

Route Description: Alongside the Ribble and Hodder from Hurst Green: In the footsteps of Tolkien

1. There is roadside parking in Hurst Green (SD68526 37939). Cross the B6243 & walk through the car park (SD68535 37890) of The Shireburn Arms to a gate & footpath. Keep the fence on your R, gently descend to a stile and the Ribble Way footpath (SD68902 37401). Turn L (east), descending through trees on a muddy path, over a footbridge (SD68997 37370) and fence stile to the riverbank of the River Ribble.
2. A grassy meadow leads to the aqueduct as Pendle Hill comes into view. A pleasant path leads along the riverbank, over stiles to reach a tarmac road at Jumbles.
3. From Jumbles rocks, continue along the flat road to a cattlegrid, a stile leads the path to the watersedge. Follow along the riverbank as the river swings N. The stone mullions of the Jacobean Hacking Hall give a sense of history to this remote riverside spot, here the Calder joins the Ribble at the site of the old Hacking Ferry. Carry on along the Ribble Way, onto a stony road near the meeting of the Ribble and Hodder, continue to Winckley Hall Farm.
4. Turn L at the farm buildings and into the farmyard. Turn R leaving the farmyard alongside the water lodge. Into trees, Winckley Hall is on the L. Immediately after its entrance, there is a footpath on the R marked by an iron gate leading onto farmland. Cross the fields, through another iron gate (SD70506 38721). Stonyhurst unfolds before your eyes, an inspiring view. Is this 'Middle Earth'? The path descends to the road (B6243) with a bus shelter and road junction opposite.
5. Turn R along the road to the Lower Hodder Bridge (SD70429 39197) and 'Cromwells Bridge'. The ancient bridge was built by Sir Richard Shireburn in 1562, replacing an old wooden bridge dating back to the 14th C.
6. Take the short tarmac driveway (SD70410 39206) before the bridge to a wooden gate and stony road along the W bank of the clear waters of the Hodder. The forest on Longridge Fell comes into view and the riverbank has many places to sit and rest. Pass the weir and the old water treatment facility before a gate leads to a tree-covered path. A short climb before a descent through trees to a stone bridge (SD70003 40005). Cross the bridge and turn L, over a wooden footbridge & ascend 132 steps, then along a path to emerge from the woodland at a stile (SD69892 39811). The path continues at the edge of the meadow to a small ladder stile and path. The path joins a stony road (SD69622 39576), keep L to the houses at Woodfields and the road (SD69567 39238).
7. Cross the road by the post box to the footpath opposite towards Hall Barn Farm. Pass the stonemasons yard (SD69331 38854) and alongside the farm buildings before turning R at the junction to the Observatory (SD69095 38817). Bear L into fields, the cricket pavilion is on your L, progress across meadows through three iron gates to emerge in Hurst Green Village on Smithy Row. Turn L along Avenue Road and continue to the start of the walk.