

Buckden Pike Walk

A Complete Guide to This Classic Dales Hike

Visit my website for full details: <https://www.paulbeal.com/buckden-pike-walk>

Introduction to the Walk

This circular route starts in the lovely village of Buckden and takes you on a rewarding 8-mile journey through woodland, open fell, and riverside paths. Along the way, you'll visit the summit of Buckden Pike, see the moving Polish War Memorial, descend into the peaceful village of Starbotton, and return along a scenic stretch of the Dales Way beside the River Wharfe.

Highlights of the Walk

From the very first climb through Rakes Wood, the views open up across Wharfedale. Higher up, a well-worn path leads past rocky outcrops, grassy slopes, and dry stone walls, with wide-ranging views in all directions. The summit offers a dramatic panorama, including glimpses of the Yorkshire 3 Peaks on a clear day. The walk continues south to the Memorial Cross, honouring five Polish airmen who died here during the Second World War. The descent into Starbotton is a joy, and the riverside return along the Dales Way provides a peaceful, easy finish through beautiful pastures.

Buckden Pike stands at 702 metres and is one of the highest peaks in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It's just a little lower than Great Whernside and overlooks the top end of Wharfedale from above the village of Buckden. The fell is a popular destination for walkers and fell runners, and it's also home to the Buckden Pike Fell Race, held every June as part of the village gala.

If you're after a scenic and satisfying day out in the Dales, this walk is well worth a try. Head to my website to see the full Buckden Pike route, explore the interactive maps, and get all the tools you need to plan your adventure. Visit <https://www.paulbeal.com/buckden-pike-walk> for full details.

Additional Information

- **Distance:** 8 miles (13 kilometres).
- **Duration:** Approximately 4¼ hours (excluding stops and breaks).
- **Difficulty:** Moderate to challenging – includes a long uphill section to the summit and some uneven, boggy terrain. Suitable for walkers with reasonable fitness and some experience of hill walking.
- **Trail Conditions:** A mix of stony bridleways, grassy slopes, rocky fell paths, and riverside tracks. The ascent is steep in places and the high-level sections can be exposed and boggy, particularly after rain. Sturdy footwear and good outdoor clothing are recommended.
- **Recommended Map:** OS Explorer OL30 – Yorkshire Dales Northern & Central Area.
- **Parking:** Yorkshire Dales National Park car park in Buckden, just off the B6160 behind the former St Michael's School Room.
 - **Google Maps Link:** <https://maps.app.goo.gl/jAa8PjWvYFTp2z4H7>
 - **What3Words:** ///spine.generally.jaunts

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Thank you for your support!

Paul Beal



Step-by-Step Directions

Your Buckden Pike walk begins in the charming village of Buckden, nestled in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales. Park in the Yorkshire Dales National Park **pay-and-display car park (1)**, conveniently located just off the B6160 at the northern end of the village. You'll find it behind the former St Michael's School Room, with ample parking available.

Head towards the northern end of the car park, where the exit is located (not the entrance). Go through a large wooden gate and follow the stony bridleway uphill, signposted to Cray High Bridge and Buckden Pike.

As you climb, you'll pass through Rakes Wood, then continue through a couple of gates, where the stone track begins to level out. When you reach a bend in the track that curves to the right, resist the turn and instead proceed straight through a gate. Immediately after, turn right onto a **bridleway signposted to Buckden Pike (2)**.

Follow the path diagonally uphill across the field towards a gate in the top left-hand corner. Pass through the gate and continue your ascent along a grassy path, which steadily climbs the hillside over an area known as **Cow Close (3)**.

After about half a mile, you'll notice craggy rocks to your right as the grassy path transitions into a rocky trail. Continue diagonally up the hillside for another half a mile, eventually reaching a **dry stone wall (4)**. From this point, the path steepens significantly, following a more direct route to the summit. Stick to the trail alongside the wall, where the surface is initially stepped with large stone boulders before transitioning to paved stone slabs as you near the top.

At the summit (5), continue along the path heading south, keeping the triangulation pillar on your right-hand side. Follow the paved path beside the wall, marked with a signpost indicating the "Suggested Route to War Memorial". Just over half a mile across the plateau, you'll reach a stile—cross over to arrive at the **Memorial Cross (6)**, a significant landmark commemorating the Polish airmen who tragically lost their lives here during the Second World War.

From the Memorial Cross, follow the path with the dry stone wall now on your right-hand side. This next section, approximately a quarter of a mile long, can be boggy, particularly after wet weather. You may find it easier to stay close to the wall or weave slightly to the left, navigating around the wettest sections. At the end of this boggy stretch, turn right and pass through a gate in the **dry stone wall (7)**.

Once through the gate, continue alongside the wall before veering straight ahead, beginning your descent down Starbotton Fell. The way is marked by wooden posts with waymarkers and occasional cairns (large piles of stones) to guide your route. The descent follows a grassy path that leads onto **Walden Road (8)**, a mix of grassy and rocky terrain. As you make your way downhill for nearly 1½ miles, enjoy sweeping views of the valley carved by Cam Gill Beck, which remains on your left.

Eventually, you'll reach a **junction with a public footpath and a signpost (9)**. Here, follow the route signposted to Starbotten rather than Buckden Lead Mine. Continue downhill into Starbotten village, crossing a bridge over Cam Gill Beck before turning right to meet the **B6160 main road (10)**. Turn left onto the road and follow it south through the village. As you leave Starbotten, turn right at the footpath signposted for Arncliffe, Kettlewell, and Buckden.

Follow the path between the dry stone walls, descending towards the **River Wharfe (11)**. Cross the footbridge and turn right at the signpost for Buckden, joining the Dales Way. This scenic riverside section of your Buckden Pike walk offers a peaceful and relatively flat route. After approximately one-third of a mile, where the **river bends to the right (12)**, continue straight ahead along the footpath.

The path remains well defined, and after just under a mile it returns **closer to the riverbank (13)**. Keep heading forward along the Dales Way, which soon widens into a stone track. Pay close attention to the waymarkers, as you'll need to take a **downhill path on your right (14)**, signposted to Buckden. Continue following the riverside trail for another half a mile, eventually reaching **Dubb's Lane (15)**.

At this point, turn right and cross the river using the road bridge. From here, simply follow the road back into Buckden village, where your Buckden Pike walk comes to an end. To round off the day, why not stop by The Buck Inn for a well-earned drink or a hearty meal?

Map of the Walk

