

Tatham Fells Walk 1 - Spen Gill & Park House

Length: 4.7 miles with 715 feet of climb (2.8%)

Wet weather option: 5.8 miles with 786 feet of climb (2.5%)

Start grid reference SD 648 666 ("Fairheath Head")

Park in the lay-by a few yards up the Slaidburn road from its junction with the Wray-Lowgill road

The parking place is on the course of a Roman road. When the sun is low, you can see the faint impression of the road as it crosses the field towards the nearby barns of Lower Stockbridge (see photo on right).

This route crosses the Hindburn river twice. The second crossing on the preferred route is by a ford, which requires paddling even after a dry spell, and may be impassable if the weather has been wet. You must inspect the river when you first cross it at Furnessford Bridge, and decide whether you fancy wading the ford. If you don't, a wet-weather option is provided, using a footbridge, but a mile longer. (There are rumours that Lancashire County Council is saving up for a footbridge to go next to the ford).

DIRECTIONS

Set off eastwards, along the road signed to White Pits. After ¼ mile you will reach a footpath sign on the left. Cross the stile and follow the sign so that you converge with a field boundary on your left; follow this past a barn to reach a track. Turn left over a cattle grid and follow the track down to Tunstall House.

Pass the house on your left, then turn right through a gate, into a field. Turn left and follow a small stream (Spen Beck) on your left until it bends away to the left, then keep straight ahead, down to a small footbridge. After this, head up to a steel gate at the top of the field. Go through, then turn right, towards a nearby house. Go through a gate (or gateway) before the house, then immediately turn left through a small wooden gate.

Ahead you will see Oakhead Bank farm. Aim to the right of the farm and you will converge with a hedge on your left. Follow the hedge downhill to a small footbridge over County Beck. Cross into Yorkshire, then join a track and turn right to follow it up to a road - Mewith Lane.

Turn left along the road. After ½ mile you will re-cross County Beck, back into Lancashire. Soon after this you will reach a road junction. Keep left here, then after 100 yards you will reach a grand gate and a footpath sign on the left. Cross the stile to the right of the gateway, then follow the fence on your left for 200 yards, to the foot of a steeper bank with a large oak tree above. Bear right here and follow a grassy old track up to The Hill farm. Go through the gap stile in the wall just to the right of the farmhouse garden, then bear slightly right to pass through the farmyard and up the farm drive to a road.

Go straight across the road, through the left-hand gate opposite, then keep straight ahead towards a forest. When you reach the forest, turn right and follow a grassy track beside the forest edge, through a gate, and then down to another gate just before Spens.

Go through the gate, then keep ahead to pass the house on your left and join its access track. Follow this through a gate and field until it joins a surfaced road.

Turn left and follow the road across Furnessford bridge. Remember to inspect the Hindburn river below as you cross the bridge, and to make your decision as to whether you will follow the shorter route across the ford, or the longer route using a footbridge.

Continue along the road, steeply uphill at first, for just over ½ mile to Park House farm. Keep left at the road junction (signed "Cul-de-sac"). 200 yards after the last building, stop when you reach, on the right, the end of a short grassy track leading to a field gate.

If you want to avoid the ford, skip to "Footbridge Route" below.

Ford Route

Continue along the road, past a barn, then down into a dip and across a stream. Immediately after the stream, climb a stile next to a footpath sign on the left. Go diagonally across the field to a wall (remains of a barn) and through a gate just to its left. Bear right to another gate 30 yards away. After this gate, turn left and follow the wall on your left until it bends left, then diverge from it and cross the corner of the field to a stile by the corner of a wood. Cross this and follow the edge of the wood down to a gate.

Don't go through the gate; instead follow the waymark towards a grassy wooded spur, where you will pick up an old track, which winds down through the woods to a level field at the bottom. Turn right and walk through the boggy field, with the woods on your right, to the field corner. Step over the fence (easy) then make your way, in the same direction as before, across some boulders (not so easy!) to the riverbank, where you will find yourself at the foot of the impressive overhanging cliff of Colegate Scar.

Paddle diagonally across the shallows to a shingly beach on the other side of the Hindburn river, then continue in the same direction for 20 yards, with trees on your left, to a wooden gate. Go through, then head up across the field towards Hole House farm. Go through a gate onto the farm access track, and follow this uphill through the farm, and continue up the drive to a road. Turn left along the road for a third of a mile to return to your starting point.

Footbridge Route

Turn right along the short track. Just before the gate, turn left and climb a stone stile over the wall, then follow the fence on your right to a footbridge. Cross this, then bear right across the field to a gate just to the left of the left-most building of Lower Houses farm.

The gate leads onto a lane, across which you will be facing three wide gates and a kissing gate. Go through the second gate from the left (footpath sign) and follow the wall on your left to another gate. Now follow the field boundary on your right until you have gone through two more gates and crossed a stream. After the stream, turn left and follow the edge of some woodland down the field to its bottom corner, then cross a stone stile in the wall in front of you (right in the corner) into the woods.

Keep in the same direction as before, and you should pick up a path which very soon bends right and then leads diagonally down through the woods to a stile at the bottom. Cross the stile, then follow the top of a bank with a boggy area at its foot, before bearing right to a footbridge across the Hindburn river.

