

Longridge Fell from Hurst Green

We start at Hurst Green using the car park at the Memorial Hall in the village centre – payment for this is via an honesty box at the entrance and the suggested donation is £2, which seems very reasonable. Public toilets are available 150m down the road from here, making Hurst Green a perfect starting point for a walk. The village is easy to find – it's just off the B6243 which heads south-west out of Clitheroe following signs for Longridge. If you are using Satnav to get there, try Avenue Road BB7 9QB as an address, or if your device works with What-3-Words tags, then **bloomers.nesting.blast** is in the centre of the car park, which corresponds to the OS grid reference SD68433820.

We start the walk by heading out of the car park and on to Avenue Road where we turn right to take the footpath along the front of the Shireburn Alms-houses.

Not far beyond the alms-houses we approach the gates for Stonyhurst College. As we arrive there, we notice a track running across the front of the college grounds and we go left here into Mill Wood, following Dean Brook upstream. This is part of the popular Ribble Valley Jubilee Trail and so is well used.

About 400m into the woodland we approach a stone bridge over the Brook, where we cross and continue Northwest along a slightly more substantial track for the next 500m, bringing us to an interesting property bearing the name Greengore. It is thought that this is a former hunting lodge for the Stonyhurst/Shireburn estate.

We continue northwest, and about 200m beyond Greengore, the woodland thins out giving us good views across the valley to our right and down to Crowshaw Lodge, a man-made reservoir that once played a part in controlling the flow of water down Dean Brook to a number of mills in Hurst Green – these included Coltsford Mill, a flour mill, a bobbin mill and the old Mill House on Avenue Road, near to where we parked.

Paths come in from the right, but we stay with the clear route of the Ribble Valley Jubilee Trail, which curves round to the right as we approach Crowshaw House, and its associated farm buildings. Just 150 later we arrive at a minor road where we head right walking on the road for just 50 m to find a gate on the left taking us up into woodland. This is a good place to pause for a break.

The woods here are plantations rather than ancient woodland so don't expect too much variety in terms of tree species – there are however a number of interesting fungi to be found where forest management has left dead wood to decay. The fact that the trees here are a crop rather than a natural feature is highlighted just 400m into this part of the walk when we arrive at an area where the trees have been cropped leaving a landscape of bleak devastation. There have been some minor diversions to the footpath here to allow the works to progress safely without preventing access for walkers, so don't be too concerned if the obvious safe route on the ground differs from the OS map a little.

Ahead we see a farm (Green Thorn) and we head toward the left hand side of that – the path is a good 50m or so from the farm, and curves right to go around the back of the buildings and up through further dense woodland before arriving at a broad track along the top of Longridge Fell. The gentle climb that we have been following almost since the start of the walk is now complete.

Once at the track, we turn right and head east along the top of the fell. The OS map shows this area as being densely forested – and it clearly was at one point, but the trees have since been harvested and replanted, meaning that in winter 2025, we have great views to the right over to Clitheroe and Whalley. The views to the left toward the Forest of Bowland are not yet visible as the track is too far below the top of the ridge.

We follow the track for about 1km, and just as it starts to veer right and head downhill, we meet a recently cleared area where we now have a view across the other side of the ridge into the Hodder Valley, and on a clear day we see Fair Snape Fell and Easington Fell. This is a good place to take a lunch break as we sit and enjoy the panorama.

Fully refreshed, we press on and note that the track is now heading downhill. As we progress it gets steeper and soon adopts a zig-zagging alpine pass style. We continue until we meet a minor road (in fact the same one we were on after Crowshaw House).

We head left down the road looking for an engraved stone telling us that we are at Bleak House. The road heads sharply to the left here and we continue straight on down a track leading to a small group of cottages. As we follow the track onward, we pass a farm on our right where the owners' interests clearly centre on matters equestrian: As well as a number of stable blocks there is a rather attractive horse sculpture close to the track.

The track continues past the farm and eventually arrives at a gate where we access open fields. The going can be a bit muddy here, and immediately after the gate, we have a choice of routes. There is a path heading somewhat to the left which goes steeply downhill toward Stonyhurst College. We opted to stay right and follow what appears to be an old green lane – it is believed that this was the route by which stones from quarries to our north were dragged down to Hurst Green. This path brings us down to a stile adjacent to a recently renovated cottage where we join a minor road and head left and downhill toward the college.

200m later we pass a junction where a minor road joins on the right, and then 50m later the road turns sharp left with the footpath into the grounds of Stonyhurst College continuing ahead. We take that path into the college grounds.

From here, the walk feels a little surreal: We are on a public footpath, yet the grounds feel rather exclusive – and perhaps the kind of place where we imagine we might not feel welcome. Any such doubts are soon dispelled though as we get a pleasant greeting from everyone we pass.

Our route continues past St Peter's church Stonyhurst, which serves not just the college but also acts as the parish church for Hurst Green. As we passed, preparations were being made for a concert, and we were treated to an impromptu organ concert featuring the finale from Vierne's Symphony number 1, and Widor's Toccata.

From here our route back is simple: As we approach the college's observatory on our left, we head right to follow a path round the edge of Fox Fall Wood. We stay to the right of the open fields as we enter them and soon arrive at a lane behind cottage back in Hurst Green. We follow this down to the junction with Avenue Road where we go left passing the alms-houses again to arrive back at the cars.

- **Total distance 11.9 km (7.4 miles)**
- **Total Ascent 267 m**
- **Easy walk**