



WALK 15

THE CHEVIOT (DIFFICULT ROUTE)

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Distance: 12.4 miles (20 km)

Maps: Landranger 75 and 80 or Explorer OL16

Walking time: 4 ½ hours

Start and Finish point: The top end of the Harthope Burn valley (NT958228). Pass through Wooler and follow the signs for the valley. Proceed up the valley passing Langlee on the left across the burn, until you reach a sign marking the parking limit for cars. Park directly here for free or there is a flat piece of ground just back 20 yards.

Summary

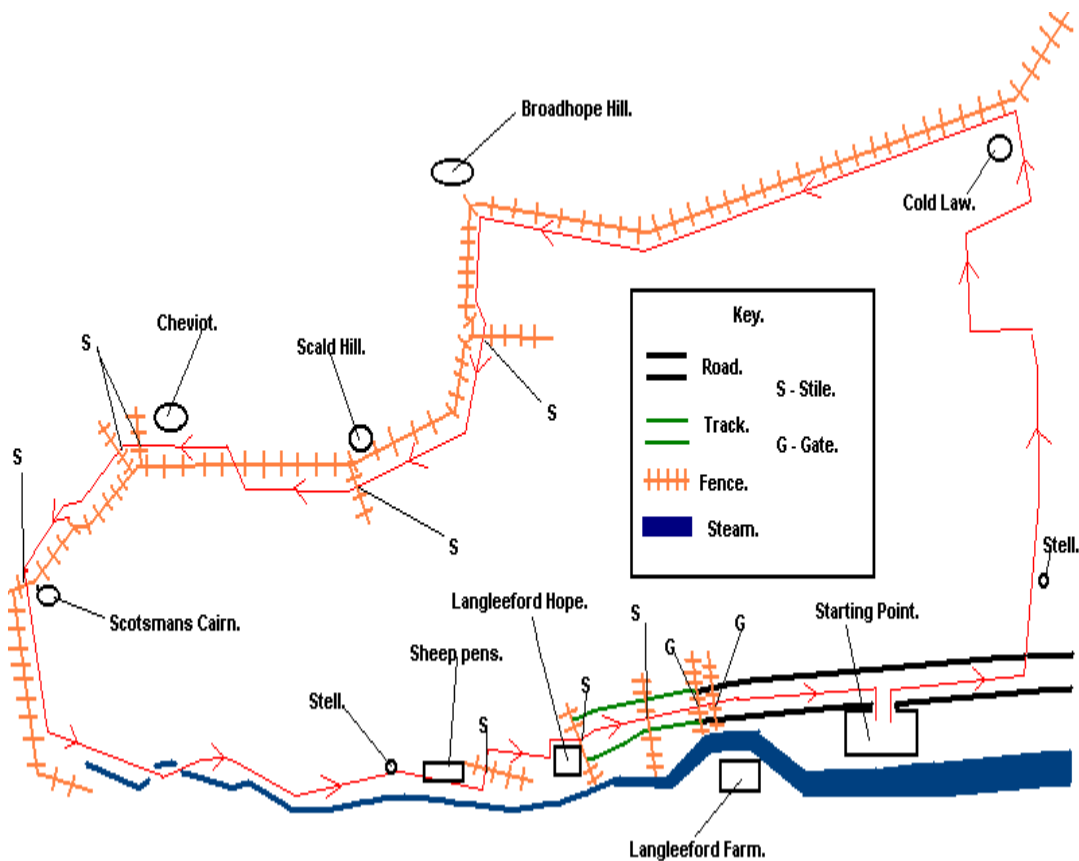
The Cheviot is the highest point in Northumberland (2,676 feet, 816 metres), so is therefore a must for anybody who walks in the area. The direct route from the Harthorpe burn valley which most people take is quite featureless, so this circular walk takes in two more summits, Cold Law, which in my opinion is a better vantage point than the Cheviot itself, and Broadhope Hill.

The summit of The Cheviot is a little disappointing, but this is more than made up for with the return journey via Cairn Hill and then the delightful decent from the source of the Harthorpe burn, which is known for its birds, especially the Dipper.

The walk is a little boggy under foot in places so good footwear is essential and as you are climbing up to nearly 2700 feet warm clothes,

waterproofs and emergency rations are essential. Treat it with respect and experienced walkers only.

Map



Route Details

From the parking place walk back down the valley retracing the route you drove in on and sticking to the road passing the first Public Bridleway sign on your left (Broadstruther 2 miles, Public Footpath Goldsclough 3 miles), until you reach the next footpath sign (Cold Law $\frac{3}{4}$). Turn left here onto the footpath and follow it climbing away from the valley floor, passing a stell on your right hand side. Stick to

the main track as it follows a stream on your right hand side (Cockshaw Sike). The stream has worn the ground away so a lot of the time just the noise of the running water is the indication it is there.

You initially climb steeply but it soon levels out and the cairn near the summit of Cold Law is easily visible.

