

LINDETH FELL

Ghyll Head, the fell between the lake and the Winster Valley



Ghyll Head, the fell between the lake and the Winster Valley, South of Lindeth Fell is like a mini Lake District in its own right.

It has a great range of habitats from craggy fell top to wet woodlands and mosses, sometimes within metres of each other. In Spring the Bluebells are some of the best to be seen in the Lake District but are almost a secret. You get minute detail, tiny sedums and almost bonsai myrtles, the streams run with marsh marigolds, watercress and water mint – plus unexpected vistas as mountain ranges reveal themselves from viewpoints and gaps in the woodland.

We describe some of the routes, but you can pick and mix as the paths intersect in many places. You'll need waterproof footwear as you'll go through at least one stream, if not three for the Ghyll Head viewpoint.

Please note: This area is conservation grazed by sheep and cows, who you may rarely meet. The cows have their young with them and are frequently accompanied by a bull. They have always been placid – just give them a wide berth even if that means going off the path.

We recommend the Ordnance Survey app, as you can download routes and not lose them if phone signals dip. You can also switch between viewing options – the aerial photo option is handy if you're just a bit confused, as it shows you the real-life setting.



Ghyll Head Tarn and the view towards the Conistone mountain range.



1. GHYLL HEAD VIEWPOINT:

Turn left out of the drive and follow the A5074, then right on to the B5360 past Blackwell House. You come to Bellman Ground, a cluster of old farm buildings, turn left up the track beside them signposted for Rosthwaite Farm.

Skirt around the farm side of the walled off tarn between that and the buildings, more or less straight on just a bit to the right. You'll need to climb the stile and go straight ahead, through the stream, and head up to a crossroads in the path beside an Oak tree. Take the right-hand path for the viewing point even though it's not marked on the post. There are a couple of rocky outcrops and dips on the way, a flatter path is to go straight on from the 'crossroads' along by the wood, and another path leads off to the right, approaching the seat from the south on a smoother path. The quickest return is to retrace your steps.

Duration: 1-1.5 hrs. The header photo shows part of the view.

Option 1a: If you'd like to add a little more distance and scenery, take in a loop of Ghyll Head woods via the lane alongside Ghyll Head Tarn, join this via the path which heads downhill towards the lake behind the viewing point seat, and turn left up the lane. You pass the scenic Ghyll Head Tarn on your right-hand side, and reach a small parking area with gate on your left, which is the start of the footpath back to Ghyll Head straight ahead. There's a choice of which bit of woodland you walk through, on both sides of the fence but they start and end in the same place; the left-hand side is more typical native deciduous woodland, and the right is a bit more open and the rarer wet woodland – there are raised wooden sections. Returning to the crossroads in the path to return to Lindeth Fell.



2. THE DRIEST OPTION FOR THE WETTEST WEATHER:

Don't let the title put you off, this is a beautiful walk year-round. At roughly 8km/5 miles, this is the biggest, driest loop around the hill. Suitable for the depths of Winter and wettest weather, as most of it is along lanes and hardcore laid track. As with all the walks you can do them clockwise or anti-clockwise but we describe this one anti-clockwise.

These instructions rejoin the walk at the Ghyll Head viewpoint. Whichever side of the woodland you walk, to join the Ghyll Head lane, turn left on the road and follow it along till you come the first turning on the left, with a gate and a cattlegrid. There's a Lake District National Park notice board for Ludderburn Moss, about the environmental work they have done there.

If you love the spectacle of massed Bluebells all of the routes have swathes of them, both out in the open before the bracken grows, and in the pockets of woodland, but the woodland on the edge of Ghyll Head lane is exceptional in Springtime.

