

Walk the Way in a Day

Walk 4 Beefstand Hill and the Border Ridge



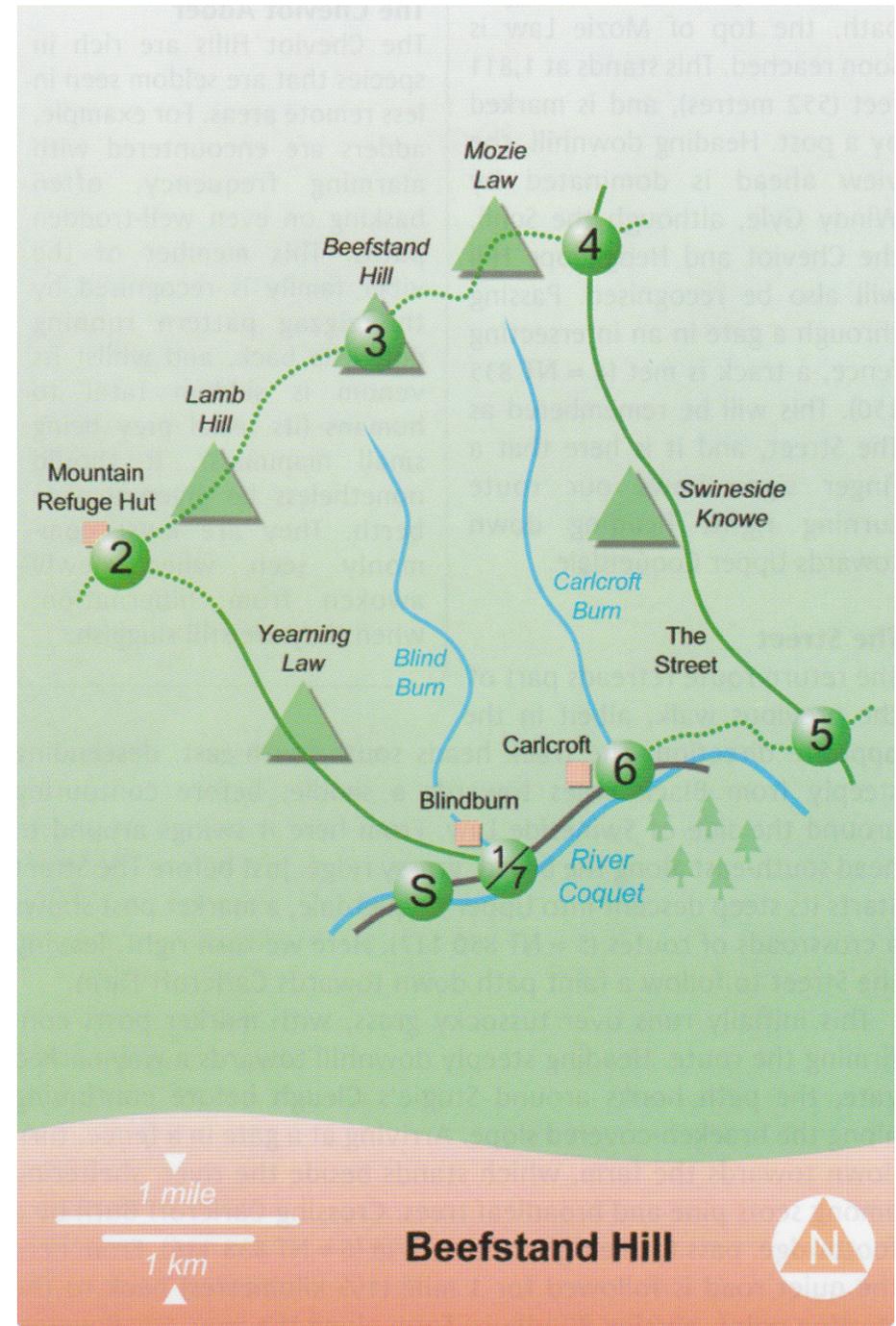
The flagged route of the Pennine Way is followed over a series of hills straddling the border ridge (Lamb Hill, Beefstand Hill and Mozie Law), with views that are once again outstanding. Both ascent and descent are by intersecting ridges flanked by deep valleys.

