



Downham Circular Walk 2

Allow 2-3 hours to complete this walk
Approximately 4 miles/6 km

The Downham Circular Walks II The Circular Walk

The walk begins and ends at Downham Visitors Car Park and is approximately 4 miles (6 km) in length. You should allow between 2-3 hours to complete the walk. Sturdy footwear is advised, as some of the paths will be muddy following wet weather.

The walk is over working farmland so please observe the country code and in particular, **KEEP DOGS UNDER CLOSE CONTROL AT ALL TIMES.**

Enjoy the walk!

Twiston Mill

Along the course of the walk you will pass Twiston Mill. This was originally a corn mill for the parish but it was converted to a cotton mill in the early 1800s. The mill was owned by the Assheton family, with William Assheton constructing the upper dam to create the reservoir in 1851.



Whilst producing cotton the mill employed twenty men, seven women and twenty-two children. The children were employed as cotton pickers, a highly dangerous job which involved working under the machinery. Accidents were frequent with the children being badly injured in a moment's lapse of concentration.

The area was obviously a hive of activity at one time with many more buildings, including workers' cottages, occupying the site than its current sleepy atmosphere would suggest.

The mill was described by its owner as 'more plague than profit' and eventually it was burned down in 1882.

Twiston Beck is one of the cleanest streams in the County and as a consequence it is particularly important as one of the major spawning grounds for the elusive Sea Trout of the river Ribble system. Much of the recent fencing you will notice along the banks of the beck is part of an ambitious project to improve still further the wildlife interest of the stream environment - another example of the active management for wildlife.



8. Cross the stile, bear right and on reaching the fence/hedge line, follow it straight ahead passing over two stone stiles. After the second stile, continue straight on following the ridge to a stile in the fence ahead. Cross and pass the wood to a wide ridge (the route of the old Roman road) and head for the centre of the woods visible ahead. Turn left on reaching the walled boundary of the wood and head down towards the village, passing through a stone squeeze stile. On reaching a small wooden gate turn right (remembering to close the gate!) and follow the road past the Assheton Arms, after which it's all downhill to the car park.

1. Leave the car park through the small gate near the toilets and head towards the stone road bridge, passing through two more kissing gates. Do not cross the road bridge but follow the road straight ahead and then bear left to follow Downham Beck upstream. Pass the cottages right to the end of the lane and then cross into the field through a narrow stone "squeeze" stile or kissing gate.

2. Continue to follow the beck upstream for about 100 metres before bearing right at the wooden waymark post. Cross this field for 300 metres to where the fence line meets the beck and then cross the Kissing Gate. Keeping the beck on your left cross a stone stile and then follow the way-marker to cross a wooden footbridge, after 200 metres. (N.B. This section of path has been officially diverted in recent years and the route here differs to that shown on older maps)

3. Follow this path through the trees for 150 metres and cross the farm track by way of a stone stile. Continue uphill keeping to the edge of the field, eventually reaching a small stone out-barn after crossing two more stiles. Turn left in front of this barn, cross a small gully, and then follow the signed route ahead towards Hecklin Farm.

4. Follow the waymarker across this large pasture and cross over the track to Hollins Farm via a steep stone stile. Continue straight ahead and cross a further stone stile down in the dip and then follow the fence round past the farm buildings of Nutshaw, which you should keep on your left. Head towards the farmhouse of Hecklin Farm but turn left at the end of the wall 50 metres before reaching the farmyard. Cross over the stone stile ahead of you.

7. Pass through this stile and head downstream along Twiston Beck, passing through a stone squeeze stile and a Kissing Gate until a wooden footbridge is reached on your left. Cross the beck and head uphill keeping the wall on your right until bearing left to cross the stile in the fence in front of Springs farmhouse. Pass between the house and the buildings on the main track and then turn immediately right to cross two stiles before bearing slightly left uphill towards a group of mature trees. Cross the stone stile in the wall ahead and continue along the line of the old trackway. On reaching a small disused quarry on your left, cross the stone stile and bear right across the meadow, aiming for a stone stile in the wall 50 metres to the left of Hey House. Keep in single file while the grass is growing, please.

6. Follow this track for approximately 100m to turn sharp right where it opens out into a meadow. Keep to the edge of the field and follow the hedge line downhill, crossing a further stile. Just before reaching Twiston Beck turn right and follow the beck upstream to cross by a wooden footbridge. On crossing the beck turn immediately left towards Twiston Mill pond and cross a stile to pass between the beck and the pond and so reach Twiston lane. Taking care of the traffic, turn right and follow the road downhill until a stone stile is reached on the left just before the farm buildings, which occupy the site of the old Twiston Mill.

5. Keeping to the edge of the field cross over a further stone stile and head for another stile crossing the wall ahead of you at the top of the hill. From this stile follow the faint line of the ancient track across Haysett Hill, waymarked with small limestone boulders. On reaching the dry stone wall at the foot of the hill turn right and cross a stile next to a field gate. Keeping to the edge of the field follow the fence line and then over a stile onto an old green lane.

