

Route(s)	Yorkshire Three Peak – Winter Edition
Elevation(s) (ft/m)	Pen-y-Ghent (2,277ft/694m) Whernside (2,415ft/736m) Ingleborough (2,372ft/723m)
Date(s)	February 4 2018
Partner(s)	Kyle Finnegan
Elevation gain/loss (ft/m)	4,831ft/ 1,472m
Distance (miles)	24.7 miles/ 39.75km
Total time (hours/mins)	9h 50m
Equipment	Rucksack
Weather Forecast	Partly cloudy
Weather Actuality	Partly cloudy, partly sunny, partly white-out
Flora/Fauna	N/A
Wildlife	Sheep. Standard protocol.
Starting Point/Trailhead	Horton-in-Ribblesdale
Grade/Rating	Class 1 and 2 (walking with some rocky sections)
Accommodations	N/A
Tourist Attractions	N/A
Motto for the day	N/A

Day 1	
Daily 1 Distance	24.7 miles/ 39.75km
Daily 1 Elevation	4,831ft/ 1,472m
Day 1 Daily Time	9h 45m (GPS run time 9h 49m)
Depart Domicile	7.00am
Arrive Horton-in-Ribblesdale	8.25am
Depart from car	8.40am
Pen-y-Ghent	9.40am
Whernside	1.40pm
Ingleborough	4.15pm
Arrive Horton-in-Ribblesdale	6.25pm
The Story	

In the grand tradition of things, I absolutely did not want to get up early on Sunday. I had trouble sleeping in the night and so crawled downstairs to the couch. Kyle had left his phone down there so when the alarm went off at the absolute crack of AM I gave serious consideration to turning it off and not telling him. *He would not know 'til it was too late to do anything anyways!* That being said, I dug deep and literally crawled upstairs, dropped the phone near Kyle and whimpered about being tired. Kyle listened with the patience of saint and then told me I'd feel better once we got out there. My rational brain knew this to be true, but the part of my brain operating on four hours of sleep laid on the bed and pretended to ignore him. Then I said something about needing a good protein breakfast before we left and tried to close my eyes while Kyle shuffled off to the kitchen to whip up some eggs. We did eventually get in the car and get going. *No thanks to me.*



I did, however, manage to stay awake and help navigate for the car ride to Horton-in-Ribblesdale. It took us about an hour and twenty minutes to get up there and fortunately there was still some parking in a little pull out. Last time, we arrived way later on a sunny May day and it was nuts busy. Good thing we were early this cold February morning. We got out of the car, I had a little more spring in my step at this point, and started getting ready, but it was cold!!

Fortunately, the start this time was a little easier since I knew which way I was going. We started in running tights with a thin wool quarter zip with our merino air hoodies over top of that. It was enough to brace against the cool and still remain breathable. We took off at a good clip though to try and warm up. The initial flat section past the primary school was fine, but as soon as the trees cleared, and the road started a gentle incline upwards towards some pastures, it became on-and-off icy. *It could have been the early morning wake up, but I'm pretty sure I saw a sheep had a bucket around its neck. But I'm not a farmer, so that might be normal...* I had a couple dramatic arm waving slips a few times, but fortunately stayed standing. The ground was, not shockingly, frozen for a good portion of the start. Frozen and slippy trail. So, we had to bounce around onto the least slick looking sections or onto the grass where necessary. But, there were several near misses to be sure. The laid flagstone like steps proved to be almost more problematic as they seemed to ice over easier. It felt like, in general, it slowed us down a little, but not too dramatically. *Plus, given we'd both been on and off sick for a month... we were not moving at lightening speeds! Probably couldn't have gone faster if we wanted!* There were a few others about, but in general the day had a stillness about it. And, as we ascended, the clouds began to roll in from the south and the winds picked up.

