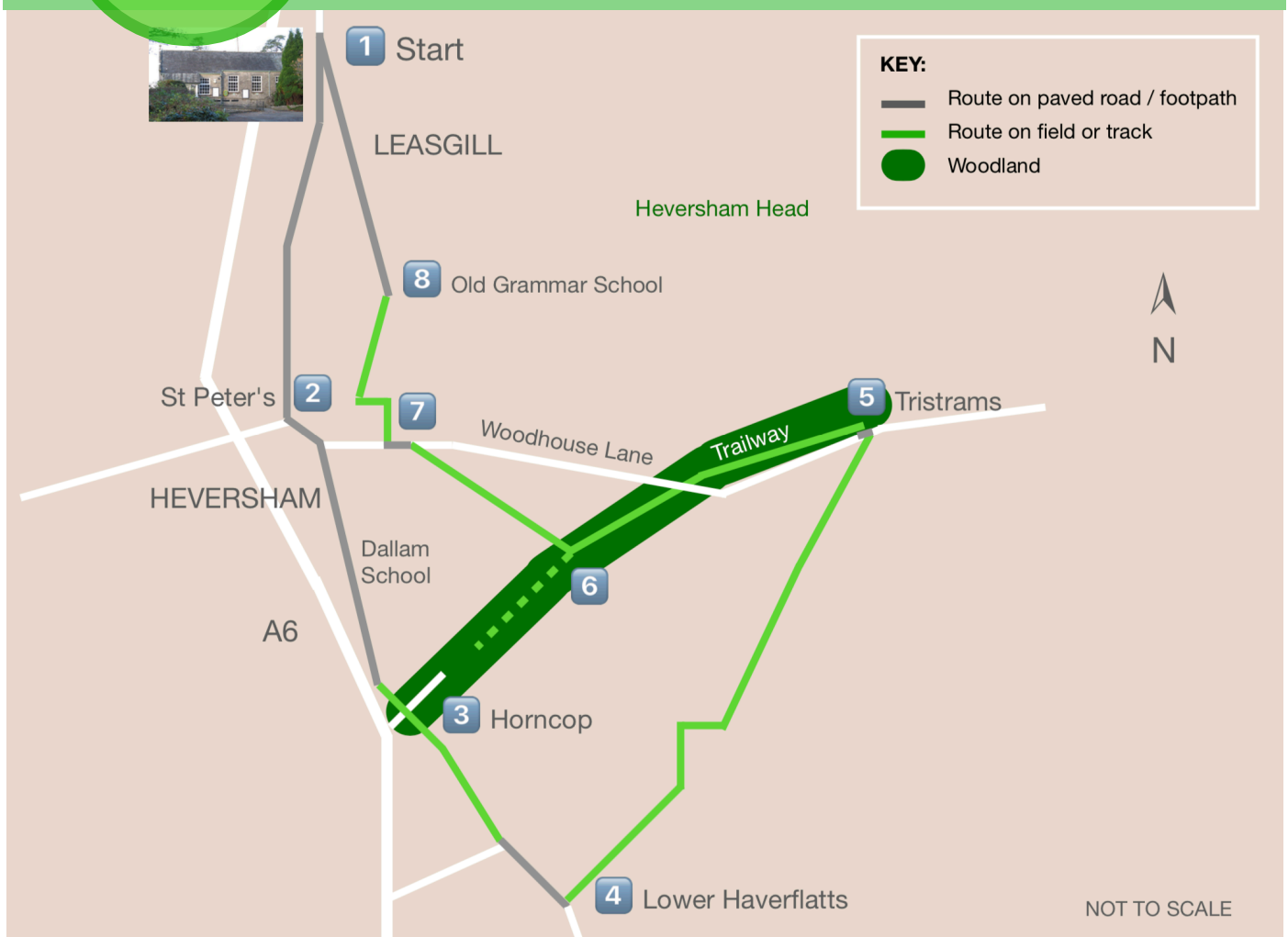


4

Lower Haverflatts



This is one of a series of short walks around the villages of Heversham and Leasgill, near Milnthorpe, Cumbria.

Disclaimer: Walkers are responsible for their own safety, particularly when on public roads, and are asked to observe the country code when crossing farmland.

Starting Point: The Athenaeum village hall on the main village street Leasgill LA7 7ET. The hall has a car park, but this is intended for users of the hall. There is free parking on the surrounding roads.

Terrain: 4.5 km / 2.8 miles. Mix of tarmac, pasture and rough track.

1 From the Athenaeum, head south down the village street. You pass Plumtree Hall on your left, built by the mayor of Kendal in the early 19th century and now retirement apartments.

2 After 600 yards you pass St Mary's Well, St Peter's Church and the old centre of Heversham Village, which once boasted three pubs, a post office and other businesses, all now private houses.

