

Bell Sykes Hay Meadow Walk

Start Point 

Slaidburn Village Car Park
★ SD 7136 5235

Distance/Time



2 miles / 3.3 km
2 Hrs

Terrain

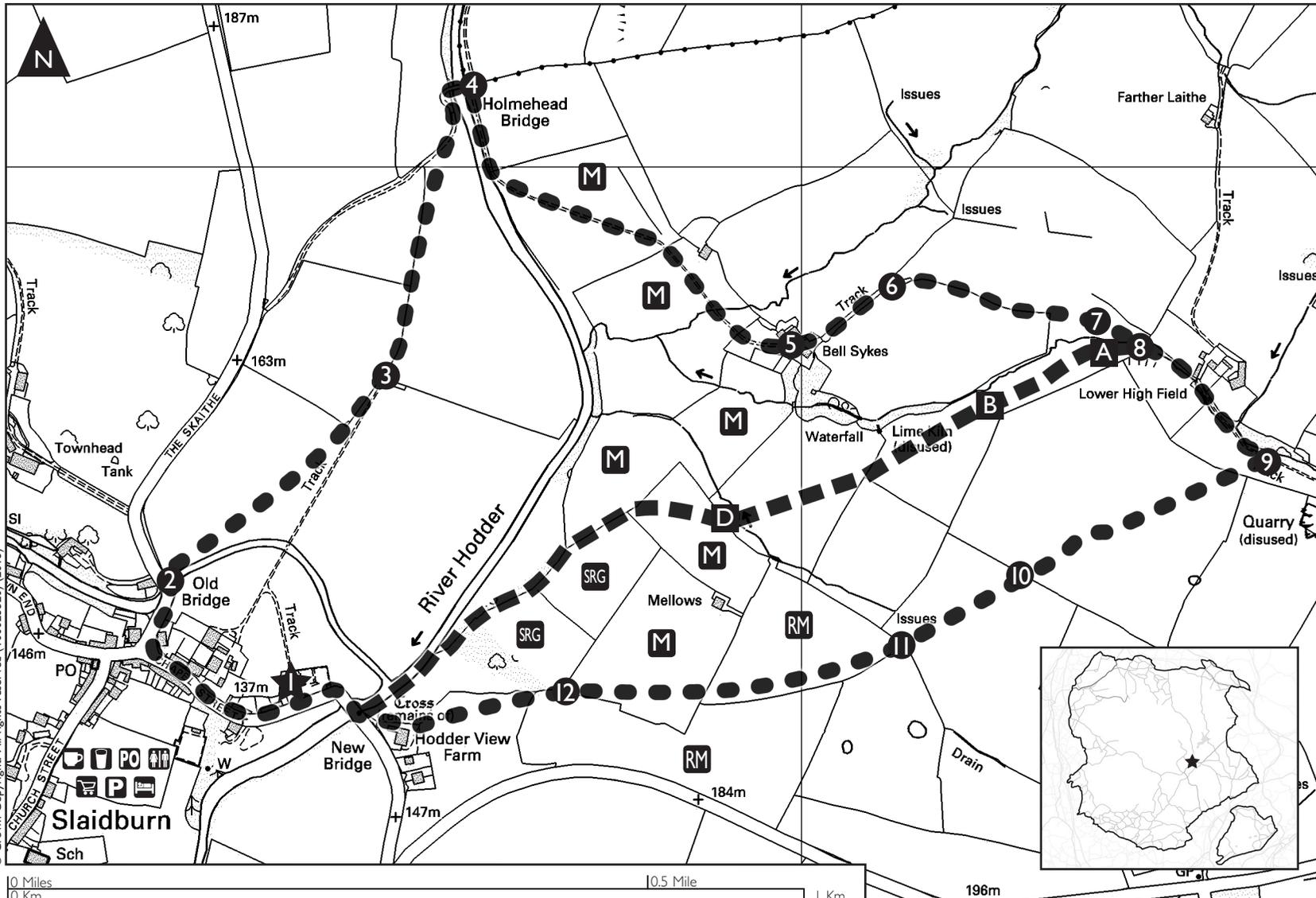
Lanes, tracks, fields (can get muddy in parts), includes a number of ladder stiles, livestock in fields.

Key to Facilities

- Slaidburn**
 Tearoom, Pub, PO Post Office,
 Toilets, Shop, P Car Park,
 Hostel

GPS Waypoints (OS grid refs)

- ★ SD 7136 5235
- ② SD 7120 5249
- ③ SD 7147 5274
- ④ SD 7158 5310
- ⑤ SD 7199 5278
- ⑥ SD 7211 5285
- A SD 7241 5277
- B SD 7222 5271
- C SD 7207 5261
- D SD 7190 5256
- ⑦ SD 7239 5280
- ⑧ SD 7243 5277
- ⑨ SD 7285 5264
- ⑩ SD 7228 5249
- ⑪ SD 7211 5240
- ⑫ SD 7170 5234



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10 Miles / 10 Km 10.5 Mile / 1 Km 196m



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Walk Description

★ GPS: SD 7136 5235

Starting from the car park, take a right onto the road and continue ahead to the cenotaph in the centre of the village. Take a right and keep ahead and over the bridge.

