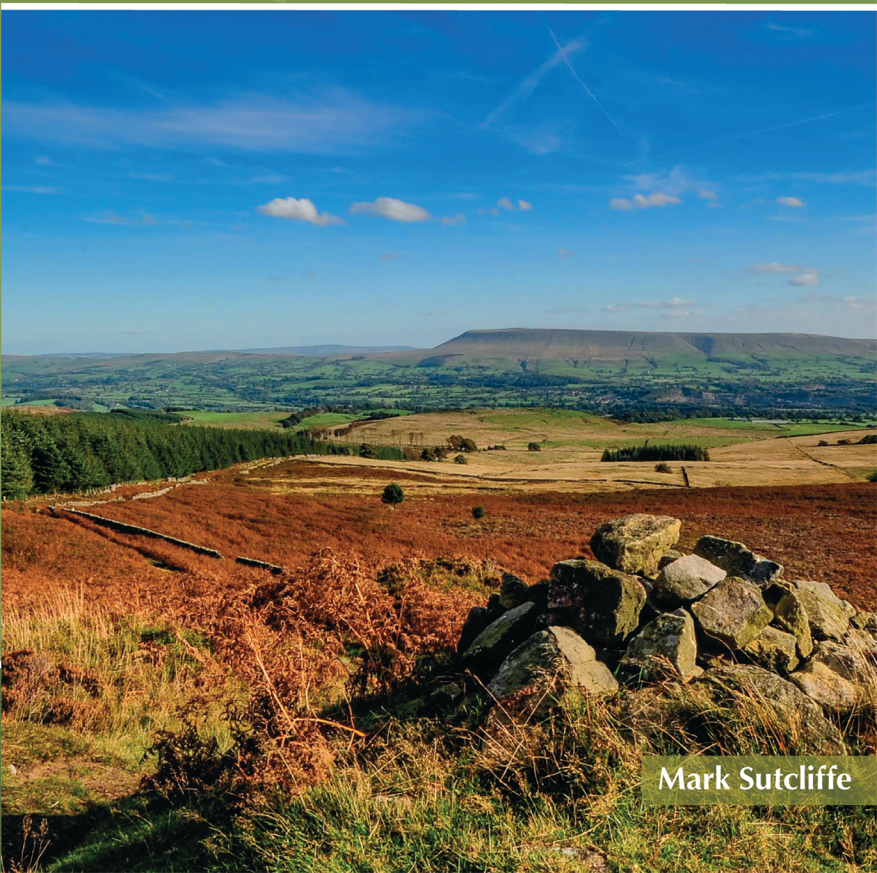


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# WALKING IN LANCASHIRE

40 walks throughout the county including  
the Forest of Bowland and Ribble Valley



Mark Sutcliffe

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### Updates to this Guide

While every effort is made by our authors to ensure the accuracy of guidebooks as they go to print, changes can occur during the lifetime of an edition. This guidebook was researched and written before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. While we are not aware of any significant changes to routes or facilities at the time of printing, it is likely that the current situation will give rise to more changes than would usually be expected. Any updates that we know of for this guide will be on the Cicerone website ([www.cicerone.co.uk/1003/updates](http://www.cicerone.co.uk/1003/updates)), so please check before planning your trip. We also advise that you check information about such things as transport, accommodation and shops locally. Even rights of way can be altered over time.

We are always grateful for information about any discrepancies between a guidebook and the facts on the ground, sent by email to [updates@cicerone.co.uk](mailto:updates@cicerone.co.uk) or by post to Cicerone, Juniper House, Murley Moss, Oxenholme Road, Kendal, LA9 7RL.

