

SKIPTON WALK

Sharp Haw, Rough Haw and a Canal Towpath Return

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

Introduction to the Walk

This varied circular walk from Skipton combines open fell, far-reaching views and a peaceful canal-side return. The route climbs through Park Hill before crossing Flasby Fell to reach Sharp Haw and Rough Haw. After descending through Flasby, the second half follows the Leeds and Liverpool Canal back into the centre of Skipton.

Highlights of the Walk

Sharp Haw is the highest point of the walk at 357 metres, with extensive views across the surrounding countryside towards Pendle Hill, Buckden Pike and Great Whernside. Nearby Rough Haw offers a contrasting summit of gritstone boulders, with further views towards Rylstone Fell and Cracoe Fell.

After leaving the fells, the route passes through the quiet hamlet of Flasby before reaching the Leeds and Liverpool Canal at Ray Bridge. The long towpath return passes locks, swing bridges, narrowboats and open countryside before gradually becoming busier on the approach to Skipton, eventually reaching the colourful canal basin in the heart of the town.

Additional Information

Distance: 11¾ miles (18¾ kilometres)

Duration: Approximately 5½ hours (excluding stops and breaks)

Difficulty: Moderate, for reasonably fit walkers. A long and varied route with a steady climb onto Sharp Haw, rougher fell paths and an optional short but steep ascent of Rough Haw.

Trail Conditions: The route includes grassy field paths, open fell, stony tracks, bridleways, quiet lanes and a long, level section along the canal towpath.

Recommended Map: OS Explorer OL2 Yorkshire Dales Southern & Western Area

Parking: Coach Street Car Park in Skipton town centre, a North Yorkshire Council pay and display car park.

• **Google Maps Link:** <https://maps.app.goo.gl/vzrpcsxAULCp6WNr6>

• **What3Words:** ///intensely.indirect.euphoric

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STEP-BY-STEP DIRECTIONS

Start your Skipton walk in the town centre at **Coach Street Car Park (1)**, a North Yorkshire Council pay and display car park. Leave by the steps on the northern side, roughly opposite St Stephen's Catholic Primary School and Nursery. Use the pedestrian crossing to reach the other side of Gargrave Road, then turn right towards the mini roundabout. Go straight ahead at the roundabout onto Water Street, following the road signposted to Grassington.

Follow Water Street to the T-junction with the B6265 Raikes Road at Mill Bridge. Rather than turning left or right, cross straight over onto Chapel Hill. Climb the hill between High Corn Mill on your right and the Curious Fox restaurant, bar and hotel on your left. Halfway up, just after The Old Chapel, take the public footpath on your left, waymarked as both the Dales High Way and Lady Anne's Way. Cross a stile and carry on up a grassy path across the fields of **Park Hill (2)**.

Keep heading north across Park Hill and then down to the A65. Cross the road and take the footpath opposite, keeping to Lady Anne's Way as it continues north. The path crosses Skipton Golf Club, where yellow directional arrows and yellow-capped posts mark the line to follow. Continue straight ahead for half a mile, ignoring any side paths, until you reach the **minor road called Brackenley Lane (3)**. The Dales High Way and Lady Anne's Way run together along this whole stretch.

Turn left along Brackenley Lane and follow it to the B6265 Grassington Road. Cross over and take the footpath opposite, staying on the Dales High Way. Ahead and slightly to your right you can now pick out the two side-by-side hills of Flasby Fell that you are aiming for, the pointed Sharp Haw on the left and the more rounded Rough Haw on the right. Carry on along the grassy path for about a third of a mile to a bend on a **narrow road called Bog Lane (4)**.

Go straight ahead here, still following the Dales High Way, and follow the road around two more bends. At the third bend leave the road on the public bridleway signposted to Flasby. This begins as a wide stony track. Keep left at the first fork, then soon afterwards leave the stony track for a **grassy public bridleway on the right (5)**, signed public bridleway and Dales High Way. Follow it along the fence line to a gate, then go straight ahead onto the open fell.

With both hills in front of you, head first for the summit of Sharp Haw. From here you follow the line of the Dales High Way rather than the official public bridleway shown on OS maps, and at this point you are about a quarter of the way round your Skipton walk. The path on the ground is well defined and crosses a wooden footbridge along the way. Continue for over three quarters of a mile to reach the **summit of Sharp Haw (6)**.

From the trig point, take the narrow path on the right-hand side back down the hill, now heading towards Rough Haw. Follow the grassy path down to a signposted bridleway and carry on straight ahead, dropping down towards the dry stone wall. Go through the gate in the wall. Climbing **Rough Haw (7)** is well worth it but optional. If you fancy the top, a narrow path straight ahead leads steeply up to the cairn, from where you retrace your steps to the bridleway. Otherwise bear left and follow the bridleway around the left-hand side of the hill, dropping down with the boulder-strewn slopes of Rough Haw above you on the right. Blue-topped wooden posts show the way.

Leave Flasby Fell and follow the blue waymarker arrows of the bridleway across a large field. In the left-hand corner you meet a **wide stone track (8)**. As this track bears round to the left, keep straight ahead on a narrower path beside a small area of woodland. Leave the woodland and continue straight towards Flasby, ignoring the left turn to Stirton. After crossing Flasby Beck and joining a tarmac road, turn left at the red post box set in the dry stone wall and follow the track in front of the houses.

Just after a **bungalow called Tenter Ghyll (9)**, turn right onto the public footpath signed to Eshton Bridge. Follow it to the top of the grassy bank, turn left and continue beside a wooden fence for almost half a mile to reach **Eshton Road (10)**. Turn left along the road and cross Eshton Bridge, which marks the halfway point of your Skipton walk. At the junction with the wider road, turn left, signposted to Gargrave, Skipton and Settle.

