

## GRASSINGTON CONISTONE DIB CIRCULAR

Starting at the square in Grassington follow Main Street up hill to the junction in front of the town hall, here we turn left onto Chapel Street and follow for approximately 400 metres looking for a turning on the right named Bank Laith. Follow Bank Laith eventually with views down onto the dairy farm until we reach a crossroad of paths. We are following the 'Dales Way' and so turn left through the stile into the field immediately crossing a small bridge over a beck. Look ahead and you will see our next stile in the wall opposite. Having crossed the stile the path swings left through a narrow field to our next stile which having crossed we follow a faint path heading right and uphill to a gate crossing a track and over a stile directly in front. Here the pathway is a little sketchy but we head in a direction which is roughly 11 o'clock. As you cross the small hillocks you should see in the wall ahead a couple of patches where the wall has collapsed in between which is another stile. Crossing this stile we head away from the farm and up on to open pasture, an area known as Lea Green and the site of an ancient settlement and medieval village pre dating Grassington. The path will have a number of paths heading off to the woods to our left but at each occasion choose the right hand path. As we climb, a lone tree on the skyline ahead will come into view and this will accompany us until our eventual descent into Conistone. After a mile or so we reach another stile which we cross, the path now is obvious for the rest of the route up top passing through gates and a couple more stiles. On route we pass an old lime kiln on our left, if you look to the right you should be able to make out another one on the hillside, these are two of many in the area used to burn limestone to create lime used by farmers to reduce the acidity in the soil for better grazing. As we climb gently the path levels out and our tree is almost alongside us, whilst atop the next stile if you look back along the hillside from the tree you can just make out the top of a farmhouse. This is 'Bare House' an old dales hilltop farmstead the building having been partially preserved. Continuing on to the next stile we depart the Dales Way taking a half left path to Conistone and in a couple of hundred metres pass a wallowing hole, which if it has been wet may have formed a shallow pond. Cattle can occasionally be seen here drinking and wallowing. The path descends steeply for a short while, take care with your footing, arriving at a gate we turn left and enter Conistone Dib, the crags up to our left provide a perfect viewpoint for hunting birds of prey including short eared owls, barn owls and kestrels. As we descend the path narrows amongst scree beds and eventually to a limestone gorge which we clamber down with care, particularly when wet, emerging to the lower part of the dib and eventually exiting through a gate in to the village of Conistone. Follow the track to the centre of the village a small triangle and follow the road left for approximately 250 metres then take a footpath on our left by the side of a cottage. This track passes through a gate shortly after the cottage and climbs gently following a wall passing through a number of gates on route, the road and river below us to our right. Eventually the path leaves the wall continuing to climb gently on to open pasture the river and quiet road below disappearing from view and a small rocky gorge ahead coming ever nearer, ignore tracks heading up and left. Eventually our path heads left heading downhill for a short while then climbs back up and through a wall and continues following a wall and climbing gently until reaching a gate in the wall on the right. Descend into the dip and follow the path up the other side through another wall as the path eventually levels and reaches a path crossing ours, a gate to the left should be ignored, instead we turn right keeping the woods to our left. After approximately 300 metres a path to the left through the grass can clearly be seen heading towards the woods, follow this initially through light woodland scrub but eventually into the woods proper. We follow this path for approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile eventually exiting the wood via a gate and leading us back onto Lea Green, keeping to this path for 400 metres. The farm and the stile by which we exited the farm area earlier are now clearly visible, re-trace your steps to return to Grassington.