



21 NORTHUMBERLAND SIMONSHAW & LORDENSHAW'S FORT

▶ Distance: 7 miles/11.1km ▶ Time: 3½ hours ▶ Grade: Moderate

SEE
FEATURE
ON PAGE 34

Crossing Old Stell Crag
on the Simonside Hills.



PHOTO: TOM BAILEY



CHOSEN BY...

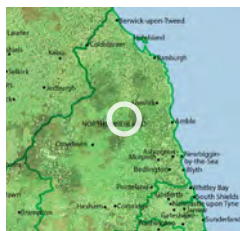
PHILIP THOMAS

Ranged to the south of Rothbury on the edge of Northumberland National Park, the Simonside Hills grant far-reaching views – to the Cheviots in the north and east to the North Sea. Rising over 400m, this ridge held ritual significance for our prehistoric ancestors, who topped its sandstone crags with cairns. They buried their dead on its lower slopes, where they also left behind rock art. Bronze Age ‘cup and ring’ marks are scattered around the later Iron Age hillfort of Lordenshaws, where this circular route begins. Heading west past the site of a medieval fire beacon,

it weaves between wind-sculpted outcrops to the blustery summit of Simonside. Dropping north through pine forestry brings you the medieval tower house at Great Tosson. Field paths and farm tracks meet up with St Oswald’s Way, which leads up between the ancient wonders of Lordenshaws and back to the start.

1 Start Cross road from car park to info sign and follow flagstone footpath uphill, waymarked ‘St Oswald’s Way’ (SOW). After 200m, fork R at signpost (leaving SOW) up to The Beacon (cairn). Continue west, through gate and fork L at junction up to Dove Crag (cairn).

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Free
Lordenshaws car park
two miles south of
Rothbury, ¾-mile off
B6342, grid ref NZ052987.

Is it for me?

Seldom steep; uses good, flagstone hill paths (occasionally rough underfoot), forest tracks, quiet lanes and muddy field paths. Mostly well signposted

Stiles 5

PLANNING

Nearest town

Rothbury

Refreshments

None on route; but plenty of choice in Rothbury

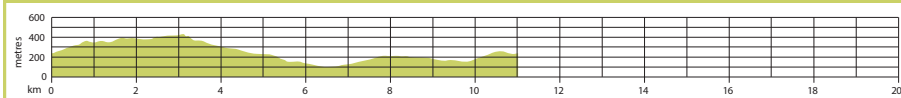
Public toilets None on route. Nearest in Bridge Street, Rothbury.

Public transport

None to start, but buses from Morpeth (Newcastle) serve nearby Rothbury

Maps OS Explorer OL42, Landranger 81

GRADIENT PROFILE



21 NORTHUMBERLAND
SIMONSIDE & LORDENSHAW'S FORT▶ OS Explorer map OL42 ▶ Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop**2** 1 mile/1.6 km

Carry on heading west and at next junction, keep L on flagstone path (permissive currently closed for erosion control). Follow path zigging up and over outcrops of Old Stell Crag to cairn. Drop down to your L and continue west on path to cairn on the true summit of Simonside.

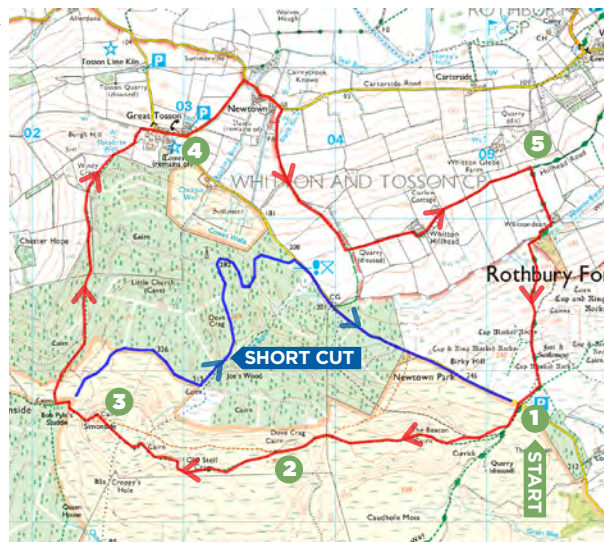
3 2 miles/3.2 km

Follow path from summit which swings L then R down to forestry track. Turn L and after 150m turn R down signposted footpath through heather. Keep straight on at junction through felled ground down to lower forestry track. Cross to resume path through trees. Turn R onto next forest track, then promptly L through gate and follow path along edge of forest to gate/stile. Continue through next gate/stile and keep following edge of forest to signpost at corner. Ignoring the direction arrows, follow path diagonally R over ditch and down through gorse to gate. Follow path down to cross stile and turn R along farm track. At end, continue R along lane through hamlet of Great Tosson (here, you may want to detour R over stile at parking area to see Great Tosson Tower up close).

4 3¼ miles/6km

At junction, fork L down the lane past 'Tosson Glebe'. At the next junction, turn R

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(signed 'Rothbury 2') through hamlet of Newtown. Turn R through gate (signposted 'Newton Park 1'). Follow path along RH edge to path marker at corner, then veer L up past next marker and follow the fence line SSW up to stile. Continue along fence, veering away R to cross next stile but rejoin fence line ahead. Continue up to junction/signpost on brow of hill. Turn L through gate and follow bridleway WNW to Whitton Hillhead. Follow track R around farm and continue WNW for another 1km to next junction.

5 5¼ miles/9.3km

Turn R onto the track (signed footpath 'Lordenshaws Fort 1') rejoining the SOW.

Follow the signed path to the R of Whittondean farmhouse and turn R along track. Shortly, leave the track forking R onto a clearly waymarked path, through the gate and onto the open hill. Follow the path up through a broken wall line and keep R at the fork to continue south up to Lordenshaws Fort. Explore this ancient hillfort, and nearby cup and ring marked rocks, or carry straight on back to car park. **CW**

VIEW THE WALK ON OS MAPS ONLINE:
lfto.com/cwroutes

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING