

3·2 Harestanes to Kirk Yetholm

42

43

47

Distance 17·3 miles (27·8 km)

Terrain paths through fields and woods, followed by a grassy paths over modest hills

Grade undulates for the first 11 miles then climbs to a summit of 369 m (1210 ft) on Wideopen Hill, with a steepish descent to the valley of Bowmont Water

Food and drink Jedburgh (wide choice but off route), Morebattle (shop, hotel), Town Yetholm (shops, hotels), Kirk Yetholm (hotel)

Summary once across the Teviot, the Way rises to high pastures alternating with small woods for the first half; after Morebattle, climb grassy Wideopen Hill



- From the footbridge near Harestanes, the main Way turns left at a signpost (see page 36 bullet 3) and goes through the woods. You emerge to cross the driveway of Monteviot House: if you're here on a summer afternoon you might wish to consider a detour to visit its gardens: see panel.
- The Way goes left along the driveway briefly, but within 60 m turns right through the woods beyond. The woodland path swings right and emerges into a field, where it heads directly downhill into trees beside River Teviot.
- The path bends right upstream for 400 m to a suspension bridge at mile 15·1. Cross the Teviot and turn left, downstream. At mile 15·7 the path bends right and follows the Jed Water upstream for 450 m before ascending to a crash barrier beside Jedfoot Bridge.



Monteviot House and gardens

Monteviot House is home to Lord Lothian, a descendent of the Kerr cattle-reiving family. The elegant sandstone house is Georgian, with later additions. Its 'eccentric and tangled' interior has fine plaster ceilings and family portraits. The house is open to the public only in July 1200-17.00 (not Mondays).

Superbly located within a curve of the River Teviot, the gardens are open daily 12.00 to 17.00, April to October. A laburnum tunnel leads to a water garden created from a spring-fed bog. House and gardens charge for entry (in 2023 £6 each): www.monteviot.com.

Monteviot gardens



- Turn left beside the A698 for just 70 m to cross the Jed Water, then cross the busy road with great care to go up a lane. (Alternatively, if in need of refreshment, don't cross but continue 350 m the east for the Caddy Mann: in 2023 it was open 10.00 to 16.00 but closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.)
- After 100 m the Way forks left uphill on a stony track (Dere Street) whilst the lane continues for 1.8 miles (2.9 km) into Jedburgh. (If Jedburgh is your goal, consider sticking to the Way as far as the fingerpost at mile 16.7 to reach it by a pleasanter route, mainly offroad: see map page 37.)
- The Way continues uphill on Dere Street for a further 200 m beyond the fingerpost. Turn left at a horse stile into a patch of woodland, and follow the narrow green path for nearly a mile (1.5 km) to a lane.
- Turn right for 300 m to where the lane bends right. Here bear left onto a broad track leading down to Oxnam Water, which you cross by a footbridge on the left at mile 18.2 **1**. Just upstream is a fine outcrop of Old Red Sandstone: see the photo below.
- After the footbridge, turn left and cross the riverside field diagonally, up to a fingerpost at a gate. As the slope eases a bit, turn left (as signed) to approach trees, then turn right up to a gate near a house (Littledeanlees Cottage). A line of telegraph poles march up this field marking your goal at the top near the cottage.
- The Way now passes around three sides of a rectangle to bypass both house and stone building to its south. It is clearly signed and channel-fenced in places. Once you reach its access road, you are heading east again: climb steeply uphill for 400 m and turn left into woodland at mile 18.7.



Dere Street south-east of Jedfoot Bridge

North-west over the footbridge across Oxnam Water



- The path heads north under tall beeches to reach another lane. Turn right for 400 m to a T-junction. Make a dogleg by turning left along the road for 40 m, then right through a kissing-gate just before Brownrigg, an eclectic mixture of vernacular stone and modern houses.
- Head down to cross a footbridge, then skirt around the foot of a field. This leaves you heading uphill (east) on a waymarked track into some trees at mile 19.9. This is the first of three woodlands in this section.
- Bear left to follow the track down into a dip. As it rises again, it narrows to a path which runs along the left edge of the woodland to a gate at its corner.
- The path continues along the edge of a field, then the right edge of the second wood, which is of Scots pines. Keep straight on along the right edge of another field, and turn left at its corner.



- Turn right over a wall stile to head slightly uphill with a wall on your right, to the third wood – a hilltop plantation of Scots pines at mile 21.
- Turn left beside the wood and right around its corner to pass along its northern edge. After 400 m turn left away from the wood at a junction.
- The track now runs downhill all the way to Cessford at mile 22.1. Bear right over a stream to Cessford Farm, where you turn left. The road leads towards and past Cessford Castle: keep ahead to the next gate (mile 22.4) for a closer look at its exterior.



Cessford Castle

Interpretation boards present the uncertain and uncomfortable life of the fortress in the reiving times.

