

# Walk the Way in a Day

## Walk 31 Cam Fell

This walk can be hard-going at times, with a badly eroded track, boggy moorland and forest firebreaks to negotiate. However, much of the route is on quiet roads and there are fine views from the ridges. Unusually, the walk starts at its highest point.



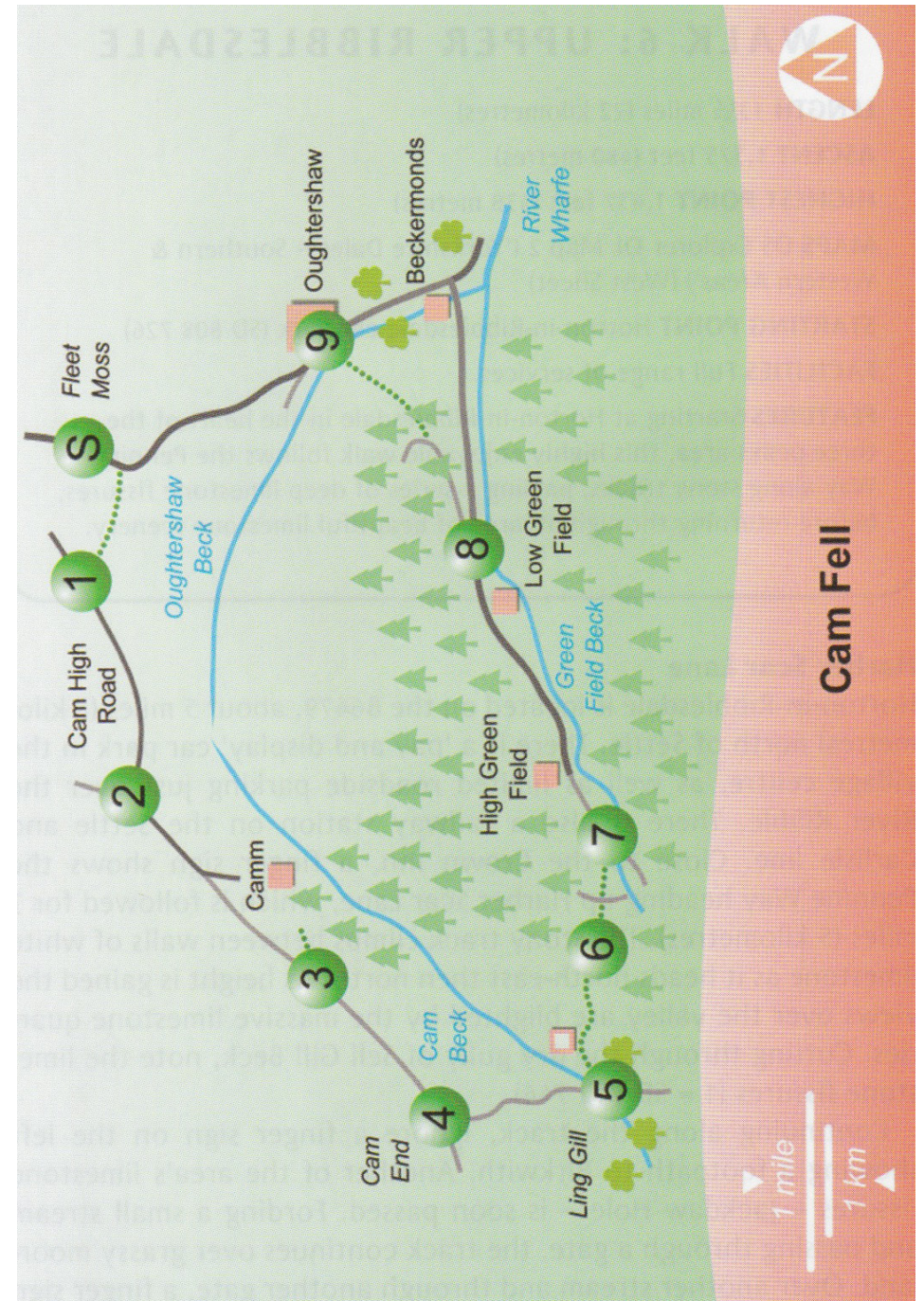
- Length: 13 miles (21 kilometres)
- Ascent: 1,444 feet (440 metres)
- Highest Point: 1,910 feet (582 metres)
- Map(s): OS Explorer OL Map 2 ('Yorkshire Dales - Southern & Western Areas') (West Sheet)
- Starting Point: Fleet Moss parking area, near Hawes (SD 860 838)
- Facilities: None.
- Website: <http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way/route/walk-way-day-walk-31-cam-fell>

### Oughtershaw Side

Fleet Moss parking area is located on the crest of the broad ridge separating Wensleydale and Wharfedale, 4 miles (6½ kilometres) south of Hawes, and is reached by following a steep road connecting Gayle and Oughtershaw. Heading down the road, turn onto a stony track leading to some old workings. Joining a quad track, this is not shown on all maps, but runs west over grassy moorland until it meets Cam High Road (1 = SD 850 838). Following the road for 1¼ miles (2¼ kilometres) along Oughtershaw Side, a finger sign shows the Pennine Way joining from the right (2 = SD 830 834).

