



**Gradients and Particulars  
of Famous Hills which Test  
the Powers and Skill of  
Many Cars and Drivers**

A successful ascent of a notoriously severe hill possesses a charm of its own. A feat of this kind fosters complete confidence in one's car and driving capabilities, whilst the experience necessarily acquired during a tough climb will, without doubt, prove of considerable assistance in the emergency that comes, sooner or later, to every driver of a mechanically-propelled vehicle. Constantly we are asked by correspondents for the gradients of noted acclivities, and for general guidance we give a list of famous British hills, their locality, maximum gradient, and outstanding features.

IT is interesting to compare the drivers of motor cars of some twenty years ago with those of to-day. In earlier times, when performances on the road were limited by the capabilities of cars such as the old Benz, Panhard, and De Dion, drivers were quite satisfied if they were able successfully to surmount the very ordinary gradients to be found on main road routes. Some of even those proved too much for these staunch but lamentably low-powered vehicles. Certainly owners of those pioneer cars did not seek fame by attempting the ascent of freak hills; the gradients ordinarily met with proved sufficiently formidable.

As automobilism developed, attention was concentrated on improving the internal combustion engine, and the transmission system was not neglected, the inevitable result being that the great increase of power delivered at the road wheels enabled cars to climb hills hitherto considered impossible, so that cars are now driven up the most severe gradients that can be found in this country. The data obtained from these tests have proved invaluable to manufacturers of such components as brake linings, etc., and many weak spots in design were revealed, especially in cases where the choice of material had been incorrect. A strenuous hill-climbing test has now become a recognised feature of the ordeal through which all British-made cars are put before being marketed. A list of the most severe gradients used for this purpose in Great Britain appears later on in this article. Wherever possible the condition of the surface of the hills is given, though this necessarily varies from time to time, in some

cases owing to the attention or the neglect of the road authorities concerned.

Car owners themselves very often take a sporting interest in the hill-climbing ability of their cars, as is witnessed by the many competitions of this kind that take place during the summer months. But quite apart from the pride of knowing that one's car has satisfactorily climbed one or other of the notorious single-figure gradients, the motorist cannot but enjoy the pleasing prospect spread out to view from the summits of these hills.

Owners of cars who live in flat districts, and who are unused to severe gradients, should exercise great care in their first attempts at climbing really steep hills. In all cases the complete brake mechanism should be carefully examined, and each brake should be tested separately to ascertain that it is in perfect working order. It is as well to remember that even in these days there are cars which, on gradients of the kind under notice, fail to maintain a constant supply of petrol to the carburetter, especially as the main tank becomes depleted of its contents. On older cars it was often necessary to climb severe hills backwards, as when the gravity petrol tank was located under the seat the level of the carburetter rose above the level of the petrol in the tank. With the introduction of lower bodies, however, tanks became gradually displaced from this position, and in the majority of cases were put at the rear of the chassis. In this position, and with pressure or vacuum feed, there is very little risk of a failure in the fuel supply.

Some Noted British Test Hills.

