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Hareden Fell Circuit – Including Fair Snape Fell and Totridge

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Roadside lay-by at entrance to waterworks at Sykes Nab (SD 632512)
Ordnance Survey map	OL41 Forest of Bowland.
Distance	10.7 Miles
Traffic light rating	 but see below.

Introduction: This is a hard walk! It is not the gradient that makes it so, although there is a knee-grinding descent of a grassy hill towards the end, it is more the nature of the moorland walking on the plateau, where the peaty ground requires endless detours to avoid the worst boggy excesses. I did the walk after a dry spell and there were still horrendous patches. For that reason, it is strongly recommended the walk be avoided after or during wet weather. The plateau is relatively featureless and it would be easy to lose one's sense of direction. For that reason, I have routed this walk to make use of fence lines as a guide. The views make it worth all the aggravation!

Start: The walk starts just west of Dunsop Bridge on the picturesque route through the Trough of Bowland which runs from Newton-in-Bowland to Lancaster. There is roadside parking in a rough lay-by by the entrance to waterworks (SD632512). A sign advises - Langden No unauthorised Vehicles past this point – a United Utilities sign.

Also, a welcome notice at the entrance advises you that you are about to enter Access land in the Forest of Bowland (an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and warns that it "...offers some of the roughest and most remote walking in Lancashire....." Quite so!

Take the broad service track past the waterworks. At the top of a cobbled section, the track forks. Take the left hand fork. You soon come to Langden Castle. I suspect the name is a result of someone's sarcasm long ago as this is a shooting lodge but has unusually "posh" arched stone windows. They and the door are now well secured with steel security doors.

Shortly after the "castle" turn left off the broad track on to a footpath indicated with a finger post (SD 605503) and follow the path over a series of boardwalks. As the boardwalks end, the path is indicated by a series of wooden posts which bend gently to the left to a stream (Fiendsdale Water/Langden Brook). Cross the stream and follow the line of the posts up the hillside.

The path gently climbs the hill above the Fiendsdale Water valley and exits on to the plateau (SD 589485). Ahead is a fence line and a ladder stile. Ignore the stile and

turn left (South East) keeping the fence line on your right for nearly a mile. At a gate and stile, cross the stile continuing to follow the fence. A sign on the other side of the gate indicates you have crossed land of Special Scientific Interest.

A couple of hundred yards beyond the gate is a stone cairn (SD 597472). Remember this cairn as you return to this after visiting the trig. point at Fair Snape Fell. Just beyond the cairn on the right is a kissing gate. Go through this gate and follow the obvious track to another kissing gate. A sign advise you are entering Wolf Fell. Through this gate, follow a fence line to your left. As it does a right angle turn left, slightly to the right on the near horizon is a large stone cairn. Head for it but before you do, note the kissing gate in the fence slightly down the hill. Do not be confused and mistakenly take this gate on your return. The white painted trig point will appear shortly immediately behind the cairn (SD 591468). There is a crude stone shelter also. There are excellent views from here, especially across to Pendle Hill although my walk was blighted by heat haze.

From the trig. point return by the same route to the stone cairn at SD 597472 mentioned in the previous paragraph. Go back through the kissing gate and turn right following the fence line once again.

An obvious track swings away from the fence at SD 608473) but ignore it. This path is the one which runs by Bleadale Water back to Langden Castle (shown as the green alternative route on the sketch map) which might be useful should you need to curtail the walk.

You need to follow the fence line for approximately 1.5 miles, passing (but ignoring) a kissing gate with a sign Welcome to Saddle Access Area. The track you want to Totridge turns left at SD 624475 but spotting its start is not easy. Essentially, follow the same fence line until your way is barred by another. There are a couple of stiles here and just beyond the crossing fence, a rough stone grouse butt. Do not go over either of these stiles but turn left at this fence line and follow it as closely as the terrain allows. The path alongside the fence will soon become clearer.

Eventually, the path veers away from the fence to meet the (collapsed) corner of two walls and continues in the same direction with the wall on the right and reaches the trig. point on Totridge (SD 635487).

From the trig. point, follow the narrow descending footpath marked by the occasional small stone cairn. At a robust wooden post, turn right. There are fabulous views here across the Forest of Bowland

The path meanders to a stone wall. Follow this steeply down the hill. As the wall ends the path swings left to cross a fence at a stile with a "concessionary route" footpath arrow. Follow the fence line then wall down and as it starts to climb, to the left at the top of the field is a farm gate with a stile alongside (and another large post indicating the footpath). Cross this and turn left.

Follow the broad grassy track and gradually bear right towards a copse of trees and descend to Hareden Farm. Turn right at the farm (note the 1790 date over the door) then left after crossing the bridge over Hareden Brook. Walk down the farm drive looking out for a stile on the left. Cross this, then a small bridge over the brook once more. Cross another stile in the corner of the field then walk along the south bank of Langden Brook back to the waterworks and the start point for the walk.

