

Pendle Hill

Start Point

Barley, SD 8225 4042

 Bus service: P1 from Nelson
(Mon to Sat) and 70/71
(Sun/Bank Hols)

End Point

Downham, SD 7846 4430

 Bus service: 5 (Mon to Sat)
70/71 (Sun/Bank Hols)

Distance/Time



5 miles / 8 km
3 Hrs

Terrain

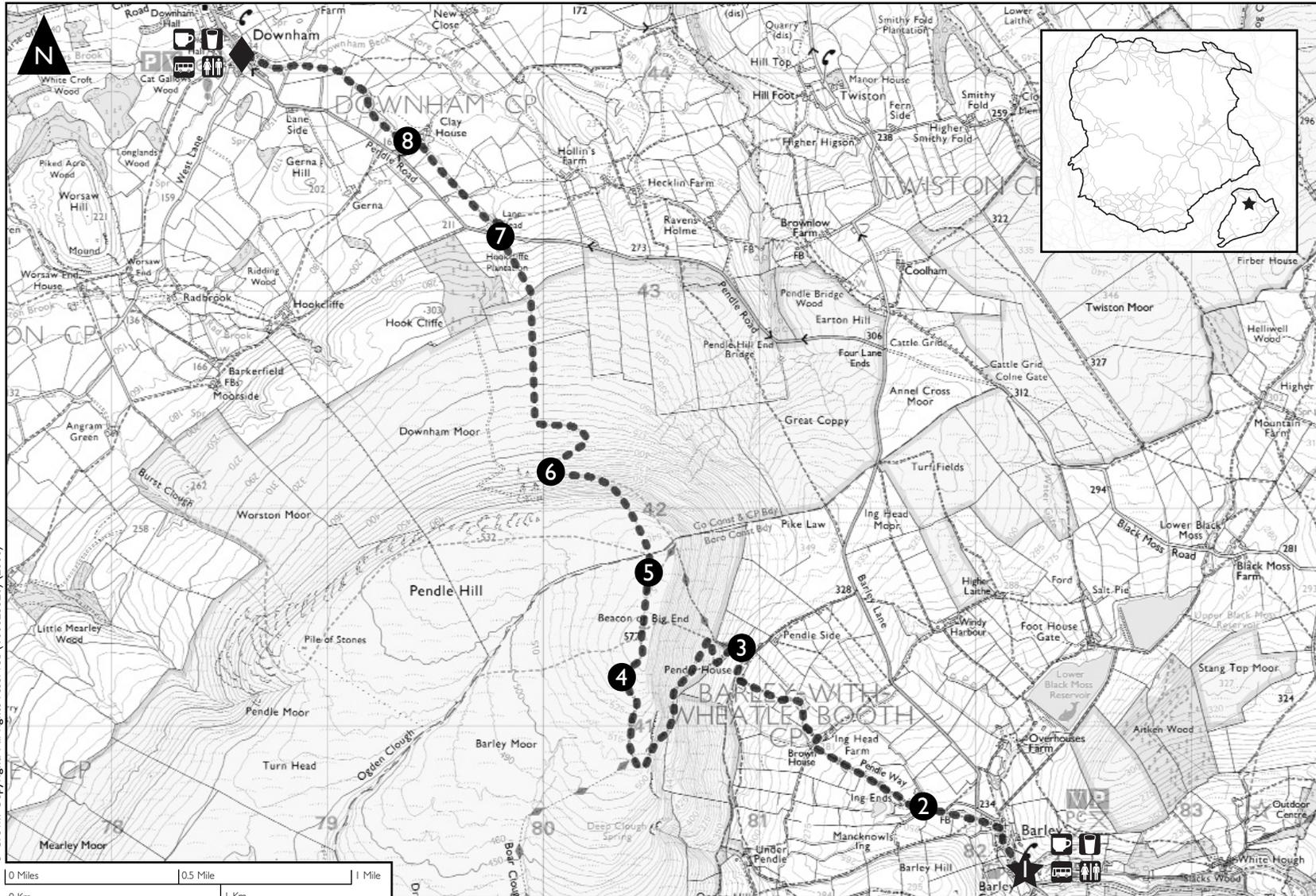
Can be wet underfoot,
very steep sections and
very exposed on the summit

Key to Facilities

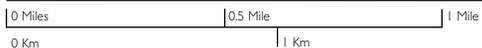
Barley and Downham:
 Pubs,  Cafés,  Toilets

GPS Waypoints (OS grid refs)

-  SD 8225 4042
-  SD 8177 4063
-  SD 8089 4134
-  SD 8039 4123
-  SD 8046 4141
-  SD 8005 4217
-  SD 7981 4324
-  SD 7943 4367
-  SD 7846 4430



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About This Walk

Barley, on the slopes of Pendle Hill (or "Pendleside" as it is known), is an ideal village from which to start a walk. There is a visitor centre (plus toilets) in the car park below the bus shelter, and the popular Pendle Inn attracts many walkers and cyclists.