Follow Eshton Road for just under half a mile, almost reaching the edge of Gargrave, then turn left onto a **narrow road called Ray Bridge Lane (11)**. A sign points the way to Ray Bridge and warns that the bridge is weak. At Ray Bridge, which crosses the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, take the steps on the right down to the canal towpath. Turn right, pass underneath the bridge and follow the towpath with the canal on your left.

From here the towpath carries you all the way back to Skipton. After a third of a mile you pass **Holme Bridge Lock (12)** beside the A65, staying on the towpath under the bridge. After a further three quarters of a mile you reach **Highgate Bridge (13)**, a swing bridge, at New Laithe. Another mile brings you to **Thorlby Bridge (14)**, a second swing bridge, by which point you are about three quarters of the way round your Skipton walk. A further two thirds of a mile takes you **beneath the A59 (15)**, and another half a mile brings you briefly alongside the A6069 at Niffany Viaduct. Keep on the towpath between the road and the canal to reach **Niffany Swing Bridge (16)**.

Carry on along the towpath, now signposted to Silsden and Skipton, and pass beneath the large concrete bridge that carries the A629 over the canal. A little further along you pass a tall brick chimney. At the next swing bridge, cross the road and carry straight on, signposted Town Centre and Bus Station, then do the same at another swing bridge shortly afterwards. Pass a block of flats and a tall stone chimney.

In the town centre, just after the point where the canal meets Eller Beck, climb the steps up onto **Belmont Street (17)**. Turn left and cross Belmont Bridge, signposted Town Centre and Bus Station, then almost at once turn left onto Coach Street. Follow Coach Street across the bridge over Eller Beck and back to the car park to finish your Skipton walk.

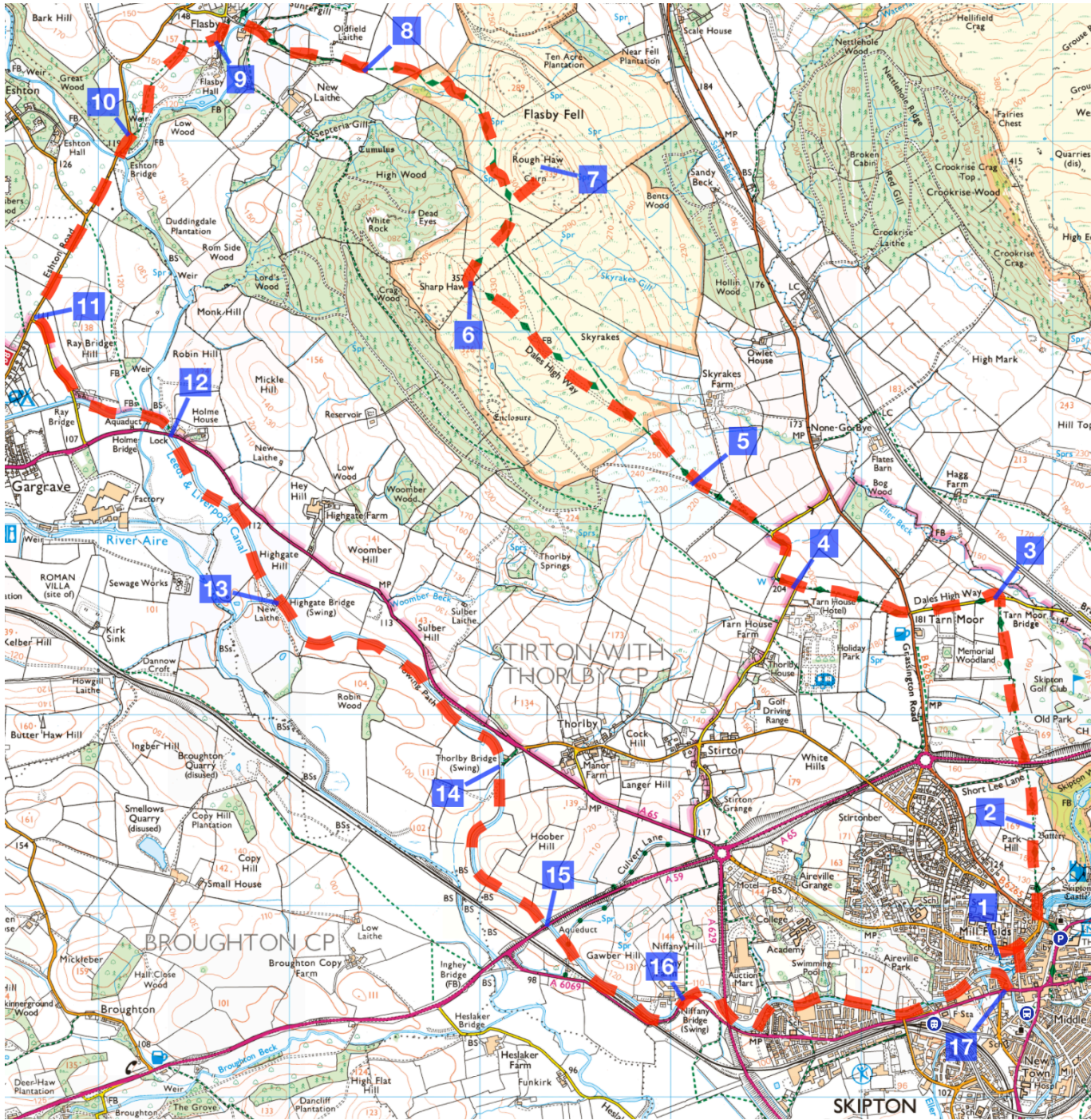
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MAP OF THE WALK



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