

The Centenary Walk

A Leader's Guide

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The Centenary walk takes a roughly oval route, from **Buckden** at its northern point to **Starbotton** in the south. It is closely associated with the River Wharfe, following it downstream at a high level at first, on the eastern bank; then after using the bridge at Starbotton it heads back upstream at river level on the western bank. The views down into Upper Wharfedale make this ideal for river studies of a glaciated valley with its associated misfit river, meanders, oxbows, and so on.

The route is not remote; rarely more than 500 metres direct line from a road, the greatest altitude gained is 440 metres. Nonetheless, the weather can be harsh (the initial climb is more exposed than on the Valley Heads Walk, the upper pastures can be bleak in winter) and the path in places not entirely obvious, especially in winter when grass is short in the higher pastures. For this reason **non – NGB qualified leaders are required to have walked the route previously** before taking a group out. If you cannot manage this, you must choose a different, easier walk.

It is recommended that the group leader talks to a member of Buckden House staff *before* walking the route. Contact the centre to arrange this.

The Centenary walk will generally take half a day, the distance being roughly seven kilometers. It provides ample opportunities for navigation practice, education, drawing, or simply exercise and conversation. Some points of educational value will be provided later in these notes.

Equipment for Group and Leader

See the **risk assessment**. An instructor will be happy to advise what clothing is appropriate for the conditions on the day – this will probably be covered at the *09.00 meeting*.

- Safety sack (down by the signing out board). Know what is in it!
- Appropriate clothing and footwear. Check what children are wearing under waterproofs!
- Drink. A flask in the cold (ask an instructor or take your own), water bottles in summer.
- “Extras” such as suncream, tissues, camera...
- This booklet and extra maps / compasses if wanted
- **Medication** required by any group members

Route

This walk is normally taken in the direction described, as it covers the more strenuous part while the youngsters are fresh.

- Leave the main car park in Buckden and immediately turn right. Keeping the wall on your right hand’ head uphill for a few metres, then level, then down to Buckden Beck.
- This is best crossed by stepping stones –the small footbridge is not actually the right of way.
- The obvious track (Roman road) now climbs steadily, passing through a couple of gates. Soon Buckden House is passed below and to the right.
- As height is gained the wooded areas are left behind. The path, still very clear and stony, passes through two walls – not currently gated.

- Finally, the path fades where a drystone wall ahead blocks the way. *Although it is not clear, there is a path junction here.* **Do not** take the signposted path which now curves up and to your left, it goes to the Buckden lead mine. Instead, **do** go up to the wall which bars your way, and follow it *uphill*, keeping it on your right, to where you meet a stile.
- Cross the stile and follow the path slightly downhill. You are once more heading down the valley, with Upper Wharfedale down on your right.
- Five pastures are crossed, all following the vague path slightly downhill; look for the wooden posts with yellow tops which mark both the path and the stiles in the walls.
- During the last descent to the village of Starbotton, a larger, very stony, track is joined. This is the old lead miners' road from Top Mere and leads (downhill, to the right) into the back of Starbotton, with Cam Gill beck flowing on the left.
- As you approach Starbotton it is worth looking a little downstream, to identify the location of the footbridge over the River Wharfe that you will be using next.
- In Starbotton, turn left where the road is joined (over the bridge crossing Cam Gill Beck). Keep to the back road until it joins the main road. Almost directly opposite, the signposted track (Buckden 2 ¼ miles) leads down through fields to the footbridge over the Wharfe.
- Over the bridge, turn right, upstream, alongside the Wharfe. The small footbridge over Fosse Gill is crossed soon after.
- The path, the Dales Way, is very obvious on the ground. Where the river first veers away rightwards, keep to the track (more footbridges) through pastures until the river rejoins the path once more.
- Buckden House is seen ahead and to the right, and then a track junction is met.
- Ensure that you take the **correct** track, signposted, which trends down to the right and keeps close to the River Wharfe. *The track straight ahead at the junction is private.*
- Three fields are traversed with the Wharfe nearby on the right, and Buckden just across the river. The final sharp right turn leads to the Election Bridge in Bucken, with Buckden House up the road to the right.

Safety

There is no mobile phone coverage in this area. Farms and pubs will have telephones to use in an emergency.

The best form of accident procedure is avoidance – know the route, look at it in conjunction with the risk assessment, and get into the habit of wondering “what if”. It is generally considered that first aid knowledge, rather than a full qualification, is an appropriate standard to reach as a leader. If you are unsure whether you have sufficient knowledge, consider:

- i) treatment of a broken arm, following a slip
- ii) recognizing symptoms of hypothermia
- iii) treatment of an unconscious casualty (banged head, faint)
- iv) choking
- v) cuts from barbed wire, broken glass

If in doubt, the school nurse should be able to help – or why not consider a first aid course?

It is generally considered that a ratio of one leader to a maximum of twelve young people is observed; a single leader will generally be very confident in their knowledge of their chosen route, and their ability to cope with any situations that might arise. However, it is not recommended that groups combine to give the security of two leaders – experience shows that it is harder for two to keep track of twenty four than for one to look after half that number.

Centenary- Walk Risk Assessment

To lead this walk unaccompanied you must have

- i) an appropriate walking qualification (BELA, ML, WGL) or
- ii) have walked the route previously, have experience with groups, and have a sound grasp of First Aid and
- iii) have the approval of the Head of Centre or designated other

Hazard

Risk

Control

Water crossing at Buckden Beck. Slips and getting cold / wet. **Drowning** possible in high water.

