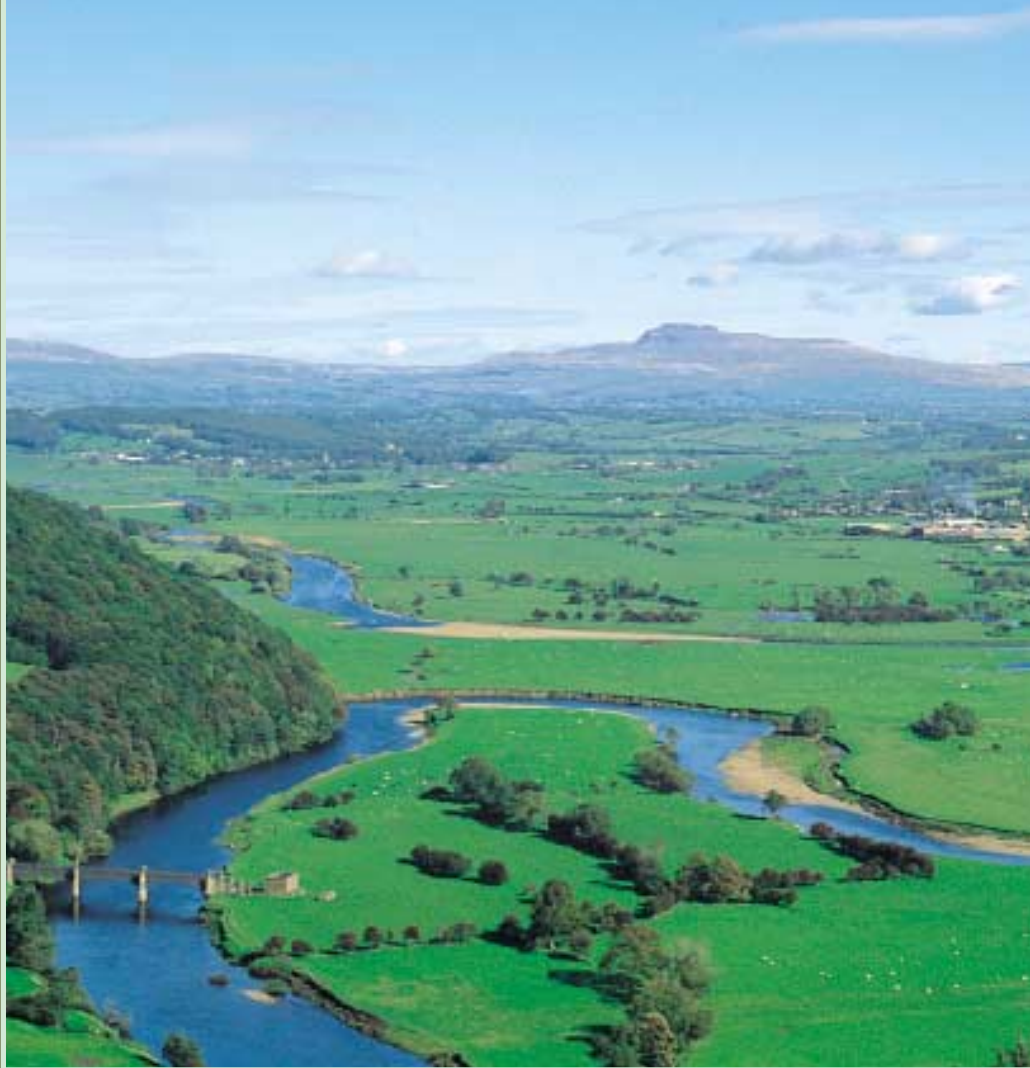


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# Lune Valley Ramble

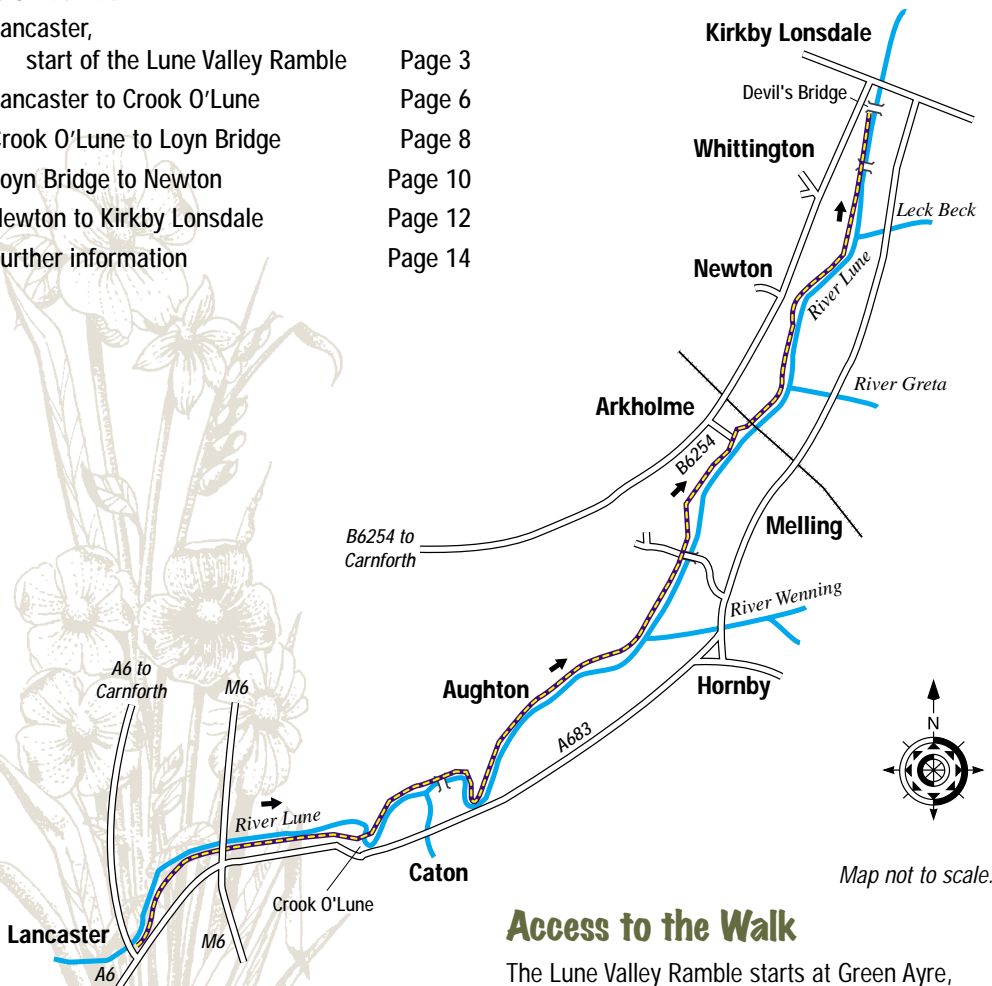
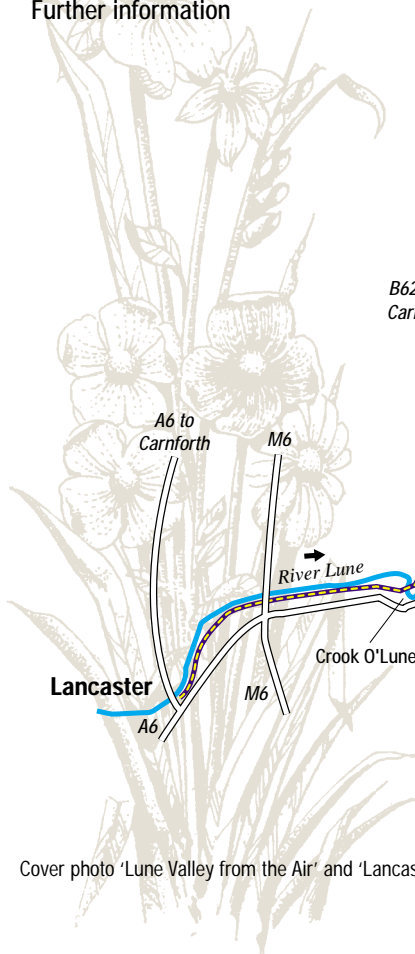
**A walk up the Lune Valley between  
Lancaster and Kirkby Lonsdale**



# Lune Valley Ramble

## Contents

Lancaster, start of the Lune Valley Ramble	Page 3
Lancaster to Crook O'Lune	Page 6
Crook O'Lune to Loyn Bridge	Page 8
Loyn Bridge to Newton	Page 10
Newton to Kirkby Lonsdale	Page 12
Further information	Page 14



Map not to scale.

## Access to the Walk

The Lune Valley Ramble starts at Green Ayre, beside the river at Skerton Bridge in Lancaster. See page 5.

# A walk up the Lune Valley between Lancaster and Kirkby Lonsdale



*Lancaster Castle and the south Lakeland Hills*

## Introduction

The Lune Valley Ramble is 16½ miles (26.5 km) long and traces the course of the River Lune's lower reaches through some of the North West's finest lowland countryside. Bounded by high moors, limestone hills and shadowed by the distant peaks of Ingleborough, Wharfedale and Leck Fell, the route offers excellent, easy walking and is signposted and waymarked throughout.

The Ramble links the City of Lancaster with the market town of Kirkby Lonsdale, two historic but very different centres. It makes the most of the valley's intimate and tranquil pastoral setting, passing through woodland, meadows and along the riverside itself. Along or near to the route are picturesque villages and hamlets, castles and ancient churches, nature reserves and wildlife in abundance.