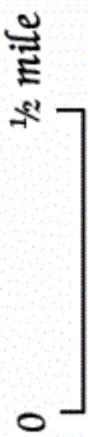
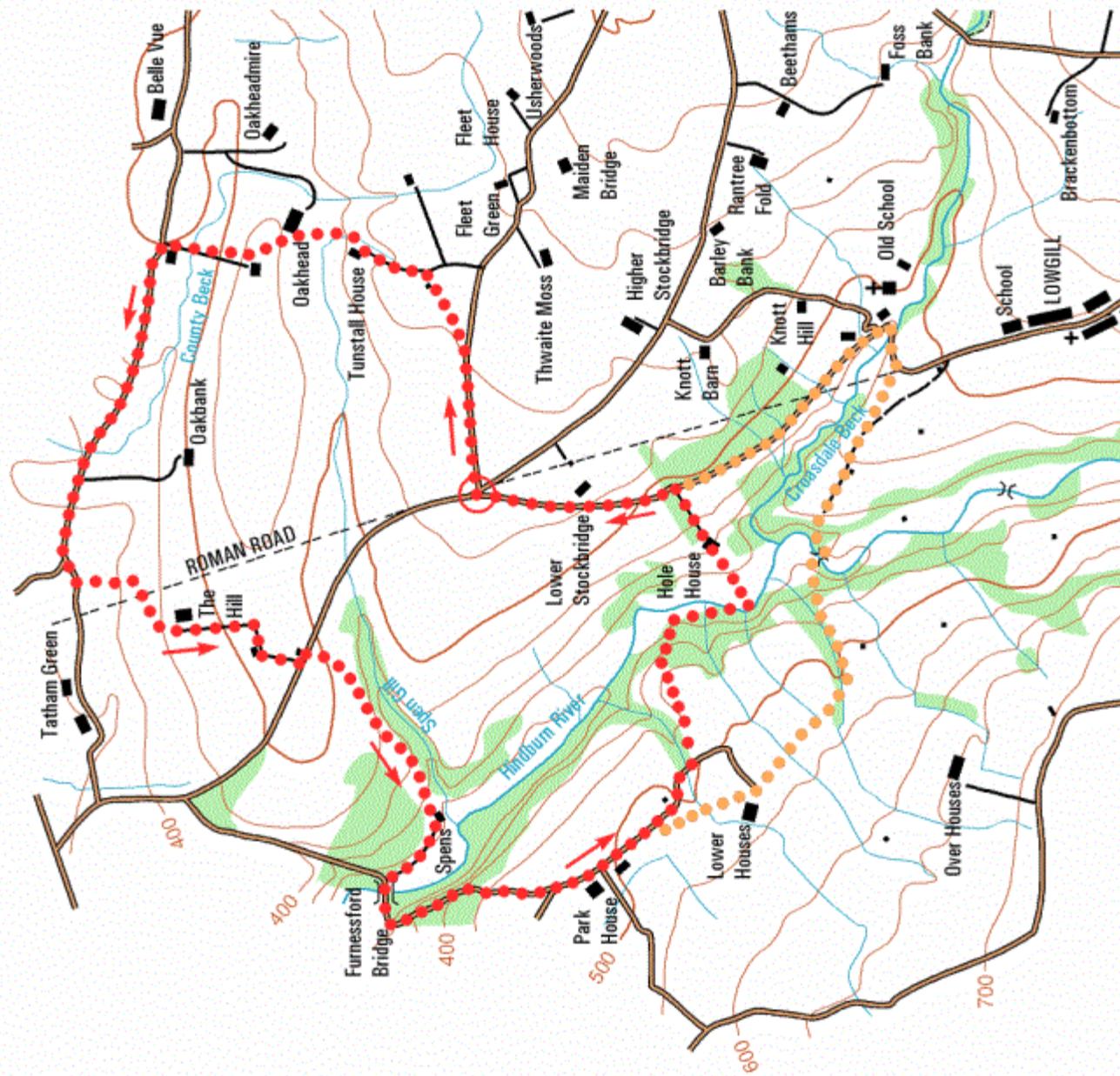
Turn left and follow the riverbank, then go through a narrow gate leading into woods. Follow a very steep, stepped path (known locally as the "Fairy Steps"!) up through the woods to a stile and gate at the top, leading into a field. Head across the field towards a barn, and you should join a grassy vehicle track. Follow this past the barn, then through a gate, and continue along the track until 50 yards before the next gate across it, then leave the track by forking left to reach another gate. Go through this and keep ahead, with the Croasdale valley down on your left, to a gate leading onto a road.

Turn left along the road and over Mill Bridge, then continue up the road for nearly a mile, to return to your starting point.

Tatham Fells Walk 1

- Start grid ref. SD 648 666
- Route
4.7 miles, 2.8% climb
- Wet weather route:
5.8 miles, 2.5% climb

This map is for orientation purposes only and should not be used for navigation. The route directions should be used in conjunction with OS Explorer Sheet OL41 Forest of Bowland & Ribblesdale, or the Harvey Superwalker map of Bentham.



Heights and contours in feet

Map based on Ordnance Survey Popular Edition One Inch to One Mile sheet 25, published 1924-33