

Heptonstall Fell Race 2013 – route guide

Heptonstall to Knoll Top

Start on the cobbled road outside the White Lion pub (GR 987 281) and head uphill for 540m to brow of hill.

Turn left onto the public bridleway signposted Lumb Bank. Descend 450m first on tarmac then on unmade track to a hairpin bend just above river. Look out for bridleway sign – Colden Clough in woods on right (GR 977 283).

Turn right to follow the bridleway into the woods. After 100m fork left down hill alongside chimney. After 150m follow the narrow path along retaining walls of mill ponds to steps (Caution: drop).

Climb steps to the way-marked junction, turn left and climb steeply to the next junction of paths; 2012 ROUTE CHANGE; do NOT go straight ahead into the old, leaf filled, quarry as in 2011 race. We have changed the route to avoid bottle necks.

The updated route takes a hairpin turn right, head up-hill, along a wide, stony, bridleway for around 50m, before turning sharp left, on a second hairpin turn that ascends to the tree line where the bridleway appears to be blocked by a stone wall. (this will be the site of a large temporary stile on race day). Go thru the small wooden gate into field. Head half-right, up the field to the Calderdale Way, to reach the gate into the next field. Pass thru the gate. Don't follow the Calderdale Way beyond the gate. Instead turn immediately right, heading up hill, following the wall to the top of the field. Go thru the step stile in wall onto farm track. Turn left and after 50m (Pinfold Top) turn right thru the gate and into the field. Go straight uphill, following wall along a grassy track thru 2 fields to the gate at top next to the stone cottages of Knoll Top (GR 971 288).

Knoll Top to Hot Stones Hill

Go thru gate and across the road (Caution: traffic). Head slightly right to find the rough track by garages. Straight ahead for 20m and straight ahead again crossing farm track ignoring the first footpath sign to Heptonstall Moor.

Follow the wall for 50m across the top of Popples Common to wall corner just past bench, keeping wall to left.

Turn left at footpath sign (for Heptonstall Moor) at junction of 4 paths (GR 973 289).

Follow level path thru gorse and then heather for 600m and go thru the wooden gate (GR 967 294). Turn left and climb steeply up hillside, following telegraph poles, alongside barbed wire then wall, crossing the Pennine Way, and up to brow of Hot Stones Hill (GR 966 290). Now follow the stone wall NW for 400m to Checkpoint 1 at the wall corner and a junction of 5 paths (GR 963 293).

Hot Stones Hill to Standing Stone Hill (GR9535430191 CP at Standing Stone)

This bit is unflagged so you're on your own – just follow a north-westerly bearing for about 2km across the bog and you should find Checkpoint 2 by the standing stone (GR 954 303). Have fun.

TOP TIP; try this; its not a direct line, but it makes the most of indistinct sheep trods through the tussocks and heather; Continue straight ahead onto the moor following an unmarked sunken path/ditch, down hill for around 150m; keep looking to your left for a shallow drainage ditch crossing the path, perpendicular to ditch you are running through.

Depending on how many runners have passed-by recently there should be a feint trod heading off left (North West) onto the moor. Next to this ditch there is a trod. Turn left and follow this trod as it weaves through the tussocks.

Warning; you are now entering an area where sections of the trod may disappear. You should be prepared to navigate across a 1-2km section of pathless moor, and may need to rely on a map/compass in poor visibility. On race day there should be few problems for any but the lead runners.

Despite its almost invisible line eventually disappearing, the trod is usually distinct enough to take you at least 100-200m NW, towards Standing Stone Hill 9535430191. If you lose the trod after this point you should aim to keep heading on the same bearing, first through tussocks in the lowest area, then through heather as you start the ascent of Standing Stone Hill. If the weather is clear you should be able to make out the 1.5m high standing stone itself (CP2) now only 1km away, NW, on the horizon. If you have sighted the standing stone, you may see a gap in the heather appearing as a long, yellow, line of grass, apparently offering a route to the stone. This ditch does indeed offer a fairly decent route. Try to reach the ditch-line as you make your ascent; there are faint trods through and to the left of the ditch that will take you direct to CP2 and the Standing Stone.

But, if the pathless wilderness isn't for you, a longer route on paths may be just as quick. Try this: Continue straight ahead onto moor following an unmarked sunken path which soon bears right, descending 500m to a walled corner on the Pennine Way at Green Hill (GR 963 298). Turn left to follow the Pennine Way gradually up hill, then over 2 flagstone bog-crossings. 50m after the 2nd flagstone bog-crossing, turn left, off the newly flagged Pennine Way, to hopefully find a very faint sheep trod hidden between tussocks. It might only become obvious 2 or 3m off the main Pennine Way. Once you have located the trod, wind uphill thru tussocks and heather. The trod first winds slightly to right then curves left, climbing to skyline to end on the moorland plateau of Standing Stone Hill. Fork right (West) across open moor for 50m to Checkpoint 2 at the standing stone (GR 954 303).

