

SUGGESTED START: Bridge over the River Hodder at Newton-in-Bowland, BB7 3DY (SD 6987 5026).


DISTANCE: 7.5 km / 4.7 miles

TIME: 2 hrs 30 mins (plus sightseeing)

TERRAIN: Footpaths, farm tracks and roads. Can be very wet and muddy underfoot in places after rainfall. There are several stiles on this route.

DIFFICULTY: Moderate

OS MAP: It is advisable to use OS Landranger 103 with this guide.

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Only school buses/currently no public bus services through Slaidburn or Newton-in-Bowland
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Layby at bridge into Newton-in-Bowland, BB7 3DY (SD 6987 5026),
Car park in Newton, BB7 3EB (SD 6984 5062)
Slaidburn car park, BB7 3ES (SD 7137 5235)
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Slaidburn car park, Hark to Bounty Inn (Slaidburn), Parkers Arms (Newton-in-Bowland)
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A Different Corner, Central Stores and Post Office, Bowland Chocolate, Vanilla Angel, Flowers from the Heart in Slaidburn
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Hark to Bounty Inn (Slaidburn) and Parkers Arms (Newton-in-Bowland)
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Riverbank Tea Rooms (Slaidburn)

THE RIVERS: The Hodder sub-catchment includes some of the most attractive landscapes within the Ribble Catchment. The whole area is within the designated Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the uplands are in the Bowland Fells SSSI. The catchment has a highly valued fishery and is popular with anglers. Stocks Reservoir and other upland river intakes provide a vital part of the North West’s public water supply. The Hodder valley is mostly agricultural with small rural villages.

The route of the River Hodder has been altered in some places along this walk. For example, the owners of Dunnaw Hall straightened the course of the river from a point below the current sewage works. The river was straightened in 1832 to provide employment and to prevent the undermining of the grounds in front of the hall.

Slaidburn is the largest village on the River Hodder. The name is thought to come from Anglo-Saxon, meaning a ‘sheep field overlooking a river’. However, there are also suggestions that the name comes from the word ‘slab’, alluding to a slab of stone which was said to mark a battle in the area.



WILDLIFE: Look out for dippers and herons along the water’s edge. Keep an eye out too for grey wagtails, sand martins and oystercatchers. Goosanders can be spotted during winter.

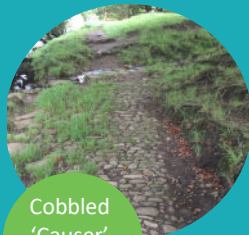
Plants such as bellflower, golden saxifrage, melancholy thistle (a northern meadows speciality, but declining) and butterbur are present along this route.



WHAT TO EXPECT: Starting just outside Newton-in-Bowland village, the walk hugs the course of the River Hodder before leading out into farmland. Following the road briefly through Easington, the route then returns to farm pastures before arriving in Slaidburn village. The walk then reconnects with the River Hodder and follows its course back to Newton-in-Bowland on the opposite bank. The conditions underfoot can be a little muddy in places, especially after wet weather. Boots or wellies are recommended for this route. Livestock are present in some of the fields on this route. Please keep dogs on a lead. If cattle get too close or become excitable, let the dog off the lead.

 **LOOK OUT FOR:** (see points on the map)

1. During the 13th/14th century there would have been **flax retting ponds** in the fields on the opposite side of the road to where the walk starts (on the right-hand side as you travel south from Newton). These ponds would have been filled with river water in order to rot the flax and release the fibres. This process would have smelt very unpleasant. The fibre released from the flax was used for making textiles.



Cobbled ‘Causer’ path

2. Keep an eye out for the 18th/19th century cobbled path which is known locally as the **‘Causer’**.

3. There is a cottage in Easington mentioned in the Domesday Book, named **Timothy’s Cottage** after the farmworker who originally lived there, with a date stone which may have been reused from the original hall.



Date stone at Timothy’s Cottage

4. Look out for a very small old bridge as you head towards Slaidburn, which goes over **King Syke**. The name of the brook relates to the King family who lived at Whiteholme. To mark Queen Elizabeth II’s Diamond Jubilee, a Coronation Meadow was identified in each county. Bell Sykes Farm, Slaidburn hosts the flagship meadow for Lancashire and there is a path which can be followed to reach it (this is off the route, but listed under ‘Nearby Trails’ on this leaflet).



