, both of which include the spectacular Stainforth Force.



*Smearsett Scar and Pen-y-ghent.*



Feizor Nick. © Hannah Collingridge

## DIRECTIONS

- S** From the car park in Stainforth follow the *Pennine Bridleway* signs to the **bottom left-hand corner of the car park** (with the toilets behind you) to pick up the subway under the main road. Follow the path round and **turn left** at a track. Pass over the railway and keep **straight ahead** into what looks like a dead end; shortly afterwards **turn right** on to a path running parallel to the railway (it's usually very clearly signposted) to reach a road. **Turn left** and head steeply down the narrow road which then crosses the river via an old packhorse bridge (at this point the *No Caravans* signs make perfect sense). Head up the hill on the road, past the campsite on the left and a hall on the right to reach a crossroads. (The hall you have just passed is a former manor house; it's an older site but this house dates to 1672 with later tweaks and adjustments. There's been a campsite here since the 1920s.)
- 2** Go **straight ahead** at the crossroads following the Dales High Way (the Pennine Bridleway turns off right here) and carry on through a gate and along a short section of walled track to reach a junction of tracks – go **straight ahead** on to a track, still heading uphill. The stony track ends but there is a wide grassy track to follow through the limestone on either side. Continue over a stile, climb a bit more and then the track begins to dip down. Ahead is Happy Valley. You should have stunning views of Pen-y-ghent to your right and your more immediate destinations of Smearsett Scar and Pot Scar ahead and to the right. Up on the left-hand side is the Celtic Wall.








Stainforth packhorse bridge.

- 3** Keep going **straight ahead** along the broad grassy track then cross a stile over a wall; the path continues parallel to the wall. (If you want to visit the Celtic Wall then **turn left** and follow a trod across the marshier ground to a gate and then pick your way up the scar. Return to the same point in the valley.) Follow the path to the next cross wall (on the right) and turn **right**, following the wall and leaving the Dales High Way. Continue **straight ahead** to reach a wall corner and stile at SD 802 676. Cross the stile and go **straight ahead**, following the wall as the path rises. At the top of the slope look for a path on the **left** heading upwards – there are plenty of sheep trods and as long as you head upwards you will arrive at the trig point on Smearsett Scar.
- 4** From the trig point continue **straight ahead** and follow the thin paths on top of Smearsett and Pot scars, exploring the stunning scenery. There is a drop in between Smearsett and Pot scars – follow whichever path you find comfortable and aim for the stone step-through stile (not always easy to spot). It is fairly close to the cliff edge near where there is a bit of fence on top of the wall. Continue along the top of Pot Scar and its cairns before heading onwards. The path drops into a hollow with longer grass – do not be tempted by the cairn on the scar ahead as there is a large wall in the way. Follow the path round to the **right** to reach a stile.



Stainforth Force.

- 5 Cross the stile and take some time to wander to your heart's content exploring the limestone. Whichever way you go – it's simplest to head **straight ahead** from the stile – you need to end up at the bottom of the field where there is a stile at Feizor Nick (SD 790 684). **Turn left** and follow the Pennine Bridleway into Feizor.
- 6 Walk through the village to reach Elaine's Tea Rooms\* and continue **straight ahead**.

 \*For a shorter route back, from the tea rooms **turn left** on to the Dales High Way through Happy Valley (signposted *Stainforth*), admiring the skyline you came along. Rejoin and retrace the outward route from 3.

Cross the (usually dry) ford and **turn left** on to a bridleway (signposted *Scar Top*). There are actually several tracks across the pastureland but keep roughly in the middle and they all meet up again. At a signpost where the bridleway goes to the right, go **straight ahead** on to a footpath. This stretch gives you chance to admire the cunning use of materials recycled into gates and stiles by local farmers. There is a striking example that I originally took to be an old bedstead but isn't. Continue on and go through a gateway to reach a path junction at (SD 804 664).



View down Happy Valley towards Feizor.

