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Horton-in-Ribblesdale and Upper Ribblesdale

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Car park in Horton-in-Ribblesdale (SD 808726)
Ordnance Survey map	OL2 Yorkshire Dales Southern and Western Areas
Distance	9.8 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: Horton-in-Ribblesdale is well known as the starting point for the Three Peaks walk (Pen-y-ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough) and as a centre for cavers as there are lots of potholes. Most walkers who visit, if not undertaking the complete Three Peaks walk, come to climb Pen-y-ghent (see my Pen-y-Ghent and Plover Hill walk).

This walk however is a lower level walk to upper Ribblesdale which incorporates good views of all three of the Three Peaks, some dramatic water features and interesting bridges, not least "God's Bridge". It takes you across wide expanses of rolling moorland and along part of the Pennine Way. Although it cannot be said that the walk is completely flat, its undulations do not justify anything more than "green traffic light" ratings. The route is mostly on easy to follow broad tracks.

I have described this walk on an anti-clockwise basis so that if, from about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way round at High Birkwith, you wish to complete the walk more quickly by road, you can.

The walk starts at the main car park close to the Crown Hotel on the B 6479 at Horton-in-Ribblesdale (SD 808726). At peak times you will find this very busy because Horton is the starting point where entrants "clock in" for the Three Peaks Challenge. Horton is also accessible via train from the Settle Carlisle route.

Start: Turn left out of the car park and at the Crown Hotel, turn right through its car park. At the back of the Crown Hotel to the left is a track indicated by a fingerpost (SD 808727). This is Harber Scar Lane, part of the Pennine and Ribble Way footpath routes. This is quite a rough, broad, walled lane.

After just over a mile, it bends sharp left at Sell Gill Beck (SD 812744) then after going through a gate enters more open country. Ignore a fingerpost on the left for Birkwith and stay on the main track.

When you come to another gate crossing the track at a three way fingerpost (SD 813772), take the left hand path for Old Ing $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.

Go through a metal gate with a ruined barn on the left and stay on the main track. As this joins another broad track joining from your right, turn left. There is a fingerpost confirming you are on the Pennine way. To the left is the farm of Old Ing.

Just past the farm is a three way fingerpost at a junction of tracks (SD 805774), turn right for Cam End. After about 200 yards at SD 804776 there is a ladder stile on the right, over which is the dramatic sight of a waterfall cascading into the Calf Holes cave system. Take great care not to do the same!

Stay on your original route and the next dramatic sight is Ling Gill, a limestone gorge on the left which is a nature reserve because it is a small upland woodland and the steepness of the gorge has prevented animals from grazing the plants. This is not open to the public. I was amused by the instruction on one of the signs which said to "Please see the back of the sign for further important information". Given its proximity to the edge of the gorge, I can only say "at your own risk"!!

Beyond Ling Gill is Ling Gill bridge (SD 803789) which, according to the embedded ancient stone, was built in 1776 although it has obviously had some TLC since. Cross the bridge and follow the line of the wall on the left until you come to a ruined barn. Just past this, cross the stile, following the fingerpost to Nether Lodge (SD 800790).

Follow the wall on the left until you see a gate on the right. You do not go through it but at this point, the path veers away to the right and to a stile. Cross the stile. The valley now drops away to the left but you bear slightly right to a fence line which you follow to a stile in the corner. There are some yellow arrows pointing the way.

Cross the stile and follow the wall on your left crossing a stile over a fence until you see Nether Lodge farm (SD 793778). The path descends to a three way finger post. Turn left signed for Birkwith, crossing the footbridge and stay on the clear main track. This leads to God's Bridge over Brow Gill Beck (SD 798776). Go through the gateway but before you do, walk briefly to the stream to the left of the gate to see the huge slab of rock bridging the beck which gives God's bridge its name.

Cross God's Bridge and follow the line of the wall on the right.

Pass a finger post for High Birkwith but stay on the main track until it reaches a broad tarmac track by a large unusually shaped stone (SD 802770). If you want to make the return journey to Horton by road, turn right here (you will see the start of the road) - otherwise turn left. As you reach another strange stone just before a wall, turn right.

As you reach the end of a wood, follow the track as it goes left through a gateway with a stile at the side. Look out for a large isolated rock about 150 yards on the right and bear off right to follow the line of the rocky scar (SD 804769). After about $\frac{2}{3}$ mile, the path turns right. There is a large triangular rock. Pass by this. As you approach a wall, the path curves round to the left and down to a short ladder stile and a little wooden bridge over the stream (SD 804765).

Climb the bank at the other side and over the brow of the hill bearing left until you come to a broad track. Turn right following the line of the scar once more.

It is now a case of just following the main track, crossing a ladder stile by a concrete water tank, through several gateways (ignoring some fingerposts on the right) until you get to a ruined cottage (SD 801744). Pass to the right of it, through the wall immediately after it and then turn left over the ladder stile. When you reach the same broad track on which you began your outward journey, turn right and retrace your steps to Horton.

