

Dunsop Bridge Easy Access Route

Route Summary

Roads and tracks. Take care on unpaved road sections. Be aware of timber wagons using the road along the Dunsop valley. 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.

Route Overview



Category: Walking
Rating: Unrated
Surface: Smooth
Date Published: 31st January 2018
Difficulty: Easy
Length: 7.660 km / 4.79 mi
Last Modified: 2nd February 2018

Description

Dunsop Bridge is the gateway to the Trough of Bowland and derives its name from the hump back bridge over the River Dunsop. It is calculated to be the nearest village to the centre of the British Isles. To mark this achievement there is a unique telephone box sited on the village green. A farming community at heart, most of the properties in and around the village are owned by two major landowners; the Duchy of Lancaster and United Utilities. In addition, the Forestry Commission manages large forestry plantations in Bowland.

The Dunsop Valley is a well-known hotspot for wildlife with spring and summer the best time to view curlew, lapwing, reed bunting, oystercatcher, redshank and dipper.

This route offers two options: a shorter walk of 1.5 miles and a longer route of almost 5 miles.

Waypoints

1 1.

(53.94595; -2.51791)

From the village car park turn right and walk along the road (care here as there is no pavement). Between the Post Office and bridge turn right onto a tarmac track. Continue along this tree lined route with the River Dunsop to your left. Pass a children's play area on the right then go through a gate alongside a cattle grid and onto open grazing pasture.

2 2.

(53.94769; -2.52042)

Continue to follow the track ahead. Views now begin to open up, including Staple Oak Fell and Whin Fell to the left and Beatrix Fell on the right. Below Beatrix Fell lies the farm hamlet of Beatrix, once a thriving market community from the 1200s. However, Dunsop Bridge gradually outgrew Beatrix, situated in a more valuable position on the route between York and Lancaster.

Go through another gate next to a cattlegrid to the left of a row of cottages.

3 3.

(53.95143; -2.52320)

Follow the track round behind the cottages to go over a stile/gate and onto a track between the river and a belt of woodland. Continue along the track and cross the wooden bridge over the river.

4 4.

(53.95306; -2.52452)

On crossing the bridge you have the choice of completing the short loop and returning to the start point or turning right to head up and then back down Dunsop valley.

Short Route Option:

Turn left after crossing the bridge and continue on the tarmac track slightly uphill through a gate next to a cattle grid and past a farm compound with a backdrop of Mellor Knoll and Totridge Fell. Continue to follow the track, eventually going through another gate next to a cattlegrid and then onwards past a small collection of houses on the right, until you meet the road at the war memorial. Turn left to follow the road downhill (care with traffic here) and over the bridge, back to the car park on the left.

Longer Route Option:

After crossing the bridge turn right and head along the tarmac track. The adjacent banks of the River Dunsop host a number of spectacular knarled and twisted veteran alder trees. Notice the ever changing lower slopes of the valley, swathed in pine to stabilise steep inclines in this important water catchment area. Sections are felled and replanted or allowed to naturalise with heather and dwarf shrubs. Pass through a wooded farm compound and continue past



numerous industrial type structures associated with the water industry. Here the valley widens and the river basin affords room for pools and wetland areas supporting a range of plant and fish life. Approaching the valley head there is a gradual change to wilderness and a sense of being in the heart of the Bowland fells.

5.

(53.97486; -2.52965)

This is the furthest point of the route. After taking in the scenery, retrace your steps back to the bridge then follow the `Short Route` description back to the village.

