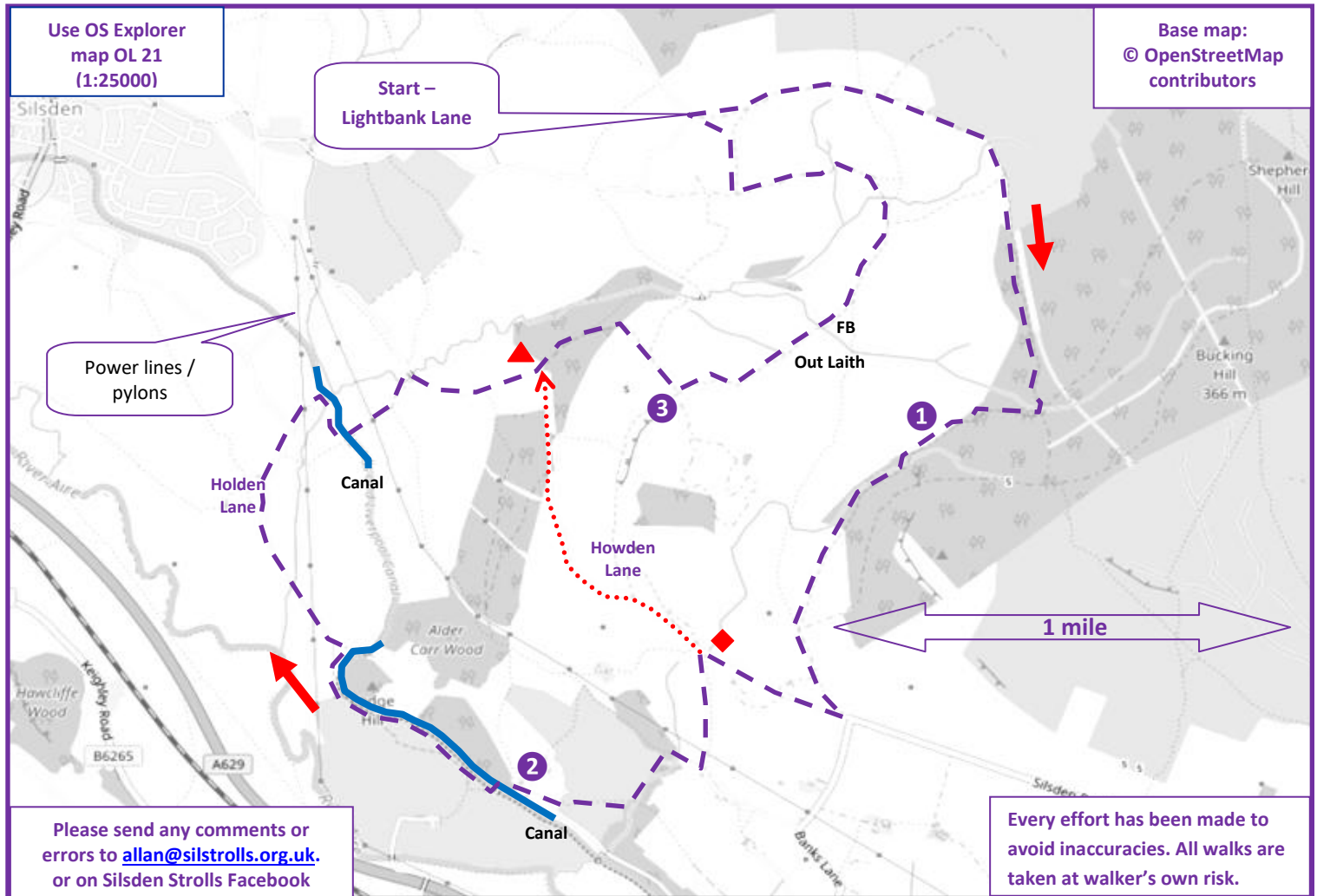


## The Harry Tillotson Silsden Stride 3

7.4 miles. A visit to the woods and their aftermath; increasingly superb views of the Aire Valley; poetry stones; strolling on the canal towpath; a phantom golf course – all this and more, with almost no road walking. The peace of Black Pots and the puttering of narrowboat traffic. Generally acceptable going underfoot.

