

The Elizabeth Thompson Walk

Elizabeth Thompson was a midwife practising in and around Kendal in the mid- to late 17th century. A diary, kept from 1669 to shortly before her death in 1675, lists the births she attended and the places where those births took place. The main walk will visit some of those sites, but you may also like to stroll around the parts of Kendal where Elizabeth lived and worked, and some information for this is included after the main walk.

Elizabeth's diary, "The Diary of a Kendal Midwife", can be obtained from www.cumbria.gov.uk/archives/onlineshop/

This circular walk is routed around some of the outlying places to the west of Kendal where Elizabeth Thompson attended births. A couple of the houses are still standing and lived in, and these will be pointed out in the text. The walk includes ancient tracks, woodland and forest, farmland and hamlets. It has stunning views especially at the beginning and end of the walk

Length of walk: 9.5 km (6 miles)

Time to complete walk: 2½ hours

Total ascent: 300 metres (1,000 feet)

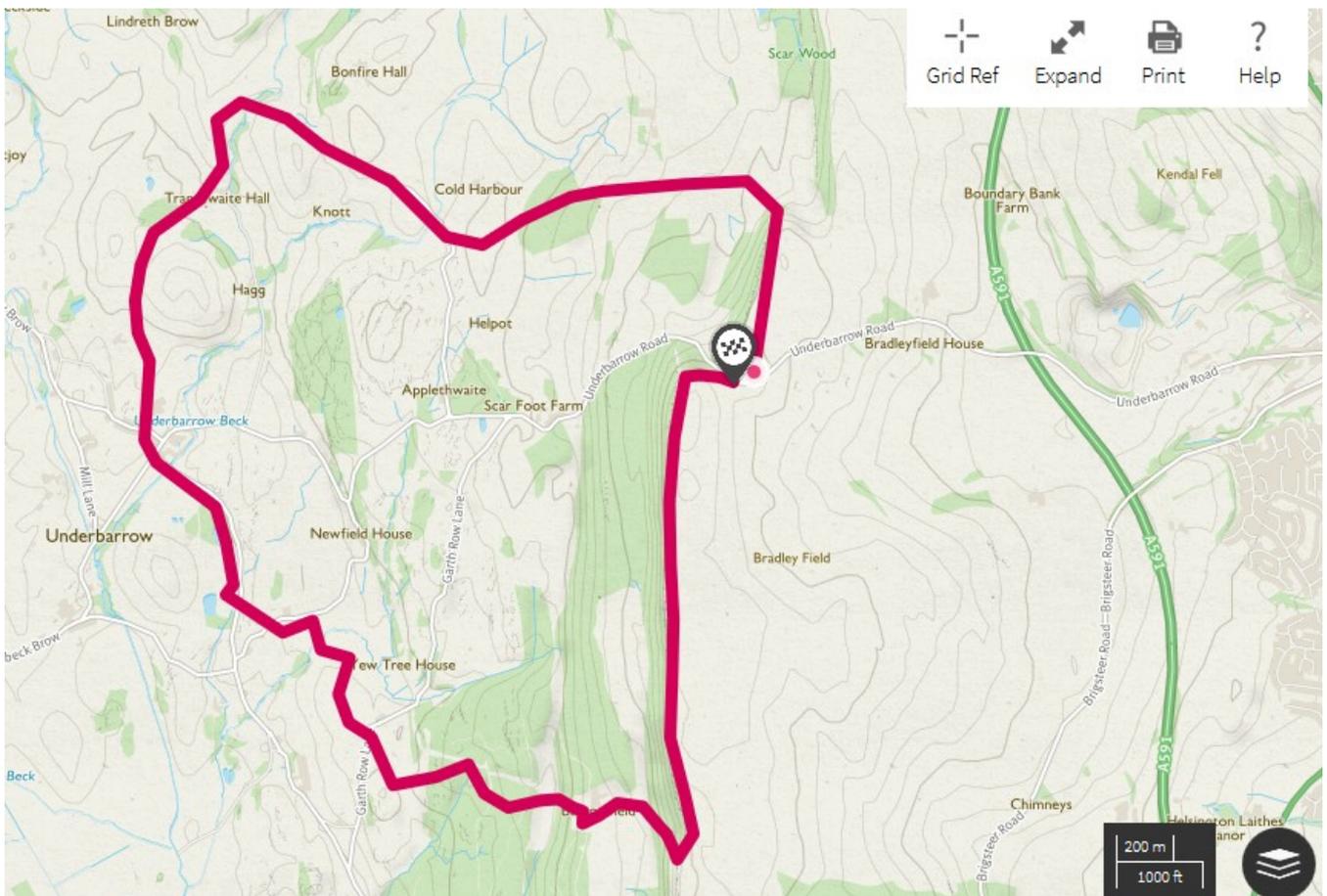
Terrain: generally firm and easy-going, though some muddy patches on lower ground.

Difficulty: mainly easy though ascent of Scout Scar is moderately steep.

Refreshments on route: The Black Labrador Inn at Underbarrow (approximately halfway). <http://theblacklabrador.co.uk/>

Maps:

Ordnance Survey Explorer OL7 The English Lakes: South-Eastern Area Ordnance Survey Landranger 97 Kendal to Morecambe





The view looking north-west from Gamblesmire Lane

To reach the starting point:

Go north along Highgate (the main road through central Kendal) and turn left at The Town Hall (its distinctive clocktower is on your right) up Allhallows Lane. Continue straight ahead up the hill on steep Beast Banks, and follow the sign for Underbarrow, again straight ahead, onto Greenside.

