



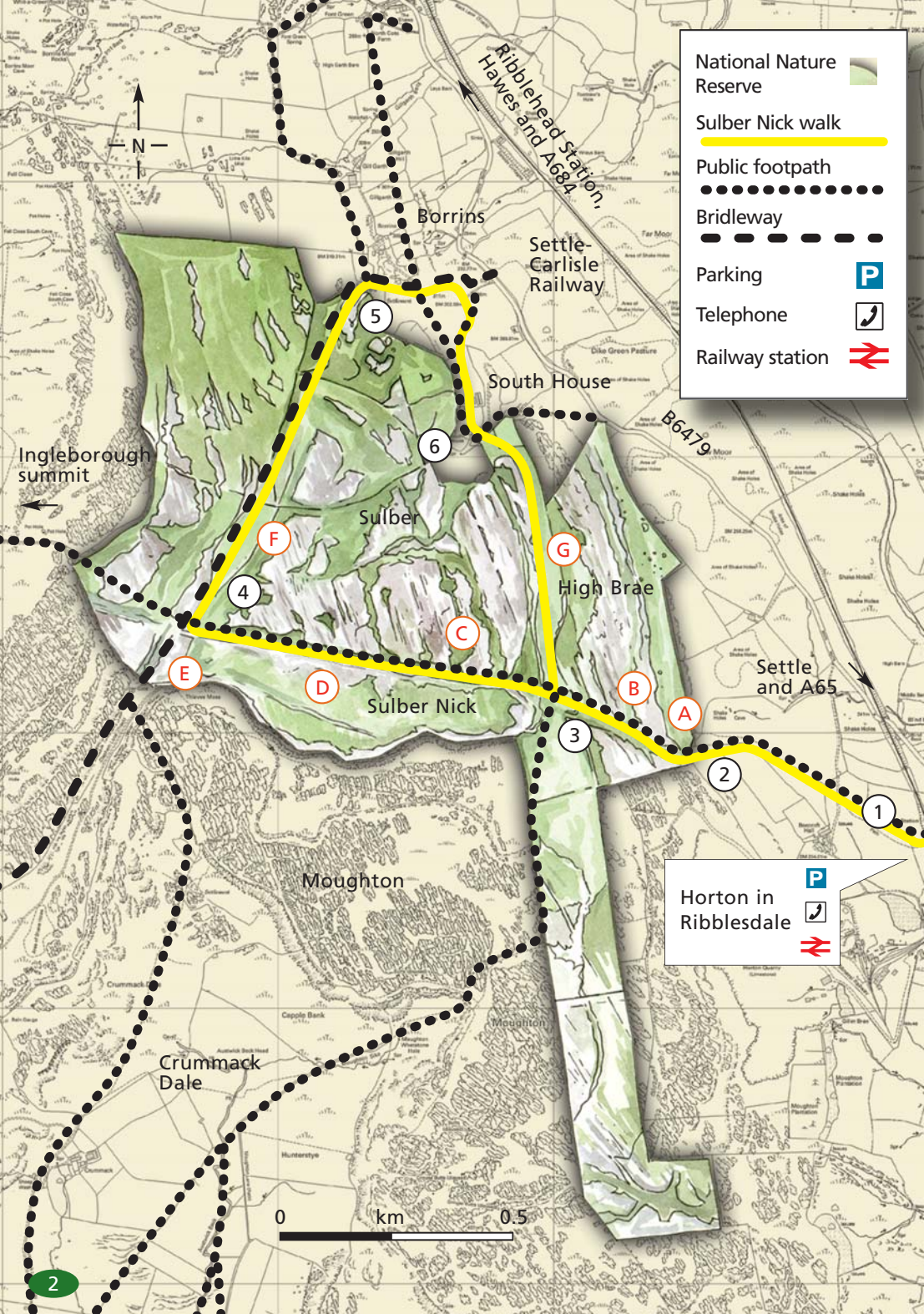
ENGLISH  
NATURE


# Sulber Nick walk

Ingleborough National Nature Reserve



working towards *Natural England*  
for people, places and nature



National Nature Reserve	
Sulber Nick walk	
Public footpath	
Bridleway	
Parking	
Telephone	
Railway station	

Horton in Ribblesdale	
	
	



2

5

6

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C

E

D

B

A

1

2

3

Ingleborough summit

Borrins

Settle-Carlisle Railway

South House

Sulber

High Brae

Sulber Nick

Settle and A65

Moughton

Crummack Dale

Moughton

Ribblesdale Station,  
Hawes and A684

B6479

# Sulber Nick walk

*Ingleborough National Nature Reserve is renowned for the wildlife and geology of its limestone pavement and other limestone features. The area's importance has been recognised by English Nature through the creation of this National Nature Reserve which covers an area of 1,014 hectares. Ingleborough is also a wildlife site of international importance, being part of the Natura 2000 series created by the European Union.*

This beautiful walk is approximately 9 kilometres (5.5 miles) long and should take about 2.5 hours to complete. Along the route there are some wonderful views across dramatic limestone country.