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*Front cover:* The long whaleback ridge of Pendle Hill seen from Grindleton Fell (Walk 20)

# WALKING IN LANCASHIRE

## 40 WALKS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY INCLUDING THE FOREST OF BOWLAND AND RIBBLE VALLEY

by Mark Sutcliffe

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Passing bluebell woods while heading up onto the fells near Grindleton (Walk 20)

## CONTENTS

Map key .....	7
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<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	9
History .....	11
Landscape and geology .....	12
Wildlife .....	14
How to get there .....	15
Getting around .....	16
Bases .....	16
Food and drink .....	16
When to go .....	17
Access land .....	18
Footpaths .....	18
Safety .....	20
Before setting out .....	20
In an emergency .....	21
Maps .....	21
Using this guide .....	22

<b>NORTH LANCASHIRE AND THE BOWLAND FELS</b> .....	23
Walk 1 Beacon Fell and Brock Valley .....	24
Walk 2 Bleasdale Ridge circular .....	27
Walk 3 Clougha Pike .....	31
Walk 4 Cross of Greet and Bowland Knotts .....	34
Walk 5 Grizedale and Nicky Nook .....	37
Walk 6 Langden and Hareden Valleys .....	39
Walk 7 Parlick Pike and Fair Snape .....	42
Walk 8 Roeburndale – the enchanted valley .....	45
Walk 9 Stocks Reservoir circular .....	48
Walk 10 Tarnbrook and the Ward's Stone .....	51
Walk 11 The Upper Wyre Way .....	54
Walk 12 Whin Fell and the Brennand Valley .....	57
Walk 13 Whitendale Hanging Stones .....	60
Walk 14 Whitewell and the Upper Hodder Valley .....	64
Walk 15 Glasson, Cockersand Abbey and Conder Green .....	67
Walk 16 Gragareth – Lancashire's county top .....	71

Walk 17	Kirkby Lonsdale and Whittington	75
Walk 18	Sunderland Point	78
Walk 19	Silverdale and Warton Crag	81
Walk 20	Easington Fell and Beacon Hill from Grindleton	85
Walk 21	The Bowland Traverse	88

<b>WEST LANCASHIRE</b> . . . . .	99
Walk 22    Hurst Green and Ribchester . . . . .	100
Walk 23    Longridge Fell . . . . .	103
Walk 24    Jeffrey Hill . . . . .	106
Walk 25    Great Eccleston and St Michael's on Wyre . . . . .	110
Walk 26    Rufford and Mere Sands Wood . . . . .	114

<b>SOUTH LANCASHIRE AND THE WEST PENNINE MOORS</b>		117
Walk 27	Barrowford and Foulridge	118
Walk 28	Holcombe Moor from Ramsbottom	122
Walk 29	Great Hameldon Hill from Accrington	125
Walk 30	Anglezarke and Great Hill	129
Walk 31	Belmont and Great Hill	132
Walk 32	Sunnyhurst Wood and Darwen's Jubilee Tower	135
Walk 33	The foothills of Pendle from Downham	138
Walk 34	Pendle Hill from Pendleton	141
Walk 35	Pendle Hill and the Clarion House	145
Walk 36	Pleasington and Billinge	148
Walk 37	Weets Hill from Barnoldswick	151
Walk 38	Whalley Nab	154
Walk 39	The reservoirs of Worsthorne Moor	157
Walk 40	Wycoller and Boulsworth Hill	160

<b>Appendix A</b>	Route summary table	163
<b>Appendix B</b>	Useful contacts	166

### Route symbols on OS map extracts




(for OS legend see printed OS maps)

-  route
-  alternative route
-  start/finish point
-  start point
-  finish point
-  route direction

SCALE: 1:50,000

0 kilometres 0.5 1  
0 miles 0.5

### Features on the overview map

-  National Park  
eg **BRECON BEACONS**
-  Forest Park/National Forest  
eg **National Forest**
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty/National Scenic Area  
eg **Dedham Vale**

>800m  
600m  
400m  
200m  
75m  
0m

GPX files for all routes can be downloaded free at [www.cicerone.co.uk/1003/GPX](http://www.cicerone.co.uk/1003/GPX).

Ottergear Bridge, conveying the Thirlmere Aqueduct across the River Conder (Walk 3)





*Millpond calm at Grizedale Lea Reservoir (Walk 5)*

## INTRODUCTION



*Pendle from the foothills above Downham (Walk 33)*

From the wide-open expanses of Morecambe Bay to the limestone fringes of the Dales; from the rich industrial heritage of the West Pennine Moors to the wild vastness of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Lancashire offers some of the most varied walking anywhere in the UK.