	Max. Gradient.	Length.		Max. Gradient.	Length.
<b>ALMS HILL</b> , near Henley-on-Thames. Bad surface, two bends. Includes 600 yards of 1-5½. Very greasy in wet weather.	1-3	1,200 yds.	<b>MOORSHOP and MERIVALE</b> , Tavistock-Two-Bridges. Both hills have long pulls of single-figure gradients. Surface usually good.	—	—
<b>ASTON CLINTON</b> , near Tring. A long rise, which includes a right-angle corner and severe left-hand curve.	1-8½	1,400 yds.	<b>MUSWELL HILL</b> , Crouch End, New Southgate. Average gradient 1-12. Surface fair. A convenient hill for Metropolitan riders.	1-9½	793½ yds.
<b>ALDERWASLEY</b> , near Wirksworth.	1-5	1½ miles	<b>MAM RATACHAN</b> , near Glenelg. Average gradient 1-7.	Approx.	—
<b>BARBROOK MILL HILL</b> (Beggar's Roost), near Lynnmouth. Fairly straight, bad surface; rises 343 feet.	1-3.64	906 yards	<b>MYTHOLM RISE</b> , near Todmorden. Includes several acute bends, and a final hairpin. Surface very bad.	1-3	—
<b>BIRDLIP</b> , near Gloucester. No sharp corners, 3 curves. Treacherous surface after rain. Easiest gradient is 1-15.	1-5	1 140	<b>MATLOCK BANK</b> , near Matlock Bath. Fair surface.	1-5	440 yards
<b>BRASTED</b> . Two bends, between which lie the steepest portion. Surface good, neither of the bends severe.	1-5½	½-mile	<b>MONUMENT HILL</b> , Taunton. On Blackdown Hills.	1-5	app. 1 ml.
<b>BWLOCH-Y-GROES</b> , near Pont-y-Pennant. Dinas Mawddwy side. Average gradient 1-7. Rises 1,250 feet.	1-4½	2,660 yds.	<b>NETHERHALL GARDENS</b> , Hampstead. Average gradient 1-18. Worst portion is just before the left-hand turn.	1-7½	760 yards
<b>BLAKE ST.</b> , Sheffield. Rough cobbled-surface. Commences with acute right-angle bend.	1-5	½-mile	<b>NEWHAM HILL</b> , near Daventry. Surface usually bumpy. Hill commences just outside Newnham Village. Steepest portion near summit.	1-6	Approx. ½-mile
<b>BYBER'S HILL</b> (Waterrow), Somerset. Includes one right-angle turn, a bend, 100 yards of 1-7 and a portion of 1-8.	Approx.	—	<b>NAILSWORTH LADDER</b> , near Stroud. Average gradient 1-3½. First portion very steep. Bad surface.	1-2½	Approx. 300 yds.
<b>BUTTERMERE HAUSE</b> , near Crummock Water, Keswick. Includes several corners with gradients of 1-4½. Rises 700 feet.	1-3½	Approx. 1½ miles	<b>NAZE HILL</b> , near Todmorden. Very bad surface, with deep ruts. First bend is a severe hairpin. A dangerous hill.	1-2½	—
<b>BAKEWELL LANE</b> , near Bakewell.	1-5	½-mile	<b>OLD WYCHE</b> , near Malvern. The old road leading up to the Wyche Cutting. A sharp bend to the right at the top.	1-3	Approx. 880 yds.
<b>CUDHAM HILL</b> (from Downe). Average gradient, 1-6.8. One of the most severe hills near London. Good surface.	1-4.1	233 yards	<b>OXENFELL</b> , Coniston Valley. Includes two hidden corners. Steepest near the top.	1-5	Approx. ½-mile
<b>CUDHAM CHURCH HILL</b> . Average gradient about 1-8. Includes one nasty bend on steepest portion.	1-5.34	416½ yds.	<b>OLD HORSE SHOE FALLS PASS</b> , N. Wales. Average gradient 1-10. Numerous cross gulleys. Bad surface.	1-4.1	1 mile
<b>COUNTISBURY</b> , Lynnmouth. Rises 900 feet; no dangerous corners. Surface usually bad. Steepest near bottom.	1-5½	2 miles	<b>PETERSHAM HILL</b> , Richmond. Average gradient 1-15. Good surface, easy bends.	1-9½	600 yds.
<b>CAERPHELLY</b> , near Caerphilly. Rises 387 feet. Average gradient, 1-8.6.	1-6.2	1,194 yds.	<b>PORLOCK</b> , Somerset. Road rises 1,200 feet. Surface very bad. Includes two bad corners and one bend.	1-4	Approx. 2½ miles
<b>CREECH HILL</b> , near Bournemouth. Fairly straight hill with good surface.	1-7	½-mile	<b>PINK HILL</b> , near Kop, Chiltern Range.	1-5	½-mile