The River Lune is the inspiration for the Ramble. The river rises from a source in the Howgill Fells and meets the sea in Morecambe Bay, just south of Lancaster. Fed by its many tributaries which drain the north-west of the Yorkshire Dales and the northern Forest of Bowland, it is one of the most important salmon rivers in the country.

## Lancaster, start of the Lune Valley Ramble

Although the Romans established a fort on Castle Hill around 80AD, it was those later conquerors, the Normans, who caused Lancaster's rise to prominence. The Castle and Priory Church, which still dominate the skyline, were both founded before 1100. The Castle was radically strengthened and enlarged by King John in the early 13th century as a regional centre of government and a military hub against the marauding Scots, who at least twice burned the town.

It became the centre of the County Palatine of Lancashire, virtually a self-governing part of England whose most famous "ruler" was the

# Lune Valley Ramble

## Lancaster, start of the Lune Valley Ramble - continued...

redoubtable John of Gaunt. During the Civil War it was first a Royalist, then a Parliamentary stronghold; in 1651 Charles II was pronounced King in Market Square, a full nine years before ascending to the throne!



*John O'Gaunt's Gate, Lancaster Castle*

The infamous Pendle Witches were imprisoned, tried and hanged here in 1612. During the 1745 Rebellion the "Young Pretender" Charles Edward Stuart passed through Lancaster on his ill-fated march south to Derby.

