

Gunnerside Gill Walk

7 Miles of Stunning Yorkshire Dales Scenery

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

Introduction to the Walk

This circular Gunnerside Gill walk begins in the village of Gunnerside in Swaledale, Yorkshire Dales. It follows Gunnerside Beck north through woodland and farmland, passing the Sir Francis Dressing Floor, Bunting Mine, and Blakethwaite Smelt Mill, before looping south through Ivelet and back across open fields. The route combines clear paths, steady gradients, and plenty of visible mining remains.

Highlights of the Walk

This Gunnerside Gill walk includes wooded paths, open pasture, and historic mining sites. It passes through Birkbeck Wood, the fields of Winterings, and the remains of the Sir Francis Dressing Floor and Blakethwaite Smelt Mill. Wide valley views open from Silver Hill and Jingle Pot Edge, while the return through Ivelet offers a calm, open-field finish.

Gunnerside Gill, or Gunnerside Ghyll, lies north of Gunnerside village. Once a busy lead-mining area in the 18th and 19th centuries, it still shows clear evidence of that past. Hushes, spoil heaps, and stone buildings mark sites such as Bunton, Friarfold, and Gorton hushes. The Sir Francis Level, opened in 1864, was the first mine in the area to use compressed air drills. The valley now attracts walkers on Alfred Wainwright's Coast to Coast route, which crosses its upper reaches.

This walk is ideal for those interested in Swaledale's industrial past and quiet valley scenery. You'll find the full route, maps, and planning tools on my website. Visit <https://www.paulbeal.com/gunnerside-gill-walk> for full details.

Additional Information

- **Distance:** 7 miles (11¼ kilometres).
- **Duration:** Approximately 3½ hours (excluding stops and breaks).
- **Difficulty:** Moderate, with a steady valley ascent, occasional narrow sections in a steep-sided gill, and a short, steep descent. Suitable for regular walkers confident on uneven ground.
- **Trail Conditions:** Mostly riverside and hillside paths with some steps, a higher path and a steep descent, then grassy paths turning into broader stone tracks, a brief stretch on quiet lane, and easy field paths. Surfaces near old mining remains are uneven, and paths can be muddy in wet weather.
- **Recommended Map:** OS Explorer OL30 – Yorkshire Dales Northern & Central Area.
- **Parking:** Village-centre parking in Gunnerside for approximately 15 cars, with public toilets near the King's Head pub.
 - **Google Maps Link:** <https://maps.app.goo.gl/sHnw4mp6cHDAunpt9>
 - **What3Words:** ///elevated.freshen.hurtles

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If you've found these directions helpful or enjoyed this walk, please consider making a £2 donation to support what I do. Your contribution helps me create more free walking guides like this one.

You can donate by visiting <https://buymeacoffee.com/paulbeal> or by scanning the QR code.

Thank you for your support!

Paul Beal



Step-by-Step Directions

Start your Gunnerside Gill walk in the village of **Gunnerside (1)**, located in Swaledale in the Yorkshire Dales. There is parking available in the village centre, with space for approximately 15 cars, and public toilets are conveniently located near the King's Head pub. Once you've parked, cross the road bridge towards the pub, then turn immediately left. Follow the signposted path to Gunnerside Gill, keeping Gunnerside Beck on your left for the first half of the walk.

A few minutes into the trail, you'll see a set of steps on your right, marked as a public footpath. Ascend these steps, and you'll find yourself in open countryside. Continue along the well-defined path, which closely follows the beck and gently ascends through the valley. The path occasionally rises along the valley's edge before returning closer to the water, offering a varied and scenic start to your Gunnerside Gill walk.

After around half a mile, you'll reach the shaded area of **Birkbeck Wood (2)**. Here, the trail winds through the woodland, gradually gaining elevation as you hike through this peaceful setting. Soon after, you'll exit the woods and enter a broad area of open pastureland known as **Winterings (3)**. Continue along the path, following the beck upstream until you reach the old **Sir Francis Dressing Floor (4)**, a disused lead mining site. Follow the path as it rises north through the valley.

Around a mile further along, you'll come to another mining site, the **Bunting Mine and Dressing Floor (5)**. Walk through the remnants of this site, then look for the signposted footpath that climbs uphill towards Blakethwaite Dams. The path continues along the side of the valley, offering impressive views of the valley floor below. After about a third of a mile, you'll spot a small pile of stones marking your next waypoint. Turn left here and descend steeply into the valley to reach the **Blakethwaite Smelt Mill (6)**.

Once at the mill, cross the footbridge and turn left, making a U-turn to follow a grassy footpath. This path rises gently, heading south along the opposite side of the valley. The trail soon passes **Botcher Gill Gate (7)**, where it levels and becomes a wider stone track. Continue south-east along this track below **Silver Hill (8)** and **Jingle Pot Edge (9)**.

As the **path turns south-west (10)**, it gradually descends towards a **minor tarmac road (11)**. Here, you have the option to shorten your Gunnerside Gill walk by turning left and following the road back to Gunnerside. If you choose to continue, turn right instead and follow the quiet road as it eventually bends left, crossing a bridge over **Shore Gill (12)**. Continue along this road, which leads into the hamlet of **Ivelet (13)**.

In Ivelet, turn left immediately after the red telephone box. Follow the lane past the Gunnerside Estate Office, then take the public footpath on your right, marked as the Coast to Coast Low Level Route. This path descends into a small valley, where you'll cross a footbridge over Shore Gill before ascending to emerge into open meadowland.

From here, continue east across at least a dozen grassy fields for nearly a mile. This path provides splendid views of the surrounding countryside and occasional **views of the River Swale (14)**. Eventually, you'll return to Gunnerside, completing your Gunnerside Gill walk in the picturesque Swaledale region of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Map of the Walk

