

Walk 1-M Melmerby, Ousby & Gale Hall

A couple of villages along the East Fellside

Distance:

6 miles (13.75km) full route

3½ miles (5.50km) shorter walk

Cumulative Height

600 ft.

Our rating: Moderate

Local services: Shop and tea rooms in Melmerby. The Fox Inn at Ousby.

Start grid: NY612373

Map: OS Explorer OL31– North Pennines – Teesdale & Weardale

The walk starts from the gateway to Melmerby Hall and uses field paths and tracks southward to Ousby. After passing through the village and one or two outlying hamlets it then moves into hilly country of the East Fellside and returns to Melmerby via Gale Hall, crossing then over Melmerby Green. A shortened route is available which doesn't visit Ousby.

The Walk

1. Commence the walk along the road towards the village green, but turn off right after a few yards through the wooden gate which is set in the high stone wall opposite the Village Hall. Once through continue gently downhill through woodland along an enclosed path then at the foot of the slope pass through another wooden gate to come out beside the A686 road. Cross the road then turn right, along its verge. Pass over Melmerby Beck and turn sharp left onto a metalled access road that leads to the property 'Elm Bank'. Turn off to the right after a few yards, over a ladder stile which is signed "Permitted

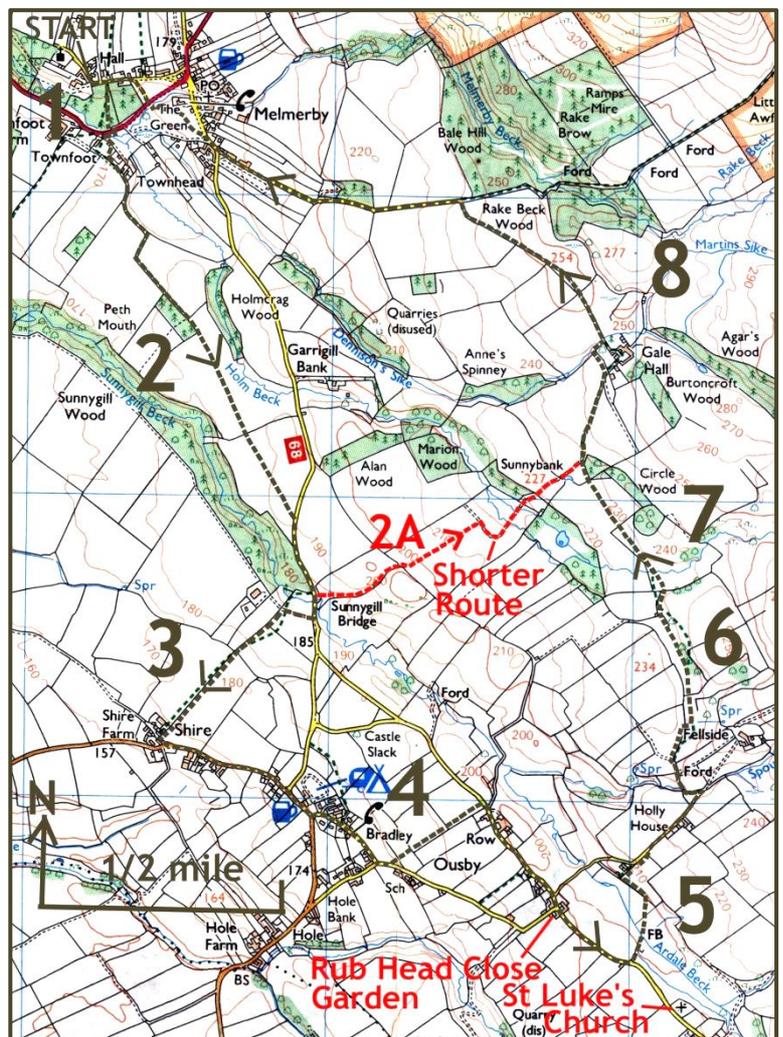
Access avoiding Townfoot Cottage to Public Footpath - Sunnygill Bridge".

2. Keep ahead from the stile then turn left through a narrow area of grassland set between the back of a dwelling curtilage and a wall. At the further end pass through a gate on the right and on to an enclosed unsurfaced track. Proceed along this track, which in places may well be quite muddy, as it winds between fields for a distance of about ½ third mile. The track eventually reaches a gate (adjoining stile) alongside a woodland. Keep ahead from the gate, with the remainder of the woodland at first to the right. Once past the corner of the woodland continue in the same direction across a field, making towards a lone mature tree at the further edge. Pass through a gate (adjoining stile) to the right side of the tree and continue ahead across the next field to reach a stile at the further edge which leads onto the Melmerby to Ousby Road. Turn right, along the road, and shortly drop down a hill to reach Sunnygill Bridge.

Note: if you are following the shorter route turn off the road to the left, just in advance of Sunnygill Bridge and pass through a gate onto the Public Footpath signed "Gale Hall or Fell" & follow the directions in paragraph 2A.