- 7** At the junction, one path goes off through the right-hand wall and on towards Stackhouse and there are two going **straight ahead** and remaining on this side of the wall – follow either of these two paths (they join back up at the bottom corner of the field). Continue **straight ahead** as you are funnelled along a short walled track into a sheep holding area. Admire the farmer’s creative use of ironmongery and head over **a stile on the left-hand wall**. With the wall behind you go **straight ahead** across the field, past a fingerpost and on to a gate where the track become more clearly defined. This track meets the outward route at a junction.
- 8** **Turn right** at the junction along a walled track which becomes a road to reach the crossroads in Little Stainforth. Go **straight ahead** then just before the packhorse bridge use the stile or gate on the **right** to follow the river a short distance to Stainforth Force. There are three short falls and then a deep plunge pool – well known as a swimming location. If lucky you may see traditional mating rituals in action – the boys leap off higher and higher parts of the bank and the girls in the pool below ignore them.
- 9** Retrace your steps back to the road, **turn right** to cross the bridge and head up the steep road of Dog Hill Brow. **Turn right** on to the Pennine Bridleway just before the main road. Follow the signs and your outward journey back to the car park.

## GOOD TO KNOW

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

DalesBus 11 connects Stainforth with Horton in Ribblesdale and Settle. The national park car park is just off the B6479 between Ribblesdale and Settle.

### WHEN TO WALK IT

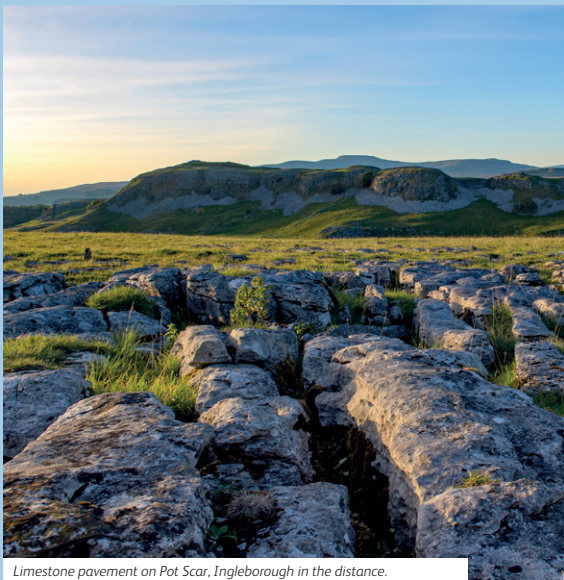
This walk is best with good visibility because the views are stunning. There are a few places on the walk that will get muddy after a wet spell but mostly it's pretty well drained.

### TERRAIN AND NAVIGATION

A mix of clear and obvious footpaths with narrow grassy trods – which may disappear – on top of the scars. The tops of Smearsett and Pot scars aren't easy to navigate in mist.

### FACILITIES AND REFRESHMENTS

The Craven Heifer pub is in Stainforth village; alternatively there is a cafe at Knight Stainforth Hall Camping and Caravan Park, near Stainforth Force. Elaine's Tea Rooms are in Feizor and a welcome stop halfway round. There are toilets in the national park car park in Stainforth.



*Limestone pavement on Pot Scar, Ingleborough in the distance.*

### DOGS AND KIDS

Livestock and ground-nesting birds mean it is a dog-on-lead kind of place, particularly between 1 March and 31 July when it is the law under the CRoW Act that dogs must be on short leads.

This walk is a good option for kids, as there is nothing particularly hazardous and it can be cut shorter from Feizor if necessary.

### POINTS OF INTEREST

The Celtic Wall is interesting to see, if mysterious. The name may be misleading, as the dating of such a feature is nigh on impossible. There's a longer section of wall, and a shorter and smaller bit to the side – it's a bit of a mystery as it doesn't seem to have any function. However, it's a good viewpoint.

Smearsett and Pot scars are some of the distinctive lumps you see so often in the Dales but can never quite name. It's great to visit them and put a name to a face.