St Peter's church is Grade II* This has been a religious site since the 7th century; part of a cross from that time is in the church porch. The present church dates from the 11th century and has been expanded and remodelled many times, particularly in the 19th century, when the tower was rebuilt and the interior restored by Lancaster architects Paley & Austin.

As you continue, the large building and sports facilities to your left are the boarding department of Dallam School. This was originally Heversham Grammar School, which merged with Milnthorpe Modern School to become Dallam School, a co-educational state boarding school, in the 1980s.

3 Continue south to join the A6, then, after a few yards, look for a footpath on your left signed to Kirkgate Lane, opposite Parkhouse Farm. This takes you diagonally to the right across a field towards a line of woodland.

The official path dips into the garden of the end house and along the side of their hedge until you emerge onto a short lane. Alternatively, sometimes the field gate is open if there is no stock in the field. Turn left onto the lane then immediately right across the old railway bridge. The large house to your left is Horncop Hall, built around 1900 by the architect and antiquarian John Flavel Curwen for his own use. At the far side of the bridge, go through the metal kissing gate on the right and head up the rise towards the electricity pole at the top.



From the top of the rise you will see a folly, St Anthony's Tower, to the south. This monument on the edge of Milnthorpe was erected by the owner of Milnthorpe Mill, Henry Smithies, to commemorate the passing of the Reform Act of 1832, which did away with the "rotten boroughs" and gave the vote to far more people (although not to women). Its siting within view of Dallam Tower is thought to have been a deliberate insult to the owners, the Wilson family, who were strongly opposed to the bill.



4 Pass the electricity pole and keep in the same direction downhill to a stile leading onto Kirkgate Lane. Turn left and head up Kirkgate Lane for about 200 yards to reach a double gate on your left with a squeeze stile beside it.



This area is called Lower Haverflatts, the name deriving from the old Norse words for oats and farm. Head across the field, passing to the left of the former farmhouse to reach a gateway in the far right hand corner of the field.

Continue along the line of the hedge in the next field to reach a ladder stile on your right at the end of the field. Cross this, then after 50 yards, there is a second ladder stile on your left. Often the field gate is open, so you can make this right-left dogleg without using the stiles. Continue north along the hedge line of the third field. Watch out for large rabbit holes.

The ground is gradually rising and back to your left there is a good view down the estuary into Morecambe Bay, with the Arnside railway viaduct crossing it. Also to your left is Whitbarrow and, further away, the mountains of the central Lakes. To your right there are views across to the Pennines.



At the far end of this field you reach a step stile over a stone wall. The drop at the far side is much deeper, so take care.

Heversham Head is seen straight in front. This 126 metre hill is not part of this walk, but features in Walk 2 and offers extensive views east, south and west.

Head down the field, passing to the right of the solitary tree in the field, to reach a rudimentary gate opening onto Woodhouse Lane.

5 Turn left, then immediately right into the line of trees at a footpath sign pointing to Mabbin Hall Lane and Heversham Head.



In front of you is Tristams Sport Field, belonging to Dallam School. No-one seems to know who Tristam was.

Instead of entering the sports field, turn left to walk along the tree-lined bed of the old railway track, parallel with Woodhouse Lane, which shortly crosses the track over a bridge after the track drops into a cutting.

The railway was built to link the London & North Western west coast main line at Hincaster to the Furness Railway at Arnside, primarily to carry coke from south Durham to the iron works in west Cumbria. This path is a continuation of the Hincaster Trailway (see Walk 3). Heversham once had a station on this line, on the far side of the A6.

6 After about 450 yards and between the second and third bridge, there is a short scramble up the right hand side of the cutting to reach a kissing gate, with a sign indicating that this is a permissive path, courtesy of Dallam School.



Head diagonally left down the field. Among the line of modern houses to your right is one with a large stone structure in the garden, the remains of an old lime kiln. Ignore the first exit onto Woodhouse Lane, but take the exit at the far right hand end of the field.

7 Turn left onto Woodhouse Lane, then very shortly right into St Peter's churchyard. Follow the path to the far side of the churchyard; this then curves left and brings you to a metal gate between two yew trees, leading into a small field.



8 Follow the path from the gate up a short rise to a squeeze stile beside a wooden bench. The path continues beside a stone wall then up to another squeeze stile leading onto a lane.

The house behind the gate immediately to the right of the second squeeze stile was the original Heversham Grammar School, founded in 1613. Turn left and head down the lane, across the cattle grid. There are more views to your left of the estuary and Whitbarrow, the long hill with an exposed cliff. The lane gradually descends, passing the former primary school, to arrive back on the village street opposite the Athenaeum.

End of walk