Blessed with two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, 160 kilometres of coastline, several chains of sparkling upland reservoirs, some internationally important nature reserves and two of England's largest river catchments, when it comes to natural assets, Lancashire is one

of the wealthiest counties in all England.

With rolling foothills, verdant valleys and some of the most scenically stunning untamed landscapes in England, Lancashire has it all. Explore the gritstone moors, intimate valleys and bleak beauty of the lonely uplands of Lancashire, earning outstanding panoramic views from the summits of some surprisingly challenging hills in this varied selection of walks across the county.

Gragareth, the highest peak in Lancashire, is a proper mountain – just. Using the traditional mountain measure, at 627m high, Gragareth just

## WALK 1

*Beacon Fell and Brock Valley*

<b>Start/finish</b>	Car park at Brock Bottom, Claughton (SD 549 431)
<b>Distance</b>	8km (5 miles)
<b>Total ascent</b>	220m
<b>Time</b>	3hr
<b>Map</b>	OS Explorer OL41
<b>Refreshments</b>	Beacon Fell Visitor Centre

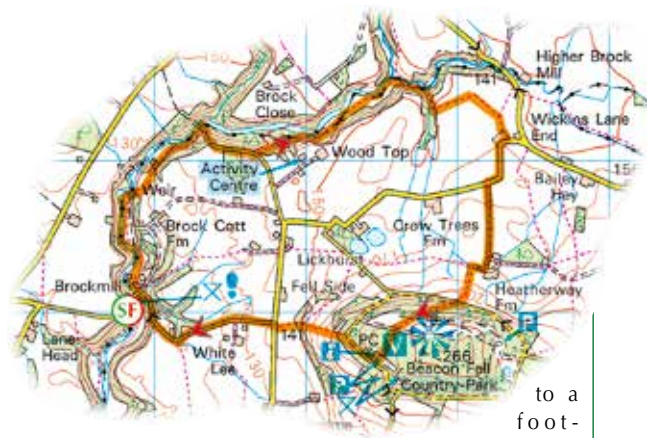
This pretty route combines a riverside woodland walk through an intimate valley with a steady climb to the modest 266m summit of Beacon Fell, which punches well above its weight when it comes to expansive views.

From the car park, head upstream past the picnic tables and cross the bridge then turn left over the cattle grid and left again past **Brockmill** and over a stile into the meadow.

Follow the path across the fields, with the river away to the left. After 400 metres, at the corner of field, head left over the stile to join the riverside path. Continue upstream, following the river as it meanders round right and the path climbs through the woods of the Brock Valley to a track. Head left along the track then skirt right of the house and continue along the edge of the woods.

After 500 metres, beside the footbridge, follow a rocky track round to the right then follow the lane for 250 metres, taking the footpath on the left where the lane curves right. Descend through trees and where the track heads left, continue ahead over the footbridge and past the campfire pit onto the gravel track through the Scout camp (**Activity Centre** on the map) to rejoin the river.

Follow the riverside footpath for 400 metres, then go over a stile into open meadow. Continue across the fields



to a foot-bridge, but don't cross. Instead, head right following the tributary over a stile and into woods. Cross the feeder stream at the next footbridge and turn left to climb through trees to cross a stile onto open farmland.

Straight ahead, the views east to the Bleasdale fells open up. Follow a grassy path along the left-hand edge of field then through a gateway and half right along the edge of the next field. Then follow signs directing you right over a series of stiles to join a lane.

Follow the lane right for 300 metres, taking the track on the left to continue over fields towards the wooded escarpment of Beacon Fell. Continue to the residential hamlet at **Heatherway Farm**; go right over the stile next to a pond, then left alongside marker posts and over another stile to the perimeter road of **Beacon Fell Country Park**.

As its name suggests, **Beacon Fell** was one of a chain of beacons which spanned the nation to warn of invasion during the Spanish and Napoleonic Wars. More recently, in 1970, it became one of Britain's first designated Country Parks.