King Syke

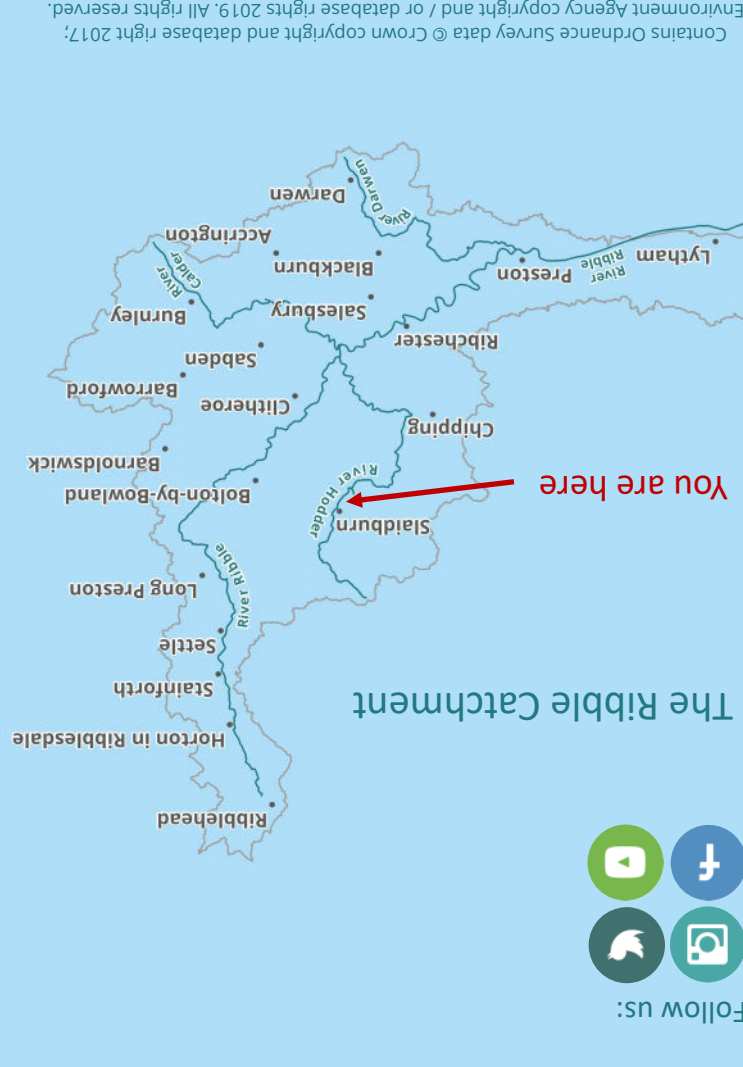
5. **Slaidburn Bridge** over the River Hodder was constructed in 1570 and widened in the 18th century. Look out for the various mason marks on the side. Once over the bridge and heading into Slaidburn village, look out on the right for a stone marker inscribed ‘WR’. This indicates that maintenance of the bridge was once the responsibility of Yorkshire West Riding before the county boundary changed in 1974 and Slaidburn became part of Lancashire.

6. This route allows an excellent view of **Dunnaw Hall**, which was built in the mid-18th century by one of the Wilkinson family. The area around the hall (now called Dunnaw) was previously called Battersby which came from the Norse settlement name ‘Badreshi’. (Image courtesy of Slaidburn Archive)