Standing Stone Hill to Blake Dean

The trig point itself (GR 951 303) is 100m North West of the standing stone following another faint trod. From the trig point head ENE on wider path descending for around 500m to the Pennine Way near a marshy pond.

Continue the descent straight ahead, crossing the Pennine Way onto faint path, hidden amongst tussocks at times, on same bearing 200m to waymarker and gate in wall (GR 959 305).

Pass thru gate straight ahead on grassy path/track alongside wall, descending for 700m to hit concrete track. Cross track continue straight ahead on steep grass and rock descent 200m to stile in wall. Over stile onto tarmac road (Caution: traffic).

Blake Dean to Greave Height

Turn left along the road, over the bridge and steeply up to the hairpin bend. Leave the road by climbing a stile on the left. You now need to climb the escarpment so follow the path for 10m before taking a sharp right turn which heads up thru the crags.

Once on the flat field at the top, head WNW up the field following the line of the wall to a step stile (GR 956 314).

Cross the road (Caution: traffic) and head up the farm track towards Ridge Nook (GR 956 315).

Leave the track when it turns right by climbing the wooden stile which leads you straight ahead across a couple of fields with the wall to your right.

When the wall ends maintain the same line towards a step stile (rather than the 5-bar gate).

Head NNE across the boggy field to yet another slippery wooden stile. Now aim northwards towards the left-hand end of that clump of deciduous trees. Over the stile (GR 954 326), straight over the first track and left up the second to the junction. Turn right

along the reservoir road which has a footpath sign pointing towards Top Withens on the Pennine Way (GR 954 326).

Do not follow the Pennine Way or the asphalt road; instead turn left into and across the ditch next to the road. You are now confronted by a pathless field of grass, reeds, and bog. Look at the plantation of trees. Aim to reach the far corner of the plantation /deciduous trees, 200m North, following the line of telegraph poles. There is no path but after 20m you will hit the remains of a dry-stone wall hidden amongst shoulder high bog grasses and reeds. Stick to the left of this wall. After a few paces of potentially knee-deep bog, the reeds and grass can be trodden down to keep your feet drier than pampers-baby's bottom.

The ground quickly gets firmer as you ascend on the same bearing, beyond the plantation to reach a stone jeep track. Cross this track and run uphill across open grass for 100m to where you re-meet the jeep track at a vertical railway sleeper. Stay on the gently climbing track for about 400m and take the right fork. Stay on this for about 400m until it stops being so perfectly straight. At the kink take a minor grassy Land Rover track up to the right. The track eventually peters out but you don't power on remorselessly on the same line until you reach the wall at the top where you should find Checkpoint 3 (GR9540833912)

Greave Height to Walshaw

Turn right and follow a path, vague at first which swoops downhill for about 800m. When the wall ends and the fence starts turn left between the two and follow the path across the stream and down and round the hillside where it becomes a track.

After a couple of hundred metres aim to leave the track and hurtle downhill across rough ground to the reservoir road just before The Lodge (GR 963 335). Over the cattle grid, past the house and turn left to go across the dam to (GR 965 333). Turn left at the end and follow the track to the 5-bar gate.

Thru the gate the track wends its way up hill past a brick shack and later a stone hut eventually taking you onto the top of Wadsworth Moor and the high point of the route – geographically if not spiritually.

Stay on the track as it descends to a gate (GR 975 321). Thru this, down the track to another gate, follow the track round to the right and another gate.

Head left from here down hill towards the trees and into the hamlet of Walshaw (GR 974 313). THIS MAY WELL BE A CHECK POINT – SEE RACE RULES FOR ADVICE

Walshaw to Lady Royd Farm

Head towards the green wooden gates and then head left across the green 'lawn' with its white painted stones.

Over the stile with its yellow and green footpath sign. Turn right and go thru the wooden gate by the flagpole and have a quick butchers at the view.

From here it's straight South across the middle of the field down the hill to the wall corner. Keep the wall on your left and continue steeply down to a little wooden gate where the path heads into the trees. Turn briefly left and then sharply right descending the narrow, slippery path down towards a track. Briefly left onto the track to cross the stream and then immediately right to follow a path down to the river. Take the footbridge over Hebden Water and turn left following a well-used path downstream for about 300m to another footbridge. THIS MAY WELL BE A CHECK POINT – SEE RACE RULES FOR ADVICE

WARNING AT TIME OF WRITING THIS BRIDGE HAD BEEN SWEEP AWAY IN FLOODING; The race organisers have enjoyed wading across immediately up stream of the ruined bridge. This may well become an additional feature of the race. If you do not fancy wading knee deep across Hebden Water, there is another bridge less than 100m down stream, which is easily reached via an easy scramble along the rocks that make up the river bank. This may add 2-3 minutes to your overall time.

Once over the river (by the ruined wooden bridge) scramble up the steep bank, into the woods, on a minor path which reaches a forest track.