2A. FOR SHORTER WALK ONLY

Pass through two gates in succession into an area of field pasture. Bear left, in front of a third gate and continue gently uphill along a 'groove type' grassy path with a wall to your right side. Climb over a wall stile (adjoining gate) at the upper field corner then continue ahead up the middle of the next field, passing to the right side of a plantation. Climb over a stile at the upper field edge, then turn right, onto a faint grassy track. Continue along the track, then keep with it as it drops down left and crosses the valley of Holm Beck. Cross the main channel of Holm Beck by a footbridge, and ford the second channel. Continue along the track as it rises up past some woodland and over the top of Sunnybank, passing through three gates en route. From the third gate the track then approaches the corner of another woodland beside which is a track junction. The fuller walk route comes in at this point from the right. Continue then by veering left and following the route guidance back to Melmerby - paragraph 8.



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3. FOR FULL WALK

For the full walk cross over Sunnygill Bridge then turn off right after a few yards and pass through a gate onto a farm access track. *(Note: this track is not a public right of way but may be used with the agreement of the local farmer, to avoid having to ford nearby Sunnygill Beck)* Rise up the track, with a coppice of woodland on the left side, then once past the trees turn off left and through a gate (adjoining stile) into a field. Keep along the right sides of this field and the next, the fields separated by a rather difficult gate to negotiate. At the further corner of the second field climb over a wall stile into a third. Keep ahead up the right side of this field and continue on to pass through a set of double gates at the further corner, close to a house at Shire Farm. Continue past the house to a track junction then turn left to meet the local Langwathby to Ousby Road.

4. Turn left, along the road and pass between various houses and agricultural buildings to reach the main road junction in Ousby village. Continue from here along the road signed to Skirwith and Appleby, then turn off left just past the Fox Inn, along the local road signed to Ousby Townhead. Pass between more dwellings and alongside the village green, then keep ahead and cross a further road junction. Shortly after this junction turn off left, over a stile in the hedgerow (signed Public Footpath), into a field. Keep ahead to a wall stile and on to a gate, then continue gently uphill along the right edges of two fields, separated by a gate (adjoining stile). At the further corner of the second field climb over a stile onto a local road at Row and turn right. Continue along this road to reach a junction by a cluster of buildings, the tallest one of which is called Cobweb Grange. *Note: by this junction there is a small garden area known as 'Ruh Head Close', and on the gate is a sign which reads "please come in and enjoy our public garden"*

5. Cross the junction and leave on the road that passes by Cobweb Grange. Continue on for about 300 yards then turn off left, over a stile, onto Public Footpath signed to Holly House. **Note: Before turning off the road you may wish to continue on a few yards to visit the historic St Luke's Church which has C12th origins.** Drop down a short length of sunken path from the stile then veer round left and over a footbridge across Ardale Beck. Bear left from the footbridge and cross some meadowland to a gate then continue on, rising gently uphill to another gate. Once through this gate turn left and follow along the boundary of a field, turning sharp right at one point and rising up steeply, alongside a dwelling curtilage, to reach a gate at a local access road. Once through the gate continue along the road in the same direction as before and rise gently uphill. After passing by Holly House drop down towards a bridge, but turn sharp left off the road just before reaching the bridge.

6. Go through a gate onto a signed Public Footpath to Gale Hill and Sunny Gill Bridge and drop gently down a grassy path to reach Spoutgill Sike. Pass through a gate, ford the Sike then continue steeply uphill on the grassy grooved track ahead. At the top of the rise climb over a stile on the left (or through two adjoining nearby gates) then drop gently downhill for a short distance on an unsurfaced track, with a wall to the right side. Where the wall ends turn off the track to the right and continue alongside a fence as far as a stile set in the fence. *Note: To the right at this point you should notice a good set of strip lynchets (former cultivation terraces) on the hillside.* Climb over the stile then continue, in the same direction as before, across rather boggy grassland to reach a gate in a shallow valley bottom. Continue on from the gate, keeping to the right side of the valley, eventually reaching a further 'signed' gate ahead.

7. Go through this gate and continue, with a wall to your left side and shortly pass over a stile into another shallow valley area. Keep ahead from the stile and cross the valley towards a low bank, crossing a footbridge over Dale Beck en route. From the top of the bank make over to the left side of the field and continue on to reach a stile (adjoining gate) at the further corner. Keep ahead across the next field to reach another stile (adjoining gate) close to the corner of some woodland. Once over continue alongside the woodland along a section of grassy/muddy track to reach a track junction.

8. Veer right at the junction and continue uphill to come alongside the concrete barn structure to Gale Hall farm. Where the track turns to the right (around the barn) keep ahead and drop down to the right corner of a grassy pasture. Pass through a gate and immediately turn right and keep alongside a wall to reach the main access route to Gale Hall, beside a bridge. Turn left onto the track, cross the bridge, then continue along the track for a distance of about ¼ mile to eventually pass over a cattle grid (adjoining gate) and drop down to the head of the local access road to Melmerby. Turn left and continue gently downhill to reach a junction at the entrance to the village. Turn right here to reach Melmerby Green then bear left off the road up a rising grassy path. Cross then right over the green to a local road junction the upper left corner (crossing the A686 road en route). Turn left here and pass by the Village Hall to reach the Melmerby Hall gateway and the end of the walk.