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## Slaidburn to Newton Via Easington Fell

<b>Starting point and OS Grid reference</b>	Village of Slaidburn - pay and display car park (SD 714524).
<b>Ordnance Survey map</b>	OL41 Forest of Bowland.
<b>Distance</b>	8.5 miles
<b>Date of Walk</b>	4 March 2015
<b>Traffic light rating</b>	

**Introduction:** This walk from Slaidburn takes you up to Easington Fell, then circles to Newton before returning via a riverside footpath to Slaidburn.

Slaidburn is a picturesque village in the Forest of Bowland and very popular with walkers.

Newton is equally pretty with an attractive village green.

Refreshment is available at the Parkers Arms in Newton and the Hark to Bounty in Slaidburn. Ideal picnic spots are rare but there are some useful benches in Newton. There is potential for a great deal of mud on this walk, so I strongly recommend gaiters.

The ascent from Slaidburn is quite a pull in some places and the descent from Easington Fell is steep. The walk therefore gets a couple of amber warnings! The walk starts from the modestly priced pay and display car park in the lovely village of Slaidburn in the Trough of Bowland where there are public toilets. The best way to get there depends very much on from which direction you are coming, so it is best to consult an atlas or my Google Map.

**Start:** Turn left out of the car park and cross the bridge over the River Hodder. Follow the road round the sharp bend and no more than 50 yards or so after the bend, turn right through a farm gate indicated by a public footpath fingerpost.

As you crest the rise, follow the stone wall on the right until you come to a stone step stile by a gate. Cross the stile and follow the wall down on the left and go through a farm gate, then another to the road. Cross the road and take the track to Broadhead Farm.

At Broadhead Farm, keep straight ahead on the tarmac, then work your way clockwise round its rear to cross Easington Brook over the bridge. Go through one farm gate and follow the track to a second. Follow the sign here to Skelshaw. This sign looked none too robust so in case it disappears, head for the top right hand corner of the next field.

Go through a gate and cross the stream (paddling may be necessary), then follow the track as it curves left to follow the bank of the stream before crossing it again. Go through the walkers' gate slightly to the left.

Follow the left hand boundary of the field to Skelshaw House and join the broad track. Turn left to follow it uphill.

At the next farm (Fell Side), the track curves left behind it and on to the open fell. There is a yellow footpath arrow on the gate. There were some very rowdy dogs at this farm when I passed but they were safely caged.

Follow the main track up on to Easington Fell. There are good views behind over Slaidburn to the fells beyond.

The track arrives at the B6478 road (SD 718484). You now have a choice. You can simply follow the road down for about a mile, to turn off left to New Laithe. However, this can be quite a busy road and I opted to take a slightly longer footpath route (about half a mile longer) across the fell to avoid this. This is not an easy path to navigate as it is clearly not well used but if you are feeling adventurous....!

Just before the road, turn right off the track on to the rough fell. You need to spot the grouse butts and follow them walking to their right. There seemed to be very faint tracks here and there but whether people or animal created is difficult to know.

You will drop down into a little valley and at this point, you should be able to spot a stone cairn on the ridge ahead. Make your way to this. There are great views from there.

Now for the tricky bit! From the cairn, (SD 715492), you need to work your way down the hill, to a gateway in the wall below (SD 715492). This is not easy to spot.

Through the gate, bear right to follow the wall down. This route is strictly to the west of the footpath shown on the OS map, which is the other side of the wall. However, I saw no easy way to access this, or I missed it. No one is perfect!

Follow the wall downhill. Eventually, it becomes a fence. Follow this down until it meets a wall at a gap where there was possibly a gate at one time. Go through the gap and follow the right hand boundary down to the farm track to Smelfthwaites (SD 711494) and turn left along the track.

At the road, turn left and follow it for less than a quarter of a mile to a distinct left hand bend. Turn right here along a broad track (SD 705488), in the direction of the public footpath fingerpost.

Follow this track past the farm and at a sharp left hand bend, go over a stile on the right, closely followed by a second stile. Yellow arrows direct you. After the second stile, follow the right hand boundary of the field.

At the end of the field, follow the broad track between the trees and keep following it to the road, exiting opposite the house Farrowfield.

Turn right at the road and immediately left over a stile in the hedge (SD 693494) . Head for about the middle of the right hand side of the field and go through a gate to cross the next field to a stile. Over this and continue in the same direction to the river.

Turn right to follow a footpath alongside the river, eventually arriving at the road into Newton. Turn left.

If you want to see Newton, continue into the village. The Parkers Arms pub is on the left as you enter the village or if you want some long benches where you can enjoy your picnic, just continue on the B6478 to the 'T' junction (SD 697505).

For the return to Slaidburn, the footpath is on the north bank of the River Hodder and is clearly marked – on the left if coming from Newton.

On reaching the sewage works, you have to turn left, right along its access track for a few yards, then, once through the gate, turn right over a stile marked "Riverside Path".

At Slaidburn, turn right to return to the car park.