Cessford was the stronghold of a branch of the Kerr family – equally feared on both sides of the border. Robert Kerr of Cessford was the most notorious raider, blackmailer and feuder of the late 16th century.

According to legend, many of the Kerrs were left-handed. While most refuge towers had a spiral staircase that ran clockwise to favour the right arm of swordsmen retreating upwards, the Kerr strongholds had their staircases spiralling the other way. Sadly the stonework is too dangerous stonework to verify this.





Cessford Castle

- After the castle, descend all the way past the entrance to Otterburn House and its boundary wall to reach the B6401 at mile 23.8. Turn right into Morebattle. Morebattle's name has nothing to do with fighting, but means 'marsh settlement' – from Linton Loch, the swamp that once lay just to its north. Its community shop is open daily: see morebattlecommunityshop.co.uk for more. There is, or may be, the Templehall Hotel at the far end of the village but as of early 2023 its opening hours were very restricted and its future uncertain: visit www.templehallhotel.com to check on opening hours and what is on offer.
- At the far end of Morebattle, bear right up a lane signed Hownam. At mile 25.6 it drops to meet a road, where you turn right.
- Follow the road beside the Kale Water and within 600 m, just after a ford, turn left to cross it by a footbridge. Cross a field to join a track and turn right on it.
- The track passes up to right of an old quarry, then zigzags uphill to a point behind a small hill fort. Turn right through a gate and head uphill to the right of a plantation at mile 26.5.
- The path heads uphill through gates to pass just left of the first hump, Grubbit Law (326 m), at mile 26.8. There are fine views north to the Eildons in this section. Bend left to join a stone wall and follow its southern side.
- Head along the main ridge line keeping the wall on your left until you cross it by a ladder stile on the second summit hump.



West over the plantation at mile 26.5



View from Wideopen Hill

- The path and wall continue to the third summit, Wideopen Hill. At 369 m (1210 ft) this is the highest point of the Way, but don't be misled by the plaque that claims it also as its halfway point: this is on the Yetholms bridge see page 46.
- Follow the ridge wall to the right, downhill, before it bends back left. Continue the descent on a spur of Crookedshaws Hill, always keeping close to the wall and crossing it only by a waymarked ladder-stile. In mist, maintain your direction as NNE (022.5°).
- Enjoy fine views to your right over the valley of the Bowmont Water. As the descending ridge reaches fields, the path turns right through a gate in a wall (photo below): below to the right, note a clump of trees. After the gate, descend on a broad path through bracken to a walker gate beside a field gate.



Wideopen Hill

Rising steeply at the northern edge of the Cheviots, Wideopen offers great views over the plains of the Tweed. In the west is the Waterloo Monument, with the triple top of Eildon beyond, 16 miles away as the crow flies. Below you, in the same direction, low sunlight may reveal the Iron Age settlement on Morebattle Hill. North-east, the ridge points along Bowmont Water to Kirk Yetholm. Behind Yetholm Law gleams the water of Yetholm Loch. To the south the views are shorter, rising to the ridgeline of the Cheviots with the English border along the skyline. At its left end rises the wide hump of the Cheviot (815 m).



- Slant slightly right down the open field, passing through the storm-damaged clump of trees to reach a further gate onto a grassy track at mile 28.8. Turn right downhill, and within 500 m turn sharp left along a minor road beside Bowmont Water.
- After nearly a mile of road, pass Primsidemill on the right, go over the minor crossroads and rise to meet the B6401, where you turn right towards Yetholm.
- After 650 m of the B6401 reach a cemetery and at its far end turn right into a minor road. Within 80 m turn left on a green track towards Bowmont Water.
- Follow the track for 0.7 miles (1.1 km) as it heads north and crosses a field, becoming a barely trod path. Just maintain direction but veer left near the road to find the gate just left of an electricity substation. Exit to the road bridge between the two Yetholms. At mile 31.2 this marks the half-way point of the Way.
- If staying in Town Yetholm, turn left at the road bridge, otherwise turn right to cross the Bowmont Water.
- On its far side, the Way descends steps to a path that continues beside the river. It crosses a field, then bends right into the streets of Kirk Yetholm. For the famous Border Hotel (terminus of the Pennine Way) aim for the eastern side of The Green.



Kirk Yetholm Gypsies



A law of 1609 made it legal in Scotland to kill Gypsies. Many of the Gypsies retreated to the edge of the hills, where they could find refuge in times of persecution. They are recorded in Kirk Yetholm as early as 1695, including the Gypsy royal family, surnamed Faa. Jean Gordon Faa, the first Gypsy Queen in Kirk Yetholm, inspired the character Meg Merilies in Sir Walter Scott's 1815 novel *Guy Mannering*. In real life she was banned from Kirk Yetholm for fighting with another woman, and finally was put to death by drowning for supporting the Jacobite Rising. You pass the Gypsy Palace, now a small holiday cottage, on the Way out of Kirk Yetholm

Clump of trees on the descent from Crookedshaws

