

Furness Haematite Trail (FHT)

Loop 5 - Loop from Askam via Thwaite Flat returning via Roanhead – 7½ miles

Thank you for downloading this guide.

The guide is in 3 sections.

- A map showing the FHT Loop 5 route.
- Walk Instructions - Askam to Thwaite – which follows Section 5 of the full FHT.
- Walk Instructions – Returning from Thwaite Flat to Askam – the Loop 5 return route.



There is a version of these instructions for printing on our [Facebook Group](#) page.

May 2026.

FURNESS HAEMATITE TRAIL



Section 5: Askam to Thwaite Flat

These instructions are for the 4.5 mile Section 5 of the full Furness Haematite Trail, and can also be used in conjunction with the separate 3 mile Section 5 Loop Route instructions to return to Askam from Thwaite Flat.

A map and .gpx of the route is available to download from the Facebook group [Furness Haematite Trail - Maps & Guides](#) or our website, QR code and link on reverse.

Leave the railway station after reading the information boards on the platform and, with the Co-op on your left, walk ahead down Duddon Road to the free car park near the shore revealing lovely views of Black Combe and the Duddon estuary.

NOTE: When the new King Charles III England Coast Path opens, this section of the trail down to Ormsgill in Barrow will change. A date for this is currently unknown. In the meantime, follow these walk instructions.

Enter the car park and go to the information board which mentions iron ore mining to your right. Then, turn to your left and follow the sometimes-narrow path over the cliff top, staying high, heading towards what looks like a bridge in the far distance.

At the Duddon Inshore Rescue Lifeboat Station building take the broad sandy track still heading for the 'bridge'. You are approaching the area on your left where Askam Ironworks was sited and the banking on your left is made up of slag, waste material from the ironmaking process.

Before the 'bridge' turn left up a narrow track and then concrete steps onto Askam Pier.

Today, there are reminders of the town's industrial heritage from street names such as Steel Street and Furnace Street. Askam Pier, which is made from slag (waste) from the ironworks and was used to load iron ore and pig iron onto boats. Askam was established following the discovery of large quantities of iron ore. In 1864 the Furness Iron and Steel Company was set up to smelt iron at Askam. The site of the new works and village was called Ireleth Marsh. The ironworks were situated on a former rabbit warren. After a few years the Company was bought out by the Askam and Mouzell Iron Company but the intended expansion of Askam never happened. The ironworks kept going until 1919 but never managed to lift Askam out of its stalled development.

There is an information board and a gate with warning signs about the pier.

Walk straight inland from the gate and then turn right into Avocet Crescent. Continue round and enter the old terrace of Furnace Place. Continue to the end of Furnace Place and turn left along New Road. The road bends right and reaches a junction with Lots Road.

The Lots shore started out as a large rabbit warren. By 1865, Edward Wakefield purchased 'Chapman's Lots' which included the sand dunes. He bought the land with the purpose of finding iron ore and erecting a mine and ironworks to process the ore. Wakefield also had plans to create a small 'factory town' on the Lots with a church, school and a covered market, as well as housing for his workers and a large public park on the site of the dunes overlooked by large villas.

However, the town was only partially realised. With the ironworks struggling to be efficient and a lengthy court case over the ownership rights of the mine, the Wakefield family sold the Lots to Myles Kennedy of the Roanhead Mines in 1902. During Kennedy's ownership residents had access to the dunes and were allowed to erect 'pens' or small allotments to hold chickens, pigs and horses used in fishing.

In 1942 the Lots Social Club bought the land to guarantee free access for the residents in perpetuity and that, when the tenants of the shore pens became deceased, it had to revert to nature. In 1953 the club was put in trust forming the Askam Village Hall Charity.

Turn right onto Lots Road. Walk on the right-hand side, facing oncoming traffic, all the way to a junction with the busy A595.

On the area to your right as you approach the A595 was where the rail track from the Askam Ironworks and the Askam and Mouzel Tramway carried the ore from the various pits in that area.

Turn right to walk beside the A595 on a safe, tarmac pavement then take the next right passing the Furness Brick Works and its landmark chimney on your right. Note the date of 1845 stamped on the bricks.

