

Walk 1-L Gamblesby & Hartside

A fellside walk in the North Pennines with the prospect of panoramic views of the Eden Valley, the Lake District and the Scottish Borders

Distance:

7.75 miles (12.5km)

Cumulative Height

1475 ft.

Our rating: Strenuous

Getting there: Turn right out of the entranceway to Glassonby Old Hall along the local road that leads towards Gamblesby. The main crossroads of the village is reached in 2miles. On road parking is available beside the village green. Public transport can be used on a Thursday or Friday from the entranceway to and from Gamblesby.

Fellrunner services:

Thursday: 137 at 10.44hrs - return at 15.39hrs

Friday: 131 at 09.19hrs return at 15.30hrs

Return journeys from Gamblesby are only by prior booked arrangement with the driver on the way out.

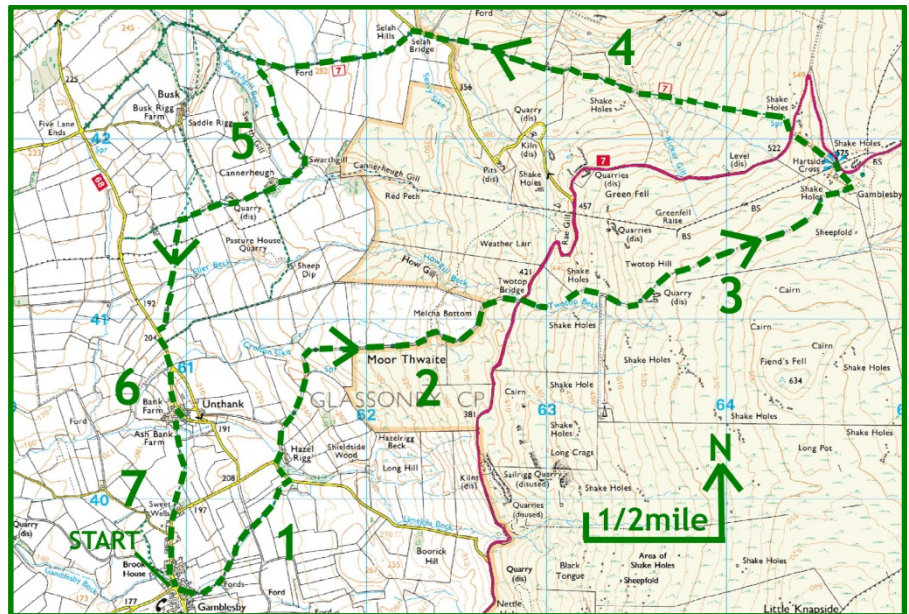
Note: The start point for this walk can be reached along the road on foot at a distance of 2 miles (each way)

Local services: Café at Hartside (seasonal), along the route of the walk. Café and inn facilities in Melmerby and Langwathby.

Start grid: NY609395

Map: OS Explorer OL31 North Pennines, Teesdale & Weardale

The walk begins in the centre of Gamblesby, close to the village stocks. It then uses old fellside tracks and paths that lead up the slopes of Gamblesby Fell to the Hartside Café, the highest café in England. The walk descends by another old fellside route via Selah Bridge and Cannerheugh Farm. It then returns to Gamblesby by field paths, passing through the hamlet of Unthank.



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The Walk

1. Commence the walk from the main crossroads in the village centre, along the road signed as a Public Footpath to Hazel Rigg (opposite the road signed to Little Salkeld). *Gamblesby is a village of Norse origin whose name means 'Farmstead' or 'village of a man called Gamall'. The village developed in a protective form against Scottish raiders with farm buildings within the village perimeter and a large green which could be utilised to graze stock. In 1772 John Wesley first preached in Gamblesby and the village, whose first chapel was built in 1784, became the cradle of Methodism in the area of the present county of Cumbria.*

With a roadside stream to the left pass between dwellings and where the metalled road ends continue out of the village along an enclosed unmade track. This proceeds gently uphill and shortly crosses a slab footbridge to one side at a ford. After about 1/3 mile a junction of tracks is reached. Pass across the junction onto a grassy path and shortly climb over a stile into a field. Continue along the right side of the field, over a stone stile, then along the left side of a second field to drop steeply down to a gate. Pass through the gate and turn left along the local road to a corner at Hazel Rigg where a stone track signed as a Public Byway to Twotop Bridge turns off to the right.

2. Proceed along this track, which firstly passes by Hazel Rigg farm. It then begins to rise steadily uphill as an enclosed track onto the lower slopes of Gamblesby Fell. *This Public Byway formed part of the pre McAdam route between Penrith and Alston, over Hartside. (The Hartside road, which now forms the A686, was constructed under the direction of John McAdam C1823).* The track winds somewhat and whilst there is a little undulation there are some steep rising sections. In common with several Pennine tracks it includes a straight section (350yds). After about 1/2 mile of climbing the track reaches the A686, Penrith to Alston road.