### Cam Fell

The route follows a broad ridge identified on the map as Cam Fell,



although it is in fact a spur of Dodd Fell. Arriving at a fork, the Pennine Way continues straight ahead (to the left is the access for Camm farm - marked on the map as Cam Houses). The stony track is badly rutted in places, although it is usually possible to follow the verge. Looking over the deep valley on the left, the view is already marred by the sprawling conifer plantation around Langstrothdale. Passing a finger sign, the next part of the route is shared with the Dales Way (a 73 mile / 118 kilometre trail connecting Ilkley and Bowness-on-Windermere) (3 = SD 813 817).

Arriving at Cam End, another finger sign shows the Dales Way continuing down the ridge, while the Pennine Way turns south (4 = SD 801 804). From here there are splendid views of the three peaks area, with Ribbleshead Viaduct spanning the valley between the great ridge of Wharfedale and the ominous, sphinx-like form of Ingleborough (the top of which was the well-chosen site of a Brigantian settlement). Heading down the stony track as it weaves through a swarm of drumlins, the Pennine Way follows an old pack-horse route that connected Hawes and Settle. Rounding a bluff, the track heads down towards Cam Beck, which is crossed by a pack-horse bridge. Limestone outcrops beside the beck provide an opportunity to stop for lunch. Continuing along the track, to the right is the wooded gorge of Ling Gill. A dry gully on the left is home to a few sycamore trees, marking the point at which we leave the Pennine Way (5 = SD 803 787).

### **Ling Gill**

*A close examination of the 16th century pack-horse bridge at Ling Gill reveals the inscription: 'this bridge was repaired at the charge of the whole West Riding, anno 1765'. Ling Gill itself is a National Nature Reserve managed by English Nature. It is a fine example of a wooded gorge, its steep sides providing shelter and protection from over-grazing.*

### **Langstrothdale Chase**

The first part of the return route runs 1 mile (1½ kilometres) over Sike Moor, with some difficult terrain to negotiate. Following a faint path up the left-hand side of the gully, continue north-east along a quad track heading

towards a ruin. Forging a small stream, the route turns east-south-east, keeping to the left of another gully. Ahead can be seen the distinctive cairned ridge of High Green Field Knott. Following a quad track over tussocky grass, this runs beside a drystone wall before veering to the left to avoid a cottongrass mire. Arriving at a broken wall marking the edge of the forest, pass between stone gate posts and cross a fence stile (6 = SD 815 789).

From here a path runs ¾ mile (1¼ kilometres) through the forest. Following a firebreak separating walls of densely-packed sitka spruce, the peaty ground is carpeted in heather and cottongrass. Crossing over a hardcore track, the path resumes a short way to the right, joining another firebreak. The ground here can be very slippery, so exercise caution. Eventually the way ahead opens-out, with the faint path crossing rough grass to arrive at a forestry road close to a stone bridge (7 = SD 827 789).

Langstrothdale must once have been a beautiful place, with Green Field Beck flowing through meadows to its confluence with Oughtershaw Beck (where the River Wharfe is formed). However, the steep valley sides are now lost beneath a thick blanket of conifers. The track runs north-east towards the isolated High Green Field farm, which stands at the end of an unclassified road. Following the road down the valley, off to the right is a tiny reservoir - a rare stopping place for wildfowl in the limestone dales. Passing Low Green Field farm, a finger sign marks the start of a footpath to Oughtershaw, crossing a fence stile on the left (8 = SD 851 802). Note that it is also possible to reach the hamlet by continuing down the valley to Beckermonds, then turning onto Oughtershaw Road (this adds about 1 mile / 1½ kilometres to the route, although there is some charming limestone scenery).

Following a hardcore track running east-north-east through the forest, a few rowan trees planted beside the route do little to improve what is otherwise just another coniferous tunnel. Leaving the track as it swings to the left, a finger sign marks the start of a path running down a firebreak. Emerging from the forest, there are fine views over Upper Wharfedale. A finger sign indicates the direction of the path, which heads north-east over

rough grass. Heading downhill as though towards a chapel, a stony track is joined just before it crosses Oughtershaw Beck by a bridge (9 = SD 870 814).

### **Langstrothdale Chase**

*Langstrothdale Chase - the hunting area of Langstroth - was part of Litton Forest. Among the isolated hunting lodges scattered throughout the area were Beckermonds and Oughtershaw, which subsequently evolved into small agricultural settlements.*

### **Oughtershaw Road**

The final part of the walk runs 2 miles (3 kilometres) up a steep road. This is normally quiet, although there are occasional spates of tourist traffic. Turning left, follow the road as it passes through the handful of stone-built cottages and farm buildings that together constitute the hamlet of Oughtershaw. Ignoring a tarmac track turning along the valley of Oughtershaw Beck (the route of the Dales Way), a marker stone beside the road dates its construction to 1887. As height is gained there are good views over the valley, with Ingleborough once again visible in the distance. Eventually the road levels-out, just before it arrives back at the starting point.

This walk is reproduced with permission from Circular Walks on the Pennine Way by Kevin Donkin, published by Frances Lincoln.