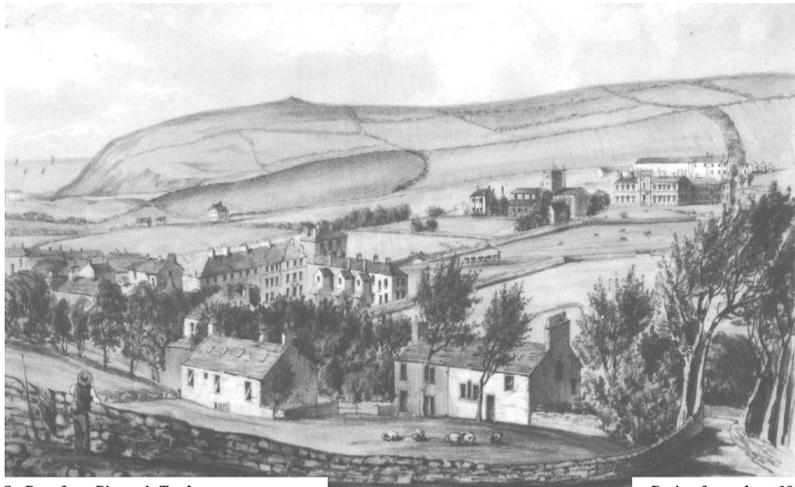


CIRCULAR St. Bees 5 WALK

A medium walk
3 miles : 5 km
about 2 hours

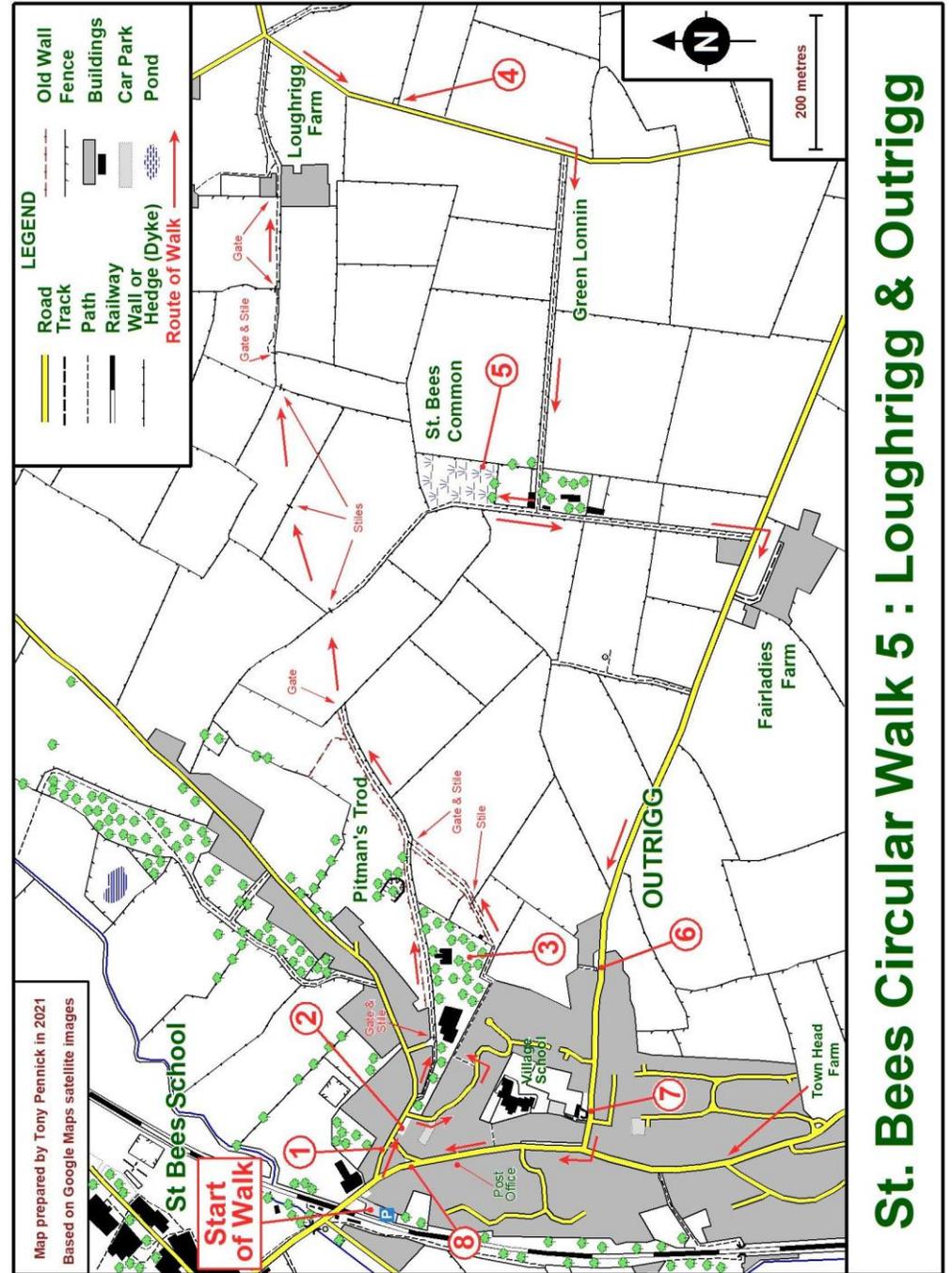
Loughrigg,
St. Bees Common
and Outrigg



St. Bees from Pitman's Trod

Dating from about 1855

Published by



St. Bees Circular Walk 5 : Loughrigg, St. Bees Common and Outrigg

(Time : approx. 2 hours Distance : 5 km ; 3 miles)

This is a varied, circular walk that gives fine views of St. Bees head and the Western Fells. Insights can be gained about the past life and economy of a rural community. Some of the paths can be quite muddy after wet weather and suitable footwear is advisable. The walk starts from the Station Car Park in the centre of the village. Cross the road by the Albert Hotel and walk up Finkle Street.