Dunnaw Hall

7. Stunning views of the Forest of Bowland AONB can be enjoyed on much of this route.




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The Ribble Catchment

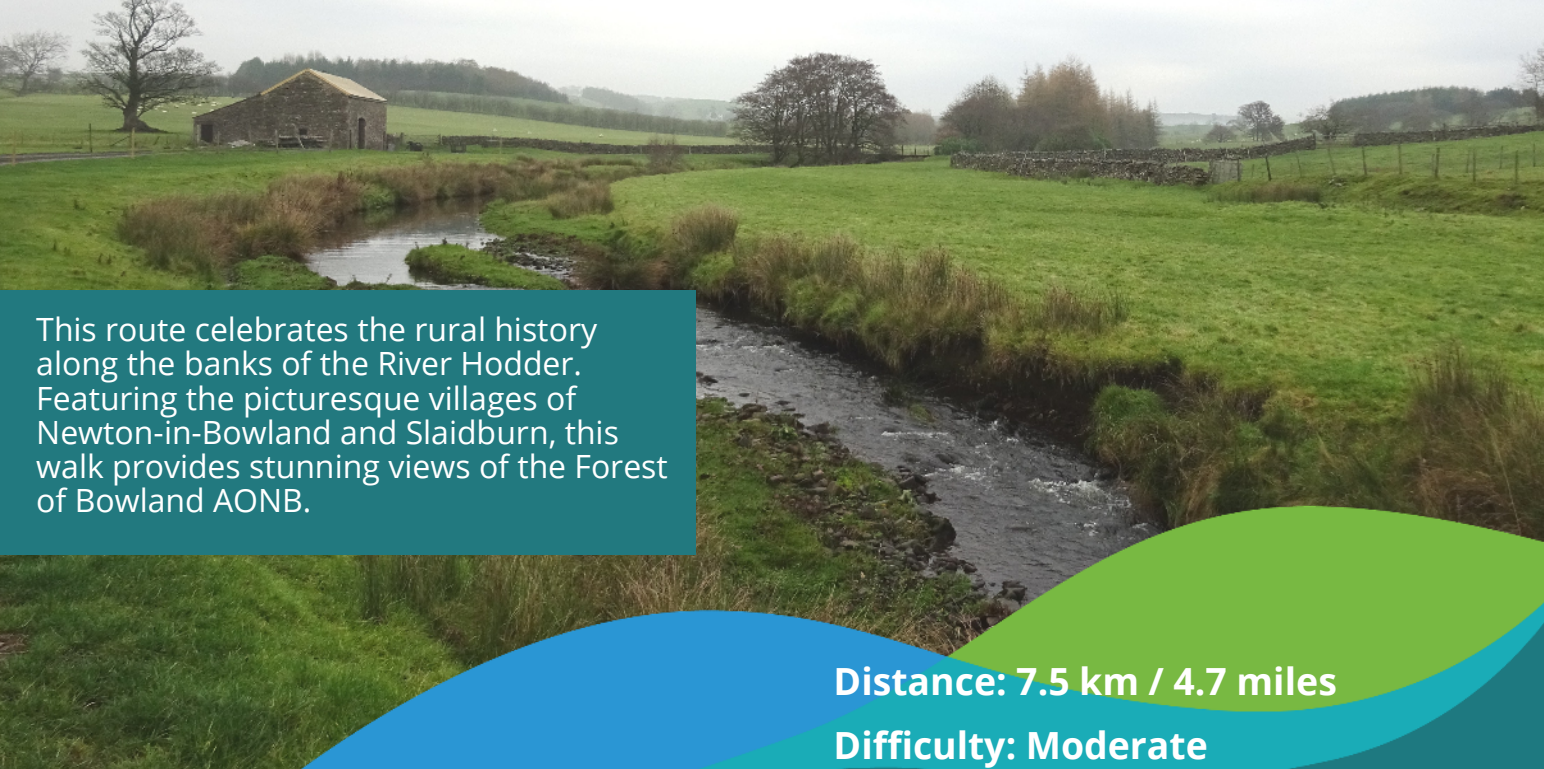
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River Walks Slaidburn



This route celebrates the rural history along the banks of the River Hodder. Featuring the picturesque villages of Newton-in-Bowland and Slaidburn, this walk provides stunning views of the Forest of Bowland AONB.

Distance: 7.5 km / 4.7 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Ribble Life Together is working to create a healthier river system by 2020 for people and wildlife. The project celebrates the heritage of the rivers, improving access and using the river to inspire and educate. Through practical environmental action, based on science, we aim to leave a positive legacy for future generations.

Nearby trails

- Bell Sykes Hay Meadow Walk (Forest of Bowland AONB)
- Newton to Dunsop Bridge Circular (Forest of Bowland AONB)
- Slaidburn - Newton (Fellscape)

Enjoy safely

- Wear sturdy boots and clothing suitable for forecast conditions
- Take a charged mobile phone, first aid kit, map and compass
- Carry spare food and drinks
- Follow the Countryside Code: consider wildlife and other users

This walk has been created by Ribble Rivers Trust as part of a series of circular routes for the Ribble Life Together project. To find all the River Walk routes, visit: www.ribbonet.org.uk

Thank you!

To National Lottery Heritage Fund for supporting Ribble Life Together and Slaidburn Archive, Dave Fisher and Chris Spencer for support in developing and trialling the route.
Photography: H. Smith & Slaidburn Archive.