Length:	9¾ miles (15¾ kilometres)
Ascent:	1,499 feet (457 metres)
Highest Point:	1,844 feet (562 metres)
Map(s):	OS Explorer OL Map 16 ('The Cheviot Hills') (East Sheet)
Starting Point:	Buckham's Bridge car park, Upper Coquetdale (NT 824 107)
Facilities:	Public toilets and inn at Alwinton.
Website:	http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way/route/walk-way-day-walk-4-beefstand-hill-and-border-ridge

Yearning Law

Buckham's Bridge is 3 miles (5 kilometres) further along the road from the starting point for the previous walk. From the car park, head back down the road a short way until, just before Blindburn farm, a finger sign on the left marks the start of a bridleway (1 = NT 829 109). This runs 2½ miles (3¾ kilometres) up onto the border ridge, and is one of a number of routes created by the MoD to compensate for the regular closure of paths on its ranges (note that these routes are not marked on the Landranger map).

Passing through a gate, a hardcore track zigzags steeply uphill. This becomes a quad track heading west up the crest of a broad, grassy ridge. Across the deep valley on the right are the steep slopes of Broadside Law. The track swings around to head north-west, climbing less steeply as it



crosses tussocky grass, with a few posts providing reassurance. Looking to the north-east, Windy Gyle is prominent. The track skirts the lumpy top of Yearning Law, although this fine promontory would certainly reward a short deviation, providing a viewing platform for the heather-crowned hills that lie ahead.

As the way ahead drops to a broad plain, a confusing plethora of quad tracks criss-cross the area, so keep heading north-north-west. When a marker post indicates a crossroads of routes, continue straight ahead on a track signed for the border ridge. This runs over tussocky grass and passes through the site of an ancient settlement before swinging around to head west. Soon the mountain refuge hut at Yearning Saddle is reached (2 = NT 804 129). This is used as an overnight stopping place by long-distance walkers, and it is worth reading the comments left in the visitors' book. The hut is kindly maintained by the tenants of Blindburn farm.

The Border Ridge

The next part of the walk follows the Pennine Way for 2½ miles (4¼ kilometres) as it rolls along the border ridge. Initially the path climbs steeply as it heads north-east, following the border fence. The distinctive cairned dome visible to the north of the ridge is the Kip. Soon the OS pillar marking the top of Lamb Hill is reached, and at 1,677 feet (511 metres) the views are unsurprisingly splendid. From here to Beefstand Hill it is simply a matter of heading north-east alongside the border fence. There is little re-ascent between these bumps on the border ridge. Flagged sections of path provide safe passage of the peaty ground, which is carpeted in heather, bilberry and cottongrass. At 1,844 feet (562 metres), the top of Beefstand Hill is the highest point on the walk, although there is not even a cairn to mark the spot (3 = NT 821 143). Looking to the north, the distinctive form of Hownam Law can be seen, its flat top the site of an Iron Age hill-fort.

The Cheviot Adder

The Cheviot Hills are rich in species that are seldom seen in less remote areas. For example, adders are encountered with alarming

frequency, often basking on even well-trodden paths. This member of the viper family is recognised by the zigzag pattern running down its back, and whilst its venom is seldom fatal to humans (its usual prey being small mammals), it should nonetheless be given a wide berth. They are most commonly seen when newly awoken from hibernation, when they are still sluggish.

Continuing along the flagged path, the top of Mozie Law is soon reached. This stands at 1,811 feet (552 metres), and is marked by a post. Heading downhill, the view ahead is dominated by Windy Gyle, although the Schil, the Cheviot and Hedgehope Hill will also be recognised. Passing through a gate in an intersecting fence, a track is met (4 = NT 835 150). This will be remembered as the Street, and it is here that a finger sign shows our route turning right, heading down towards Upper Coquetdale.

The Street

The return route retreads part of the previous walk, albeit in the opposite direction. The track heads south-south-east, descending steeply from Black Braes towards a saddle, before contouring around the side of Swineside Law. From here it swings around to head south-east along the broad, grassy ridge. Just before the Street starts its steep descent into Upper Coquetdale, a marker post shows a crossroads of routes (5 = NT 850 117). Here we turn right, leaving the Street to follow a faint path down towards Carlcroft farm. This initially runs over tussocky grass, with marker posts confirming the route. Heading steeply downhill towards a waymarked gate, the path hooks around Stogie's Cleugh before continuing along the bracken-covered slope. Arriving at a gate in a fence, turn down towards the farm, which stands beside the river, sheltering among scots pine and broadleaf trees. Crossing Carlcroft Burn by a footbridge, pass to the right of the farm (6 = NT 838 116). From here the quiet road is followed for 1 mile (1½ kilometres) back to the starting point, passing Blindburn farm along the way. Small waterfalls in the course of the river complete a charming scene.

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