I was curious how the short little rocky scramble before the summit would look. It was about as I expected it, but also, slightly better. There was some compacted snow where people had walked, which was slippery, and some sections with ice forming on the rocks, but it was very passable, even in our gortex running shoes. We moved slowly and carefully through this rocky section, using our hands to steady ourselves where needed. Then, all too soon, it was over. *I was really looking forward to a bit more of a sustained challenge!* The wind was well and truly picking up though, and it was too cold to sit about, so we moved forward into what was turning into a near white out. We couldn't see very far in front of us at all. I wasn't fussed. I'd been here before, I generally knew where I was going, and in a worst case scenario, we could back track or pull out the GPS. In fact, it was exciting. *I love it!* Not long after, I could see the trig point coming out of the clouds, and two women, who we'd seen previously, asking someone to take their picture. As we approached I heard one yell to wait as she needed to fix her hair. *It was blowin' wind up our skirts and she was worried about her hair!* It made me smile. That is dedication. We asked the same gentleman to take our picture, but I didn't even bother to try to fix my hair. I have a gift for looking like an absolute mess. *No sense getting fussy now!* The guy took our camera

and made some comment about not having seen an actual camera in a while (presumably because most people just use their phones). Guess I really am part of the old guard now!



There was a large group of people huddled on the far side of the wall trying to use it as a wind-break, but I couldn't fathom stopping for long. It just wasn't tempting with the wind picking up and no views. Plus, we were on a bit of a schedule if we were going to try to finish around or just after dark. A quick check with Kyle revealed he was ready to keep moving as well. *Thank the lord because we were going to move either way! But it's better to have him think it was a vote! Marital harmony is bliss!* Again, with the clouds being thick and all

around us, it was difficult to see exactly where we were going, but I generally remembered where the trail went, and we set off in that direction. It appeared to be snowier on this side though, and fewer tracks, so several times I had to gauge if it 'felt like a trail'. *They don't call me trail sniffer for nothing!* The wind was picking up though, and it was biting through our layers, so we picked up the pace in an attempt to drop a little lower and get out of the wind. Once we were slightly more protected I told Kyle I had to pee and I wanted to stop while there was still snow. I hiked off the main path a bit, snow coming well over the tops of my running shoes, and tried to get my pants off. But, it was so cold, my thighs were numb, and I could barely feel where the pants were to get them off. It was so weird I was giggling! With dedication to the cause I muddled through, and even used an Anne Ice Wedgie (aka snow instead of toilet paper). Kyle and I joked about writing to remind her it still makes me think of her!

With that business sorted, we headed off back downhill. The trail was still a bit icy, but as we descended it became less so, and the sun started to come out, warming the lower parts of the hill. From here we used mostly my memory to navigate the paths from Pen-y-Ghent over to Whernside. There were a handful of posts with markers on them, but they were fairly few and far between. It was along this stretch that the sun chose to come out in all its glory. It was beautiful. And warming up! We could see all the peaks, snowcapped, surrounded by green fields, dotted with sheep and houses. It was so quintessentially glorious. Some days I miss the rugged and remote Cascades, but today I was just peaceful and grateful. As we approached a paved road we could see clouds rolling in from the north, and it was clear we could have precipitation in our near future. With that in consideration, we pulled out a packet of Quorn picnic eggs and shared them between us while we walked. Better to stay fueled and keep going than stop, especially if the weather was going to turn again.

We intersected the B6479, and took a right, following it until it T-ed with the B6255. The weather which had looked ominous was so far holding off and in fact seemed to be clearing up a little bit as we approached the Ribbleshead Viaduct. It is a really gorgeous elevated section of railway, and we were fortunate that the skies were fairly blue at this point, so we could enjoy it properly. Up to this point we'd



only run into four people or so from the summit of Pen-y-Ghent to the viaduct, but it was clear there was more activity happening on this side. *Or perhaps it was just late enough people were getting moving!* From the road up to this point it had been fairly dry and easy footing. And as we traveled under Whernside the path stayed decent. It was as we turned uphill that we started to slowly encounter snow again. But, as the day had warmed, it didn't seem as icy. And, to keep ourselves motivated, we pulled out sour

gummies and fueled up! The weather stayed pleasant until we gained the ridge. Once we started up the last gradual hill towards the summit it became clear that the clouds from the north had darkened to a really dismal shade of gray, and were closing in. I was hoping we would make the summit before the clouds encased us, but alas, we were about five minutes from the top when the clouds overtook us. Fortunately, we were able to catch a glimpse of Morecambe Bay before it was swallowed into the clouds. But that was it. And, in a wicked turn of fate, the clouds closed in on us on this second summit!! I couldn't believe it! As we closed in on the trig it started to become a white out again. *Unbelievable!*