On the left is Hodgetts (1), the old Liberal Club which is now the Village Hall. Further up on the right is one of the earliest surviving houses in St. Bees (2), built in about 1500 and the birthplace around 1517 of Edmund Grindal, Archbishop of both York and Canterbury under Elizabeth I and the founder of St. Bees School. There is a plaque on the side of the house.

Just past the entrance to the Crofts Estate, take the public footpath right at the bend in the road by the former Fleatham Farm. Go through a narrow lane behind the new houses to gain the Loughrigg path - Gates in this section should all open.



This path goes around part of the boundary of Fleatham House, a six-bedroom Victorian villa set in 7 acres of mature gardens (3). It was formerly owned by a local chemical company and used for corporate entertaining. It then became a hotel/restaurant and played host to many VIPs - eminent visitors from the past included Tony and Cherie Blair, Harold Wilson, Douglas Hurd and ex-Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey. The path here can often be muddy after rain, so the alternative route may be preferable.

Turn right into the Crofts Estate and follow the path up hill. After about 150 metres, turn left along a footpath signposted between two of the houses. The path skirts the Fleatham estate and leads onto a well defined track that goes over two stiles and between lines of gorse bushes to join the Loughrigg path. This section was known locally as "Pitman's Trod".

It provided the most direct route on foot from the village to the iron ore mines at Pallaflat and Bigrigg - and on the old OS Maps was called Johnson's Lonnin.

Turn right and follow the lane to the end. This used to link the village with the common land, but has now fallen into disuse. Through the gate, the path goes directly over three fields to a stile in the corner in the direction of the Bigrigg TV transmitter.

This is a public right-of-way, so don't be put off by the growing crops as the landowner has an obligation to maintain a path across them.

Here the path runs alongside field boundaries to reach Loughrigg Farm.

Dropping down to the farm there are fine views of Dent, Ennerdale and the whole panorama of the Western Fells of the Lake District.

Pass between the farm buildings and follow the track to the road junction. Turn right and follow the minor road (which is the Parish boundary) for about 800 metres until a lane is reached on the right. This is "Green Lonnin".

The ruin in the field corner (4) is the remains of the Black Cock Inn, which used to provide refreshments for those at St. Bees race course - on the levels below Watson Hill/Whangs farms.

Walk up the Lonnin and at the "T" junction, turn right and walk about 100m to reach the Common.

This is all that remains of the Common - the uncultivated land on the margins of the "Town Fields" but still within the territory of the village where the local farmers had the right to graze a certain number of beasts according to the size of their arable holding. This arrangement existed up until the middle of the 19th century, but after that time, more and more of the land was enclosed to make more compact holdings. Today the area is overgrown, but provides a valuable habitat for a diverse flora and fauna. The wetter area on the far side (5) used to be part of Taylor Tarn, before some of this was filled in.

To continue the walk, retrace your steps and follow the track, past the house on the left, to its junction with the direct road between St. Bees and Egremont. Turn right and go past Fairladies Farm and down the steep hill called Outrigg.

The Outrigg, or Outgang, was a fenced route to prevent the cattle straying. It linked the farmsteads which lined the village main street to the Commons up the hill. From this point there are splendid views of St. Bees Head and, on a fine day, the Isle of Man.



The view down Outrigg

The new Fairladies farm was built to replace the old farm buildings which are on the Main Street at the bottom of Outrigg, about 50 metres to the left (south).

Follow the road downhill into the village. Tarry a while on the seat (6) part way down the hill and enjoy the views.

Some of the houses on both sides of Outrigg are built into the quarries which provided the red sandstone used to build many of the older houses in the village. These were originally worked in the mid 19th century and re-opened in 1902 to yield a plentiful supply of building stone until they were closed in 1911. One was used as a .303 rifle range in the 1950s.

Just before the bottom of the hill, by the entrance on the right which leads to the village school, is a 17th century stone built semi-circular walled enclosure called the Pinfold (7). This was where animals that had strayed from the common land were kept until they were collected by their owners, on payment of a fine. The building opposite with the corrugated iron roof used to be the village slaughterhouse.

At the bottom of Outrigg, turn right and follow the raised pavement down Main Street. By the Manor House and opposite the Queens, look out for the Rimming Stone (8), set in the ground on Cross Hill and used by the nearby smithy.

The original smithy was in the Main Street to service the local farms, but later moved to Cross Hill and only closed in 1955 when increasing mechanisation meant the services of a skilled blacksmith were no longer a necessity.

From here, return to the Main Street and then on to the Station.

To find out more about St Bees, you may like to visit the Village Web Site on www.stbees.org.uk

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Outrigg Illustration courtesy of Trevor Green

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