Continue over the bridge over the bypass (the A591) and about 300 metres past this bridge on your left you will pass Bradleyfield House farm with Bradleyfield farmstead across three fields to the south. These farms were well-known by Elizabeth who attended at least 5 births at one or other place.

Continue up the hill and, immediately before you reach the brow, you will see a car park on your right (Car Park for Scout Scar). Grid reference SD489925.

Births at Bradleyfield			
Date of birth	Time	Baby	Father
22 nd April 1669	2 to 3am	Margaret	John Ronson
20 th September 1669	9am	Margaret	Nicholas Fisher
27 th February 1672	10pm	Anne	Nicholas Fisher
4 th September 1672	2pm	Henry	John Rowlandson
28 th January 1674	1am	Nicholas	Nicholas Fisher

1. Scout Scar car park to The Black Labrador Inn at Underbarrow.

- Leave the car park by the path through the woods to the right of the entrance. When you reach the mast, **turn left** along the path behind it and pass through a gate signposted to Cunswick Fell.
- Cross grassland, following a line of telephone poles, until you reach a track crossing the path. **Turn left** along this track, which is Gamblesmire Lane, to enjoy fine views of the land around Crook and beyond. Pass a lime kiln on your right before heading downhill along this clear ancient trackway. As Gamblesmire Lane straightens, there are fine views across to the the Scafell Range and [briefly] Great Gable.
- Traverse a small wood - the stretch after the wood can be muddy even during dry weather.
- On reaching the tarmac lane, **turn right** and walk along the hedged lane for 300 metres until you reach the entrance to Knott Farm.
- Continue **straight ahead** on the narrow public bridleway between two hedges for 450 metres until you emerge on another track, and **turn left**.
- After crossing a stream, **turn left** along a non-signed track, which is a public footpath, towards the farm (ignore the signed footpath taking you through a gate on the hill above the stream).
- Go over the step stile on the right of the barn and pass in front of the farmhouse, Tranthwaite Hall. Elizabeth attended the birth of Janet, the daughter of a gentleman farmer, Randole Baitman, on Monday 15th June 1674 at 4am in this house, where (in 2018) young children still live.
- Take the left-hand gate of the two metal gates, and walk up the field to the right of the coppice to pass over a stile at the top left of this field.
- Traverse the next field to the opposite right corner, pass through a gate and **turn left** onto the track.
- As the settlement of Underbarrow and the farm gate for Nook Farm comes into view ahead, take a wooden gate through the hedge on your left (ignore the gate directly above on the left just before this), and head across the field to a gate in the right-hand fence. Go towards the metal gate but take the footpath through a wooden gate to its left.
- Continue to yet another gate and into the farmyard, walking through this to emerge on the road at a telephone box.
- **Turn left** to arrive at The Black Labrador.

Births in Underbarrow

Date of birth	Time	Baby	Father	House
24 th January 1673	11pm	Elizabeth	Henry Harbart	Hollinstall
18 th February 1673	Not given	Girl ?stillborn	Thomas Whalley	Crag
5 th December 1673	4pm	Jane	Will Garnett	Honeybee Yeat
12 th February 1674	2pm	Isabel	Thomas Whalley	Crag
4 th September 1674	7pm	Miles	Miles Borrow	Not stated

2. The Black Labrador Inn to Scout Scar car park.

- On emerging from the pub, turn left and left again onto the lane signposted to Brigsteer and follow this uphill for 600 metres, until a house and a garage on the hill to your left are seen. Take the signed footpath on your left and follow the house driveway to the road and turn left.
- 100 metres after you pass Tullythwaite House on your left, take the signed footpath on the right across farmland.
- Cross a stone bridge and a stone step stile in the wall ahead.
- Traverse the next field to the top right and through a wooden gate.
- Go across the next field heading towards and behind the small stone barn, through a gate and on to the road, where you turn left.
- Almost immediately turn right along a footpath signed to Scout Scar, passing to the right of some dwellings. At the field boundary, this path turns sharply left (signed Scout Scar), crosses the field and enters a forest.
- Take the forest path heading uphill until you reach a clearing with a track to your right. Turn right along this track and the path soon leaves it again on the left.
- Continue on this forest path, crossing a field and continuing through more woodland until you emerge at Barrowfield Farm. Keep to the right (south) of the farm and take the track straight ahead heading uphill towards Scout Scar.
- The path enters woodland and climbs steeply to the top of the hill and a large cairn. Turn left and walk along the top of the scar on a broad clear track northwards for 1.7 km. There are fine views of the The Old Man of Coniston range, the Scafell range, and the central fells including Fairfield and High Street. The view opens eventually to include the eastern fells. Towards the end of this section there is a shelter or viewpoint, which was built in 1912 as a memorial to George the Fifth.
- Continue on the path until, passing through some shrub, you reach the road and the car park.

Exploring Elizabeth Thompson's Kendal

Elizabeth Thompson lived on Highgate which is the main route through Kendal to the south of the Town Hall. North of the Town Hall is Stricklandgate, a continuation of Highgate. Both roads, but especially Highgate, have many yards on either side of the main thoroughfare, and it is probably in these that many of the births listed in her diary probably took place.

Finkle Street is on the right of Stricklandgate just beyond the Town Hall and runs into Stramongate. These are also areas in which Elizabeth attended births.

On the opposite side of the road from the Town Hall is Allhallows Lane which leads up to the neighbourhood of Fellside and Elizabeth also attended many births in this area.

A map of Kendal showing the places outlined above can be downloaded from https://visit-kendal.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Kendal_Leaflets_Trails_Web.pdf



Barrowfield Farm from the path leading up to Scout Scar