

In the footsteps of **J.R.R. Tolkien**

This is a 9Km/5.5 miles circular walk starting and finishing at Hurst Green in Ribble Valley, Lancashire

The Tolkien Trail

How to Get There: Hurst Green is 8Km/5 miles west of Clitheroe and 15Km/9.5 miles north east of Preston on the B6243. There is limited car parking in the village. Buses running between Clitheroe, Whalley and Preston serve Hurst Green. For details contact Traveline on 0870 608 2608,

The epic '**The Lord of the Rings**' trilogy was compiled over the course of some 16 years, and finally published in 1954/55. **J.R.R. Tolkien**, his wife and other children, regularly stayed at a guest house in the grounds belonging to Stonyhurst College. Their son, John, who was studying for the priesthood at the English College in Rome, was evacuated to the Jesuit seminary at St. Mary's Hall (now the preparatory school for Stonyhurst College) during the Second World War. **J.R.R. Tolkien** spent much of his time writing, both at the guest house and in the College itself.

This map of the Tolkien Trail is followed by instructions to the route. The walk starts from the War Memorial in the centre of Hurst Green.

1. With your back to the main road, walk along Warren Fold. Just beyond the last of the houses, go over a stile - you will see the domed turrets of Stonyhurst College straight ahead of you. Follow the wall on your left, pass through a gateway and turn sharp right. Walk across the field, passing a lone tree, to reach the fence on the other side.

2. Don't go through the gate, but turn right and follow the fence, heading towards the red brick cricket pavilion. Go through a kissing gate and continue to follow the field boundary. After passing through another kissing gate, follow the path downhill and over the stream. Climb uphill with Fox Fall Wood on your left.

3. As the gradient levels, bear right across the narrow paddock to follow the iron fence to the corner. Go through the gate in the corner and turn right, passing the current [Observatory](#) for the College. Follow the tarmac track downhill towards [Hall Barn Farm](#).

4. Turn left before the gate and go through a wooden gate, following the line of the farm buildings. There is a magnificent view of Stonyhurst College and the [Pavilions](#) to your left. You will shortly emerge on to a track. Keep straight ahead, following the hedge. To your left is St. Mary's Hall, formerly a seminary. Across the playing fields to your right is the distinctive profile of [Pendle Hill](#), with - a little to its left - Clitheroe Castle.

5. When you reach [Woodfields](#), cross the road, bearing slightly to the left and turn down the lane between the houses. The lane soon becomes a rough track and swings to the left. Turn right and go over the wooden stile, then follow the edge of the field alongside Over Hacking Wood. Near the corner, turn left over a stile, then right to descend a stepped path.

6. Cross the bridge over the stream and follow the path which forks to the right towards the [River Hodder](#). Just before reaching the river, turn right over another bridge and climb steadily uphill. Passing [Hodder Place](#) on your right, the path now descends towards the river. Herons can be seen along this stretch of river. Go through the stile at the bottom of the hill to emerge from the woodland on to a wide, surfaced track. You will now follow the river as it curves gently round to the right.

7. Where the track meets the main road at Lower Hodder Bridge, cross over, pausing to admire [Cromwell's Bridge](#) just a little downstream. Turn right along the footway and follow the road uphill. Opposite the junction, go left over a stile and bear slightly left across the field to another stile in the fence opposite. Go over the stile and walk straight uphill, crossing another stile before the brow. Bear slightly right across the field, passing through a kissing gate and heading towards the hedge to the left of the farm buildings.

8. Go through the kissing gate and turn left along the tarmac track, which drops steadily downhill. Where the track levels, go straight ahead, through the gate and into [Winckley Hall Farm](#) yard. Turn right, go through the yard, then turn left, passing a brick wall on the left to reach a gate. Go through the stile and turn immediately right along a gravel track, with the River Hodder again on your left.

9. Where the Hodder joins the River Ribble, take the path to the left, around the gate, to reach a stile by a bench. Go over the stile and turn left to follow a wide track alongside the Ribble. After about 1km, the Ribble is joined from the left by the River Calder, with [Hacking Hall](#) on the opposite bank.

10. Continue to follow the bank of the River Ribble until the path narrows near a stone building on the right. Go through a gate on to a track and over a stile, heading towards Jumbles Farm. Follow the track around to the left to pick up the line of the river again. Where the track turns right, keep straight on alongside the Ribble. As you walk you will see a [stone cross](#) on the hillside to your right.

