

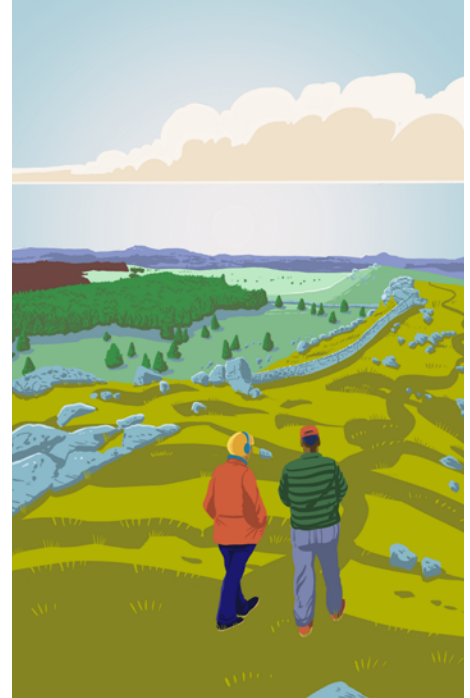


## ITINERARY 9

### THE BOWLAND TRAVERSE

Alfred Wainwright described the Hornby Road between Wray and Slaidburn as 'the best moorland walk in England' and this two-day hike across the Bowland Fells, follows in his footsteps to showcase some of the area's scenic highlights like Stocks Reservoir and Gisburn Forest.

Spanning 28 miles of lonely uplands, punctuated with an overnight stop in a pretty farming village, this trek takes in some of the most spectacular views in the Forest of Bowland AONB. The daily distances are manageable year-round and navigation is fairly straightforward and with railway stations at either end of the route, the logistics are easy, too.



**DAY 1:** Arrive by train | Walk 16.5 miles  
**DAY 2:** Walk 12 miles | Depart by train

## DAY 1: WENNINGTON TO SLAIDBURN

Arrive by Train at Wennington

Regular services along the Bentham Line from Leeds, Skipton and Lancaster. Timetables at [www.northernrailway.co.uk](http://www.northernrailway.co.uk)

26.6km (16.5 miles) | 750m of ascent | 8 hours

From the station car park, cross the railway bridge and walk up Old Moor Road, crossing rich pastureland with views extending across the Wenning Valley to Ingleborough and down the valley to Hornby Castle. Continue climbing out of the Wenning Valley and descending into the next valley, crossing the River Hindburn and following the riverside footpath heading upstream to Wray.

### LUNCH

Go left over bridge to stock up with food and drink at the Bridge House Tearooms. This is the last refuelling point before your overnight stop in Slaidburn. The next section involves six miles of sustained ascent before crossing an elevated plateau with no settlements, so make sure you're well provisioned.

From Bridge House, cross into Harterbeck and follow the lane upstream before descending into the densely wooded valley of Roeburndale.

This is an abridged version of a walking route published in the Cicerone Guide to Walking in Lancashire. For a more comprehensive route description and detailed maps, the guide is available to purchase online from the Cicerone Online Shop.

<https://www.cicerone.co.uk/walking-in-lancashire>

### NATURAL HIGHLIGHTS

This densely wooded gorge is one of the few remnants of Littoral Atlantic Rainforest in Lancashire. It's the closest thing we have to 'jungle' in Western Europe and a precious ecosystem with a rare microclimate. Roeburndale is home to rare woodland birds such as redstarts, wood warblers and pied flycatchers. There's also a rich diversity of flora – from extensive drifts of ramsons and bluebells in spring to mosses, lichens and ferns, which all thrive in the damp, temperate microclimate.

Navigate this secluded valley with care to emerge at Barkin Bridge. Continue along the road for another mile to High Salter Farm, then through the gate onto the Hornby Road.

Follow this track for the next seven miles as it traverses the gritstone heart of Bowland, before descending along the lip of the remote valley of Croasdale, then into the Hodder Valley and the farming village of Slaidburn.

### EVENING

Dine at the Hark to Bounty in the village or wander beside the River Hodder to the village of Newton in Bowland for dinner at the renowned Parkers Arms – consistently rated one of Britain's finest gastropubs.

Total distance walked: 16.5 miles



# DAY 2: SLAIDBURN TO GIGGLESWICK

19.2km (12 miles) | 425m of ascent | 6 hours

## MORNING

Stock up on provisions at Slaidburn Central Stores in the middle of the village and head left past the war memorial and continue over bridge, following the River Hodder upstream to Stocks Reservoir.

Follow the path along the eastern shore of the reservoir and over the causeway and into the dense coniferous woodland of Gisburn Forest. Keep to the signed footpaths and logging tracks, following Bottoms Beck then climbing through the woods to the craggy outcrop of Whelpstone Crag for some of the most expansive views in the whole of Bowland.

## NATURAL HIGHLIGHTS

Whelpstone Crag and nearby Bowland Knotts are prominent gritstone outcrops where the complex geological formations of the Bowland Fells emerge from the peat uplands on the eastern boundary of the AONB.