The Askam Brick Company has a rich history dating back to its establishment in 1845. It was a family run business that has continued to produce bricks to this day. The company played a significant part in the growth of Askam, with the opening of the Furness Railway station building (mentioned in Section 1 of the trail) in 1868 reflecting the village's development. Today, as Furness Brick and Tile Company Ltd, it produces non-standard,

heritage and bespoke bricks with the use of a coal-fired continuous kiln to fire local clay.

Here, you may see 'private' road signs, but this is a right of way. Go straight ahead along a gravel track and, at a gate, bear slightly right to follow a narrow tarmac road onwards, passing Park Farm.

Just after Park Farm and at a level crossing on your right, can be seen the site of Park Iron Mines. The huge, flooded crater that you can see was created when an iron ore deposit called a 'sop', which often contained several million tons of iron ore, 100s of feet in length breadth and depth was extracted. This vast area of iron when extracted resulted in much subsidence on a grand scale leaving behind a massive crater that you see today.

Follow this undulating road, then go under the A590 viaduct, passing Park South signal box and over the level crossing into Hawthwaite Lane. Take the next left, past a row of terraced cottages.

The row of houses on your left was known as Thwaite Flat Cottages and was tenanted by miners. They were recorded in the 1875 Poor Rate Book as being owned by the Kennedy Brothers of nearby Roanhead Mines

Continue along the road and pause before the entrance to Goldmire Quarry. NOTE: This is a busy working quarry with trucks entering and leaving the site and driving up the road which you will be using.

Goldmire Quarry supplied limestone to Askam Ironworks, an essential ingredient in the ironmaking process.

Also from this viewpoint, in the trees to your left, was the site of Goldmire Iron Mines containing various shafts and a mineral

railway connecting to the nearby Furness Railway. The mine started in 1811 and was abandoned in 1900.

Continue, gradually ascending to the old road running alongside the busy Park Road Turn right, joining Park Road and cross to the pavement opposite descending to the traffic roundabout. Turn left here signed Walney Island and soon, safely cross over the central reservation to Oak Lea Road opposite, signposted for Roanhead.

- Section 5 (main trail) **ends** here.
- Section 5 Loop Route **starts** here.
- Section 6 (main trail) **starts** here

Facilities:

At Askam

- Askam and Shore car park (height barrier)
- Public Transport (Train, and bus 7/X7)
- Toilet adjacent to Platform One café
- Café open (Thurs – Sun)
- Co-op Convenience store

Disclaimer: The publishers of this trail have taken all reasonable steps to ensure the accuracy of the historical information used in this trail. The information has been obtained from sources that are considered to be reliable and presented in good faith and is provided purely for information. The publisher disclaims all liability arising from negligence or otherwise in respect of such information.

Information correct - March 2026

For the latest information, and the most up to date instructions for all Furness Haematite Trail walks please follow this link or scan the QR code.
<https://tinyurl.com/FHT-Section5-1-0>



FURNESS HAEMATITE TRAIL



Section 5 - Loop Route

Return to Askam from Thwaite Flat

The Section 5 Loop Route starts by following the separate instructions for the 4.5 mile Section 5 of the full Furness Haematite Trail from Askam to Thwaite Flat. Then returns using these instructions on a 3 mile Loop Route to Askam from Thwaite Flat.

A map and .gpx of the route is available to download from the Facebook group [Furness Haematite Trail - Maps & Guides](#) or our website, QR code and link on reverse.

After having crossed the A590, walk down Oak Lea Road, and over the railway bridge.

After the bridge, in a field to your right, was the site of Thwaite Flat Iron Mines.

Continue past Oak Lea Farm on the right, past some farm buildings shortly after the farmhouse. Here, you have beautiful views of Black Combe, the Irish Sea and Haverigg sand dunes in the far distance.

Continue, and at a T junction, turn left into Hawthwaite Lane. A few hundred metres ahead a finger post to Sowerby Wood on the left is the continuation of Section 6 of the main trail. However, we continue along this narrowing tarmac lane where there is much evidence of mining activity. If you see a small

pool, it's most likely to be the remains of a flooded pit, often with a visible spoil heap alongside the pool.

As you walk down Hawthwaite Lane, you can see, mostly through the vegetation on the right-hand side, the historic sites of Rita, Kathleen and Violet Pits of Roanhead Iron Mines. As you near Sandscale Cottages and Sandscale Haws, (the end of the lane) on your right you can see a body of water which is undoubtedly the flooded workings of Nigel Pits also belonging to Roanhead Mines.

