

Walk 7: Hawkshead Hill to Colthouse

A delightful walk through the fields and villages of the Esthwaite vale.

Difficulty: easy

4 miles

500 ft altitude gain

2-3 hrs

Exploring this pretty valley will take you through the tiny hamlets of Hawkshead Hill and Colthouse, as well as the picturesque village of Hawkshead. You will experience the Ecumenical nature of our community as you visit a Baptist Chapel, a Quaker Meeting House, a Methodist church and an Anglican church.

You will be walking through fields some of which will have livestock so please keep dogs on leads and close all gates behind you.



There aren't any difficulties on this walk, but after rain, it will inevitably be muddy.

There are many things to discover along the walk including the [16th Century Court House](#) and the museum of the [Hawkshead Grammar School](#) where William Wordsworth went to school. You may also be interested in the beautiful [gallery of Beatrix Potter's art](#).

There are plenty of places to find refreshments in Hawkshead, from welcoming pubs to tea shops selling fabulous cakes or you can pick up an ice cream on the way past.

Every effort has been made to achieve accuracy of information in this guide. The authors, publishers and website owners can take no responsibility for loss or injury (including fatal) to persons, loss or damage to property or equipment, trespass, irresponsible behaviour or any other mishap that may be suffered as a result of following the route descriptions or advice offered in this guide. The inclusion of a track or path as part of the route, or otherwise recommended, in this guide does not guarantee that the track or path will remain a right-of-way. If conflict with landowners arises, we advise that you act politely and leave by the shortest route available. If the matter needs to be taken further, then please take it up with the relevant authority.

The Walk

1. Park at [Hawkshead Hill Baptist Chapel](#) (LA22 OPW). Toilets are available round the back, and you can find self-serve drinks in the chapel. Turn right out of the gate, and then immediately right at the road junction.



A short distance up the lane you will see a red letter box and telephone

box on the left. Take the footpath (signed) opposite. Follow the grassy path which takes you to a gate. Go through the gate. The footpath continues following a wire fence and hedge on your right. You will soon come to a small wooden bridge.

Meditation 1: On the bridge

Stop: Listen to the trickling of the water. What else can you hear?
Reflect on God's love which is constantly and quietly at work in your life.

2. Go through the next gate and continue. Look out for a waymark which directs you left. (Take care at this point because there is also a path which bends to the right.)

Meditation 2: At the junction

CONSIDER: Are you called on to take the less trodden path?

There are trees on your right. You will see stumps and damaged trees on your left. Soon you will reach a kissing gate.

Meditation 3: At the kissing gate

STOP: Note the view ahead of mountains:
'I lift my eyes to the hills. From whence does my help come? My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.' (Psalm 121)

Carry on through the gate and follow the footpath which takes you diagonally left over the field to a gate in the middle of a mesh wire fence. Go through this kissing gate, and continue right over the field, keeping the wire fence on your right.

At the bottom of the field, go through the kissing gate which is in the left corner of the field and takes you onto a lane (Skinner How Lane). Turn right onto the lane. The next section of the walk is downhill.

Meditation 4: On the lane

REFLECT. The word 'down' can have negative connotations. You might want to briefly acknowledge the experiences in your own life which have got you 'down'. Then consider how Jesus came down from heaven to earth.

'He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' (Philippians 2: 8—11)

Eventually you will see the lane rise ahead of you. As you walk up the rise, consider how Jesus ascended the hill of Golgotha and died for the sins of the world.

The road then descends and soon reaches the main road. Just before the junction, notice a stream which goes under the road, and channels into a pond on the left.

Meditation 5: At the pond

STOP. Remember your baptismal/confirmation vow to be a disciple of Jesus. Receive again the promise of 'sins forgiven'. If it helps, imagine throwing your sins into the pond.

'For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us' (Psalm 103: 11, 12)

3. Turn left onto the road (B5286). Take care on the S bend. (It is best to walk on the LHS of the road at this point. Once round the bend, cross over to the RHS). As you approach a junction, you will see [Hawkshead Courthouse](#) on the left.



