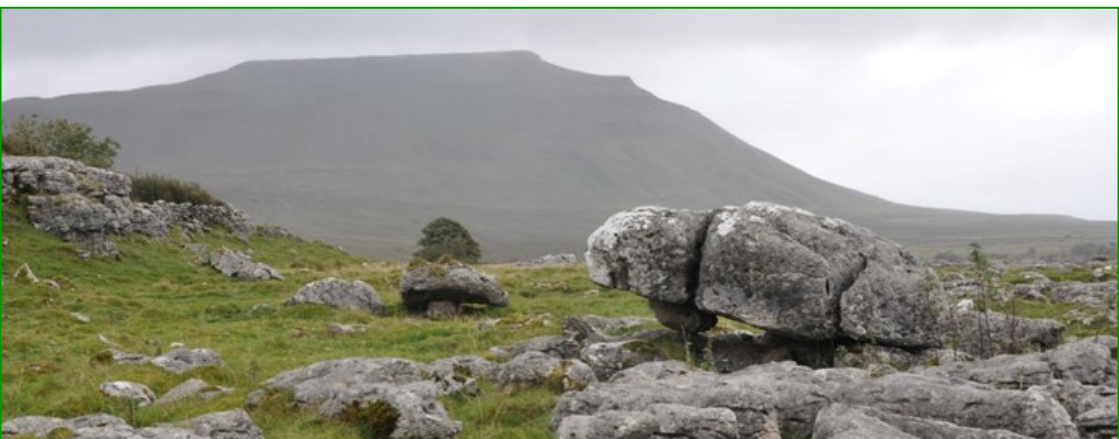


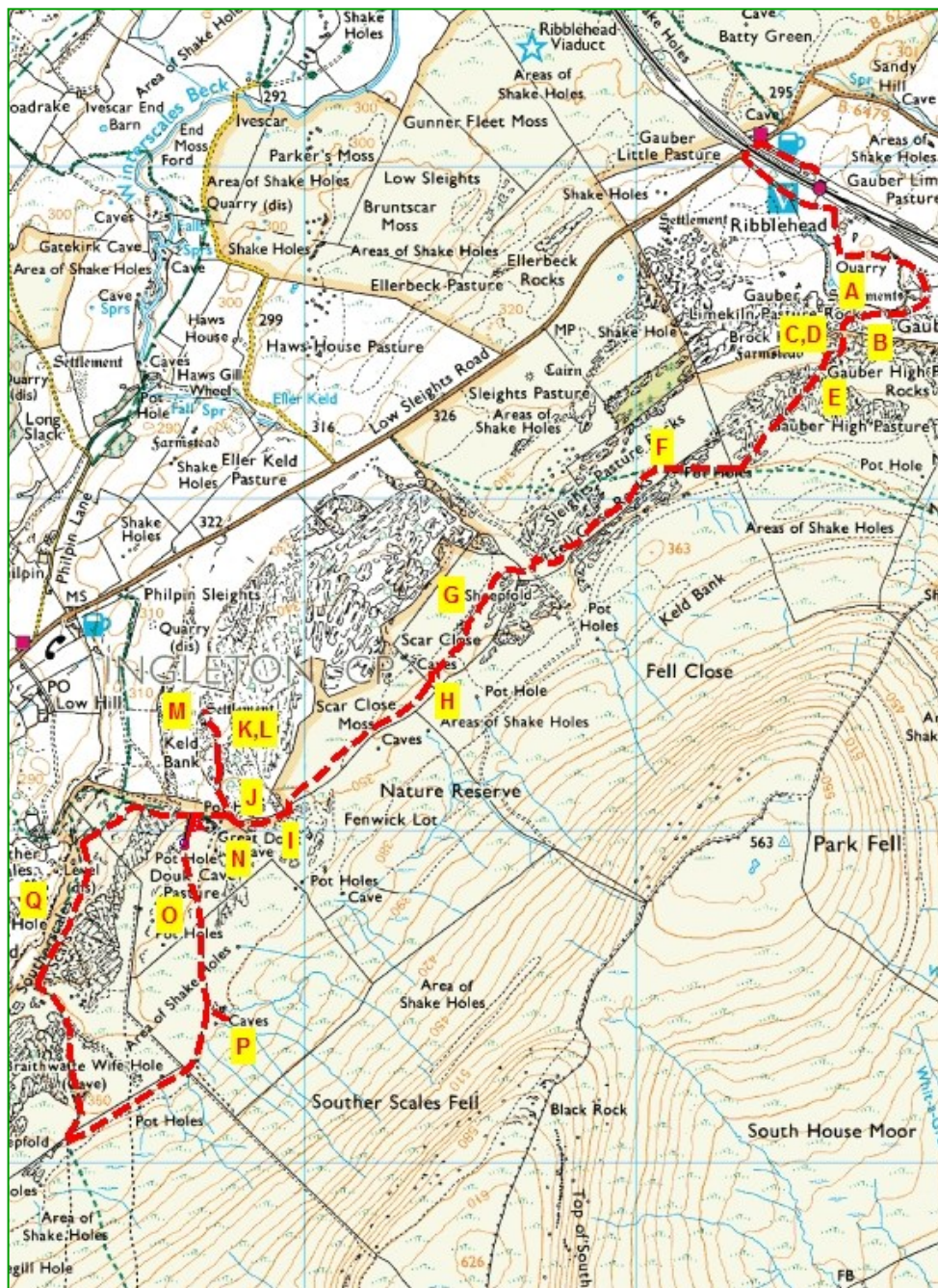
Ingleborough National Nature Reserve
Archaeology Walk No. 3