<b>CROSSDALE</b> , near Ennerdale. Includes four bends.	1-4	1 mile	<b>PEN-Y-BALL</b> , Holywell, Flintshire. Average gradient 1-6.	—	½-mile
<b>CORFE HILL</b> , Somerset.	1-3	1 mile	<b>PEAT HILL</b> , Westgate-in-Weardale. Hill is 27 miles from Durham. Excellent surface; no really bad bends.	1-4	—
<b>CRAWLEYSIDE</b> , near Stanhope.	1-8	—	<b>PARK HEAD</b> , near Kendal. Rises 500 feet. Average about 1-10.	—	Approx. 1 mile
<b>COPPIC HILL</b> , near Accrington. Portions of 1-3.9.	1-2.6	400 yards	<b>RIVER HILL</b> , Sevenoaks. Average gradient 1-13.4. Good road. Easy curves.	1-9.8	1,444 yds.
<b>COLLIER'S HILL</b> , near Broomfield (Taunton).	1-5½	—	<b>RED BANK</b> , near Ambleside. Good surface and easy corners. Steepest in the middle section.	1-3½	880 yards
<b>CARMICHAEL CHURCH HILL</b> .	1-6	—	<b>RANZE HILL</b> , near Dore. Includes an S-bend, with steepest portion near top.	Approx.	—
<b>CREW HILL</b> , near Bristol.	1-7	½-mile	<b>RISING SUN</b> (Gambles Lane), near Cheltenham. Steepest portion at top. Surface poor, several gulleys running across road.	1-4	480 yds.
<b>CLAPTON-IN-GORDANO</b> (Bristol Club). A fairly straight hill with an average gradient of 1-7.22.	—	½-mile	<b>SAINTBURY</b> , Broadway. Average gradient 1-11.9. Moderate surface.	1-6.1	2,341½ yds.
<b>COLD FELL</b> , near Gosforth (Lake District). Good surface, but about fifty gulleys cut across the road.	Approx.	—	<b>STONELEIGH</b> (Motslow Hill), Coventry. Approached by right-angle turn. A Coventry test hill.	1-9.34	452½ yds.
<b>CROSSDALE HILL</b> , near Ennerdale. Includes five turns.	1-5	—	<b>SUDELEY</b> , near Winchcombe. Surface poor and often greasy. A long hill, starting with an easy gradient. No serious corners.	1-5	1,200 yds.
<b>COWDALE LANE</b> , near Buxton. Treacherous surface after rain. Two bad corners.	1-4	—	<b>SUNRISING</b> , Stratford-on-Avon—Banbury. Two sharp corners and a curve. Surface good. Steepest portion near top.	1-6.43	1,093½ yds.
<b>CURBAR</b> , Sheffield District. Averages 1-6; rather rough surface.	1-5	1 mile	<b>SUTTON BANK</b> , Thirsk. One sharp bend. A famous Yorkshire test hill.	1-3.9	1,600 yds.
<b>DASHWOOD</b> (High Wycombe). Average gradient 1-16. Good surface, and quite straight; 352 yards of max. gradient.	1-10.9	1,180 yds.	<b>SWAIN'S LANE</b> , N. London. Average gradient 1-12.	1-6½	873½ yds.
<b>DUNMAIL RAISE</b> , near Ambleside. A straightforward hill, with good surface.	1-7	1 mile	<b>SUNDON HILL</b> , near Barton-in-the-Clay.	1-8	—
<b>DACRE BANK</b> , Ullswater. Rises 400 feet, with steepest portion at top. Good surface.	1-4	¾-mile	<b>STANTFORD'S HILL</b> , Torquay.	1-4	—
<b>EDGE HILL</b> , Kineton. Rises 360 feet. Three bends, the first being the most severe. Good surface.	1-7	¾-mile	<b>SLACK HILL</b> , near Chesterfield. Includes two bends.	Approx.	Approx. 1 mile
<b>FARLOW BANK</b> . One hairpin corner to left; two bad corners. Road surface usually loose.	1-5	¾-mile	<b>STONEY BROW</b> , Manchester.	1-7	—
<b>FOOLSTEP</b> , near Ambleside. A short hill. Includes sharp double turn near top, which is the steepest portion.	1-3½	220 yds.	<b>STATION HILL</b> , Coniston. Includes many corners. Bad surface.	1-3½	—
<b>GREENHOW HILL</b> , Pateley Bridge, Yorks. Rises 1,000 feet. Two bad corners on steep part. Surface good when dry.	1-5.4	2½ miles	<b>STR WILLIAM</b> , near Grindleyford, Sheffield. A tricky ascent. Surface rough. Two hundred yards of maximum gradient.	1-4½	Approx. 2 miles
<b>GREEN HILL</b> , near Wirksworth (Sheffield). Bad surface when wet.	1-4	—	<b>STILE COP</b> , near Rugeley. One big sweep, nearly straight.	Approx.	¾-mile
<b>GUMMER'S HOW</b> , near Windermere. A straightforward hill. Rises 550 feet. Lumpy surface.	1-4½	1 mile	<b>SNAKE HILL</b> , Glossop. Includes every variety of surface, and a hairpin bend.	1-4	1 mile