Used as a small port since Roman times, the rise of trans-Atlantic trade in the 18th century saw Lancaster gain prominence as one of the north-west's premier ports. Cotton, sugar, rum and coffee were the main cargoes handled.

A more unusual import was hardwood for the local furniture manufacturer Richard Gillow, who dominated the manufacture of fine English furniture for more than 200 years. The wealth from such trade (and the profitable slave trade which enriched many local shipowners) generated an explosion of building during Georgian times when many of the City's sublime merchants houses, terraces and the fine warehouses along St. George's Quay were erected.

The award winning Maritime Museum in the Old Custom House well repays an extended visit. The exuberant, green-domed Ashton Memorial dominates the skyline to the east of the City. It was built in 1907 as a memorial to the wife of James Williamson, the first Baron Ashton, whose oilcloth and linoleum mills once employed as many as a quarter of Lancaster's workforce.

Other striking buildings include the City Museum (Old Town Hall), Judges' Lodgings and the Grand Theatre.

For further information about Lancaster, visit the Tourist Information Centre on Castle Hill or the Lancaster City web site on [www.lancaster.gov.uk](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk)





# Lancaster to Kirkby Lonsdale

## Access to the Lune Valley Ramble from Lancaster City Centre



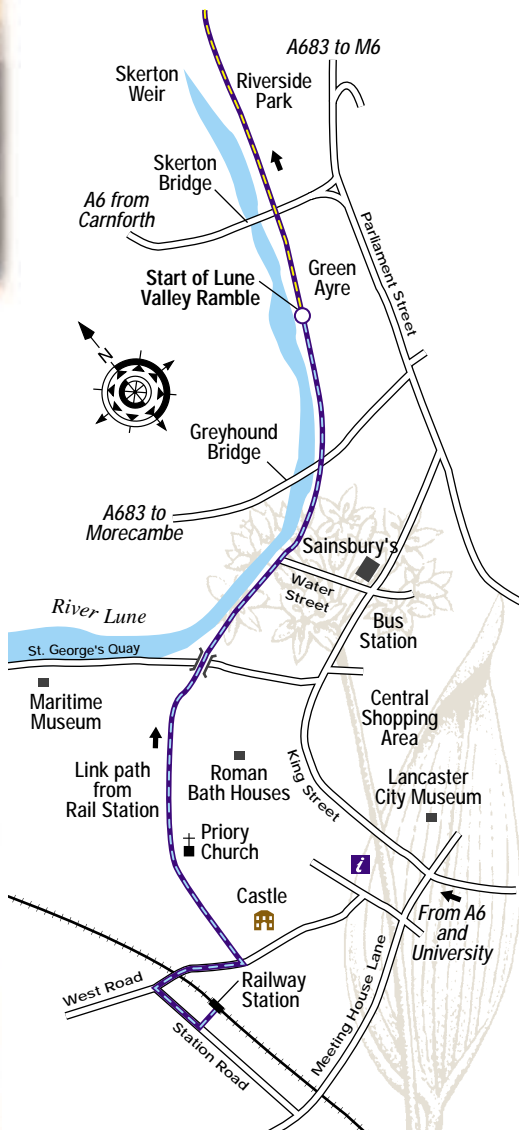
*Lancaster evening skyline*

From Lancaster Railway Station turn right along Station Road, right again up West Road then left at the hill crest into the Castle grounds. Take the path to the left of the Priory Church (signed for Maritime Museum) and descend the steep path. Turn right at the foot of the steps, joining the old railway cyclepath to reach Green Ayre.

From the Bus Station cross into Water Street to join the cyclepath behind Sainsbury's and turn right (upstream) to reach Green Ayre via the underpass. The old crane (formerly located at Hornby Station goods yard) marks the start of The Lune Valley Ramble.



*Green Ayre, the start of the Lune Valley Ramble*



*Map not to scale.*

# Lancaster to Crook O'Lune

The Ramble traces the course of the old Lancaster to Wennington railway, closed under the Beeching axe in the 1960s and now a landscaped cyclepath as far as Bull Beck, Caton. There are more than 15 miles of such transformed railway line in the Lancaster area. A riverside park is being developed between Lancaster and Caton with grants from the Millennium Fund. Watch out for the new environmental sculptures along the route.



*Swans on the River Lune*

Above Skerton Weir the Lune Aqueduct strides across the river. Built in 1797 by John Rennie and Alexander Stevens it is constructed of stone and is 664 feet long with five semi-circular arches, each with a 20 foot span. It carries the Lancaster Canal at a height of 50 feet above the river.

The canal was constructed between 1792 and 1819 to link Kendal, Lancaster and Preston with the coalfields of South Lancashire. Today the 41 mile stretch from Preston north to Tewitfield on the Lancashire/Cumbria border is the longest lock-free stretch of canal in the country. The canal is now used for a wide variety of leisure pursuits including boating, canoeing, angling and walking.



*Lune Valley mists and distant Ingleborough*

Passing beneath the M6 viaduct the Ramble reaches the old Halton station above Halton Bridge and lower weir.

To cut short your walk here, cross the bridge to Halton village which has shops, pubs and a good bus service back to Lancaster. You could also complete a circular walk to Lancaster by turning left along Halton's main street, pass beneath the M6 and join a riverside path back to the Aqueduct, Skerton Weir and Skerton Bridge.