As you approach the National Trust Sandscale Haws car park, on your right, there are public toilets. There is a max. headroom bar and a charge for this car park although free to NT members.

After the toilets go through a tarmac turning circle for vehicles aiming for a broad sandy bridleway straight ahead. After a 100 metres at an intersection with a black plastic boardwalk, turn right and ascend some steps. You are now on the England Coast Path which will take you over Roanhead Crag to Askam. About 100m further on go over an access track to a gate on your right but keep straight on. The path drops down to a bridge and ascends some steps. Lovely views back to Roanhead and on your left over the estuary and to Black Combe. Through a gate and steps down. Eventually coming to a path going off to the left, keep straight on to two wooden bridges ahead. At a T junction bear left and descend on the path to Black's Pond.

Local stories have it that the pond was formed by the flooding of Woodhead Pit. In 1909 a local woman Jane Black who was thought to be suffering from depression committed suicide in the pond.

As you drop down the path towards the shore, look to your left where you may see a section of tramline built to protect the

mine from the sea. This rail line connected to the Roanhead line and went to the ironworks.

The ECP goes to the left of Black's Pond and bears right into a swamp-like area of trees known as 'carr'.

Wet woodland is characterised by trees such as willows, birches and Alder that thrive in poorly drained or flooded soils. Wet woodland known as 'carr' is often low canopied growing over a ground layer of plants such as royal fern, yellow flag iris and meadowsweet.

Exiting the trees follow the evident grassy path over a small wooden footbridge and, after about 100m, turn right uphill on the broad sandy track aiming for an obvious white house ahead overlooking the estuary.

Turn left to walk in front of the house, continue past a green space and a row of cottages on your right arriving at a T junction. At this point, a narrow path downhill will soon take you to an information board about the Lots Shore Askam and Roanhead.

Return to the T junction. Turn right and, ignoring the first road on the left, take the next left, then keep straight on over a crossroad. Continue past Turnstone Crescent on your left where the road bends slightly to the right and then take the next left. This road eventually becomes Duke Street and is the main street through Askam. Passing a few streets on the left and Lots Road on the right you will see Greenside House on the left.

Greenside House, Duke Street. Stone inset reads 'This stone was laid by Victor C.W. Cavendish Esquire on March 20 1897 and Richard F. Cavendish Esquire, M.P. for North Lonsdale. The significance of why this plaque had been placed on Greenside

House is unknown at the time of writing to the authors of these guides.

The Cavendish's, aka the Dukes of Devonshire were, along with the Dukes of Buccleuch and Queensberry, the major landowners at the top of the pyramid of people involved in the iron ore industry in Furness. Below them were the iron ore owners and Managing Agents employed by the respective royalties of the two dukes. For many of these men and their families, the iron ore industry made them very wealthy but there was always a risk that money could be lost also. Using the pyramid analogy, those who could be at the bottom were, of course, the working-class miners. They too faced risks: unemployment, injury, death, poor housing, poor health etc. Many families had to leave their homelands in search of employment in the burgeoning iron ore industries to make a living, with their families sooner or later joining them.

Much has been documented about those at the top of the pyramid, but historical accounts usually forget to mention the social history of those who made the money for the 'Masters'. If the Furness Haematite Trail has 'wetted' your appetite and wish to read more about the mines and the Masters, a bibliography will eventually be published on our website:

Shortly after, you can see the Askam and Ireleth Community Centre with the ornate vents on the roof.

In 1942 the Lots Social Club bought the land to guarantee free access for the residents in perpetuity and that when the tenants of the shore pens became deceased it had to revert to nature. In 1953 the club was put in trust forming the Askam Village Hall Charity.

Continuing along Duke Street you will come to some shops and the Co-op near the railway Station. Across the road from the Co-op is a lovely little recreation area with a couple of benches celebrating Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, a nice place to rest and wait for your train. Another such place is the quirky little café Platform One and toilet next to the station which is open Thursday to Sunday.

Section 5 Loop Route ends here

Facilities:

At Askam

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FURNESS HAEMATITE TRAIL - LOOP 5 - ASKAM TO THWAITE FLAT AND BACK TO VIA ROANHEAD