At the junction, look left and you will see the sign for [Hawkshead Hall Campsite](#). Look to the right of the sign to find 2 footpath signs. Cross over the road, walk to the left, and find the footpath. Follow the path, which is accompanied by a stream on the right. In the autumn there are blackberries growing here. After around 200m, go through a gate. Immediately after the gate there is a footpath sign. Turn left to 'Wray Castle & Ambleside'.

(ALTERNATIVELY – for a shorter route which misses out Colthouse – Continue ahead following the sign 'Hawkshead 200yds'.)

4. The path crosses the flat bottom of the valley and runs through green fields. Go through a gate and cross a waterway; stop to look back at Hawkshead village behind you. Go through another gate and you will see paths to the right and the left. Go right and walk round to another kissing gate. Turn right onto the bridleway (Scar House Lane) following the signpost to 'Colthouse'.

Eventually the road bends left round a barn and white cottage, and brings you to a road. Look straight ahead, over the fields, to see the whitewashed [Friends Meeting House](#). Turn left onto the road. You are now entering Colthouse. Follow the road a short way, then take the next right turn signed '150yds Quaker Meeting House'.



At the Quaker Meeting House take time to look around.

5. When you are ready to leave, turn right onto the lane. This takes you through a farmyard to a junction with another lane where you should turn left. Immediately on the LHS, you will see the 'Society of Friends (Quaker) Burial Ground. Dating from 1659'. Take time to look round the Burial Ground. There are many daffodils in the spring. There are seats around the walls. From the seat at the highest point, you can see Hawkshead village to the right, and Grizedale Forest to the left.

Meditation 6: In the burial ground

Reflect on the Christian belief of 'the resurrection of the dead'.

'For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day'. (John 6: 40)

Turn left out of the Burial Ground, and then immediately right onto the main road signed 'Hawkshead, Coniston'. The road runs past a Site of Scientific Interest on the LHS. The road goes over a bridge. Turn right following the sign, 'Hawkshead village (P) 150yds'.

Take the next left signed 'Hawkshead Village'. Follow the short road to the end, (there are public toilets on the LHS) and go through the large gates facing you with signs 'Grammar School & Parish Church'.

Go through a gate straight ahead of you. (There is a graveyard on the left which you might like to explore. If you take the steps to the top of the graveyard, you will reach a bench at the top. From here there are good views.)

Follow the path around [St Michael and All Angels' Church](#). This bends to the right and takes you to the main entrance on the far side of the building. You are welcome to spend time inside.

6. As you leave the church, follow the path ahead to the gate, and then down the short slope into Market Hall Square.

[Hawkshead Methodist Church](#) is tucked away in the far left-hand corner of the square (left of the Kings Arms, and the Minstrel's Gallery). Do find your way inside and take some time.

As you leave the church, turn left round the Minstrel's Gallery and then left under the arch on Vicarage Lane. Follow this lane up the hill, with a stream to the left.

Look for a sign on the right saying 'Public Footpath to Tarn Hows'. Go through the kissing gate, and follow the grassy footpath. Initially this is flat, and then it starts to climb. It brings you to another kissing gate.





Continue on a narrow stony path to a kissing gate. Continue on a wider stony path, with trees on the left and fields on the right, to a kissing gate. After going through the gate, notice the stream to your right, and look down at the deep gully (take special care of any children with you).

The path bends to the right over a stone flag bridge. Follow the rocky path and go through a kissing gate. You are now in Thompson Ground. Follow the path over a field.

Meditation 7: In the field

Take in the view. There are mountains to the right. There are usually sheep in the field. Consider:

'It is he who made us, and we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.' (Psalm 100:3)

Eventually the path descends to a kissing gate. Here there is a sign indicating 'Tarn Hows 1½ miles' to the left. Follow the road to the left and soon you will see, ahead of you, the blue sign 'Hawkshead Hill Baptist Church'.

Take time to go inside the chapel (make yourself a drink), look round the grounds, and enjoy the peace and quiet.