Fewer stiles than on other Strides! Water, hats and sun cream in the hot times, and sturdy boots always. Leave all gates as you find them.



Park on small grass area by gates at top of Brunthwaite Lane. Pass through these, climb left up slope to gate, then follow track ahead to Black Pots farm  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile ahead, passing Doubler Stones and Doubler farm en route. Go through gate at Black Pots and climb slope to woods, where you plunge in, following obvious track. Exit on to a broad track, and turn immediately right, back into wood. You soon leave trees again, to be confronted by evidence of much felling and planting to your left, but with a now much opened view across to Silsden and Airedale, a view which steadily broadens as you descend. Stay to admire and read the Stanza Stones, ① which also benefit hugely from having trees' former lowering presence now removed.

A gate leads you down to another close to TV relay mast, where you follow track left all way down, ignoring tempting stile in corner, to gain Silsden Road. Right, then after 300 yards take stile at nearer of two footpath signs. (◆ For shorter  $5\frac{1}{2}$  mile walk keep ahead on Holden Lane till you reach large wrought iron gates ▲). Drop diagonally left across three more stiles on this line. Continue dropping right, to reach outbuildings and gate; then, with your back to gate, walk ahead keeping wall on left, to drop to small metal gate on edge of trees. *The path proper continues ahead through overgrowth to ladder stile where it drops left even more obscurely, following wall to arrive by one of the greens.* On other hand, literally a few paces after gate, path divides, both arms pretty

obscure, and you need to drop left to immediately enter top of former golf course. Go downhill, following wood's edge and occasional white boundary posts.

At bottom follow round right, and at once drop left under single power line to track. Right, and follow this to pass a bouldered-off carpark and boarded up clubhouse, ② where track on left takes you over canal. Turn right and follow towpath for just shy of ½ mile. (*Keep an eye open for heron who frequents opposite canal edge where large field replaces trees*). Just after corrugated reinforcement of canal bank take the stile just before the accommodation bridge and drop down the track to the farm gate where you turn right to immediately exit. Follow Holden Lane for ½ mile. Next stile is well hidden in bushes on right on l/h bend. Cross it, (you're close to a pylon), and go left along wall to stile at canal. Right, along towpath, to Holden Swing Bridge. Pass over this, then climb to Howden Park farm, passing through its yard to reach Holden Lane.

Turn right and climb steep hill, keeping an eye and ear open for traffic. After ⅓ mile, where road bends right, go through impressive iron bridle gate next to impressive iron limousine gates which head impressive bridle way. ▲ Ahead through gate and, ignoring tempting gate on left, ahead to reach metal gate after r/h building. Follow bridle path up to right, through a gate / stile, then climb right, passing a solitary tree, to reach another gate. Follow r/h wall up a long field, pass through a gate and then another on left some 50 yards ahead. ③ Go through and follow track on left, rounding shoulder of hillock, bearing right to gain sight of ruined barn of Out Laith – your goal. Join track and follow it to gate on right. The next marker post is actually some 50 yards this side of ruin, but you may care to make directly for it and its two stiles through tough grass (though it's a bit boggier this way in winter).

From second stile, by barn, walk ahead and down steep slope to cross little bridge over Dirk Hill Syke. (Use a bearing slightly to right of single large tree in middle of wall on opposite hillside.) Go right, over stile immediately on left, and climb diagonally left up steep slope to reach stile / gate in corner. Sharp right and follow field edge to reach Far Ghyll Grange farm.

Pass through gate, and follow track past house to reach a gate on left. Follow obvious track through several more gates to reach a bend at Ghyll Grange farm where a broad path climbs away to right. Follow this, exit at gate and follow l/h wall through meadow back to start.

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