

Winter Hill 3

This walk is one of a series of Winter Hill walks. This one varies from about 5.5 miles up to 9.75 miles with a number of options to vary the distance and/or vary the extent of moorland walking. Most of the main walk is on easy paths and gentle inclines with only two short steeper sections.

The walk begins in Belmont from the Black Dog Inn. It passes over lower fields to reach Belmont Road and follows that all the way around to the Pike. From the Pike it passes Pike Cottage (café), Two Lads and Holden Farm to reach the small reservoir on Smithills Moor. Dean Ditch is then followed to the masts area and then returning to Belmont via Grange Brow.

There is little parking in Belmont. The Inn car park is used for the Church on Sunday and only usable by patrons at other times. There is a lot of street parking.

The walk can immediately be reduced to about 5.5 miles by starting at either

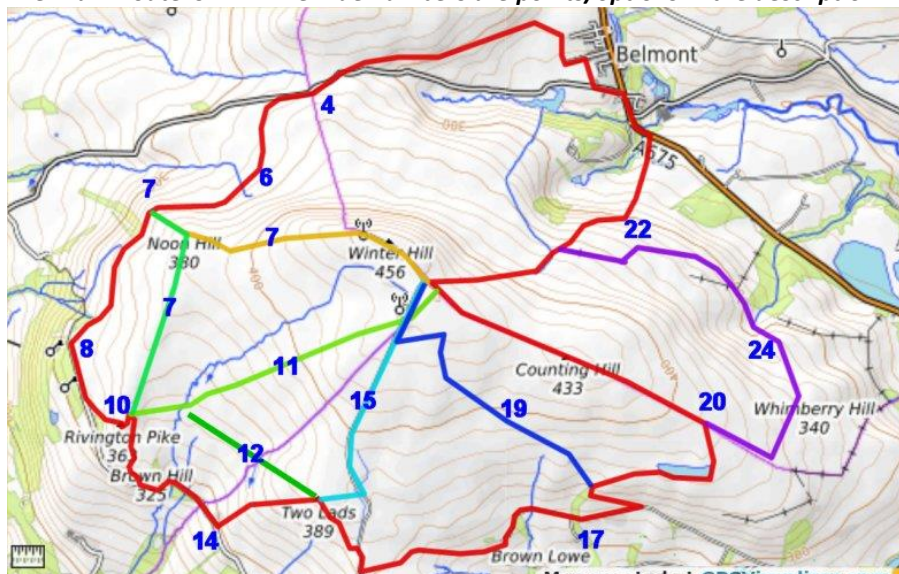
Point 5, where the Belmont and Rivington roads meet, (or as mentioned in **Point 4**.)

The Black Dog Inn is at SD 674158, Post Code: BL7 8AB

Main Route



The Main Route is RED. The Blue numbers are points/options in the description.



It is important to always be appropriately dressed for the conditions and carry, and know how to use, a suitable map for the walk.

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1: SD 674158 Proceed up Church Street past the church for 180 yds(160m) to a Toilet sign on the left beyond the last house and partly hidden beside a tree. Opposite the sign is a gate and path leading to a playground. On reaching the road at the other side of the playground, turn left and continue to a stone pillar.



2: SD 671160 Continue ahead and follow the right turn. In a short distance there is a style on the left that will also lead to Point 3 but a better path is straight ahead to reach a metal gate on the left with an adjacent kissing gate. Turn left through the gate and follow the track, then path, to reach a wall with a style. (It doesn't matter if you stay on the wide track, you reach an adjacent opening in the wall).



3: SD 669163 Go over the style, or through the wall, to find a path angling off to the left. Follow this path for 3/4 mile(1200m), passing through a gate in a stone wall to reach a style onto Rivington Road. There are good views both of Winter Hill and back towards Belmont.



4: SD 657160 Cross onto the road and continue uphill for 1/4mile(400m). A small parking area is passed on the way and could be a start point for the walk and has a return point opposite from the west most mast. After the 1/4mile the junction of Belmont and Rivington Roads is reach on the left. Usually with some parked cars there.

5: SD 653158 674158 Turn up Belmont Road and continue along it for nearly 1.75miles (2.8Km) to reach the approach to the Pike. Along the way several access points to the moor are passed, as follows. (All ignored for the main route)



6: SD 652154 In about 1/4mile(400m) and just beyond a metal gate on the right are some steps to a little bridge on the left to an access point to the moor. This could be a return point if parked at the Belmont Rd junction. At the top it's accessed from beside the west most, (and oldest?) mast.



7: SD 645151 3/4mile in from the junction is a stile on the left that leads to a well-trodden path to the west most mast. Another stile 120yds further leads to the same route. Its an obvious path but likely to be soggy. **Note:** an option is to follow this path to the cairn on Noon Hill, then follow a clear path directly to the Pike hence avoiding a lot of Belmont Road.



