

Nick o' Pendle and Jeppe the Knave's Grave from Pendleton

Distance 6 miles/9.7km

Time 3.5 hours

Terrain: Some steep climbs and boggy terrain on sometimes faint paths over access land.

Grading: Moderate to challenging. Requires good level of fitness.

Start/Parking: Pendleton village car park behind Swan with Two Necks (Grid reference SD755396).

Refreshments: The Swan with Two Necks, Pendleton. Call 01200 423112 for opening times.

THIS satisfying little hike explores the foothills of mighty Pendle and visits the grave of a highwaymen beheaded for his crimes in the middle ages then interred on the site of a much earlier Anglo-Saxon burial. The start and finish point adjacent to one of the finest real ale pubs in Britain is an added bonus...

START

Turn L out of car park and along road through the pretty little village of Pendleton, past the old school house and church and out onto quiet lane heading NE towards Pendleton Hall.

2. 0.5 miles / 0.8km

At junction with Pendle Road, cross with care onto bridleway winding past Pendleton Hall, over the bridge and past the farm buildings, heading NE on the rough track. After half a mile, just before farm houses, look for wooden marker post on right and turn right uphill over stile next to red gate. Continue climbing SE across the fields, following the sunken track up to a derelict barn. Head for the left side of the barn, then over the ladder stile in the corner of the field.

3. 1.5 miles / 2.4km

Follow grassy track through sometimes marshy ground SW towards Howcroft Barn. The path becomes faint, but head SW for the barn and before reaching it, cross the stream on the footbridge and take path left.

4. 1.9 miles / 3km

The path climbs steeply beside wall then continues through wooden gate and out onto open fellside. The path is again indistinct in places, but continue just west of south to reach the road.

5. 2.3 miles / 3.7km

Join road with care, climbing uphill for 250 yards, then opposite ski slope, take footpath left climbing steadily up to ridge then turning right along wide ridge track towards the Nick o' Pendle.

6. 2.8 miles / 4.5km

From the Nick, walk down road for 200 yards and take bridleway on right. Go through gate and take main track to left heading SW gently downhill. Continue along track past farm buildings on left, after which it becomes unsurfaced. Follow the marker posts indicating a less boggy route.

7. 3.6 miles / 5.8km

After the third marker post (GR SD764376), a faint track heads off to the right over the Access Land. Climb this track, heading NE towards skyline. It's initially hard going over boggy tussock grass then up a steep escarpment beside a dry stone wall, but after a short steep climb, the gradient eases onto the summit plateau. Follow the wall NW to the intersection with another wall.

8. 3.9 miles / 6.3km

Cross the stile then go immediately left over the ladder stile. From here, descend SW for 250 yards to Jeppe's Grave - just visible as a circular prominence among the tussock grass. This is the resting place of Jeppe Curteys – a highwayman beheaded in 1327 and buried on the site of a Bronze Age burial mound – perceived by the locals as pagan ground and a fitting final resting place for such a ne'er do well. Retrace your steps and return over the two stiles, then follow the wall NE to reach summit trig point.

The views from the trig are wonderful. To the south lie the industrial valleys and uplands of the West Pennine Moors; to the north, the Bowland Fells; to the east, the wild massif of Pendle and beyond the Yorkshire Dales and the Three Peaks. While to the west the Ribble Valley winds its way down to the coast where the Irish Sea forms a sparkling ribbon along the horizon.

9. 3.95 miles / 6.35km

Follow the faint grassy track heading NE towards Pendle for three quarters of a mile, ignoring a ladder stile and minor sheep track on L. Pick your way carefully through the gap in the drystone wall near the intersection and continue for 70 yards along another wall to reach the car park at the Nick.

10. 4.7 miles / 7.6km

Follow the road north over the Nick and take the footpath left just after the highpoint. Descend NW for 500 yards then through white gate on right and head downhill to tree with prominent white spot. Pass farmhouse, cross the beck and go through gate then over stile.

11. 5.2 miles / 8.4km

Continue straight down field along hedge then right through gate. Continue along hedge to a stile then left along hedge, before crossing to a footbridge over the stream in bottom right corner of field. Descend gently beside beck past quirky cottage into Pendleton and along the stream to the car park.