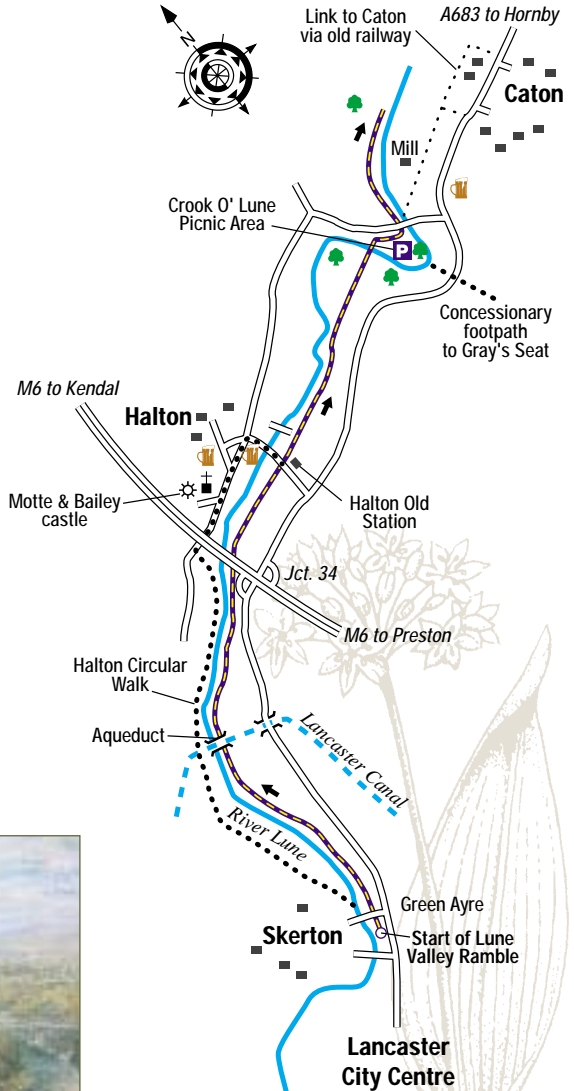
*White Lion Inn, Halton*

# Lune Valley Ramble

The Ramble itself follows the old railway across a high bridge to reach Crook O'Lune. This idyllic wooded setting, created by an incised meander of the river in the shape of a shepherd's crook handle, was a subject for the renowned landscape artist J M W Turner.

There are car parking, toilet and picnic facilities here and a mobile snack bar opens daily in summer (weekends only in winter). A ramp has also been built to ease access down to the railway bridges and to the riverside. It is worth going up to the picnic site by the car park for the sweeping views right up the Lune Valley to Ingleborough, in the Yorkshire Dales. Nearby, a new concessionary footpath leads to Gray's Seat, named after the poet Thomas Gray and from which point Turner painted.

Caton village, half a mile further along the old railway, has a wide range of shops, refreshments and buses back to Lancaster. The Lune Valley Ramble, however, leaves the old railway here.



*"Crook O'Lune near Lancaster" by J M W Turner 1775 - 1851*

*Map not to scale.*

# Crook O'Lune to Loyn Bridge

Join the river bank and walk upstream, the Lune to your right. Low Mill at Caton stands prominently on the flood plain. It was powered by water, the plentiful supply of which made Caton a village of mills in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Between the Crook and Loyn Bridge the Ramble is within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (see page15). A particular landscape feature of the Lune Valley is the "hanging woodlands" which cling to the steep northern side of the valley. Many of these woodlands are "ancient woodlands" as they grow on land which is unlikely to have ever been cleared of trees. Some trees may be as much as a thousand years old. The ancient nature of the woods is shown by the wide variety of wildflower species that they support. The show of bluebells and wild garlic in spring is particularly dramatic.

Just beyond the Waterworks Bridge (the Thirlmere Aqueduct, piping water from the Lake District to Manchester) are Lawson's Wood and Burton Wood, the largest of these hanging woodlands, managed by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust. These host small-leaved limes, a relic of the woodlands that several thousand years ago were widespread in Britain, when the climate was warmer.

Man's use of woodlands for timber, fuel and fodder has changed their species composition dramatically over the ages. Today the sessile oak is the main tree species, but the outstanding feature is the ash-wych elm woodland on the lower slopes in which the lime trees are to be found. Sadly, Dutch Elm Disease is continuing to take its toll on the woods in this area.

The Ramble hugs the river bank around a great meander. This was created in relatively recent

times - the river once flowed directly below the foot of the woods. This is dramatic evidence of the dynamic nature of the Lune. The forces of erosion and deposition are forever at work, shaping the nature of the river channel.

The Lune Valley is a farmed landscape, its beauty and appearance shaped over the centuries by man. Most of the valley's settlements are sited above the flood plain. Aughton (pronounced Afton) is typical. A hamlet of a few cottages and farms, it clings to the steep north valley side of the Lune. The Ramble meets the bottom end of an old lane at Aughton Barns, from where fords once crossed the river to Claughton. We, however, remain on the northern bank, passing below Great Close Wood and above the shoals and gravelly islands in mid-river. Across the river the turbines of Caton Moor Wind Farm feather the ridgetop. Below these the course of two aerial ropeways can be discerned which transport clay drawn from quarries on Claughton Moor down to Claughton Brickworks. The Ramble leaves the waterside to pass behind a bungalow. Beyond it turn right, cross the cattle grid and wind with the driveway to the heavy, low-set gate on the right between stone gateposts. Go through this, fall to the slope foot and bear slightly right to a stile in the distant fence, some way to the right of the platform.



