

# Linking the Meadows: Gisburn Forest and Black House Farm Circular

OS Explorer

OL41



## Start Point

Gisburn Forest Hub, SD 746 599  
(Parking charges apply)

## Distance/Time



3 ½ miles (5.75 km) long,  
taking 1 ½ – 2 hours.

## Terrain

Walk is partly on forest and farm tracks, partly on wet fields and pasture – waterproof boots needed, plus OS map

## Key to Facilities

Gisburn Forest Hub  
Toilets, Parking, Café

## Walk Description

### ★ GPS: SD 746 599

From the car park, head towards the buildings at **Stephen Park**, and just before the buildings turn left to have a look at the new meadow and interpretation board. Retrace your steps back to the carpark and then take the drive back towards the main road.

### ② GPS: SD 743 554

Take the first track on your right, through the green barrier and down the slope. Soon on your left you will see a barn and pasture.

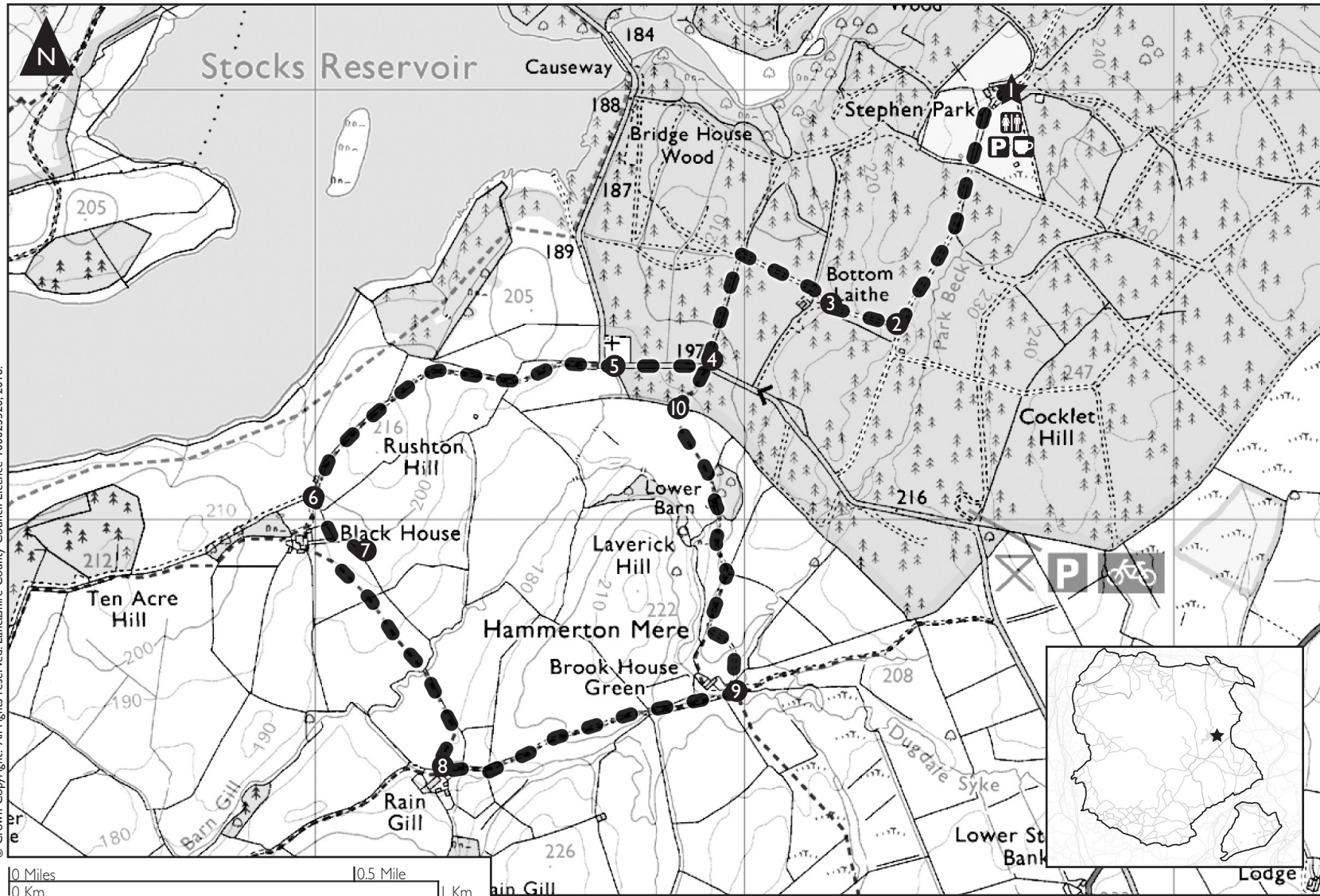
### ③ GPS: SD 741 555

This is **Bottom Laithe**: an important site for rare plants which is being managed by volunteers.

At the bottom of the slope turn left, following the blue St James waymarked walk towards Stocks Reservoir.

### ④ GPS: SD 739 553

When you see the road, continue right on the track downhill, and then bear left when the path divides: following signs to St James churchyard and Stocks Reservoir.



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## Walk Description Continued

Take care when you reach the road, and look out for a good display of wildflowers along the verges here – particularly ragged robin and common spotted orchids. When the road bends right, around the churchyard, take the farm track which carries straight on.

### 5 GPS: SD 736 553

If you want to go into the grounds of **St James chapel** continue around the bend and enter via the gate on your right. This is a Biological Heritage Site and remains an important sanctuary for wildflower species as it has never been treated with fertilisers or herbicides, and is managed as a traditional haymeadow by a local farmer. The chapel is usually open to visitors and you are welcome to look around.

To continue on the walk, return to the road bend, cross over and proceed along the farm track/footpath.

### 6 GPS: SD 729 550

You are now approaching **Black House Farm** where the seed for the Stephen Park meadow was harvested in 2012. When you cross the cattle grid in front of the farm look for the ladder stile over the wall to your left.

### 7 GPS: SD 730 549

Once over this, look for a stile/gate ahead of you, then walk down this field

to the field gate. You are now in a Site of Special Scientific Interest, from where donor hay will be taken to restore other nearby grasslands.