8: SD 640143 Continuing with the main route, a little before reaching the Pike entrance is the Pigeon Tower. This is part of the Rivington Gardens that lie behind it for a distance down the hill. Just beyond the tower be sure to bear left on the main road. (although the right route ends up at the same place)





9: SD 641140 Soon the refurbished toilets are reached and opposite them is the access to the Pike. Go through the fence and follow the road. There is a choice in that you can follow the road as it curves up and around the Pike or the steep steps can be tackled.



10: SD 642138 Most people take the stairs, perhaps slowly! At the top enjoy the 360 deg view although to the north only the masts are seen.



11: SD 642138 The main route is going to return to Belmont Rd and follow it further. However, from the Pike there is an option to head straight across the moor to the main mast. It can be soggy anytime though usually easy in reasonable weather. This is looking WNW (70deg).



12: SD 642138 Another option is to head across the moor to Two Lads rejoining this route at **Point 15**. Head towards the masts first then at the collapsed bridge head WSW (120deg).

13: SD 642138 To continue the main route, look SW some 1/2 mile to spot Pike Cottage which is the next goal. Return to Belmont Road either by they steps or preferably by contouring round the back of the hill to meet the road nearer the cottage. Once on Belmont Road it is not far to the cottage.



14: SD 649131 The cottage is now a café with outside seating and a great view over Lancashire Plains. At the right of the café is a gate to the path leading to Two Lads. Initially steep, easier later. Half way up it crosses a stream. If you wish to avoid Two Lads, go right along vague paths beside the stream to catch the route a little before
Point 16



15: SD 656133 The Two Lads cairn has been rebuilt a number of times by locals to offset the council safety concerns. (*Optionally* you can head for the main mast from here) Continue by taking the clear SW path heading towards a black painted fence around a covered water tank(?). Turn left there and then right onto the moor/mast road. Shortly you reach substantial road gates and small car park.



16: SD 658128 Go through the road gate and immediately go left through another gate onto a farm track (to Holden's Farm). Follow this nearly 1 mile(1.6Km). The track takes you around the farm onto the farm approach road and then reaches a narrow wood.





17: SD 671132. At the start of the wood on the left is a small bridge and gate into the wood. This is an *option* to cut off a corner. The path leads fairly steeply up through the pleasant wood, then you go down and up significant steps to rejoin the main route at **Point 19**. The main route continues on the road for ¼ mile(400m) to find a track hard left. Go through the kissing gate and notice the stone memorial.



18: SD 676133 This reminds of a mass trespass in 1896 causing this track to be made a Public Footpath. Some 280yds (250m) along the track, before a steep set of steps down and up, there is a path ascending to the right.



19: SD 673134 If you went through the wood this is where you rejoin this route. (*Optionally* you can go down/up the steps and follow the track to the main mast.) Ascend the short slope and continue 2/3rds mile(1.2Km) on the path which reaches a small reservoir. Walk all the way around to the diagonally opposite corner and continue on the path to meet a wall and gate.



20: SD 679138 Go through the gate and turn left. (see **Point 24** for an alternative) Follow the fence for just over a mile (1.6Km) to reach and go through a gate that swaps you to the other side of a fence. A few yards further you reach the tarmac road leading to the various masts.

21: SD 662147 You arrive close to this gate (possibly either side) from the right of this picture. The return route is through this gate and down the wide track. You could follow this track to it's end but that involves an additional 1/4mile along the main road. After 3/4mile watch carefully for a small path to the left. (look for a gate in a fence downhill somewhat).



22: SD 674150 Look downhill for a telephone pole and nearby gate, and a row of 6 black house roofs further downhill. Once found the path to the gate is clear. Through the gate use the 6 black roofs as your goal as there is no clear path but it's easy underfoot. Near the houses cross a stile and promptly another leading *Directly* onto the busy Belmont main road.



23: SD 676156 This is the stile onto the road. There is no pavement on this side and a corner to your right so care is needed. Cross to the pavement on the other side and walk left less than ¼ mile(400m) to the start point.



End of Main Route.

Optional Extension. NOT easy walking.

24: SD 679138 If you missed rough moor walking, one option here is at the wall/gate in Point 20 go right 1/3rd mile(550m) to find a stile (don't cross it) that is at 90deg angle to Whimberry hill. Take the path to the hill and then the path to Egg hillock and on towards Shaly Dingle. At the time of writing the area had fire damage and the path was less than clear but the direction easy.





25: SD 683144 Shady Dingle is a deep gully with a bit of track at the bottom. It's not difficult to cross the stream but you must find a way up on the steep right hand side of the stream. There was a vague path but it's disappearing. Once the wood is reached the path is clearer. (there is a tempting path to the right which does get up onto the moor but no clear onward path.)



26: 683144 Follow the stream for over 1/2 mile (800m) which eventually curves left to meet a wall. Then follow the wall for 1/4 mile (400m) to meet up with the main return route and turn right downhill. This reaches **Point 22** in a little over 1/4 mile (400m)

The End

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