There were three people up there huddled together, doing lord knows what besides waiting around. Kyle and I hopped through the narrow gap in the rock fence to tag the trig and snap a few photos. But once again, why stick around? The clouds were obscuring everything, the wind was kicking up, and it was starting to snow. There wasn't a real compelling reason to stick around. Plus, today was a race to get out before it got too dark. So, a few more sour worms and away we went. We had to 'wog' a little to get the blood flowing again. And as we were going the wind picked up and the snow started coming down more heavily. Except the wind was blowing it onto my side and back and crusting ice there! I didn't realize it was there. *Guess I was really cold at this point! My mind was now focused on going down and quickly!* As it happened last time, as soon as we descended a little way, the wind and clouds let up a bit. And, similarly, I had to pee. Again! I hadn't drunk that much! It was almost getting embarrassing and there weren't a lot of places to run off and hide! *Plus, I needed snow to make it an eco-stop!* As soon as I said it, as if it was contagious, Kyle told me he had to go. Well... now we definitely had to sort something out. To solve this particular problem, we ended up playing look out for each other. Except as soon as I had my pants half off Kyle said 'Oh someone's coming!' my reply was to screech 'Really?!' to which he nonchalantly said 'Oh yah we'll you have time'. *Then why bring it up?! I nearly peed my pants!* Crisis averted, and business settled, we set off again. We dropped down through the farm fields and buildings, past a little summer shop that was closed and on to the main road near The Old Inn. At this point a warm dinner was sounding lovely. I wasn't strictly needing to stop but a rest sounded nice. Fortunately, I was mission driven, and in that mindset, and so was Kyle. *Phew! That could have been a dangerous temptation!*

We climbed over the fence and started uphill, yet again. This time, however, it was much muddier. We really had to circle around some wide muddy sections. In hindsight our mini ankle gaitors would have been a good idea, but without them mud was creeping dangerously up to our ankles, and in a couple cases, started to spill over into our shoes. It was ice cold! Which made sense because the clouds, coupled with the lowering sun, meant that the temperatures were dropping, and things were icing up again. The laid stone paths up a bit higher proved to be particularly treacherous and we ended up staying mostly off to the sides of the flagstones. I was a little apprehensive that this rocky section up to the very mellow ridge trail might be a bit slicker than the Pen-Y-Ghent section. But, in actuality, even though it was icy, we just moved slow and used our hands in some places and it went fine. *But, for the love of Mary!* As soon as we hit the this more moderate path, a little more exposed to the elements the wind kicked up yet again. And this time, it was really biting. Almost painfully so. We kept moving and found the summit trig, snapped a couple photos and looked at the GPS to tag the summit. But the batteries which had been working ten minutes before now read as dead. *Darn it.* They were new batteries this morning so the cold must have zapped em! We put on windbreakers and changed out the batteries, but these other fresh batteries were also dead. *Ugh. Well. Time to descend.* I'd rather descend using the precious little daylight we had left to make it as far and fast as possible than fiddle with dead batteries. In an effort to warm the batteries, as that can help on occasion, I put the GPS in my coat with the antenna sticking out, and we got going. My fingers had started to really freeze-up so I was constantly blowing on them to warm them. My running gloves were fairly insufficient, but I didn't want to stop and dig out my other gloves. I knew once we descended a bit it'd get better. It just took longer than I was expecting to get better this round. *Unh. Annoying but not dangerous yet.* But I did hound Kyle a couple times to make sure he was warm enough as he rarely gets cold but had expressed he was still feeling chilled. We had brought extra warm layers etc.

In the end, we were able to descend quite far and use the daylight to our advantage. But, we also encountered a lot deeper mud obstacles on this side and it slowed our progress. *Well. That and we were starting to slow a little bit due to the mileage.* Randomly my hips were hurting. *What is up with that?* Just before the light completely disappeared from the sky we pulled out our headlamps and completed the rest of the jaunt back into town. I think the dark made it feel longer. But we eventually made it to the lights twinkling in the distance. We popped out at the train station and made our way through town to the car. And right as we passed through the town it started to snow again! And it was really coming down! The snow was sticking to the car. So instead of going to the pub for dinner we decided to drive back towards the house in case it really started to stick to the roads. But, we had one stop before home and that was to grab a curry near Tingley! *Just as delicious as a day in the hills!*