*Bluebells, Lawson's Wood*

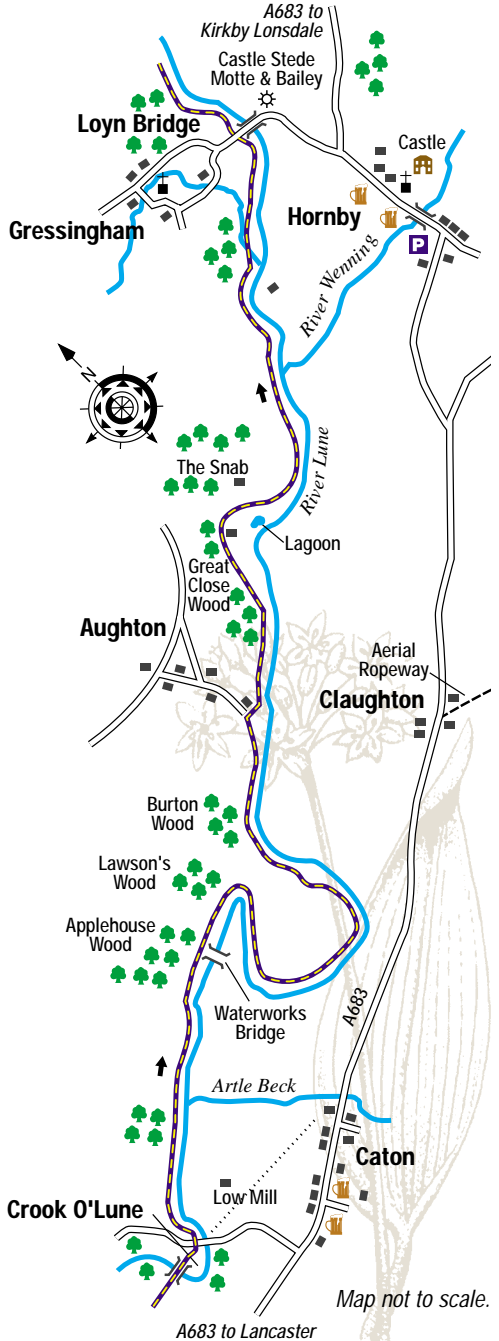


# Lune Valley Ramble



Here rejoin the riverside path. This area is one of the prime birdwatching locations in the north-west of England, renowned for its over-wintering geese, shellduck and waders, great flocks of oystercatcher and redshank. The river Wenning joins from the opposite bank, one of the Lune's major tributaries. Looming over this is, in the middle distance, the Eagle Tower of medieval Hornby Castle, which is still lived in as a private house today. Crossing a footbridge in trees, the Ramble reaches Loyn Bridge.

To cut short your walk here, cross the bridge and rise to a junction, here bearing right to Hornby (about half a mile from the bridge). The village has shops, pubs, accommodation and a regular bus service to Lancaster.



Map not to scale.



*Gressingham, above Loyn Bridge*

A683 to Lancaster

# Loyn Bridge to Newton

The present Loyn Bridge dates from 1684. It is constructed of square sandstone blocks, making three arches separated by triangular cutwaters. The bridge is of historical importance and is designated as an ancient monument. The single carriageway affords the only road crossing of the Lune between the Crook and Kirkby Lonsdale. Overlooking the eastern end of the bridge is the impressive Norman earthwork of Castle Stede motte & bailey castle, fronted by a Second War pillbox! Half a mile west of the bridge is the hamlet of Gressingham; with church, Hall and cottages huddled around the fern-bedecked falls of Gressingham Beck.



## *Loyn Bridge near Hornby*

The Ramble remains on the west bank of the river, here sharing the route of the Lunesdale Walk, a 37 mile walk which incorporates the high moors of Bowland and the limestone hills to the west of the Lune. A companion booklet to this one, and detailing the route of the Lunesdale Walk, is available. Our route rises along narrow paths through Thrush Gill Wood before re-joining the riverside pastures - in some stretches the river itself is invisible beyond flat watermeadows. Across the river to the north-east is the distinct peak of Ingleborough.

About two miles upstream of Loyn Bridge the foot of a lane leading to Arkholme is reached. Known as "Erghum" when Norse settlers were here, and recorded as "Ergune" in the



## *Main Street, Arkholme*

Domesday survey, the village is a veneer of idyllic 17th and 18th century cottages beside a lane dropping from the old Carnforth to Kirkby Lonsdale turnpike down to the Lune. There used to be a ferry here across the river. Melling is visible on a low ridge, and the Wenning gap through the line of the western Pennines and so into Yorkshire. At low water the remains of the ferry steps may be seen. This was such an important link that in Norman times a motte and bailey castle guarded it. The structure is still clearly defined, with the motte being particularly well preserved. Later the tiny St. John's Chapel was built within the bailey. The bell has an inscription from the 14th century.



