


A Beatrix Potter favourite... 4 miles Townend and Troutbeck Valley

Uncover classic Lakeland scenery, farmland and architecture on this beautiful circular walk from Brockhole, near Lake Windermere, up into the Troutbeck Valley and to the charming and unique 17th century farmhouse, Townend. On the way you will be rewarded with stunning views of the surrounding fells and Lake Windermere, diverse wildlife and some charming local architecture.

Start point: Brockhole Visitor Centre – grid ref. NY407023 – OS Landranger 90, Explorer OL7

Getting there and facilities

Regular bus services from Windermere and Ambleside. Windermere  is 2½ miles from Brockhole. WCs, refreshments and car park at Brockhole Visitor Centre (pay & display, not NT). It is just off the A591. More WCs can be found at Townend and more refreshments in Troutbeck village. Check out www.nationaltrust.org.uk/townend for opening details.

Things to look out for...

Brockhole

This impressive house and its landscaped grounds have an interesting past. Created in the 1890s by local man Thomas Mawson, Brockhole became home to relatives of Beatrix Potter, the Gaddum family. In the 1940s it was turned into a home for convalescents and since 1965 it has been the main visitor centre for the Lake District National Park.

Townend

For over 400 years Townend was home to just one family, the Brownes. They were ‘well to do’ farmers (also called yeomen) and passed their estate down through 12 generations until 1943 when the line died out. The money they made farming a large swathe of the Troutbeck Valley enabled them to extend and improve the house. There is a lot of fine oak furniture here, much of which was carved by the last George Browne. He retired in his 40s to make more of his talent as a wood carver.

Wildlife

The Troutbeck Valley is home to a wealth of wildlife. Look out for rabbits, deer and badgers, as well as birds such as nuthatches, coal tits and blue tits. During spring and summer, brightly coloured wildflowers such as primroses and foxgloves decorate the fell.

Thirlmere to Manchester aqueduct

This aqueduct, built between 1888 and 95, delivers fresh water from Thirlmere reservoir to Manchester. It takes 24 hours for water to travel the 100 mile distance.



Townend House sits imposingly on the hillside at the southern end of Troutbeck village. The large, round chimneys are typical of Troutbeck and were much admired by the poet William Wordsworth.

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Look out for Herdwick sheep. They can often be spotted on the Lake District's higher fells. This hardy breed is able to brave the elements in a harsh climate and is recognisable by the black (youngsters) or dark grey fleece (older sheep).

© NTPL / Val Corbett



This area has a wealth of beautiful farm buildings in the local Lake District vernacular style, such as this 17th century bank barn (not open to the public) at Townend Farm.

© NT / Matthew Antrobus

“I loved to wander on the Troutbeck Fell... more often I went alone. But never lonely. There was always the company of gentle sheep, and wild flowers, and singing waters.”

Beatrix Potter

Walk directions

1. Leave Brockhole, turn right and walk along the footpath beside the A591 until you see a bridleway on the opposite side of the road.

