

Foreword

The 1650s and 1660s were a particularly turbulent time in English history – the Plague, the Fire of London, Cromwell's Lord Protectorship, the restoration of the monarchy and the suppression of religious dissidents are covered on pages 14-16. In these times George Fox became an itinerant preacher, walking up and down the country speaking the truth as he saw it. He paid a heavy price with hardship and eight spells in prison, and, with support from his wife Margaret Fell Fox, he founded the Religious Society of Friends or Quakers: see pages 17-21.

Today, going for a walk is recognised as therapeutic – a good way of clearing the head and sorting out your thoughts. Following a long-distance route with its ever-changing scenery (rather than a familiar, local route) provides great satisfaction – ways found, miles covered, landmarks and turning points achieved.

Being away from your normal routine, your mundane tasks, gives a new perspective on life's issues. It gives you space to sort out your thoughts and helps you to get in touch with your inner self. Walking also lets you discover and recognise new or buried ideas and to consider them quietly, slowly. Then 'full-on' ideas can be allowed to simmer, cure or 'be seasoned' – as Quakers would say.

Many of the paths described here are historic routes, well-trodden by generations past. How was the path for those previous users? They were probably not at leisure, perhaps focussed on the job to be done, but one hopes also able to appreciate mild weather, the sun on distant slopes or the views from high ground.

To paraphrase an Irish blessing: as you walk this route, may the wind be always at your back and may the sun shine warm upon you!

*Jocelyn Bell Burnell
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Howgill Fells



1 Planning

George Fox's 1652 journey from Barley to Swarthmoor Hall was our inspiration, but we do not claim to follow his footsteps. We thought long and hard about this issue when developing the route, and we referred often to the Boultons' excellent book *In Fox's Footsteps*: see page 78. To understand why we split the route into two guidebooks, and why we simplified the Boultons' major zigzags, please visit our website: www.rucsacs.com/books/fw1.

This guidebook focuses on George Fox's life and his walk as far as Sedbergh, whilst its sequel continues the walk to Swarthmoor Hall: see page 78. At the heart of the latter is Margaret Fell's transition from mistress of Swarthmoor to organiser of the Quakers. Each guidebook describes a walk that visits many sites of key importance in Quaker history and can be completed within one week. We hope that this will introduce some Quakers to long-distance walking and many long-distance walkers to Quakerism.

A note on terminology

The official name of the Quaker movement is the *Religious Society of Friends*. Although *Quaker* was originally coined as a pejorative term, it is now often used interchangeably with *Friend*. In general, Quakers are more likely to refer to each other as *Friends*, whilst non-Quakers are more likely to use the term *Quakers*, especially for clarity in speech – where *Friends* and *friends* sound alike.

Best time of year and weather

Most people will opt to walk this Way in late spring, summer or early autumn. Whitsun week echoes the timing of George Fox's 1652 journey, and wildflowers are at their best in late spring and summer. However, birds are more active and visible during early spring and late autumn. Accommodation will be more limited out of season, so the best times overall are from Easter to October.

In theory, the Way could be walked at any time of year. Its highest point is the summit of Pendle Hill at only 557 m (1830 ft). However winter walking is always subject to short hours of daylight, greater chance of wet, windy weather and sodden ground in the offroad sections. It's wise to keep checking on the weather forecast as your walk progresses: see page 78.

Unless you are familiar with fairly high latitude (about 54° N) you may be surprised by how short the days can become – fewer than eight daylight hours in late December. To check on sunrise and sunset times in advance, see page 78.

Which direction?

We describe the route from Barley to Sedbergh because that follows Fox's sequence: his vision on Pendle Hill preceded his ramblings around the dales to Firbank Fell near Sedbergh and the Pulpit where he delivered his outdoor sermon. In theory you could walk it in reverse, but we advise against it. You would on trend be walking into the wind, and our text instructions cover the northward direction only, so you'd have to rely on our maps: it's harder than you think to follow directions in 'reverse'.

If you later decide to complete the walk to Swarthmoor Hall, Ulverston you would resume from Sedbergh anyway. The two day-walks in Sedbergh (see pages 68 to 77) can be done in either order after arrival; or, if you live nearby, either or both could be completed on a separate occasion.

How long will it take?

The overall distance (62 miles/100 km) to Sedbergh is presented in five sections and for many that will be five full days with some early starts. However you can split the route differently to suit your fitness, travel arrangements and accommodation choices. The route is intended as a long and enjoyable walk, not as a test of endurance or speed. For some, the 17 miles/27 km from Sawley to Malham will make too long a day, but it can be split further at Gisburn and/or Hellifield.