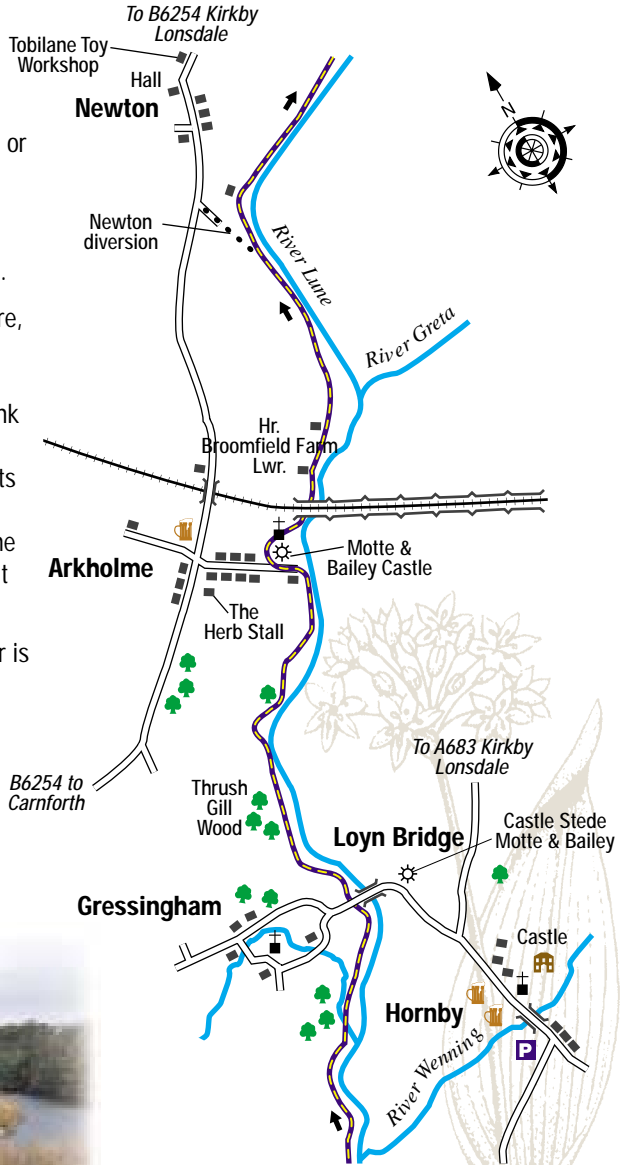
## *St. John's Chapel, Arkholme*

# Lune Valley Ramble

Arkholme village centre is half a mile up the lane. Here are a pub, post office stores, organic farm shop and buses to Lancaster, Carnforth and Kirkby Lonsdale. The Ramble, however, leaves this lane just 200 yards or so up from the river, passing behind the church and along an old driveway to eventually pass beneath the railway viaduct to reach Lower Broomfield Farm.

Carefully follow the waymark arrows here, to the right of the farm complex, soon passing by Higher Broomfield Farm to return to the floodplain. On the other bank the river Greta ends its winding course from high in the Yorkshire Dales. It has its source on Wherside, one of the "Three Peaks" of Yorkshire and has flowed to the Lune via the famous "Waterfalls" walk at Ingleton.

Past here an abandoned loop of the river is traced to the foot of a rough lane. The hamlet of Newton lies up this. Here is located Tobilane Designs Toy Workshop where you can see new toys being made or antique rocking horses being repaired. It's well worth a visit (telephone 015242 72662).



*The Lune sweeps beneath Loyn Bridge*

*Map not to scale.*

# Newton to Kirkby Lonsdale

To continue the Ramble, do not follow the rough lane to Newton but instead turn right to return to the riverbank. Here it passes along a short stretch of concessionary footpath kindly made available for use by the Newton Hall Estate.



*Summer's tranquillity near Arkholme*

The second of two rough lanes on your left, Burrow Mill Lane, is a possible cut-off to Whittington village, just over half a mile away. The village boasts the Dragons Head Inn, which doubles as the post office, sublime cottages and a fine church. The village was recorded as "Witetune" in the Domesday Book. Centuries later, in 1783, it was the birthplace of William Sturgeon, the inventor of the electro-magnet. It is also on a bus route for Kirkby, Carnforth and Lancaster. Burrow Mill itself was on the opposite bank where the Leck Beck meets the Lune, reached by an old ford from Whittington.

The Ramble hugs the riverbank between Burrow Mill Lane and Kirkby Lonsdale, only leaving it for very short distances. There is little woodland along this length and the character is of wide open spaces with expansive views.



*Whittington Church*

Beyond the river, the gathering heights culminate in the lonely Leck Fell, highest point in today's Lancashire at 2,057 feet (627m). The medieval Devil's Bridge at Kirkby Lonsdale marks the end of the Lune Valley Ramble. The bridge dates from the 14th century and takes its name from a famous legend. The devil built the bridge in order to claim the soul of the first person to cross it, but was thwarted by an old woman who threw a bun so that her dog crossed ahead of her. The devil is said to have burst into flames and vanished!

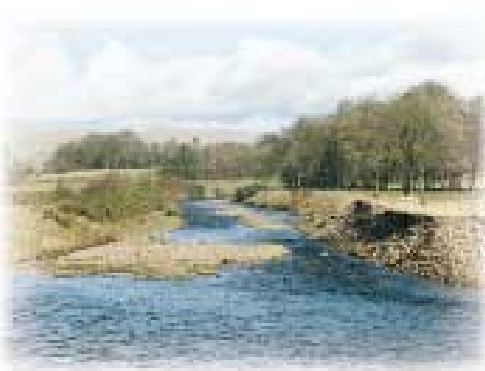
Well-used footpaths lead from Devil's Bridge to the heart of this charming little town. Standing