Difficulty level is medium with a number of stone stiles and some quite steep sections.

Throughout the Reserve there are footpaths for your safety and convenience. Where sections of the walk pass through privately-owned land around farmsteads, please keep to the public footpaths.

*1 Arriving by train? Alight at Horton in Ribblesdale Station and take the public footpath due west from the northbound platform. By car - from the National Park car park in Horton in Ribblesdale – head north across the footbridge over the River Ribble, then continue due west to the railway station.*

*2 From the railway station follow the public footpath (the main Three Peaks footpath) for about three-quarters of a mile until you enter the Ingleborough National Nature Reserve (NNR).*

*3 Continue on the public footpath through High Brae Pasture and*

*over the wooden ladder stiles into Sulber Pasture.*

*4 Keep on through Sulber Nick until the footpath forms a crossroads with the bridleway to Clapham. At this point a short detour along the bridleway to the south gives wonderful views across Crummack Dale. Return to the crossroads and continue on the bridleway northwards towards Borrins.*

*5 Before reaching Borrins you will leave the Ingleborough NNR. Go through the farm gate and continue along the bridleway (track) first to the east and then when the track goes down to the road, take the track swinging round to the south (right), towards South House Farm. Please keep to the public rights of way across this land.*

*6 Pass through the farm yard at South House Farm into a small field, across a small stream and over the stone stile back into the Ingleborough NNR. Now leave the public footpath (which goes over a wooden ladder stile, marked with yellow paint) and continue up the slope (southwards) along a path to rejoin (after two-thirds of a mile) the footpath (turning left/east) back to the railway station.*

## A) Limestone pavements

Whatever the season, as you enter the Ingleborough National Nature Reserve (NNR), the colour of the landscape around you will be very different from the green fields you have just walked through. You have entered 'Limestone Country'.

The landscape here is dominated by large expanses of grey-white rock interspersed with grasslands, green in the summer but tinged with orange during the autumn and winter months.



Hart's-tongue fern in limestone pavement. Whitfield Benson

The rock scars and blocks all around were laid down as marine deposits during the Carboniferous period, approximately 300 million years ago. These large expanses of limestone blocks (or clints) are known collectively as limestone pavements.



Shorthorn cow. Whitfield Benson

## B) Cattle grazing

Throughout most of the year High Brae Pasture is grazed with a small but elusive herd of native cattle. These cattle have been reintroduced as part of the Limestone Country Project to manage the rough grassland vegetation found on these upland limestone pastures. Native breeds are uniquely able to digest and live on a diet very low in nutrition. They are also better adapted to cope with the hostile upland climate - their hairy coats offering protection against winter days.

## C) Sulber Nick

As you cross the stile into Sulber you will walk up a narrow corridor stretching out before you. This 'dry valley' is all that remains of an old stream bed, the water flow of which has been lost to underground caverns.

## D) Blanket bog

The land around is a mosaic of colours, the harsh grey-white of the limestone contrasting against the darker purple and brown shades of the heather ground.

Close inspection reveals the heather growing on layers of dark, almost black peat.

Since the last Ice Age this area of the country has been subjected to some very wet periods. During this time peat accumulated on flatter, poorly-drained ground.

By reducing numbers of livestock the acid-loving plants, such as purple flowering ling heather and pink flowering cross-leaved heath, have increased in abundance.



Cross-leaved heath. Laurie Campbell

## E) Crummack Dale

The view across Crummack Dale is a treat.

To the south and east is Moughton Common, a wild and wonderful place on which grows one of the largest remnants of the high altitude juniper forests which would have clothed this mountainous landscape in earlier times.



Juniper berries. Laurie Campbell

To the west is Long Scar with its miles of exposed, bleached limestone pavements.

Running between these two high level plateaux is Crummack Dale, a glacial valley which was scoured out of the hillside by ice flows during the last Ice Age.

The valley bottom now provides good quality grazing, while the hillsides offer a useful bite for sheep during the summer months.

## F) Limestone springs

At the base of the slope below the bridleway, water (rich in dissolved calcium) seeps from the underlying limestone rock strata.