Ribblehead, Great Douk and Southerscales

One of a series of three self-guided walks
produced by the
Ingleborough Archaeology Group
in association with
Natural England



Your Route



Ribblehead, Great Douk and Southerscales

This 9km (5.5 mile) walk on the Ingleborough National Nature Reserve (NNR) takes you past many points of historical and archaeological interest. Although a GPS is not necessary to complete the walk you may find one useful to help you locate some of the features described.

This is a moderate walk over paths and open fell with no steep ascents or descents. It does however cross extensive areas of limestone pavement which can be quite difficult and, when wet, very slippery. Please wear appropriate clothing – including stout footwear. Please keep dogs under close control at all times.

This walk may be extended by returning via Natural England's Ridge Route walk which is described in a separate leaflet. This extension takes you almost to the summit of Ingleborough and will result in a round walk of about 12km (7.5mile).

You can start this walk either from the car parking area at the entrance to Ribblehead Quarry (SD7660 7886) or from Ribblehead railway station. From the station walk down the access track to the main road (B6255) and turn left. Go under the railway bridge and then left again up the track running parallel with the railway line. The entrance to the NNR is on your right after 300m. Pass through the gate into the quarry and make your way to the Geology Seat, where you will find an audio post. Listen to the short recordings to learn more about the wildlife, geology and history of the quarry and its surroundings.

Return to the route and follow the green waymarkers. Bear left at the pond and continue to follow the

green waymarkers up a rough stone slope.



A. The Quarry

The quarry was first established in the late 19th century to supply crushed limestone for the Settle to Carlisle railway. The quarry became part of the Ingleborough NNR in 2000.

Pass through a small gate and after about 30m take an obvious grassy track to your right. You will come across more green waymarkers which lead you along the top of the quarry.

B. Settlement

Around you lie a number of banks and earthworks, all that remain of a multi-period settlement, probably reaching back through the Romano-British period to the Iron Age.

Follow the green waymarkers through a small gate and after about 80m, just after the second waymarker, turn right off the main route on a rough narrow cleared path through the limestone pavement.

C. Remnant Walls

As you walk through the limestone note the upstanding stones on your

right. These are the remains of ancient walls.

On emerging from the limestone you will discover the distinct remains of three rectangular buildings, clearly visible in the aerial photograph below (SD7659 7843). The black dotted line indicates your route.

D. Gauber Settlement

This site was excavated in the 1970s by Alan King. The artist's impression on the next page gives an idea what the settlement may have looked like when it was inhabited.

In the small building just to your right as you emerge from the limestone were found the remains of an oven or kiln, along with many animal bones and a quern for grinding corn. These finds suggest





© Dominic Andrews, Archaeoart

that this building may have been used for preparing food. To your left is the largest building on the site – which is an impressive 19m long with 1.5m thick walls. Finds here included a spearhead, two iron knife blades, a horse bit and four coins. This building has been interpreted as the main living area.

The third building – a short distance away – makes use of the limestone bedrock to form its foundations. A central hearth together with a hammerstone and a spindle whorl suggest that this may have been a workshop.

Although the site has not been firmly dated the finds suggest that it was occupied during the late Anglo-Saxon period.

Looking up the length of the largest building, you are now going

to head up the bank on your right. At the top of the bank look for a small raised mound about 10m from the edge (SD7657 7838).