Low probability, normally minor consequences, but potentially **fatal** in flood conditions

Alternative walk, as conditions dictate. To be decided by centre staff.

Drop to right when ascending first part of Centenary path. Slips on limestone, tumbles downslope.

Moderate probability of slips when rock is wet. Low risk of falling off path. Consequences moderate to **fatal**.

Appropriate footwear in wet conditions (good grip). Good group control, brief before hazard is encountered. Vigilance.

Steep descent to Starbotton. Uncontrolled running, slips and falls

Medium probability, if conditions are wet or icy. Consequences moderate to serious.

Good group control. Briefing before hazard is encountered. Slow pace!

Roads and traffic, especially near Cray and Buckden bridge.

Low probability but potentially **fatal** consequences.

Good group control, briefing. Reflective vests in the top of the safety sack, torches as appropriate.

Animals in fields along riverside path. Mainly cows with calves.

Very low probability. Consequences serious.

Keep group together, do not get between cow and calf. If a cow approaches it is probably hungry / curious. If concerned, shout at it and wave arms. **Do not run**. Do **not** take dogs on this walk in the spring.

Environmental injury, Both **cold** and **heat** related; Sunburn, heat exhaustion, hypothermia. Bees stings

Moderate probability of minor effects, low probability but potentially **fatal** consequences.

Consult centre staff as to best route, clothing and equipment options. Carry medication.

An Accident Procedure

This document is not an excuse for not thinking.

Be realistic about your own capabilities, and those of the group. There is a fine balance between admirable and effective self-sufficiency and the Hippocratic injunction, 'first, do no harm'.

Problem

Consider

Suggestions

Lost

Are you off route,
or merely uncertain?

Go back the way you have come, until you recognize that you are back on course. If you *know* you are in the wrong place, do not forge ahead across private land to reach your destination; *go back*.

Child too hot

What is the state of
the other children?

Give fluids, rest in shade. If water nearby is not drinkable it can be used to cool the head and neck.

Child too cold

What is the state of
the other children?
Where is the nearest
shelter?
Might the child be
hypothermic?

Add clothing, especially hats and waterproofs.
Seek a quick way to a lower/
less exposed area.

Injured child

Is this life threatening,
or is time not an issue?
Is anyone else at risk?
What will everyone
else do while you treat
the casualty?
Can the casualty move,
or be helped?
Get help using nearest
telephone, or passerby.
Move as many of group as
possible to nearest road pick
up. If you get help alone,
remember where the group is.
(01756 760254 – Buckden).

First aid kit in safety sack.
Remove rest of group from
potential hazard, also casualty
if possible.
Protect from cold, also use
the contents of the safety sack
to protect the entire group, as
necessary.

Points of Interest en Route

- Buckden Rake (943773, and north and south) is the remains of the Roman road which ran from Ilkley in the south to Bainbridge (Wensleydale) in the north. The road generally avoided the valley base as being too marshy, wooded and prone to ambush. The local British tribe, the Brigantes, fought the Romans for many years; their defensive earthworks may still be seen on top of Ingleborough, and nearby at Tor Dyke above Kettlewell (981755).
- On the ascending Centenary path (943773 and onwards to 949764, opened to commemorate the first hundred years of the National Trust) fine views can be had down the valley. The massive erosive power of the Wharfedale glacier can easily be appreciated in the U shaped valley. Roughly twelve thousand years before present, a huge mass of slowly moving ice filled the current valley, from upper Langstrothdale in the north-west and down the dale past Buckden and Kettlewell towards Skipton in the south. It scoured away uncountable tons of soil and the underlying limestone, smoothing the valley sides and flattening the base, leaving behind bare rock and scree.
- Limestone is a chemically pure rock. When eroded by rainwater it dissolves almost entirely and is carried away in solution, leaving very little residue. As a result, soil forms very slowly on a limestone bedrock where there is not also significant plant growth to contribute biomass. Twelve millennia have passed since the glaciers scoured the dale clean of soil, but still the soil cover is still very thin in places, as witnessed by the small crags and limestone pavements seen all along the upper course of the walk.
- Note the 'misfit' river Wharfe – far too small in its present state to have eroded the massive Wharfedale – which meanders about across the wide, barely-graded valley bottom. Small oxbow lakes are also seen down at 947753.
- Swaledale sheep - with their distinctive black face and white muzzle – are the symbol of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. These hardy animals are bred for their meat (although in the past their wool was the main source of wealth in the north riding) and are now more important in their role of keeping the fells clear of woodland through their grazing. The distinctive bleak, open landscape of the Yorkshire fells is almost entirely a result of sheep farming – it is not natural.
- The drystone walls are generally made up of very local rock. The walls by the miners' track (953754 and south) are made of a very fossil rich limestone. The ring – shaped segments of crinoids are abundant – but not in walls elsewhere, where different beddings of limestone are at the surface.
- Fosse Gill (949745) is a series of waterfalls and mini gorges, lined with rowan and hawthorn trees, among others. Brown trout may be seen at all times of year, while yellow primroses line the banks in spring. A gill is a rocky stream or watercourse, the word being introduced by Norse settlers in the tenth century, while a fosse is Norse for a waterfall (as in Janet's Fosse, near Malham).
- The Birks Wood (939760 and stretching northwards) is a mix of ancient and undisturbed woodland (birks being the Old Norse for birch tree) and decorative foreign trees, planted for the last resident of Buckden House, Miss Elizabeth Compton Stansfield, who died in 1939. These woods are best seen under autumn sunshine where the varying colours indicate the wide variety of species planted around a century ago; they are particularly well seen from Miss Stansfield's verandah at Buckden House itself!