

Tosside to Slaidburn Linear Walk

Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Route Summary

This walk is accessible using the Coast and Coves DalesBus 881 Service, which runs between Morecambe and Malham on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays until 20th October 2019.

Route Overview



Category: Walking
Length: 10.280 km / 6.43 mi
Last Modified: 26th June 2019
Difficulty: Medium
Rating: Unrated
Surface: Undefined
Date Published: 26th June 2019

Description

If travelling from the Morecambe direction there is plenty of time for a leisurely walk and picnic, plus a visit to a café/pub before the return bus journey west. If travelling from the Malham direction the pace would need to be much brisker, with only 3 hours between alighting in Tosside and catching the return (and final) bus in Slaidburn.

Mainly tracks with some field and road walking. May get muddy in parts.

Take care on un-paved road sections and keep an eye out for cyclists and vehicles in Gisburn Forest. Expect livestock and keep dogs under effective control. "Walking safely" information available at www.forestofbowland.com

Walkers are advised to carry OS Explorer map OL41.

Description

The walk starts in the hamlet of Tosside, which straddles the Lancashire/Yorkshire border on a hillside watershed. The route takes Forestry England tracks through Gisburn Forest before descending to United Utilities-owned Stocks Reservoir then dropping down to the River Hodder and Slaidburn village.

Gisburn Forest is the largest wooded area in Lancashire. Created in 1948, the meadowland and pastures were planted with conifers tolerant of the wet, acidic soil conditions. In more recent years, more native British species such as alder, ash, beech and oak have been planted to replace the felled trees.

Stocks Reservoir, completed in 1932, was built to supply water to the Fylde. The reservoir holds approximately 13.6 million meters cubed of water with a maximum depth of 31m (103ft). Up to 30 species of wildfowl can visit the reservoir during the winter and two hides for bird watchers can be found close to the original site of Dalehead Church (close to, but not directly on, the route of this walk).

Nestling in the upper Hodder Valley, Slaidburn is a picturesque, stone-built village, notable for the parish church of St. Andrew dating back to 950 AD, with a Norman period font.

(Note: in Gisburn Forest the route does not always follow Public Rights of Way as indicated by the OS map, but follows trails marked by Forestry England.)

Waypoints

1 SD 7687 5605

(54.00011; -2.35444)



In Tosside, take the track immediately to the left of the old Dog and Partridge pub and continue past the "Private road/No entry" signs. Follow this track past an outbuilding on the left and a Gisburn Forest sign, next to a barrier, further along.

2 SD 7618 5703

(54.00866; -2.36483)

As the track bears left, continue to follow it as it descends gradually through the forest and swings to the right. On reaching a junction of paths (at the point where the main track bears round to the right again) take the path on the left hand side, marked with a red/blue waymarker. Continue to follow this track as it eventually curves round in a loop to skirt the left hand side of a shallow, wooded valley. Ignoring the side tracks for mountain bikes, follow the track until you reach the complex of buildings at Stephen Park.

3 SD 7463 5599

(53.99979; -2.38803)

At Stephen Park, continue along the main track as it passes to the left hand side of the complex (which includes Gisburn Hub Café) and, slightly further on, the main Gisburn Forest Hub car park and toilets. Watch out for vehicles as you continue along the main access track to the next opening on the right hand side.

4 SD 7435 5545

(53.99453; -2.39249)

Turn right here, go past a metal vehicle barrier and follow the track as it descends gently, passing Bottom Laithe barn on the left. Soon after the barn, follow the track as narrows and turns left along a forest path. Continue to follow the path as it then bears right and runs parallel to the road. Where the path splits, take the left hand fork down to the roadside.

5 SD 7374 5537

(53.99369; -2.39943)

Taking care here, turn right (if may be better to cross over the road until you get round the right hand bend) and walk past Dalehead Church. Once past the church look out for an opening at the end of the dry stone wall on the left hand side. Turn left here and go through the kissing gate on the left. Follow the path as it rises gradually, eventually going through a tall gate in a deer fence. Continue through the woodland plantation and out of a second gate on the other side. (Great views of the reservoir here.)

6 SD 7317 5540

(53.99429; -2.41057)

Follow the grassy path ahead and when Black House Farm comes into view, bear right at the waymark post. Follow the path as it makes its way across open, grassy ground and then between the reservoir on the right and a conifer plantation on the left. At the end of the plantation, as the route opens out, continue to follow the path ahead. The path eventually runs parallel to the reservoir slipway before approaching a field gate next to

a kissing gate near the dam. Just before these gates, bear left up the grassy bank and over a stile. Continue uphill and, just before you reach the next boundary, turn left to follow the path next to a young hedge, until you come to a gate on the right.

7 SD 7208 5444

(53.98468; -2.42657)

Go through the gate and continue ahead, keeping a hedge and then a plantation on your left. Towards the end of the plantation, turn right onto a worn, grassy track which crosses the field roughly parallel to a stone wall. Go through a field gate and continue downhill to go through another gate at the bottom of the field.

8 SD 7199 5390

(53.98034; -2.42863)

Once through the gate, continue ahead a short way (ignoring a field access track on the right) before turning right onto the farm track. The buildings of Hammerton Hall are ahead of you. Follow the track towards the hall (look out for one of the Forest of Bowland AONB's 50th anniversary "Beauty stones" in the curve of the wall to the right) but leave the track before it goes into the farm buildings and bear left along another track between two dry stone walls. Follow the track to cross a small bridge then turn right and continue to follow the track through a field beside the River Hodder and then over an arched stone bridge.

9 SD 7155 5309

(53.97311; -2.43515)

Once over the bridge follow the track as it bears left then right and, at the next field boundary, turn left to follow the path which runs adjacent to the wall. Go through the gate and, at the end of the wall on the right hand side, leave the track and bear slightly right to follow a slightly raised bank across the field towards a house and bridge visible ahead. (Don't follow the track towards the farm buildings.)

9 SD 7155 5309

(53.96933; -2.43698)

Once over the bridge follow the track as it bears left then right and, at the next field boundary, turn left to follow the path which runs adjacent to the wall. Go through the gate and, at the end of the wall on the right hand side, leave the track and bear slightly right to follow a slightly raised bank across the field towards a house and bridge visible ahead. (Don't follow the track towards the farm buildings.)

10 SD 7120 5250

(53.96772; -2.44034)

Go through the kissing gate onto the road – care here! – and turn left to go over the road bridge and up towards the memorial. At the junction you can either turn right and walk up to the Hark to Bounty pub/Youth Hostel, or turn left to walk down to the entrance of the village pay and display car park, as the bus will pick up at either of these locations.