Keep to the main grassy track made by a quad bike and used by the game keeper to tend the grouse. This prominent track initially heads to the summit cairn but begins to swing away to the left. Stay on the track until you come to a junction with a single footpath which heads straight up to the cairn.

Carry on past the Cairn and continue on towards the triangulation point.

The summit of Cold Law is 452 metres (1500 feet) above sea level and provides you with a wonderful view of the Northumbrian coast, with the Cheviot South West of you. I think this summit is one of the true forgotten treasures in the Cheviot Hills.

After visiting the summit continue along the path leading to the fence. When you reach it turn left and follow the fence line keeping to the left of it.

The fence that you are now following is a high tensile one. These fences are very popular in these situations as they are low maintenance and are a lower initial cost. If you take a closer look at it you will see only the larger posts, which are every fifty yards, actually go into the ground. The seven smaller posts in between are called 'droppers'. The wires would have been tightened over a massive distance to what are called strainer posts.

After following the fence for some distance you come across a wooden gate, with a stile next to it. Do not go through this gate; follow the fence passing a boundary stone. You should still be on the left of the fence.

As you climb up to Broadhope Hill the path fades out but just keep following the fence line stopping to admire the view back to Cold Law. You eventually reach a 90-degree corner in the fence just below Broadhope Hill. If you wish to visit the summit of Broadhope Hill you need to go through the gate here and go up the rough heather to the summit. It is not the best vantage point, so unless you are feeling super fit I would conserve your energy.

If you do not wish to visit the summit follow the fence through 90 degrees to the left sticking to the left-hand side.

This hill ground is known for its grouse shooting and the management of the grouse is very obvious in these uplands. You can see strips of heather have been burnt.

This is done by first mechanically cultivating a small firebreak around the desired area. This is done to kill the old woody heather and encourage younger vegetation to grow. Strips are left so that the grouse can shelter in the longer heather and feed on the fresh young shoots coming through on the burnt area. Also shooting butts are obvious all around this area which the shooters will be based in. There is a lot of money in grouse shooting and usually more is made on these farms through shooting than traditional farming methods.

Stick to the main path, still following the fence and pass a stile on your right hand side. Continue on as you drop down before rising up to a stile (permissive footpath arrow on it).

Stick to the path as it turns to the right with a prominent path joining from the left (this is the main route up the Cheviot).

Continue on as you rise to the summit of Scald Hill before crossing a stile. Stick to the main path, which follows a fence on your right hand side.

You start really climbing now as you rise up to the Cheviot summit.



As you start to level off you join a paved path leading to the summit, passing through the fence so that you are now on the right hand side of it. The summit is very flat so the view is disappointing.

You are now at the highest point in Northumberland (2,676 feet or 816 metres above sea level). This is certainly a summit for the record, not the view. There has been massive erosion of the summit by years of trampling by walkers and then the effect of the wind and rain on the exposed peat. Northumberland National Parks are trying to control this erosion by planting clumps of undamaged plants in the peat trying to reduce further erosion.

After visiting the summit you stick to the paved as you start to descend slowly, sticking to the Pennine Way.

After a while you reach a footpath signpost (Path to Langleeford 3 $\frac{3}{4}$). Turn left leaving the Pennine way here and crossing the stile (permissive footpath marker on stile).

Pass Scotsmans Cairn on your left and drop down sticking to the path, with the fence on your right hand side, ignoring the stile crossing it.

You descend to a public footpath marker post directing you to the left. Follow the arrow ignoring the stile in front of you.

You soon reach the source of the Harthorpe burn. At first it is quite hard to locate it, as it is underground, and you can just hear it rushing away under your feet as you keep crossing it.



This is a wonderful peaceful section of the walk and well worth keeping your eyes open for Grey Wagtails, Meadow Pipits and Dippers feeding on the burn.

As the burn grows in size you come across Harthope Linn, which is a waterfall surrounded by mountain ash. Keep your eyes open for dragonflies around the waterfall.

As we have dropped down from the summit of the Cheviot you can see how the foliage has changed for the sheep to live on, even though it is all the same grazing area. On the tops it was mostly heather, but down in the valley the grass is very lush by comparison. Also it makes you realise how much height you have dropped over the last half-hour or so.

You pass an old ruined stiel before passing to the right of some sheep pens.

This is where most of the sheep work will be undertaken. You can see a prominent passageway in the middle. This is called the race. Sheep are packed in here from the pen behind, which has a taper on it. When they are tight in the race they can easily be checked over and wormed etc.

Pass the yellow way marker post before crossing a small ladder stile and entering a small wood, with a ford running through it before Langleeford Hope.

Pass the house on the left before crossing a stile, ignoring the footpath sign pointing away to your left.

Follow the wide track crossing a cattle grid, a stile, then pass through a large wooden gate, then a kissing gate just before Lanleeford Farm.

Now you are back on the road that takes you to the car park.