ROUTE DIRECTIONS

A. Bridge over the River Hodder at Newton

Starting at the bridge over the Hodder at Newton, go over the stone stile (before the bridge on the right-hand side if approaching from Waddington direction). This leads into a field. Keep the river on your left and descend onto the cobbled 'Causer' path, over the stream, to reach the wooden stile beside the river. Follow this path, keeping to the river.



Newton Bridge

B. Towards Easington

At the end of the path, go through the gate (ignore the ladder stile as it is missing rungs on the farside). Once through the gate, carry straight on, keeping the low stone wall on your left-hand side. Go over the bridge, following the path, with woodland on your right-hand side. Follow the line of mature trees in the field, keeping the trees to your right. At the end of the field, go over the stile and cross the field diagonally, reaching a metal gate (the right-hand one) and turn left on to the lane.



Manor House

C. Easington

Turn left onto the lane and follow it into Easington, turning right into a farmyard straight after the barn with the red door (Manor House). Follow the track on the left-hand side of the farm yard as it winds down to meet the main track. Continue to follow this with the river on your right-hand side.

Before the track goes over a bridge, go left over a stile (follow the waymarker) and follow the path, with the trees on your right-hand side.

D. Tree plantation and Broadhead Farm

Continue to follow this path and the fence line as it curves to the left (follow waymarkers). Go right when you reach a small wooden field gate at the top of the tree plantation, away from the river. Once through the gate, follow this path with the tree plantation on your right-hand side. Then keep going across the field, heading towards the river and go through the metal gate. Then head towards the farm, going through another gate and on to the farm site. Go through the farmyard and then turn left onto a tarmacked track going up the hill. At the junction, cross the road to go through the gate opposite and continue up the hill.



Broadhead Farm

E. King Syke

At the left-hand corner of the field, go through the gate and turn right. Continue with the woods and wall on your right-hand side. Cross over the small bridge over King Syke, and then go over the stile at the end of the field. Bear left, following the path with the wall, and eventually follow the woods, on your left-hand side. Follow the path as it curves to the right and go through the gate at the end of the path onto the road, turning right. Go left through a gate, following the public footpath sign.

Views down to Slaidburn



At the bottom of this field go through the gate where the houses are and keep right, going towards Slaidburn bridge.

F. Slaidburn

Go right onto the road and follow it as it curves to the left. When you reach the village hall, turn left through the car park and take the path at the far end (following the public footpath sign). Follow the path through the woods, ignore the kissing gate on your right and go through the kissing gate at the end of the path, keeping the river on your left-hand side.



Slaidburn Village Hall



Slaidburn Bridge

G. Riverside Path

Follow the riverside path, curving right with the Hodder on your left-hand side. Go over a small bridge over a stream and continue. At the metal bridge (on your left hand-side) turn right to just below Dunnow Hall and join the right of way there, turning left and heading to the far end point of the field.