Distances are shown in Table 1, in which you will see sections that appear unequal in length but they take account of gradients and terrain, as well as overnight accommodation. Most people will find the 14.7 miles/23.7 km from Far Gearstones to Sedbergh makes an easier day than the shorter distance from Malham to Buckden. And although the two Sedbergh day-walks are both under 10 miles, there is so much Quaker heritage to see, and so many places to spend time reflecting, that each fully justifies an entire day.

Table 1

	miles	km
Barley	5.6	9.0
Sawley	16.8	27.0
Malham	12.5	20.1
Buckden	12.4	20.0
Far Gearstones	14.7	23.7
Sedbergh	9.8	15.8
Cross keys		
Quaker Trail	9.4	15.1
Total	81.2	130.7

Accommodation and refreshments

Many walkers seek a hot evening meal and a soft bed after a hard day's walking. With this in mind, we have split the route in the expectation that you will probably wish to overnight in each of Sawley, Malham, Buckden and Far Gearstones, followed by a couple of nights in Sedbergh. Table 2 shows where you can find accommodation and refreshments, or at least where you could in 2021. In most cases the ticks refer to permanent establishments but we have included selected locations based on [airbnb.co.uk](https://www.airbnb.co.uk). The fallout from the Covid 19 pandemic may mean that some options will close and may not reopen. Check carefully before making plans.

As of 2021, a few hostels, bunkhouses and campsites were spread along the route and they too are listed in Table 2. The ultimate low-cost

accommodation is a tent that you carry, but this could be very challenging. Official campsites are sparse, especially in the southern part of the route, and you would need to carry heavy loads to include sleeping equipment, cooking gear and food. To undertake this route by camping demands considerable fitness and previous experience.

Refreshments are generally covered by the main overnight stops having at least one pub, café or take-away. If your dietary needs are specialist, or you feel you need frequent snacks, carry your own supplies. However if you have a hearty breakfast and a good evening meal you may need to carry little extra food. In any event, carry plenty of drinking water for the day's walk, unless you rely on purifying tablets or filters.

Facilities along the Way

	B&B, hotel	hostel, bunkhouse	café, pub	shop	campsite
Barley	✓		✓		
Downham	✓	✓	✓		
Sawley	✓		✓		
<i>Gisburn*</i>	✓		✓	✓	
Paythorne			✓		
Hellifield	✓		✓	✓	
Kirkby Malham	✓		✓		
Malham	✓		✓	✓	✓
Arndcliffe	✓				
<i>Starbotton*</i>	✓		✓		✓
Buckden	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hubberholme	✓				
Yockenthwaite	✓				
Nethergill	✓				✓
Swarthghyll	✓	✓			
Far Gearstones	✓				
<i>Ribblehead*</i>	✓	✓			
Cowgill	✓				
Dent Village	✓		✓	✓	✓
Sedbergh	✓		✓	✓	✓
Cautley (Cross Keys)	✓		✓		
Bramaskew Farm	✓				

** places in italics are offroute; B&B may include AirBnB*

Pendle Hill from Haw Lane



Navigation, waymarking and experience

The mapping in Part 3 is detailed and closely linked with the route description. If you follow directions carefully, navigation should be straightforward. Distances are shown by mileage markers that are cumulative from Barley, except for the two Sedbergh day-walks which both show distances from St Andrew's Church. Each page also carries a pale grey km grid and north is always straight up the page. The key to map symbols and colours is inside the back cover.

As of 2022 the Friends Way had no dedicated waymarking, and although there are plenty of signs you need to stay alert for which ones you are meant to be following. We offer detailed advice within the text about when to follow – variously – the Pendle Way, Lancashire Way, Ribble Way, Pennine Bridleway, Pennine Way and Dales Way. The photos above give you some idea of the variety of signs to look out for. But you also need to be vigilant about when to stop following certain signs. On occasions you have to look for an obscure arrow or detect which gate or stile to aim at, or try to follow a trod path.

If you have never attempted a long-distance walk before, we encourage you to obtain and study our *Notes for novices* (see page 78). We suggest that you don't go alone, especially not in winter or when poor visibility means that map and compass skills may be needed. Having said that, if you take time to prepare and plan your expedition, this could be a very suitable choice for your first long walk and an ideal preparation for the follow-on walk to Swarthmoor Hall.

North towards the Three Peaks in winter