3. Cross diagonally left over the road and onto the metalled access road to the Hartside telecommunications tower. *[Note: Great care is needed in crossing the road at this point due to poor visibility and fast moving traffic, often motorcycles]* Pass over a cattle grid and continue uphill along this road to a point where it turns sharply to the right. Leave the road here and strike ahead through two gates and onto a grassy track that rises steeply past former colliery workings, with a fence to the immediate left side. *This colliery, thought to be named Twotop Colliery after the adjoining hill, has long since ceased production. The mine was, however, linked by a gravity tramway down to the Hartside Road, close to the route of the present metalled telecommunications tower access road.* Once past the area of the workings the gradient begins to ease and a gate is reached. From here the track is reasonably level as it passes to the north side of Fiend's Fell. It then rises up a short steeper section (with optional routes here) to reach a gate. Pass through the gate then veer left to a second that leads into the rear section of the car park for the Hartside Top café. Pass around the café to the viewing area which provides a panoramic view across the Eden Valley. *The Hartside Top café claims to be the highest café in England at 1904ft. above sea level. The café and its surrounds are noteworthy for the fine views across the Eden Valley and into the Lake District and Scotland.*

4. Turn left out of the front of the Hartside Café car park by the A686 road. Instead of walking along the road immediately turn off left onto a wide rough track which is signed as an 'off road' section of the National Cycle Network's C2C route. Drop steeply down to reach the A686 road once again. Cross over the road and pass through a gate (signed Public Bridleway Selah Bridge) onto a track that firstly provides access to a 'bothy' style dwelling. *This route, which passes near to several castles, was thought to have formed a part of the medieval 'Via Regia' or 'Monarch's Highway'.* Once past the dwelling continue downhill along a grassy path of varying gradients and after about ¼ mile drop steeply to cross Ricker Gill by a restored bridge. Once over the Gill continue uphill a short distance and pass through a gate. The route now contours as a wide grassy track then descends (passing through two gates) and passes by sheep pens and a derelict farm building. It then continues downhill and after a further ⅓ mile reaches the Hartside to Renwick road at Selah Bridge. Keep ahead along the road, cross Selah Bridge, then turn off left at the top of a short hill rise, onto a track signed as a Public Byway to Five Lane Ends.

5. The unsurfaced track continues the descent and after turning to the right has a long straight section of about ⅓ mile. The track then rises a little to a hill crest where a gate to the left leads onto a signed public footpath. Cross a first field to a gate then continue along the left edges of three further fields each separated by gates. In the third bear left and pass around the left side of two barns (three gates) before dropping down, past the barns, to a fourth in the right wall at the head of an enclosed track. Pass through, then drop down the track which 'dog legs' and passes through Cannerheugh farm (2 gates). It then descends further and 'dog legs' slightly again, near a small wooded area. Keep on downhill, pass through a gate, then shortly after turn off left within a field. This is at the point where a stile is located in the right wall. Cross over the field passing to the left side of a telegraph pole to reach a wall stile at the further side. From here, keep ahead across the next field and drop down to climb over another stile. Cross a footbridge over Eller Beck then continue ahead up the right side of the next field. Pass through a gate at the upper corner and continue along an enclosed track (further gate) to reach the Renwick to Unthank road.

6. Turn left along the road, then after descending and crossing Crofton Sike, turn off right along the access road signed to Unthank. *Unthank hamlet was originally a group of thatched dwellings surrounded by a wall, to keep out Scottish raiders. The name means 'a squatter's holding' or 'land held without consent'.* Shortly pass farm buildings and descend to a junction in the centre of the hamlet with the access road to the right signed as a Public Footpath to Gamblesby. Turn right and proceed along the road for a short distance, then turn off to the left, immediately in front of a farm gate. Continue downhill on a grassy track that skirts a dwelling and its garden. At the foot of the slope pass through a gate and cross a bridge over Hazelrigg Beck.

7. Continue uphill from the bridge and through a gate ahead at the top of the rise into a field. Keep along the right field edge with a stone wall on the right side, then just after a shallow right bend in the wall climb over a stile, set in the wall (adjoining a gate), into the adjoining field. Continue then in the same direction as before, with the stone wall now on the left side. From the point where the wall bends to the left at a shallow angle keep ahead towards houses, to reach a kissing gate at the field boundary. Once through the gate continue along a short stretch of enclosed path and over a wall stile onto the Unthank to Gamblesby road. Turn right, along the road as it enters Gamblesby village, shortly reaching the green area and cross roads at the centre of the village and the end of the walk.