Cross the road and climb diagonally right through the pines and straight ahead over the heath to the **Visitor**



*The Bleasdale fells from the slopes of Beacon Fell*

The views west over Morecambe Bay are best from the edge of the clear-felled heath above the Visitor Centre.

**Centre.** The summit viewpoint is well worth a short detour for panoramic views over the Ribble Valley and Forest of Bowland. ◀

From the Visitor Centre, head right along the perimeter lane for 250 metres and take the footpath on the left. Look straight out west over Morecambe Bay from the top of this path on a clear day and you might be able to make out the Isle of Man, almost 100 kilometres away in the distance.

Descending steeply through woods and fields, go right at the lane, then left along White Lee Lane for 800 metres back to the car park.

## WALK 2

### *Bleasdale Ridge circular*

<b>Start/finish</b>	Delph Lane car park, Oakenclough (SD 546 455)
<b>Distance</b>	15.5km (9¾ miles)
<b>Total ascent</b>	458m
<b>Time</b>	5hr
<b>Map</b>	OS Explorer OL41
<b>Refreshments</b>	Beacon Fell Country Park, Chipping Farm Shop

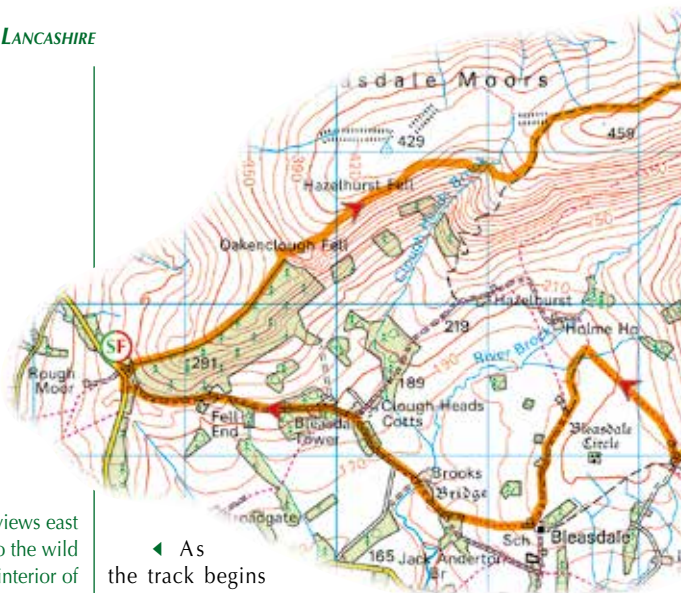
This rewarding walk follows the natural contours of the landscape to complete the northern rim of the Bleasdale Horseshoe before descending the steep nose of Fair Snape and meandering through the rich pastureland beneath the fells via a mysterious prehistoric henge. In the right conditions, the panoramic views from this western rampart of the Bowland Fells are simply stunning.

Park at Delph Lane car park and walk north up the lane past Trumper Trail to turn right along the track beyond the cottage at Stang Yule. Fork left then back right through a kissing gate onto access land. Continue northeast along the edge of a felled plantation.

Climbing onto **Oakenclough Fell**, the views behind you over the Fylde plain, Lune estuary, Morecambe Bay and the Irish Sea open out magnificently. Continue northeast alongside the wall, then follow the track up onto **Hazelhurst Fell**.

Just below the trig point (hidden from view above the skyline northwest) on Hazelhurst Fell, follow the track as it descends before climbing again up to Fiendsdale Head. At a junction of tracks, head left, climbing towards Fiendsdale Head.

A modest **memorial** beside the track commemorates the RAF personnel who lost their lives in military aircraft which crashed among these hills in adverse weather conditions during and after World War 2.



The views east into the wild rugged interior of the Bowland Fells are magnificent, as Ingleborough looms above the craggy outcrops of Bowland Knotts.

◀ As the track begins to descend, at the parking place, take the faint path off right to follow the white marker posts east across the heather to Fiendsdale Head.

When the marker posts run out, make for the wire fence and pick up the flagged path at the kissing gate. Follow the flags east for 100 metres then continue

Memorial to members of RAF air crews lost among the Bowland Fells



alongside the wire fence as it curves gently round to the south onto the summit plateau of **Fair Snape Fell**.