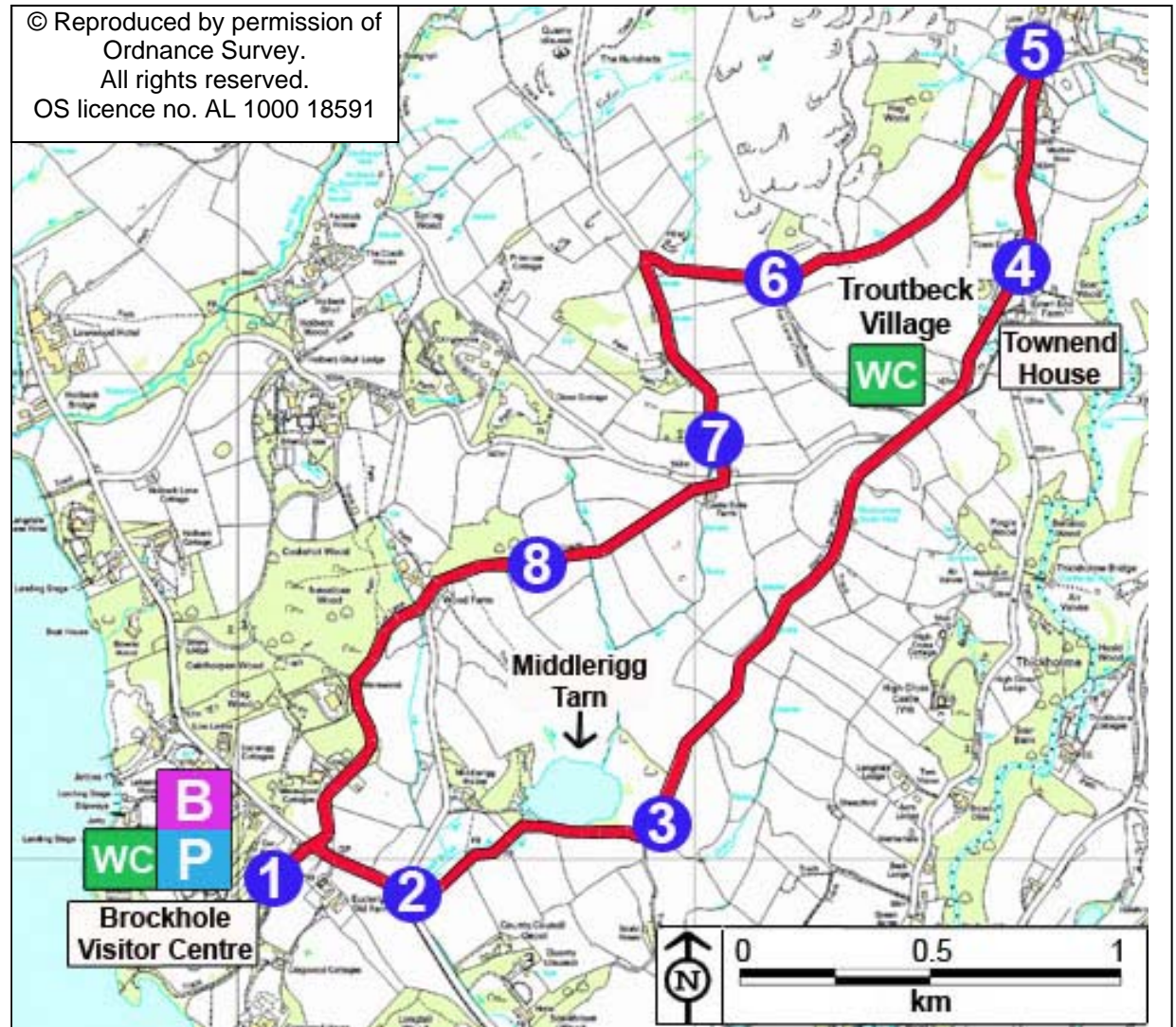
Here you can see old St Andrew's Chapel (now used as offices). It was built in 1913 by a family who lived nearby, so that their staff would not be away from their duties for too long by going to church in Bowness.

2. Cross the road carefully and follow the track up towards Middlerigg Tarn. This track is known as "Wain Lane". It is a 10th century cart lane and was used by packhorses to bring slate from Troutbeck down to the lake where it could be transported by boat.
3. Follow the track past the tarn and continue along it as it veers to the left. You can see the route of the aqueduct along Wain Lane. Look out for single iron gates supported by sandstone pillars, which were used for access.
4. When the track meets a road, turn right. This will take you into Troutbeck village. You will see Townend House to the left of the next T-junction along the road.
5. Continue along the village road past the barns and interesting houses and up towards the post office. Turn left here.
6. Follow Robin Lane, which will be joined by a bridleway on the left. Continue for 300m and then turn left opposite a pillar on the right. This is an excellent spot for a view of Windermere, England's largest lake.
7. On entering the lane turn first left over a stile and follow the track down to a road. Cross over to Mirk Lane which is directly opposite.
8. Walk along Mirk Lane back down towards the A591. Carefully cross the road again to return to Brockhole.

Walk terrain and accessibility

This 4 mile walk, with an ascent of 750 feet, will take you across country roads, bridleways, footpaths and a busy main road. The terrain can be uneven and muddy after wet weather. Walking boots or sturdy shoes are recommended.

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National Trust places nearby: Townend, Bridge House, Windermere and Troutbeck

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