*Devil's Bridge, Kirkby Lonsdale*



# Lune Valley Ramble

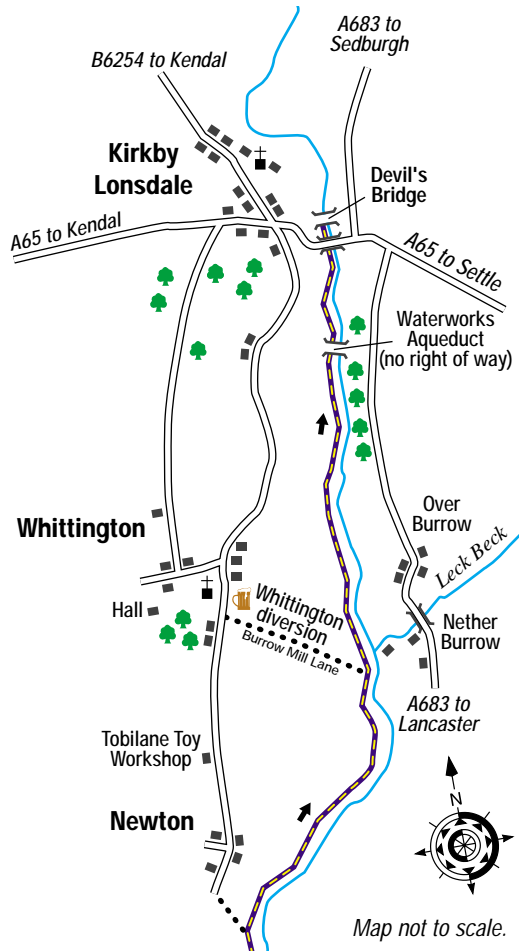


*Leck Beck and Leck Fell, Burrow Mill*

just over the county boundary in Cumbria, the market town is wonderfully situated on a high bank overlooking the River Lune. The glorious views from the churchyard and from "Ruskin's View", up the valley to the Howgills and Casterton Fells, have drawn many artists, including J M W Turner, and were described as "one of the loveliest scenes in England" by John Ruskin himself. The town grew up on an old packhorse route and during the 18th century an annual hiring fair was held there. There is now a weekly market every Thursday in the Market Square. The attractive narrow streets radiating from the Square are lined with shops, cafes and public houses.



*"Kirkby Lonsdale Churchyard in the Vale of Lune"  
J M W Turner*



*Map not to scale.*



*The end of the ramble, Devil's Bridge*

# Further Information

## Walking the route

The Lune Valley Ramble is 16.5 miles (26.5km) long. The route is well waymarked by frequent fingerposts and discs. The relevant Ordnance Survey Maps are Outdoor Leisure sheet 41 (Forest of Bowland & Ribblesdale) and Pathfinder sheets 628 & 637, available from local bookshops and Tourist Information Centres.

Seasoned walkers can complete the Ramble in a day. The Ramble also lends itself to shorter walks. Suggested cut-offs are detailed in the text, each leading to a regular bus route back to Lancaster. The text is presented as a walk upstream from Lancaster. It is as easy to walk downstream from Kirkby Lonsdale; again, the route in this direction is well marked.

The Ramble can be combined with other well waymarked trails in the Lune Valley area to form multi-day walks. These include the Limestone Link from Kirkby Lonsdale, the Lunesdale Walk from Loyn Bridge (Hornby) and the Lancaster to Kendal Canal Walk.

## Transport

There are regular bus services between Lancaster, Carnforth, Kirkby Lonsdale and Ingleton serving routes on both sides of the Lune. For details telephone (01524) 841656.

There is ample car parking in Lancaster, at the Crook O'Lune, in Hornby village and in Kirkby Lonsdale. Parking is also possible in the villages mentioned in the text (except Aughton).

## Please note:

The route of the Lune Valley Ramble is subject to constant upgrading and improvement. At times the route may vary from the information supplied in this booklet and occasionally stiles and gates etc. may be altered or changed as part of this ongoing maintenance programme.

## Equipment and Safety

Although the most difficult path surfaces have been improved, many of the paths are along the riverbank and the ground can be rough and slippery in places. It is important to wear the right footwear (boots or stout shoes) and clothing and carry some refreshment. The Ramble cannot be completed when the river is in flood as sections will be impassable and dangerous. If walking alone make sure someone is aware of your planned route.

## Tourist information

Staff at Tourist Information Centres (TIC) will be pleased to help with further information on public transport, places to stay, other walking trails and local attractions. TICs are at

Lancaster, 29 Castle Hill (01524) 32878

Morecambe, Station Buildings, Central Promenade (01524) 582808

Kirkby Lonsdale, 24 Main Street (01524) 71437.

## Acknowledgement

The Lune Valley Ramble has only been made possible through the co-operation of landowners and farmers along the route whose assistance is much appreciated. In particular, the generosity of Mrs Kimber of the Newton Hall Estate in granting a concessionary footpath through part of her land is acknowledged.

Maintenance, new stiles and waymarking are carried out by Lancashire County Council's Countryside Service (Tel: (01772) 263919 to report problems).

## Further copies

This leaflet is obtainable from Lancaster Tourist Information Centre, 29 Castle Hill, Lancaster LA1 1YN. Tel: 01524 32878

# Lune Valley Ramble



*Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*

## The Forest of Bowland AONB

Equal in status to a National Park, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was designated in 1964 to facilitate the co-ordinated protection of the fragile landscapes of heather moorland, secluded wooded valleys, unpolluted watercourses and grassy fells which characterise the area.

The AONB is managed to ensure that a balance between environment, ecology, economic and social well-being is maintained for the benefit of both current and future generations.

