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Gunnerside Round

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Centre of Gunnerside village (SD 951982)
Ordnance Survey map	OL 30 Yorkshire Dales – Northern and Central
Distance	9 Miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This is a walk of varied interest from the brilliant views over the lovely upper reaches of remote Swaledale as you follow its course around Black Hill and Ivelet Moor, to the remains of lead mining by Gunnerside Gill. Also in Gunnerside Gill are the extensive remains of Blakethwaite Smelt Mill with information boards. To get the best views of Swaledale, the walk follows a path high up the sides of Black Hill but it mainly follows the contours of the hill so is a relatively easy walk, although there are one or two places where it is necessary to cross shale. The walk up Swinner Gill is only moderately steep. Also the path is narrow and close to the edge in places but should not present undue hazard with care. There is a much easier track which follows the banks of the river Swale itself but then you do not get the benefit of the best views.

The walk starts at Gunnerside which is on the B6270 between Reeth and Keld in Swaledale. There is free parking in the village centre by the river bridge (SD 951982) There are also public toilets.

Start: Start the walk by taking the lane to the left of the cottage called Greystones with the red pillar-box in its wall. Look out for a small low level sign on the right to Ivelet. Take this path and just round the corner it passes through a squeeze stile. The path across the fields is then obvious.

Follow this path across the fields until you reach a fence overlooking the river Swale with a stile. Do not take this stile but turn right and follow the fence up the field towards a finger post in the left corner. Go through the squeeze stile and follow the sign for the hamlet of Ivelet. The path is now high above the River Swale.

Continue through several stiles passing an unusual barn with porch roofs over the doors.

Through the hamlet of Ivelet, turn right at the red telephone box on the tarmac road (SD 936980). Follow this up the steep hill passing a very large impressive house on the left and turn left at the fork where there is a “no through road” sign (SD 936982). Along here, watch out for a crude bridge of wooden sleepers on the right where there is a finger post indicating a footpath across the open land (SD 932983). Take this route. This next section of path is not too obvious but head for the cliff/rock outcrop

on the hill (Kisdon Scar) (SD 920983). The path passes just to the left hand side of a short section of collapsed stone wall (SD 926982).

As you get closer to Kisdon Scar, the track becomes clearer and appears as a double track in the grass caused by vehicles. The path follows the rocky outcrop, bearing right and follows the contour round the hill at about 1250 feet.

Eventually, the path drops down to Arn Gill above some old mine workings. Once over the gill the path turns right up the hill (indicated by a white footpath arrow sign on a post. Once up the hill, the path continues to follow the hill contour still overlooking the river Swale.

Pass across the top of the next gill (West Arn Gill) (SD 912992) where the path is not easy to spot but it drops down slightly to round the top of the next gill.

As you arrive at a large area of boulders the path bears right to a ladder stile over a wall (NY 912004). Continue to Swinner Gill where you descend to some old mine workings (NY 913012). Go up the left hand side of the gill close to the water and at the top, bear right and join the broad moorland gravel track, turning left when you reach it (NY 918013).

Keep on this track until you get to a stone built fairly crude sheep pen arrangement just before the main track turns sharply right. The path you want leaves the main track here on the left (NY 931013) but is not obvious. If you cannot spot the path, head downhill across the moors heading slightly left and the path will eventually become clear leading to the extensive remains of the old Blakethwaite Smelt Mill by Gunnerside Beck. Continue up the valley on the left hand side until you reach a level gravel area supported by stone walls. Cross Gunnerside Beck to the other side and turn right following the footpath as it climbs above the workings.

Remain on the footpath down the valley, ignoring any left turns and follow the course of Gunnerside Beck back to Gunnerside.

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