This creates an ideal habitat for a whole variety of moisture-loving plants.

Some of the most colourful are butterwort (an insect-eating plant), grass of Parnassus and the beautiful bird's-eye primrose or 'pinkey'.



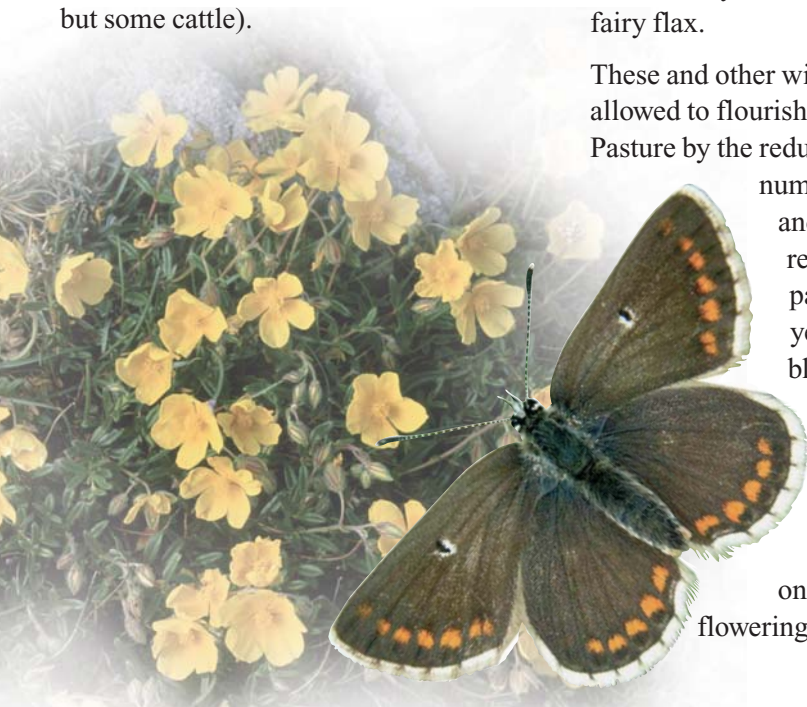
Bird's-foot trefoil. Laurie Campbell

## G) Limestone pastures

Most of the limestone scenery through which you are walking bears witness to a long history of forest clearance and pasturing of stock (mainly sheep but some cattle).

Continual nibbling by these animals has left a relatively short turf, which supports a delightful mosaic of plants like wild thyme, bird's-foot trefoil and fairy flax.

These and other wild plants have been allowed to flourish in High Brae Pasture by the reduction of livestock numbers in the spring and summer. The result is colourful pastures of purple, yellow, white and blue. Keep a careful eye open for the elusive northern brown argus butterfly, whose caterpillars feed on the yellow flowering rock-rose.



Common rock-rose. Laurie Campbell

Female northern brown argus.  
Robert Goodison

# Take your own safety seriously on the Sulber Nick walk

*There is much to see and enjoy here, but peace of mind is something only you can ensure by being informed and prepared.*

Ingleborough is a wonderful but demanding reserve. A remote and often deserted mountainous area (rising to 650 metres) it is subject to extreme weather conditions, including sudden and dense hill fog. We recommend you come equipped with the following:

- A map and compass - make sure you know how to use them
- Waterproofs, spare clothing
- Emergency food and water
- A torch and whistle
- A mobile phone – limited reception but worth a try
- A rucksack to carry it all in

It makes sense to tell a responsible person exactly where you are going, how long you plan to spend and what time you will return.

## The lie of the land

Many rocks are slippery and loose and there are deep holes concealed by

vegetation, so keep your eyes peeled and don't try to travel in poor light.

There are many caves and potholes. Unless you are part of a properly equipped, experienced and supervised group, stay well away from them.

Take care with the old drystone walls – many are topped with rusty barbed wire. They may be unstable and it may be unwise to climb over or on them – use the stiles or gates provided.

## Keeping an eye on livestock

- Please try not to disturb the livestock
- If left alone, animals will generally not cause a threat to visitors
- However, cattle can intimidate, crowd or kick
- Do not get between cows and their calves
- If you are walking a dog and cows become agitated and crowd around you, let go of your animal

## Public phones

Public phones are located at Selside (SD785757) and Horton in Ribblesdale (SD807726)



# ENGLISH NATURE

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Front cover photograph:  
Sulber, looking towards  
Pen-y-ghent. Whitfield Benson



Natura 2000 is a network of internationally important wildlife sites, protected under EC Habitats and Bird Directives. They have been set up to help halt the loss of European biodiversity.



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