11. Where the cross disappears from view, go over a stile, across a gravel surface, then over another stile to continue alongside the river. Ahead of you is a graceful three-arched [aqueduct](#). When you reach the aqueduct, go over the stile to its right, bearing slightly right across the field and through another stile on the edge of a wood. Cross the wooden bridge and climb the stepped path to another stile. Go over this stile and walk straight ahead, following the fence on the left.

12. Where the fence turns sharply left, keep straight on downhill. Cross two bridges and another stile, then turn slightly to the left. You should now be walking uphill along a low ridge with streams on either side. After about 200m, cross the stream on the right and turn left to continue uphill, following the line of the field boundary on the left. At the top of the field, go over a stone stile in the left corner and pass through the car park of the Shireburn Arms Hotel. Cross the road to return to the start of the walk

The Observatories

The first observatory at Stonyhurst was begun in 1838 and completed in 1845. In 1868, this observatory - known as the Dome Observatory - was completed. It houses a larger telescope than the original building and is still in use by the students.

Hill Barn Farm

The Barn, which stands alongside the path, is at least in part probably late medieval. Until as late as the 1820s, a number of 14th and 15th century

buildings survived at Stonyhurst. It is possible that the barn dates from the same period, as the roof is supported on 5 massive oak cruck frames. This building technique fell out of favour in the 16th century due to a shortage of timber.

Garden Pavilions

The two pavilions, with their elegant curving roofs, were added to Stonyhurst - along with a formal walled garden - by Sir Nicholas Shireburn in the late 17th century. The octagonal building beyond (now used as a tea room) is the old observatory of 1838 (see above).

Pendle Hill

Pendle Hill dominates the south eastern flank of the Ribble Valley and is the highest hill in Lancashire at 557m (1860ft). Clitheroe Castle was built in the 12th century on the rocky outcrop overlooking the crossing of the Ribble at Edisford. The castle and adjacent museum are open throughout the year.

For opening times, contact Clitheroe Tourist Information on 01200 425566.

Woodfields and New Lodge

The houses around Woodfields are owned by Stonyhurst College and provide accommodation for staff. J.R.R. Tolkien stayed at nearby New Lodge when he visited his son John at St. Mary's Hall. At that time, it was a seminary for the English College evacuated from Rome. His other son Michael later lived at Woodfields and planted a copse in his father's memory following J.R.R. Tolkien's death in 1973.

River Hodder

The Hodder marks the historic county boundary between Lancashire (this side) and Yorkshire (far side). Much of the land in the Hodder Valley further to the north is owned by the Queen as the Duke of Lancaster.

Hodder Place

This impressive building dates back to 1780, when it was the home of a cotton mill-owner. All traces of the mill, on the river bank below the house, have now disappeared. The building was greatly extended by the Jesuits in the nineteenth century when it was used as a Novitiate and then as a preparatory school until its closure in 1971. It has since been divided into privately owned houses and flats.

Cromwell's Bridge

Also known as Devil's Bridge, the packhorse bridge across the Hodder was built by Sir Richard Shireburn in 1562, replacing a wooden bridge dating from at least 1331. Legend says that it was used by Oliver Cromwell during his march from Skipton to intercept the Royalists at the Battle of Preston in 1648. It is far more likely that he would have crossed the river at Higher Hodder Bridge.

Winckley Hall Farm

In the 12th century, Winckley was part of the estates of the Knights Hospitaller. By the early 13th century it had been granted to John de Winkley. John supported Thomas Earl of Lancaster in his revolt against Edward II in 1318. Although Thomas was executed for treason, John Winkley was pardoned. Little of the early house survives.

Hacking Hall

The de Hacking family occupied this site from at least 1200, until it passed by marriage to the Shuttleworth family in the 14th century. The present house was built in 1607 by Sir Thomas Walmsley of Dunkenhalgh, the noted circuit judge, who had married the heiress Anne Shuttleworth. Just upstream of the hall was the ferry service, which operated until the 1950s. The ferryman's hut and the ferry itself are on display at Clitheroe Castle Museum.

The Stone Cross

The base of the cross dates to the early Christian period and was originally sited to the north of Cross Gills Farm. It was moved to its present position in 1833 by the Rector of Stonyhurst. At the same time a new shaft and arms were cut to surmount the pedestal.

The Aqueduct

The graceful stone aqueduct was constructed in the 1880s by the Blackburn Corporation. It originally carried water from Whitewell via an underground pipeline