

# Dry Rigg Quarries to Horton in Ribblesdale via Pen-y-Ghent

## The walk

We start at a free parking area with picnic tables at Helwith Bridge. This is clearly signed and on the left just past the pub when travelling from the Settle to Horton road.

From the car park, we head out over the bridge and back to the busy B6479. Here we take left toward Horton, but only stay on the road for 25m, before taking a track on our right signposted to Pen-y-Ghent. It is worth noting that the track is open to all traffic at this point, although the deeply rutted surface usually makes it traffic free with the exception of a few mountain bikes and farmer's quads.

The track heads uphill quite steeply with the looming presence of Pen-y-Ghent always ahead and to the right. We soon reach a fork in the track, and we take left. The alternate to the right is the Ribble way, and is good route to Stainforth.

Our route (signed as Pennine Journey) continues uphill, initially between drystone walls. We pass through gates, but the route remains clear as we climb. Once we leave the confines of the lane, the land on our left become open, and we soon meet a finger post for Dub Cote, directing us gently downhill toward the farm buildings. The more adventurous could complete the climb to the peak of Pen-y-Ghent and return to this point making the walk significantly longer. An alternative would be to complete the peak and then return to Horton via the Pennine Way and Pennine Journey paths.

As we leave the lane and head down toward Dub Cote, the fields are littered with Shake holes, and rocky outcrops that have formed as underground erosion of the limestone has occulted - be wary of holes along the path.

We head down toward a field corner where we find a ladder stile taking us in a pasture where a clear track takes us down in a westerly direction to Dub Cote, where path follows the road down past the front of the farmhouse to a small road junction where we take a right turn.

The small well surfaced road now meanders gently downhill, offering good views of Pen-y-Ghent to the right, and Horton ahead.

Our next landmark is another small road junction – with no signage. We take right, which is back uphill and toward Pen-y-Ghent. This road takes us back round through Brackenbottom, rather than approaching Horton via the much busier B6479, and so is both safer and more scenic.

Notice at Brackenbottom that one of the old farm buildings is the headquarters for a caving group – this area features many quite challenging caves and pot holes. We stay above ground and follow the lane back round toward Horton – passing one of the main access paths to the summit of Pen-y-Ghent on our right where we may well see groups heading up or down – and if you chose to extend this walk to include the summit, welcome back.

We follow the lane back into the southern end of Horton In Ribblesdale, and St Oswald's church. From the church we walk along the main road into Horton, noting that free public toilets are available at the National Park car park just before the bridge. Our onward route takes the Pedestrian bridge over the Ribble at the North end of the car park rather than the road bridge which has no pavement.

The bridge offers good views up and down the Ribble, and up the valley toward Ribblehead, and we note a stile at the end of the bridge leading us into a meadow next to the river – in times of heavy rain expect this to be a little boggy.

Our path now tracks down the Ribble – keeping the river on our left hand side. The quality of the path varies a little, and at times we are walking along the tops of small walls that form part of the flood defences. The route remains clear though, and we soon pass a pipe bridge connecting the waste water treatment works to the village in Horton.

After a short while we arrive at a footbridge over the Ribble, with benches on both banks – this makes a good place to stop, before pressing on to the quarries.

We stay on the riverside path - still with the river on our left - until we arrive at Cragg Hill Farm, where there is another bridge (for farm use only).

Our path now tracks away from the river toward the farmhouse, taking a left turn into a track between the farm buildings just before we get to the house. At this point look for a single gate on the right leading into a field with a pedestrian crossing over the railway line as our next destination.

At the railway, cross with care and turn sharp left to take the path along the side of the railway heading South toward Settle. The path soon diverges from the railway though, and we head gently uphill toward a clearly visible stile.

From here we maintain a consistently Southerly direction toward a fingerpost directing us through a gate us along a short path which soon crosses a stile bring us back into the same field. You may well choose to remain in the field rather than cross the unnecessary stile.

We now walk along the top edge of a steep embankment above flatter and boggy land below which we see the rail extension to the Arcow quarry – this is a recent extension, and the line is not shown on the current OS map. We cross a new pedestrian bridge over the railway gaining a good view of the quarry and loading operations. On our left we note some curious oblong ponds – clearly man made although now overgrown and somewhat derelict.

Our track soon turns sharp right, and we find ourselves on roads that are used by quarry traffic – so care is needed.

Ignore the road coming in on the left and follow the road round the base of the quarries, toward the farm buildings at Foredale. The cottages visible on the hillside above us on the right are the quarry cottages that are a landmark sight from the main road – they look more inviting close up than the bleak long-distance view we are more used to seeing.

The track continues around the perimeter of the quarries. We follow the track round past an area important for wetland bird nesting (on our left), and round to the quarry access road where we meet the Pennine Bridleway and soon after, the road from Austwick. We follow this round to the left back toward Helwith Bridge where we find the car park.

**Total distance 12.84 km (8.0 miles)**

**Total Ascent 531 m**