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Pendle Hill Walk From Barley

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Barley village – “honesty box” car park
Ordnance Survey map	OS Explorer OL41 Forest of Bowland and Ribblesdale.
Distance	9.2 miles (or 5 miles for the reduced walk)
Traffic light rating	(or shorter walk see text)

Introduction: Pendle Hill is one of the most visited Lancashire walks. The hill has a distinctive shape and if you have ever looked south from a Yorkshire Dales vantage point and wondered “what is that hill”, the chances are it was Pendle.

This Pendle Hill walk is useful in that it can be treated as a straightforward 5 mile walk of the hill itself or extended if time/weather/inclination permit. The shorter option goes via the green dotted route shown on the sketch map.

This is an alternative route to my Pendle Hill from Downham walk.

The walk starts from the pretty village of Barley and takes a route via one of the Black Moss Reservoirs, rather than heading in the conventional direction straight for the hill. The way chosen up the hill is the steepest but takes you first to its northern end from where there are good views towards the Yorkshire Dales. Along the top, there are good views across the Forest of Pendle.

The descent brings you down by Ogden Reservoirs from where you have the shorter option of an easy one mile walk along the track back to Barley. However, on the day I did the walk, the decision was to extend it to take in Newchurch in Pendle with its pretty church and along a higher part of the Forest of Pendle to Roughlee. This latter section provided some surprisingly good views.

The area is of course well known for the Pendle Witches, a true story of a number of women who were executed in the 16th century for witchcraft. This has resulted in a minor tourist industry exploiting references to the witches and not least the use of witch characters on some of the footpath signposts for the Pendle Way, part of which (*sic*) features in this walk. Unfortunately there is some inconsistency and some of the junctions only have normal yellow footpath arrows.

The walk is easy apart from the steep walk up Pendle Hill itself, which attracts the amber traffic light, marginally short of a red. The path is quite steep but it is not too long and is well “manicured” with rock paving to reduce erosion. Certainly even a relatively inexperienced walker should not have undue difficulty.

In Barley village where there is a public “honesty box” car park and toilets where we start. The Pendle Inn in Barley makes a useful refreshment stop at the end of the

walk. There is also a tea room in Newchurch in Pendle and another roadside café en route.

Directions to Barley would be very different according to which direction you come from so it is best to consult an atlas/sat. nav. or my Google map showing the starting point for all my walks.

Start: From the car park, (SD 823404) go to left of the toilets and follow the path across the green to the road and turn right. Walk along the main street, passing Barley Mow restaurant which is on the right.

Shortly after the Methodist Chapel, turn right along a broad track signposted "Blacko" which will take you to the first Black Moss Reservoir. Walk along the track to the end of the reservoir and turn left.

At the farmhouse (Foot House Gate), turn right. As you get to the next farmhouse, take the footpath off to the left over a stile. The path crosses a couple of fields to another farmhouse (Higher Laithe). Go through the gate and straight ahead, following the drive. As you pass the last building, turn right over a stile marked with a yellow footpath arrow.

About 20 yards beyond the stile, bear left indicated by the footpath arrow. The path is now indistinct but simply head towards the right hand end of Pendle Hill ahead. You will come to a narrow stile through the wall into the road. Turn right along the road, then left along the drive to Pendle House and Pendle House Farm (SD 814416). There is a public bridleway fingerpost.

At a junction of tracks, the way is clearly marked with a white painted direction arrow on the wall for "Pendle". Follow the track through the trees and just after going under the power lines, take the right fork.

As you come to the gate of the next farm, turn right. The path splits. Take the right hand fork, where the path has stone slabs and go through the kissing gate (SD 809413). The steep ascent begins!

Climb to the top and stop to admire the view and catch your breath. Ahead of you is a stone stile. Do **not** go over this but turn left, initially to follow the wall but very quickly the trig. point over to the left and the path to it come into view.

From the trig point, follow the edge of Pendle Hill. The path is initially marked with large cairns.

You pass the top of an alternative path up the hill on the left, which you ignore.

As your path descends, it becomes fainter and in fact there is no path shown on the OS map but it is clear enough to make out on the ground. You come to two kissing gates. Go through both these ignoring the path off to the left and follow the right hand field boundary to the concrete track at the bottom. Turn right on this.

This leads down to another track, where you turn left (SD 809398). The dam of the Upper Ogden Reservoir is to your right. You have now joined the Pendle Way.

If you want to return to Barley now, simply keep straight ahead on this track – which reduces the walk to 5 miles. Otherwise, just before Lower Ogden Reservoir, turn right by the signs for the Firefly Fishing Club, crossing the stream via the bridge made of sleepers. Pass a small stone bench and continue uphill through the trees on the obvious stepped path.

Turn right on exiting the trees and walk alongside them. As they end, go over the stile and turn left.

Follow the left hand boundary of the next two fields. As you come in sight of a small brick (utility) building, bear right to a stout footpath marker post. From here head downhill to Newchurch in Pendle with its Witches Galore teashop. There are public toilets here too.

Turn right along the road to the 16th century Parish Church of St Mary. Here we leave the Pendle Way. Go into the churchyard and turn left in front of the church and through the gate. Turn right along the narrow walled footpath.

Stick to the right hand side of the playing field and follow the little footpath beyond to arrive on the outskirts of the hamlet Spen Brook. Turn left along the broad track.

At the white painted building, walk along its left hand side. Pass Spen Barn Farm. At Lower Dimpenley Farm, turn right.

As the track forks at a gateway (SD 834 392), keep left then, on joining the tarmac drive, turn right. Keep on this main track and just after a bend, turn left over a stile with yellow footpath arrows on to a footpath (SD 836392). There is a little sign “Old Laund Booth Circular Walk”.

Follow the right hand boundary of that field and on reaching a tarmac track, turn right then left on reaching the road.

As the road bends right at a café (Noggarth Top Cottage) (SD 839393), keep straight ahead through the kissing gate. Follow the right hand boundary of the field on a raised banking, then straight ahead on the track. At a ‘T’ junction in front of a covered reservoir (SD 844399), turn left, as indicated by yellow arrows, and follow this track. At the next junction, turn left and continue to the road.

At the road (SD 848403), briefly turn right then at the bend, before the sign for Barrowford, turn left off the road. There are two public footpath fingerposts here and you need to follow the one pointing to the left.

Walk diagonally down this field. You go for less than 200 yards before going left on to the Pendle Way once more, down to some stepping stones across the river. The problem is that this left turn is invisible on the ground – or was when I did the walk. If

you have problems finding this or the stepping stones, continue to the far bottom corner of the field where there is a bridge to the road where you turn left.

Over the stepping stones, cross the road (or after 3/400 yards on the road depending on which way you went, and look out for the footpath on the right) and proceed along a broad track to the left of a barn. The yellow footpath sign here bears the witches emblem.

As the track bends right, go straight ahead through the gate following the witch footpath arrow. The footpath curves right. Ignore the footpath off to the left. Go over a footbridge and up the hill.

At a tarmac drive, turn left to the road and at the road turn left following the road downhill in the direction of the yellow arrow for about 80 yards. Turn right for "Intake Farm" (SD 838407).

At the farm gate, turn right and then after crossing a little plank bridge, take the path to the right through the trees and on coming out at the drive to the outdoor centre by a small brick building, turn left (SD 832405). The Pendle Way witches should still be with you! At the junction, turn left and right at the next junction.

The track now follows the course of the stream back to the car park where you started.