Management is through a partnership of local authorities, government agencies, the local landowning and farming community and other interest groups.

A Countryside Service employs rangers and project officers who work in the area to help manage the landscape, bring about improvements to public access and to liaise with visitors and residents. For details contact or visit the Bowland Visitor Centre at Beacon Fell Country Park (Tel. 01995 640557).

Back cover photo:  
'Evening lights the River north of Arkholme' Neil Coates.

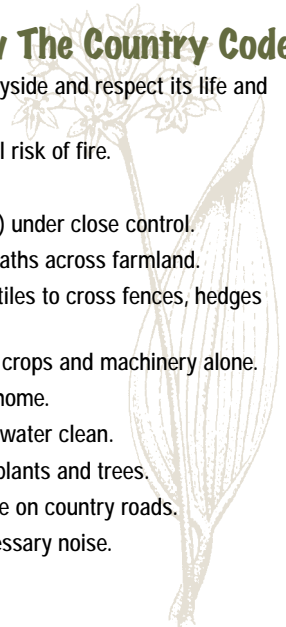
Photography:  
Neil Coates, Jon Sparks, Robert Swain and Kate Young.

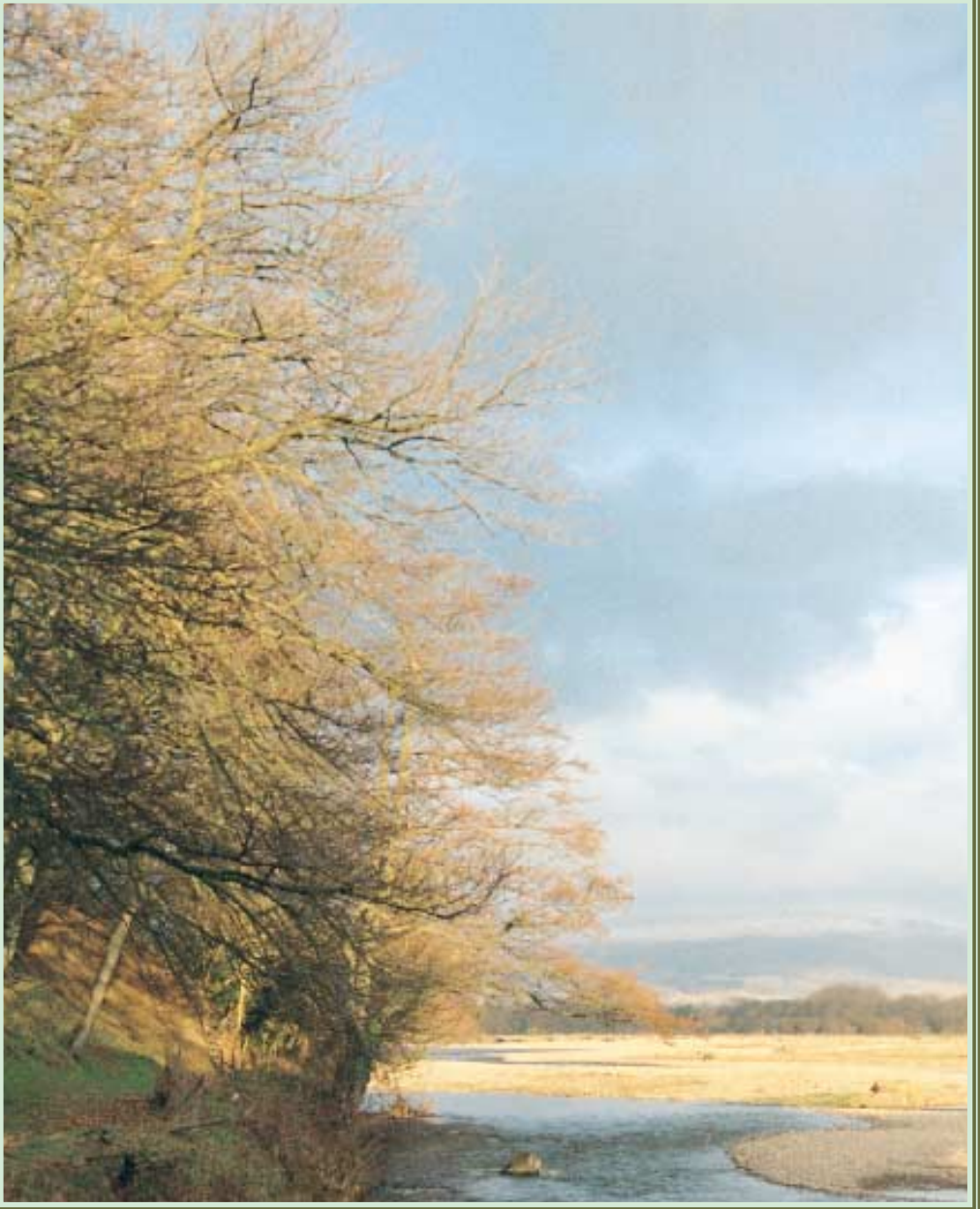


*River Lune at Thrushgill Wood*

## Please follow The Country Code

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work.
- Guard against all risk of fire.
- Fasten all gates.
- Keep your dog(s) under close control.
- Keep to public paths across farmland.
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls.
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone.
- Take your litter home.
- Help to keep all water clean.
- Protect wildlife plants and trees.
- Take special care on country roads.
- Make no unnecessary noise.





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