Dunnow Hall

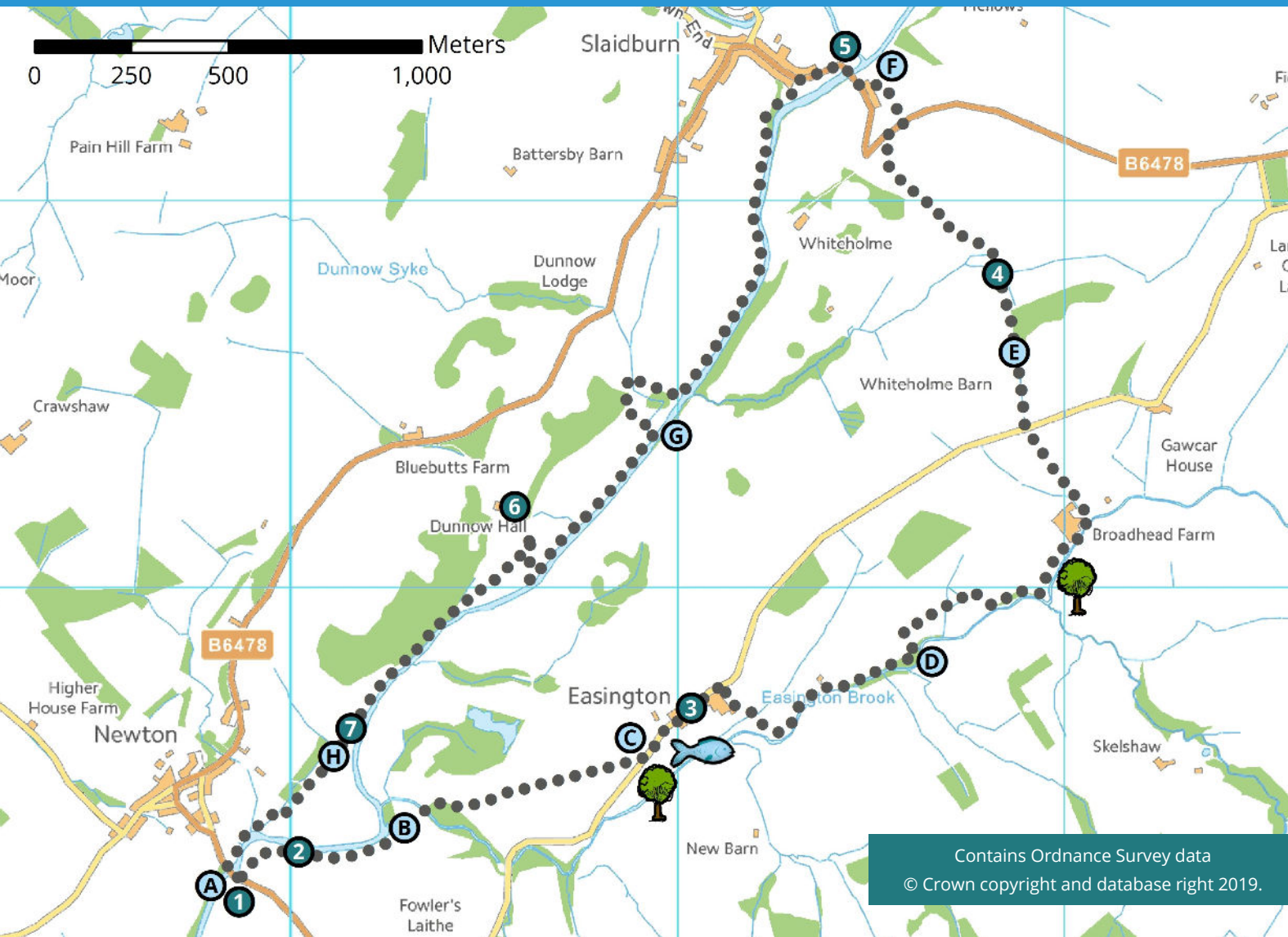
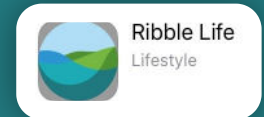
Go through the kissing gate and enter the woods. At the end of the path through the woods, go through the kissing gate, keeping right, with the river on your left.

H. Newton-in-Bowland

On the right-hand side of the field, go through a small wooden gate and go along the path which runs parallel to the field and river. Go through another two gates in quick succession, following the path straight on. Then go through the third gate back into the field and head for the stone stile on your right-hand side, before reaching the metal gate at the end of the field. Go over the stile and tiny stone bridge immediately after, then follow the path over a small wooden footbridge with the wall on your right-hand side. Step over the stream and continue, going up the steps and through the gate. Keep to the left along the river, going past the information board and through the wooden gate onto the bridge where the walk started.

Ribble Life App

Download the Ribble Life app to accompany this walk guide. Available on iOS and Android, the app features additional points of interest, further information and video and audio clips.



Ribble Rivers Trust projects (see map points)



Weir on Easington Brook - in 2012 a small weir was removed by Ribble Rivers Trust to improve access along Easington Brook for migratory fish species such as salmon and trout. As the weir had also provided a place to cross the brook on foot, a bridge was constructed to provide access to the opposite bank.



Along this section of the brook, over 500 trees were planted, also in 2012.



Before: Weir on Easington Brook



After: Bridge over Easington Brook



Broadhead Farm woodland - in the early 2000s, one hectare of woodland was planted by Ribble Rivers Trust at Broadhead Farm to improve habitat along Easington Brook.

Woodlands provide many benefits for rivers, including reduced pollution in watercourses, reduced rainfall runoff from fields, provision of new habitat for wildlife, shade for fish during hot weather and mitigation against the effects of climate change. Ribble Rivers Trust work with farmers and land owners to plan new areas of woodland. We rely on our hard working team of volunteers to help us plant thousands of trees each winter.



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