This stretch can be hard going as the peat hags are quite badly eroded in places. Hopping over to the other side of the fence can make things a little easier.

Your endeavours will be rewarded by **views** of Ingleborough's companions, Penny-ghent and Whenside away to the east. To the north, the Lakeland fells form a dramatic backdrop to Morecambe Bay. On a clear day, you may catch a glimpse of the Isle of Man away to the northwest.

To the southwest, the foothills of Snowdonia are clearly visible and, in exceptional atmospheric conditions, the highest summits in the Mountains of Mourne in Northern Ireland are just visible on the horizon.

Continue through the kissing gate and follow the path round to the southwest to the summit cairn. From the cairn, head southeast along the ridge towards Parlick before cutting back on a steep zigzag track down the western face of Fair Snape Fell.

At the access point, follow the faint path across the field to **Higher Fair Snape Farm**. Go through the farmyard then left and right at the signpost on the track to the right of another barn. At end of the track to **Holme House**, go left down the track to Vicarage Farm.

At the farm, a concessionary footpath takes you to **Bleasdale Circle**. ▶

It's unclear exactly who built **Bleasdale Circle**, but it could date back to the Neolithic Period. There's

It doesn't rival Stonehenge but it's an atmospheric spot in a little coppice atop a shallow hillock beneath the Bleasdale fells.



*The Bleasdale Fells form a stunning backdrop to the Neolithic Bleasdale Circle*

little to see on the ground, but interpretation boards explain how the site may have looked more than 5000 years ago. There is evidence that a high-status individual was buried here and, even today, it remains an inexplicably evocative place.

After returning to the track, continue south to the **church** then take the footpath right across fields to the lane and past the old packhorse **Bridge** at Brooks. Continue along the lane past **Bleasdale Tower** and **Fell End**, then cut across on a footpath running south of Stang Yule back to Delph Lane.

## WALK 3

### Clougha Pike

<b>Start/finish</b>	Rigg Lane car park, Quernmore (SD 526 604)
<b>Distance</b>	11.5km (7 miles)
<b>Total ascent</b>	430m
<b>Time</b>	4hr
<b>Map</b>	OS Explorer OL41
<b>Refreshments</b>	Station Inn, Caton

This shortish scramble over the gnarly clutter and spoil heaps of Clougha Pike is a rite of passage for all outdoorsy types from the historic city of Lancaster. The ascent is steep in places, but rewarded with excellent views from the summit out over Morecambe Bay.

Leave the car park via the footpath, climbing through the bracken and keeping right on the rocky track then across the bog on a wooden walkway. Continue climbing through the scrub and into the woodland beside a stream.

At the wall, take the right-hand ladder stile and continue climbing alongside the wall. ► As the gradient plateaus, head half right for the corner of wall ahead, then follow the wall through the wooden gate.

Ascend diagonally southeast up the ridge via the rocky scarp of **Clougha Scar** then follow the wall right towards the summit. After 800 metres, go left through the kissing gate and over the stile, then follow a wire fence and head up over slabs to the cairn and onwards to the trig adorning the summit of **Clougha Pike**.

Leave the trig point and head just north of east on the rocky path towards Grit Fell, crossing the wire fence and descending through the heather before climbing again towards Grit Fell.

*This path can become a stream in wet weather.*



- explore the Red Rose county • Forest of Bowland, Ribble Valley, West Pennine Moors • walks within easy reach of Preston, Blackburn, Burnley, Lancaster and Clitheroe

From the wide-open expanses of Morecambe Bay to the limestone fringes of the Dales, and from the rich industrial heritage of the West Pennine Moors to the wild vastness of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Lancashire offers some of the most varied walking anywhere in the UK.

The walks in this book have been carefully selected to offer something for everyone: from wild weekend adventures for committed hikers and challenging routes for seasoned walkers to engaging urban hikes and shorter wildlife-rich walks for active families to enjoy.

- includes both low-level and high-level walks



- most walks are suitable for any reasonably fit walker
- includes walks for all seasons – though some higher level routes are challenging in winter