Turn right to join another track which heads South.

The track goes past Hardcastle Craggs on your right and then a clearing with a circle of wooden benches on your left (GR 973 303).

About 30m after the benches take a faint path off to the left which heads uphill, into the trees and on to a stone staircase. They are easy to miss but once you've found them climb them like a hobbit carrying a ring. The steps take you up thru the trees to a wooden stile in the field corner.

Over the stile the path heads up between two low stone walls to a wooden stile which leads onto a track. Turn left and then immediately right on the farm track that leads up between the buildings of Lady Royd Farm (GR 975 303).

Lady Royd Farm to Turn Hill

Turn right after the last farm building on the right, thru a 5-bar gate and straight on past the ruin on your left.

After the building head diagonally up to your left over a gap in the wall to a precarious wooden stile over the fence.

Head ESE up hill and across the next field looking for another stile which is halfway along the top boundary of the field. The stile is next to a stone gate post. Uphill from here heading East to the far corner of the field and over the stile. Follow the wall on your right until it ends and then head out NE still climbing and following vague line of a ditch.

Paths here are somewhat indistinct but as long as you're going uphill you should be doing fine.

When things flatten out a little look NE and you should see the small mound of Turn Hill in front of you (GR9813030572) THIS MAY WELL BE A CHECK POINT – SEE RACE RULES FOR ADVICE

Turn Hill to Shackleton Knoll

Once at the top of Turn Hill turn left and head WNW downhill for 200m to a waymarked stile over a barbed wire

fence. Continue downhill thru reedy fields a further 500m to stile over wall onto walled track. Turn right along track and follow to Walshaw hamlet (GR 974 313).

At barn on left turn right through 5 bar gate (bridleway sign points to Crimsworth Dean) onto a track heading NE.

Follow it through gate after 250m and continue on well defined track uphill close to wall on left for 600m. Turn left through gate in wall on left. Now leave the track and go NE uphill 200m to Shackleton Knoll (GR9845431464). THIS MAY WELL BE A CHECK POINT – SEE RACE RULES FOR ADVICE

Shackleton Knoll to New Bridge

From the knoll turn right SE and head down 200m from the knoll to a gate. Thru the gate head 200m down the walled track to gate with a derelict farm on left (Nook aka Shit Farm).

Turn right and immediately left down a steep rough unmarked path to the left of the derelict buildings of Sunny Bank.

Here the bridleway continues down between stone walls to the left but on race day head straight thru the gap in the wall downhill across the field to a level well defined footpath that contours across the slope (GR 991 313). Turn right onto this path heading SW with Crimsworth Dean Beck 50m below on the left.

Follow this undulating path for 1km crossing a high stone wall on stile. Continue on the path past the farmhouse on left.

Don't go thru the farm's 5 bar metal gate – instead fork left and follow a path downhill into the woods (GR 987 305).

Go over stile into wood and continue for 100m downhill to stone bridge over beck. Do not cross the bridge.

Instead, follow path through wood slightly uphill, keeping the beck on your left. After 300m reach a gap in the wall ahead with a wooden bar and fencing across it. Fork left down a faint, steep, slippery, barely discernible path for 50m to reach the beck (GR 988 300).

Cross the cobbled sluice outlet with care. Head past bench and over the beck.

Go through metal gateway topped with spikes and bear right along mill pond retaining wall. Take care crossing the gaps.

Follow path along wall for 300m until you come to a large retaining wall presenting you with an apparent dead end.

Turn right thru a narrow gap at end of the barbed wire fence and enter the field (GR 989 296).

Head S across field along well defined path that becomes walled track for 400m until you reach 5 bar metal gate.

Go through gate turn right down walled track 50m to road (WC on right). Turn right onto road 20m over one bridge and then left at the road sign that says "Weak Bridge" (GR 988 290).

New Bridge to Heptonstall

Almost there. Head SW on track, across the weak bridge and then take the path to the right of the house, Cairn Acre. The path wends its way up hill to a tarmac track. Cross over the track, up some steps and onto a muddy path that leads up into the trees.

The path gets ever steeper eventually becoming a staircase that takes you up to the top edge of Hebden Dale where you climb a wooden stile over the fence into the field.

By now you're probably in no state to turn round and admire the view so continue 10m to a wooden step stile in the stone wall and onto the road (Caution: traffic).

RECCE ROUTE FINISH

Cross the road and head down to the left for about 20m to leave the road at another stile by a footpath sign. Follow the path SE thru the gap in a wall to a gateway. Bear right on the track to the 5 bar gate which takes you thru onto a walled track. Follow the track and the line of telegraph poles for 500m and you're back where you started. Well done.

RACE ROUTE FINISH

The last half mile of the route will cross the road 50-100m further up to the right of the last wooden stile– the route will then enter private fields, ascending towards the race car park, where runners will finally descend to the finish field. We'll give precise details on race day and this section will be well flagged.