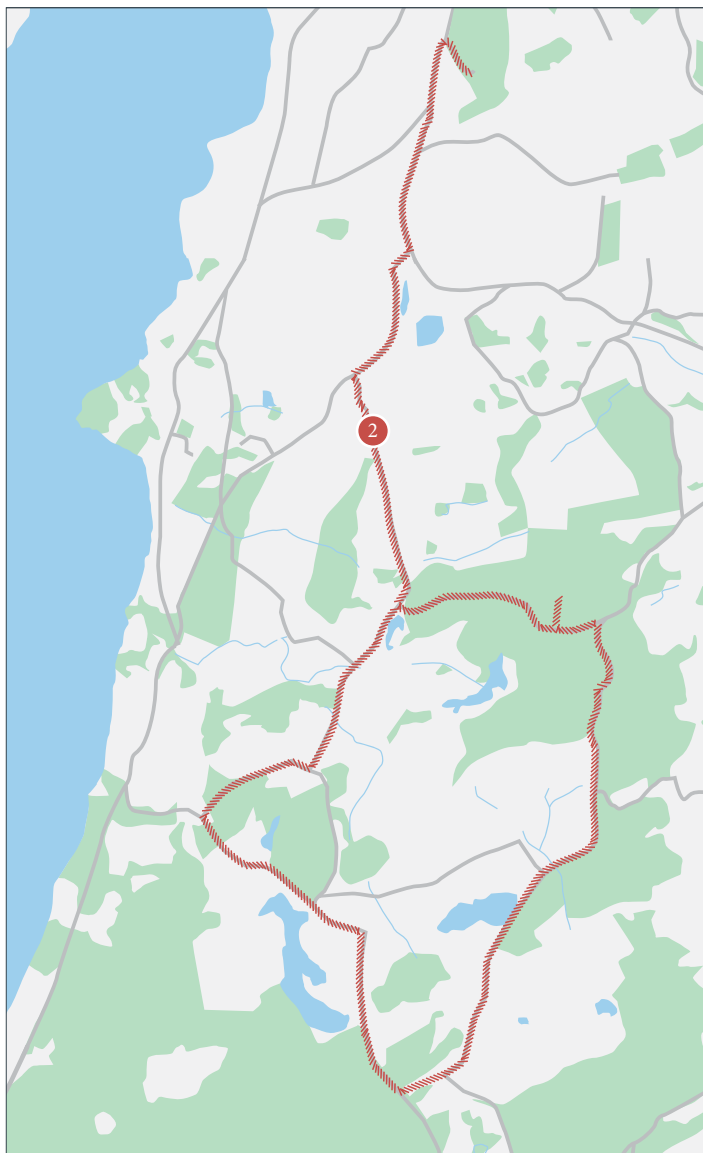
This leads between the two Ludderburn Mosses, past Green Hill, to Podnet Tarn. (The diversion via Green Hill woods and Little Ludderburn Moss is described in another walk). This area is a site of Special Scientific Interest and you'll notice it in the details, it's teeming with wildlife, (mainly the little kind, butterflies and beetles, and native wildflowers). Podnet Tarn is another pretty little tarn - a great spot for a picnic. In late Spring it is fringed with the improbably exotic looking, but prosaically named bog bean, and almost totally covered with white water lilies. There are shoals of minnows, and many types of damsel and dragon Flies. Plus a cuckoo calling.

The track after here turns from concrete to compacted gravel and leads through native deciduous woodland. You get sudden distant views of mountains, or glimpses of other inaccessible tarns in wooded hollows. It's easy to follow as this is the only track, eventually you come to a fork in the path and you can see the tiny hamlet of Winster off to the right – however keep left. As you reach the top of the first rise you could take a little detour up to Rulbut's Hill on your right, 5 minutes there and back – you get great and unexpected views to the top of Windermere, around and over to Yorkshire, identifiable by Ingleborough's distinct profile, and South out to sea with a view across Morecambe Bay.

Retrace your steps to rejoin the track and follow it onwards to Rosthwaite Farm. This stretch of woodland was devastated by Storm Arwen – it's a small mercy that most of the trees were non-native evergreens. It's always a surprise how shallow tree roots are.