E. Burial Cairn

In the middle of this mound is a small rectangular cist (chamber) which indicates that it was a prehistoric burial cairn. A stone



leaf-shaped arrowhead found in the cist is typical of the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age.

From the burial cairn head across the rough fell, aiming for Ingleborough in the far distance. Take care across the uneven ground and aim for a small gate in the distant wall about 500m ahead. (SD7629 7810). This gate is distinctive as it has a bent handle. The handle has been purposefully bent to stop cows from opening



the gate with their heads! Follow the path to the next small gate and note the wall either side



of the gate.

F. Orthostats

The large stones set vertically into the base of the wall are known as orthostats and they are distinctive of medieval walls.

Through the gate, after about 30m, bear left along a track running parallel to the wall. After another 250m go over a stone step stile next to a large gate.

Eventually the track bends away from the wall to meet another track. Turn left along this track for a few metres before leaving it to head through a small gate on your right to re-enter the NNR.

As you follow the blue waymarkers round to your left Ingleborough dominates the skyline.



G. Ingleborough Summit

On the summit of Ingleborough there are the remains of a rampart around the edge and twenty circular features – some more distinct than others. Until recently this was interpreted as an Iron Age hillfort containing hut circles.

A more recent interpretation suggests that the rampart was never intended for defensive purposes and that the circles may be ring cairns – ceremonial features from the Bronze Age probably dating back over 4,000 years.

You can visit the summit of Ingleborough should you choose to extend your walk and return by the Ridge Route.

Continue to follow the blue waymarkers running alongside the wall which soon appears on your left. Cross over another wall which has collapsed.

H. Old Walls

The wall on your left would have originally separated improved land from the open fell. The need for wire on top of this wall is an indication that modern sheep are larger and more agile than their predecessors.

The collapsed wall which you have just crossed also reflects a distinct change in farming practices as small farms merged into larger units and walls became redundant.

About 550m further on, your route takes you over a stone step stile in the wall on your left. Note the difference in vegetation either side of the wall caused by heavier grazing on the fell. As you follow the blue waymakers to the right take a good look at the wall alongside.

I. 16th Century Wall.

Documentary records show that this wall was in existence in 1543 and it has a number of interesting features distinctive of that period. It has many large stones and is both tall and straight sided. Also the measurement across the top of the wall is typically one cubit – the distance from fingertips to elbow, about 45cm.

Go over another stone step stile. Continue straight ahead, do not go through the gate in the wall on your left but carry on through the sheep pens and over the stone step stile next to the large gate. Continue walking straight ahead, keeping the limestone scar on your right. This raised limestone pavement is Scar Close, entry to which is by permit only, available from Natural England.

J. Scar Close

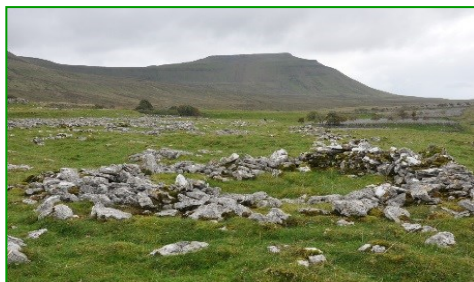
Scar Close has been protected from grazing for over 40 years and the diversity of its plant life makes it the most important upland limestone pavement in the UK.

Note how the natural limestone outcrop has been enhanced, as a barrier for stock, with stones filling in the gaps.

After about 180m you cross a low grass-covered stony bank (SD7476 7722).

K. Settlement

You are now entering an area which contains the remains of many walls, banks and other structures. There was once an extensive settlement on this site with many enclosures and buildings. Although the limestone here is now exposed, when the site was inhabited there would have been a covering of soil giving good grazing for stock. This indicates that the site is probably prehistoric. It is recorded as being Romano-British.



Explore the site at your leisure as you head towards the short wall in front of you.

L. Bield

This wall is a bield – a shelter for sheep. Although not as old as the settlement, the bield has several

characteristics which indicate that it is possibly late medieval: it is tall with straight sides, there is no grading of the stones from large at the bottom to small at the top, the stones do not form regular courses (layers) and the top stones are laid flat.



From the field walk to the edge of the bank and look down to the terrace below. As well as seeing further evidence of the settlement you will see a large elongated mound with a small pile of stones on top.

M. Neolithic Long Cairn

This man-made mound is a typical Neolithic long cairn used for burials over 4,500 years ago. The disturbed

top shows that in the past it has been dug into – probably by antiquarians in the 19th century.