Downham village is one of the most attractive in Lancashire, featuring several fine 17th and 18th century stone yeomen's houses and cottages. It also has reputedly the best-kept toilets in the whole of the county! (located in the stable block near the car park). There is a handsome church on the hillside, from where there are stunning views back towards Pendle Hill - one of the North of England's best known landmarks, rich in legend and mystery.

It is easy to while away an hour or so in Downham if waiting for a bus (generally every two hours), but if you have missed one it's less than a mile of fairly quiet lane to Chatburn village - keeping straight ahead at the cross roads, eventually over the busy A59 Clitheroe by-pass into the centre of Chatburn. Bus stops for Clitheroe (C2,280/X80) and Skipton (280/X80) are located just to the left of the road junction in the village centre.

Walk Description

★ From the bus shelter walk up through the village past Barley Mow restaurant and Meadow Bank Farm to where a path, signed the Pendle Way (look for yellow witch logo), leads off to the left. This follows a shallow valley over two footbridges, turn left onto the tarmac lane.

② Continue up the lane past a white house, Ings End, and go right at the fork, then right again behind the house on what starts as a cobbled way. Keep following Pendle Hill Circular Walk signs, now following the stream and fence uphill to Brown House. Follow the clear waymarked path right towards Ing Head Farm, then sharp left after 20 metres through a gate.

③ A steady climb now across an open field, bearing right up and alongside a wall towards another farm, Pendle House. The path goes round and behind the farm before joining a steep, stepped and cobbled way, running diagonally up the hillside.

④ To avoid the steps, look for the left-hand track which zigzags up the hillside, before heading southwards, climbing steeply up the shoulder of the hill. This is a long, tough ascent, so take your time to enjoy increasingly rewarding views!

⑤ After some 700 metres the path reaches the summit plateau and bends sharp right towards the crown of the hill, up to a low cairn in the centre of which is a white concrete triangulation post. *This is the summit of Pendle Hill, known as Pendle Beacon - one of a chain of beacons, which in medieval and Tudor times was used to carry messages of great events, most famously the arrival of the Spanish Armada in 1588. If you are lucky enough to be on the summit on a clear day, you will enjoy a magnificent panorama of hills across Craven and into the Yorkshire Dales. Pendle Hill also features in many of the stories and legends of the Lancashire witches and the notorious show trials that took place in the 17th century. It is now a place of pilgrimage for lovers of more romantic legend, especially around Halloween or mid summer.*

⑥ Continue directly ahead to a wooden ladder stile. Cross and remain heading in the same direction over open moorland. Care is needed as you cross the brow of the hill, meeting another path, which comes in from the right before descending to a waymarked post.

⑦ The path now curves right and then left in a S-shape, following what appears to be an old peat cutters'

sledge track. This finally turns sharp right and crosses a low, boggy area, gradually descending Downham Moor. This is all across public access land (permissive path) - the path crosses two stiles and then through a kissing gate onto the road to Downham at Lane Head.

The route into Downham is a pleasant, easy-to-follow public right of way. Go through another kissing gate directly ahead across the lane, which leads to a gravel path through newly planted trees. Ignore the tall guidepost ahead, and bear left across a little gully, over a stile, past an inviting bench, and another stile on the right. This leads into a long field. The path initially runs downhill alongside a narrow plantation to a stone stile. The hollow on the right now becomes a rocky streambed, and you follow this all the way to Downham.

⑧ To the west of Clay House Farm cross the farm track, then stiles then a gravel track by trees to a footbridge, then field path. After more stiles and gates it bears left to emerge at a narrow lane, by a footbridge at the bottom of Downham village. Bear right uphill to the church, just below which, by the telephone box and bench, is the bus stop.