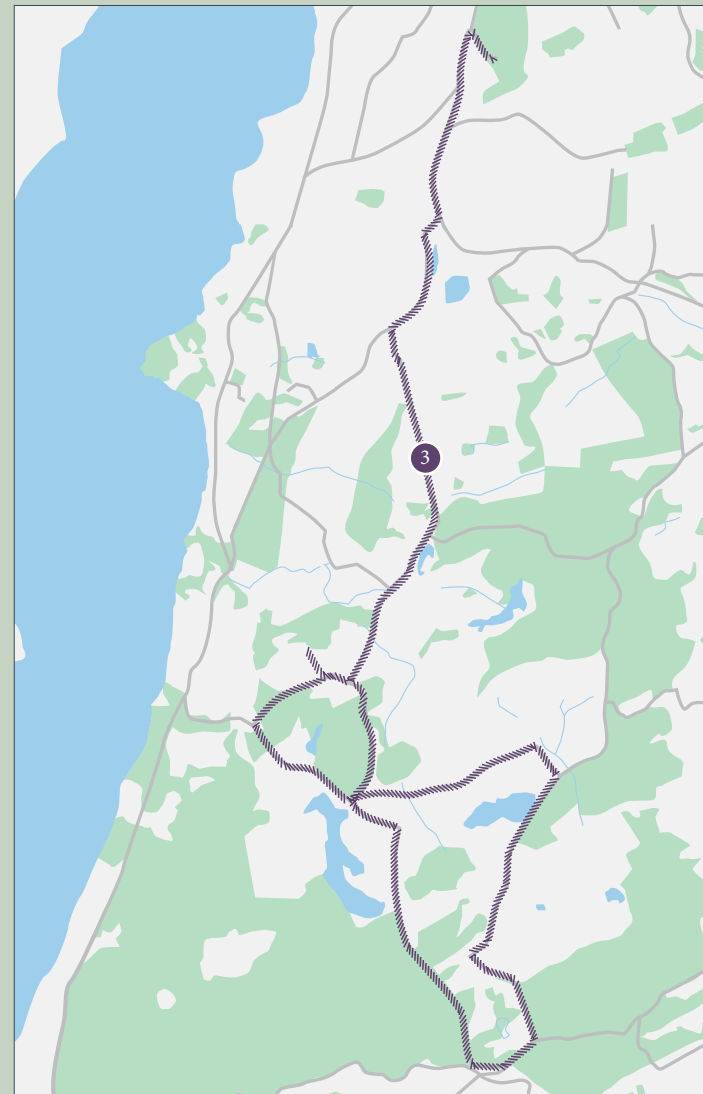
Once you reach the farm, and cluster of houses by another small tarn, take the concrete track right at the small horse statue, in front of the houses. This leads you towards Bellman Ground again, and back to Lindeth Fell.

You'll notice from the maps that many routes interweave, so you can pick and mix your options to create your ideal walk from the options we give you here.



Bog Bean

3. MOSSES AND TARNs - THE MOST DIVERSE HABITAT ROUTE:



This one loops around the tarns and wet woodlands, a mix of lanes and raised wooden walkways, plus dips in the fell top where streams cross the paths. But unless you're dressed accordingly best left in Winter – although mosses and lichens come into their own then, and this ancient natural woodland is thick with both.

The wet woodlands enjoyed on this walk are unusual habitats – the LDNPA has been working to restore them to their natural best, hence the deer fencing around the boundaries. Take the path to Rosthwaite farm again, then Ghyll Head as Route 1. At the crossroads of the paths take the first footpath on the left through woodland to the East side of Ghyll Head woods. At the end of the path, through the gate to the other side of the fence, turn immediate left and follow the path across heathland, turning right at another slight crossroads of paths, (there's a fence and small gate opposite), it's a few yards till you come to the main concrete track. Turn right here and you come to Podnet Tarn. Follow the track alongside the tarn, over the cattle grid and along by woods on your left, turn left off the track through a gate in the wall, marked Green Hill, and go straight ahead. You take a gate into woodland, and follow the fork to the right into Little Ludderburn Moss – a marshy almost overgrown tarn fringed with native trees, coated with moss and ferns, beds of reeds and bilberries as well as multitudes of other wild flowers. A raised walkway by the wall brings you to the gate into the lane.

Turn right and follow this lane to the next junction and turn right again onto the Ghyll Head Lane, signposted Bowness/Storrs. This lane has woodland on the left and Ludderburn Moss on the right. For a bit of variety follow it past Ghyll Head Tarn and turn right at the path signposted to Bellman Ground. This is also another chance to enjoy the viewing point at the top of Ghyll Head, before following the main track back towards Rosthwaite Farm, and back to Lindeth Fell via Bellman Ground.



Podnet Tarn

MAP ROUTES

KEY

- Route 1:
Ghyll Head viewpoint
- Route 2:
The driest option for the wettest weather
- Route 3:
Mosses and Tarns -
The most diverse habitat route