Retrace your steps to the sheep pens. Note the two large boulders under the limestone scar propped up by smaller rocks. Is this a natural feature or is it the work of man? We may never know.



Go back over the stone step stile and then through the small gate on your right. Immediately against the wall on your right is a jumble of bricks and broken metal. This is what remains of a pair of Set Pots. The picture on the next page shows their condition in 2008 when they were surveyed by the Ingleborough Archaeology Group.



They are a good example of how quickly historical features can deteriorate.



N. Set Pots

The pots are made of copper and they were built into a brick base. A fire was lit under the pots to boil and soften paste dip, or salve, which was then rubbed on the fleeces of sheep to kill parasites. They were probably last used about 50 years ago.

In front of you is Great Douk – a large natural sink hole surrounded by a wall. Go down to the wall and follow it round to the right. When you reach a stile in this wall do not follow the track downhill but climb up the grassy bank in front of you. (A short diversion over the stile will take you to the bottom of Great Douk.)

On reaching the top of the bank head for a small grassy mound about 50m ahead of you (SD7465 7697).

O. Cairn Field

This grassy mound is probably the remains of a Bronze Age burial cairn about 4,000 years old. Again the disturbed top suggests that it has been dug into at some time in the past.

Thirty-three similar cairns, mainly oval in shape, have been recorded in this immediate area. Some are more obvious than others, many having sandstone placed around the outside as a kerb. Have a good look around and see if you can find the remnant cairn pictured below, which has two large stones at either end (SD7454 7686).



From the first cairn your route takes you through a gate clearly visible in the wall on your left. Follow the path through this gate and when you see a limestone outcrop in front of you head for the walls beyond.

P. Washfold

You have now arrived at a washfold. This washfold is typical of many in the Dales where a water course was dammed to make a deep pool and

the natural limestone bedrock was used as a platform to safely push sheep into the water for washing. Once dipped and scrubbed they were released onto the fell. Many of these washfolds were still in use well into the 20th century.



Return to the path and continue round in front of the limestone outcrop. Head for the wall about 200m ahead of you and go over a stone step stile. Follow the path alongside the wall until you reach a gate on your right. At this point you can choose to extend your walk by following the Ridge Route up to your left. Otherwise go through the gate and follow the track.

After about 500m the track bends sharply to the right and heads quickly downhill. At this point a wire fence appears on your left. After another 250m this fence gives way to a wall. Leave the track and look over the fence at this point.

Q. Southerscales Settlement

Below you lie the remains of several clusters of buildings in a large natural basin – although in certain conditions these earthworks can be difficult to see.

This site is a Scheduled Monument. It was fully surveyed and excavated by a Stories in Stone project which proved that it was occupied as five farmsteads between the mid seventh and the late tenth century. Please note the site has no public access.

Return to the track and just before the second gate follow the sign up to the right, back to Great Douk. From here retrace your steps to the start.

Be careful not to go astray when you reach the gate with the bent handle. Once through this gate head for the twin gables of Ribblehead Station, which can just be seen in the distance over to your left.

At the far edge of the exposed limestone head to your right along the ridge and this will bring you back to the cist above the Gauber settlement (page 5). If you are unable to see the station due to poor weather then follow the wall to your left which will eventually bring you back to the gate above the quarry.

Information

Spring and Summer are the best seasons to see the wonderful flora on the nature reserve but often the vegetation can mask archaeological features which are just lumps and bumps in the ground. These features are best seen between October and April.

The approximate dates of the archaeological periods referred to in this series of publications are:

Neolithic	4000 BC to 2500 BC
Bronze Age	250 BC to 800 BC
Iron Age	800 BC to AD 70
Romano British	AD 70 to AD 410
Early Medieval/Anglo Saxon	AD 410 to AD 1066
Medieval	AD 1066 to AD 1540

Please be aware that there are cattle on the NNR throughout the year. If left alone livestock will generally not cause a threat to visitors, but if you are walking a dog and cattle become agitated you are advised to let go of your animal.

Leave gates as you find them unless instructed otherwise. Do not climb on, or remove stones from, any of the walls or features. Take great care when walking as much of the ground is uneven and limestone can be very slippery when wet.

There is limited mobile phone reception around Ingleborough and it cannot be relied upon. We advise that you take the relevant OS map:

Explorer Map OL2 Yorkshire Dales Southern & Western Areas

This leaflet has been part-funded by Stories in Stone, a programme of conservation and community projects concentrated on the Ingleborough area and developed by the Ingleborough Dales Landscape Partnership.

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www.storiesinstone.org.uk