<b>HOLNE CHASE</b> , Dartmoor. Road rises 850 feet. Surface fairly good; near Holne Bridge an acute right-handed turn with max. gradient.	1-3½	2 miles	<b>TYSOE HILL</b> , on Edge Hill Range. Rather twisty, with fair surface, but greasy in bad weather.	Approx.	Approx. ¾-mile
<b>HIGH FELL</b> , near Carlisle.	1-5	—	<b>TROW HILL</b> , Sidford. Average gradient 1-8.	1-5½	1 mile
<b>HOLMSIDE HILL</b> , Durham. Includes several bad corners. Rough surface. Steepest at bottom.	Approx.	Approx. 1 mile	<b>TOWTOP</b> . Includes a series of 12 sharp corners and several portions of 1-3½; 9th corner is worst.	1-3½	1,160 yds.
<b>HONISTER PASS</b> , Lake District. Buttermere side. Includes many portions of 1-4½. Bad surface.	1-3½	1½ miles	<b>TRESCOMBE HILL</b> , near Taunton. Road rises 450 feet. On the Quantock Range.	1-6	1,000 yds.
<b>HARD KNOTT PASS</b> , Lake District. Includes twelve hairpin bends. Very bad surface.	1-3½	—	<b>TELEGRAPH HILL</b> , on Teignmouth Road.	1-7½	—
<b>HIGHER LATH HILL</b> , near Ulverston. Road twists considerably, and includes a difficult left turn. Middle portion is steepest.	1-3½	—	<b>TITSEY HILL</b> , Godstone.	1-6	—
<b>JAWBONES</b> , Dartmouth. Starts with a right-angle turn and a gradient of 1-8, increasing to maximum, and finishing with another sharp turn to right.	Approx.	—	<b>THWAITE HEAD</b> , near Windermere.	1-4½	—
<b>JACOB'S LADDER</b> , near Hathersage. A narrow winding climb with moderate surface.	1-4.5	350 yards	<b>UNDERWOOD HILL</b> , Lake District. Includes three sharp turns.	1-4½	1½ miles
<b>KOP HILL</b> , Princes Risboro'. No bad corners, surface fair, but rather loose. Steepest part near summit.	Approx.	Approx. ¾-mile	<b>UP-PACK HILL</b> , near S. Harting (Sussex).	1-6	—
<b>KILN PARK BROW</b> , near Broughton-in-Furness. A long climb, which includes many turns with 1-4½ gradient. Good surface.	1-5	—	<b>VALE ST.</b> , Bristol. A side street near the river. Includes two bends.	1-2.44	480 yards
<b>KIRKBY MOOR HILL</b> , near Ulverston. Includes long stretches of 1-4½ and 1-5 gradients. Rises nearly 900 feet. Good surface.	1-4½	—	<b>WESTERHAM HILL</b> . Average gradient 1-13.4. One sharp bend to left. Good surface.	1-7.8	1,764½ yds.
<b>KIRKSTONE PASS</b> , near Ambleside. Ullswater side. A long steady climb. Steepest portion near the top.	1-4	2 miles	<b>WILLERSEY HILL</b> , Broadway. Road rises 406.3 feet. One abrupt corner. Very greasy in wet weather. Surface usually poor.	1-5.9	1,206½ yds.
<b>KIRKSTONE PASS</b> , near Ambleside. Ambleside side. Rises 1,300 feet. Surface usually good.	1-4½	2ml. 7fur.	<b>WATERMILLOCK</b> , near Penrith. Three sharp turns on upper portion.	1-4½	Approx. 1½ miles
<b>LYNTON HILL</b> , Lynnmouth. Average gradient 1-6. One of the steepest hills in England. One bad corner near bottom. Surface usually bad.	1-4½	Approx. ½ mile	<b>WEST HILL</b> , Highgate.	1-9	—
<b>LITTONSTACK</b> . Surface very bad. Starts with acute hairpin. Steepest portion at top. Narrow road.	Approx.	Approx. 420 yards	<b>WESTON LANE</b> , near Bath. Includes an S-bend.	1-4.75	¾-mile
<b>LOWER BRAEFIELD</b> , near Sheffield. Includes several stretches of 1-5.	1-3	—	<b>WRYNOSE PASS</b> , Lake District. Includes portions of 1-4. Bad surface; twisty route.	1-3½	2 miles
<b>LITTEN HILL</b> , near Bakewell. A narrow road, but good surface. Mostly 1-6 gradient, but steeper at top.	1-5	—	<b>WATTY SCOUT HILL</b> , near Todmorden.	1-3	—
	1-3	—	<b>WHINLATTER PASS</b> , near Keswick. Rises 720 feet. Has two steep patches in the lower part.	1-5½	2 miles
			<b>YEW TREE HILL</b> , near Coniston Water. Includes portions of 1-4½ and 1-4½.	1-3½	—