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Pen-y-Ghent and Plover Hill

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	8.45 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: There is something about Pen-y-Ghent, one of the summits to be conquered during the famous “Three Peaks” walk – the others being Ingleborough and Wharfedale. It has an unmistakable majesty and profile all of its own. A bonus is that if you do the walk at the end of March/beginning of April at about 1900 feet on the limestone cliffs you may be lucky enough to see the rare purple saxifrage, which was left over from the last ice age.

The walk is pretty straightforward and large sections of the path have been 'manicured' with large stones and on the summit with stone flags. I can see these reinforcements are a necessity but take care if conditions are icy, as the ice can make for very tricky walking on them. There is one short section of scrambling where you will need to use your hands. Again, take great care if it is icy.

I recommend undertaking this walk in the direction shown (i.e. anti clockwise) as the scramble is much safer going up than down.

The walk starts at the main car park close to the Crown Inn on the B 6479 at Horton-in-Ribblesdale (SD 808726). Alternatively, you can park at the Golden Lion Hotel at more modest cost. To get there, take the signposted turn off by the river bridge in Settle. Horton is also accessible via train from the Settle Carlisle route.

At peak times you will find Horton very busy because Horton is the starting point where many entrants “clock in” for the Three Peaks Challenge.

Start: Out of the car park, turn right and walk through the village on the B6479 and round the right-angled bend by the church. Ignore the first on the left (where the post box is) and take the second left which is School Lane. Follow this round until you get to a barn on the left at Brackenbottom Farm and a finger post on the left signed “Pennine Way” (SD 818722). Pass through the gate and the small walkers' gate.

The well worn route then follows the line of the stone wall on your left. Ascend, climbing over a couple of ladder stiles. You reach the ridge just below the “nose” of Pen-y-Ghent at a ‘T’ junction of paths. Turn left (SD 836728).

The walk now earns its red traffic light with a vengeance. A very steep climb, keeping the wall to your left and where you may need to use your hands now and again, takes you to the summit (SD 839734). Here you will find the trig point and an unusual ‘S’ shaped shelter with stone seating built into the wall. There are magnificent views east towards Littondale, west towards Ingleborough and north-west towards Wharfedale.

Climb the ladder stile to the west side of the wall. If for any reason you want to shorten the walk, the Pennine Way straight ahead and indicated by a finger post will take you back to Horton-in-Ribblesdale. Otherwise, turn right following the wall to the summit of Plover Hill. The wall you have been following meets another at a 'T' (SD 748752). Cross this wall and the path then kinks slightly right before a steepish grassy descent across Foxup Moor arrives at a broad track (SD 846762). Turn left.

Basically this track now takes you straight back to Horton but there is an interesting feature to look out for about 1.75 miles after you join the track. This is Hull Pot on the right about 200 feet from the track (SD 825746).

The track emerges in Horton close to the car park. Ignore any left or right turns on the way.

