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Whitendale and Baxton Fells

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Village of Slaidburn - pay and display car park (SD 714524).
Ordnance Survey map	OL41 Forest of Bowland.
Distance	12.1 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This walk is a combination of clear broad tracks and open moorland. As always but especially for this walk, you need a clear day to get the benefit of good views and to avoid the possibility of getting lost especially across Dunsop Fell on the return leg. Familiarity with map reading and compass use are advisable in case visibility deteriorates. The walk is also best done after a dry spell as there are many boggy areas. Gaiters are recommended.

The route follows part of the Whitendale River and in its valley you have a good chance of seeing various birds of prey, especially in spring.

The walk starts from the modestly priced pay and display car park in the lovely village of Slaidburn in the Trough of Bowland where there are public toilets. The best way to get there depends very much on from which direction you are coming so it is best to consult an atlas or my Google Map.

Refreshment is available at the Hark to Bounty inn in Slaidburn.

Start: From the car park at Slaidburn, turn right along the road and right at the war memorial in the centre of the village. Go across the old road bridge and walk along the road. Turn left off the road after about 200 yards over a stone step stile by a footpath finger post.

Climb up the hill - do not go right through the obvious gateway at the end of the wall. In the top right hand corner of the field after passing through the trees, go over the step stile.

Follow the wall on the right in the next field. Just after the wall ends, bear off to the left. Walk diagonally across that field, go over a stone step stile at the end of it and carry on straight ahead over the next field.

Go over a wooden stile and straight across the next field. Over the next stile, you cross a broad farm track and go straight ahead. As the field dips down, go over another stone step stile.

Walk across this next field to a stream and turn right and follow it along to a wooden step stile. Over this stile, go straight ahead and to the corner of the field keeping the stone barn to your right.

Go through the metal gate and straight across the farm track and through the kissing gate opposite. At the far end of the field go over the wooden stile with the yellow footpath marker. In this field whilst walking straight ahead, drift gently across to the right and the higher part to meet a broad track. Turn left.

As the path forks to go into the farm yard, keep left. Continue on this track and go through a farm gate between a farmhouse and barn and almost immediately afterwards, turn left across a ford.

Follow the fence line along and turn left through a kissing gate, descending to the little valley. Cross the wide bridge at the bottom and follow the obvious track bearing right. Follow the track along and go left through a kissing gate where there is a notice telling you that you are entering "Access land".

Climb the short steep hill and follow the path round to the right. The path here is indistinct but basically just follow the course of the stream below. Look out for posts with yellow tops which mark the route of the path. If you follow the stream along, sooner or later you will see one.

Cross a series of wooden "duckboards" and the path climbs gently away from the stream to a gate in the wall. Go through it and follow the path across the moor using the yellow topped posts as your guide.

At a wooden post bearing various names but "Salter Fell" facing you and "Croasdale" on its far side, join a broad track and turn right (Salter Fell Road or Hornby Road)

Follow this track for just over 2 miles then to Hard Hill Top, shortly after going through a gateway at the highest point, turn left at a post bearing the name Whitendale to descend into the valley following more yellow topped posts. Follow the course of the river and eventually the path becomes a broad track (ignore a bridge on the right).

You come to a white painted cottage with stone frontage (Whitendale). Keep to the right but do not cross the beck. Go over the little bridge then turn left along the track in front of Whitendale. Cross the concrete farmyard, go through the double gateway and stay on the broad grassy track climbing the hill.

Look out for a footpath going off to the right on a bend marked by a footpath arrow. This is your route.

The first crest you see is a false summit!

After reaching the actual summit of Dunsop Fell, follow the path across its top until you reach a gate in the wall. Go straight ahead here and do not be tempted to turn right. The path here is a little indistinct (compass bearing 75°).

The path exits into a concrete road. Turn right by a sign "North Lancashire bridleway Woodhouse Lane". Follow the road and after a sharp right hand bend, take the track

left to Myttons farm. In the middle of the farmyard, turn right on to a wide grassy walled track.

Turn left at the end of this short track and follow the wall on the left. After going through a gate, the path bears off diagonally right across the field. Cross a single stone bridge and go over a stone step stile.

Cross a wooden ladder stile and go straight ahead. Stay on the obvious path crossing a series of stiles until you exit into a road where you turn left.

You come out in the center of Slaidburn opposite the Youth Hostel. Turn left to go back to the car park, passing the Hark to Bounty Inn which makes a worthwhile refreshment stop!