2 GPS: SD 7120 5249

Turn immediately right through a metal kissing gate. Keeping to the right fence edge keep ahead until you reach the end of the tree line and then begin to bear slightly left and continue ahead.

3 GPS: SD 7147 5274

Keep to the left fence edge until you reach a lane. Take a right continuing over a cattle grid and ahead again over a bridge.

4 GPS: SD 7158 5310

After the bridge, immediately turn back on yourself around a low wall to the right and through a wooden gate to follow the river. Keep on the track ahead until you reach Bell Sykes Farm. You will pass through two meadows, the first contains large drifts of meadow crane's bill, the second has meadowsweet in the damper areas as well as patches of melancholy thistle.

5 GPS: SD 7199 5278

Go through the metal gates into the farmyard. After passing the back of the farmhouse take a left through a wooden gate and up a tree lined rough track and through another wooden gate at the top. See if you can spot the grind stone used to sharpen scythes for cutting grass.

6 GPS: SD 7211 5285

Keep ahead and then bear right up the steep hill. For the option of a shorter walk you can follow these directions back to Slaidburn:

A GPS: SD 7241 5277

Take a right over a small wooden footbridge (just in front of a wooden gate) across the beck and take a right keeping ahead to the field gate.

B GPS: SD 7222 5271

Continue ahead to the right field corner and into the next field next to a stone gate post.

C GPS: SD 7207 5261

Head diagonally left in the next field eventually reaching a wooden footbridge in a dip, across the bridge and up to the stile in a stone wall.

D GPS: SD 7190 5256

Head diagonally right down the field to a wooden kissing gate; follow the path with the river on the right. This sloping meadow is stuffed full of great burnet, with its deep red heads up above the level of the grasses. Hay from this meadow was used to help restore the flowers to others on the farm. Soon reaching the main road where you need to take a right to go back into Slaidburn Village.

7 GPS: SD 7239 5280

To continue with the longer walk keeping to the left of the beck keep ahead to the wooden gate (can get very wet and muddy here).

8 GPS: SD 7243 5277

Continue ahead along a well trodden path to reach a wooden stile to the right of a derelict barn and take a right when you join the lane.

9 GPS: SD 7285 5264

When you see a waymarker post on your right, a short way along the lane, take a right, slightly back on yourself towards a ladder stile over the wall. Head diagonally right to a further ladder stile in the wall.

10 GPS: SD 7228 5249

Head towards the right field corner in the next field and through the gate.

11 GPS: SD 7211 5240

Keeping to the left field edge continue ahead to reach a stone stile. This meadow has been restored using species rich hay from other meadows on the farm. See if you can spot the meadow flowers coming through the grasses. In the next field head slightly diagonally left to wooden kissing gate. This is one of the meadows used in the restoration project.

12 GPS: SD 7170 5234

Continue downhill to Poor'sland business units, taking a right once you reach the road and ahead over bridge to return back to Slaidburn village.

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Habitat Notes

M – Hay Meadow.

The flower rich meadows at Bell Sykes are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) because of the wide variety of meadow species that they contain. This set of meadows is one of the most important in Lancashire, due to the large number of fields all in one place. Often only tiny fragments of meadows remain, but here it is possible to be entirely surrounded by one of the rarest habitats in England. From late May and June through to when the meadows are cut in late summer you will be able to see a wide variety of species flowering, starting with meadow buttercup and yellow rattle, followed by hawkbits, meadow cranesbill, meadowsweet, great burnet, meadow vetchling and knapweed. It is not necessarily that these species are very rare in themselves, but to see them together in such abundance is what makes these meadows so special. On a sunny day you will also see a huge number of insects, butterflies and feeding swallows. You might even glimpse the scarce and beautiful melancholy thistle, so named because of its drooping seed head. The meadows at Bell Sykes are the

Coronation Meadows for Lancashire, chosen for their species diversity and public access as donor meadows to help restore this precious habitat.

SRG – Species Rich Grassland.

On the slopes which are too steep to allow hay making, the grassland is grazed at the end of the summer, allowing the plants to flower and set seed. The species rich grassland at Bell Sykes is very similar in composition to the meadows on the farm, and its low input management ensures its high wildlife value.

RM – Restored Meadow.

These two fields are part of the Bowland Hay Time project, which is helping farmers to restore hay meadows across Bowland. Green hay from two of the species rich meadows at Bell Sykes was spread onto them after they had also been cut and scarified at the end of the summer of 2012. The green hay dries and drops its species rich seed. Yellow rattle started to germinate in the spring of 2013, so you may see meadow flowers coming through the grasses.

Slaidburn

Visiting Slaidburn is like stepping back in time. Isolated and protected by the surrounding Bowland fells, and largely owned by a single family for almost 200 years, the village has remained un-spoilt by modern development and is virtually unchanged since the early 19th Century. Slaidburn whilst picturesque is also a living, working village still largely dependent on agriculture, with a large number of its inhabitants working in the local area. If you are looking for refreshments why not visit the popular Riverbank Tearooms, a picturesque spot next to the river, for some lovely homemade produce www.riverbanktearooms.co.uk or if you prefer a pub the Hark to Bounty Inn is home to the original Moot Courtroom of the Forest of Bowland www.harktobounty.co.uk