At the bottom of the meadow cross the stone bridge over Barn Gill and take the path opposite to **Rain Gill Farm**, keep the wall on your left hand side, and then cut diagonally right across the field to enter the farmyard.

### 8 GPS: SD 733 543

Cross the gill and exit the yard using the farm track to your left up the hill. Continue along this track until you reach the next farm.

### 9 GPS: SD 739 546

**Brook House Green.** Turn sharp left down the track towards the farmhouse, then before you reach the house go through a waymarked gate on your right. Climb up the hill and follow the track along the top of the small valley towards **Lower Barn**. From there head diagonally right, across the field.

### 10 GPS: SD 738 552

Head towards a stile in a short stretch of dry stone wall, and then back into the forest. This track leads you back to the main road. Cross with care and take the track opposite (point 4) back towards Bottom Laithe and Stephen Park.

## About This Walk

Since the 1950's 97% of wild flower meadows have been lost, along with the insects, birds and animals which they supported. The Bowland Hay Time project began in 2012, with the aim of restoring this species richness to meadows across the AONB area. The restoration of the meadow at Stephen Park began in 2012, using green hay from the SSSI meadow at Black House Farm. Wild flower-rich hay was cut, transported and then spread out onto the newly cut meadow at Stephen Park. This allowed the seed contained in the hay to drop onto the meadow at

Stephen Park and germinate in the following spring. In particular, yellow rattle, meadow buttercup, red clover, eye bright, crested dog's tail and sweet vernal grass have now re-established themselves. Every year since the restoration began there have been more wild flowers and grasses in the new meadow, and in the summer of 2015, the first orchid was spotted. The restoration work has been continued by local schools in the area, who have been growing and planting out wild flower plants local to the area.

## Can You Help?



Champion Bowland is a small charity which works to enhance the outstanding landscape of the Forest of Bowland AONB. It does this by raising funds from visitor donations and charitable activity; and these funds are then awarded to local projects which benefit the environment, local communities and visitors.

Look out for donation boxes and pin badges in local businesses, or text **CBOW15** followed by the amount you wish to donate (eg £1 or £5) to 70070

For further information visit [www.championbowland.org.uk](http://www.championbowland.org.uk)



[www.forestofbowland.com](http://www.forestofbowland.com)