Expensive views extend across the upper Ribble Valley and the stark geological fracture of the Craven Fault, above which the limestone terraces and pavements of the Yorkshire Three Peaks dominate the horizon.

If you're lucky – especially in May or early June – you might catch a glimpse of a hen harrier soaring above the ridgeline, or perhaps a peregrine falcon or mercurial merlin hawking meadow pipits above the moorland.

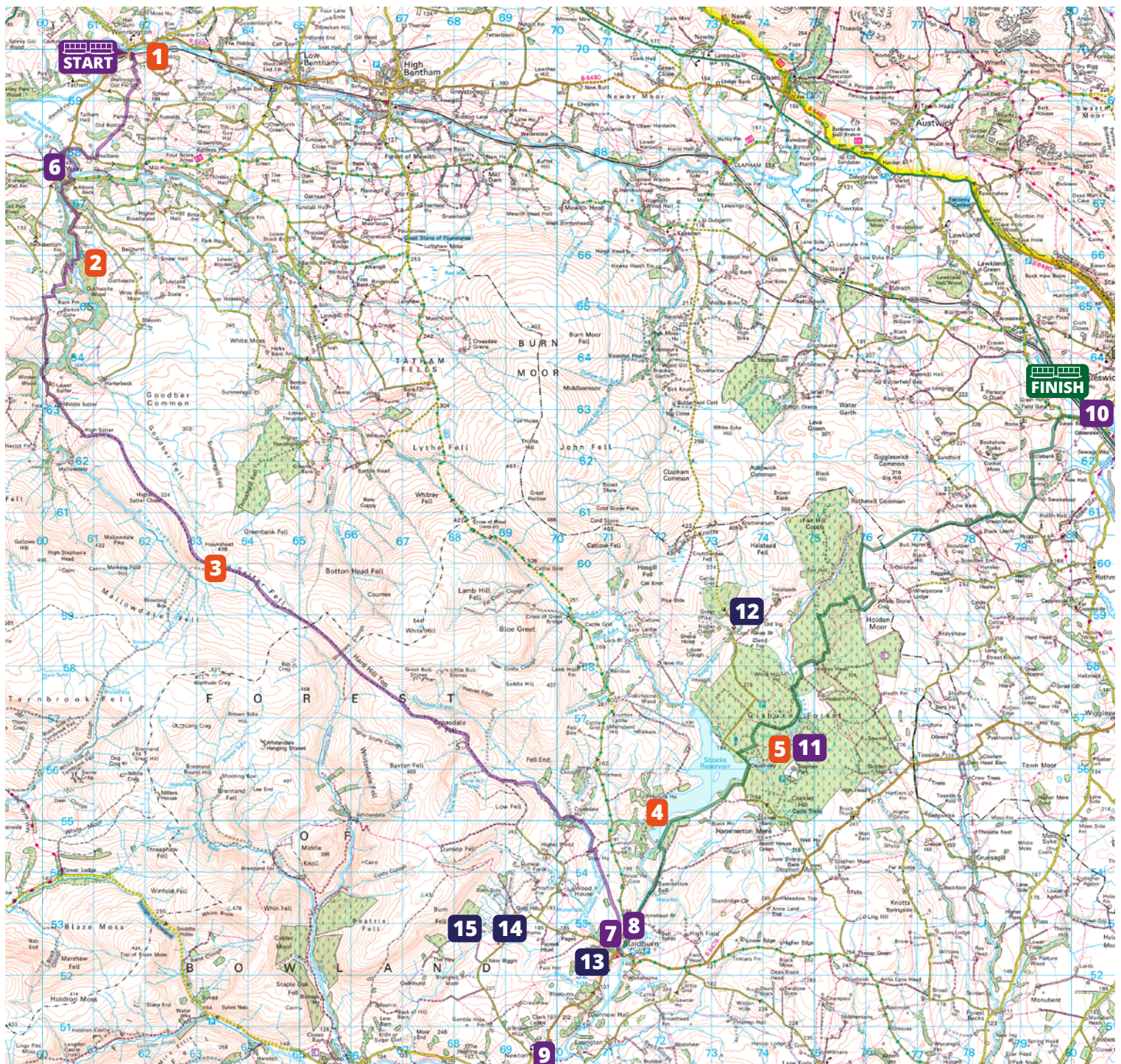
## THE FINAL LEG

Follow the well-worn path to the right of the Whelpstones and through the gate to reach the trig point before following the ridge for half a mile then starting the long gradual descent through the rich pastureland of the Ribble Valley to reach Giggleswick Station.

## REFRESHMENTS

The Craven Arms is just across the A65 (very busy road – cross with care!) from the station and there is a wider selection of cafes, pubs and restaurants in the pretty Dales town of Settle – just a 15-minute walk from Giggleswick Station.

Total distance walked: 12 miles





## EXPLORE MORE

Stocks Reservoir and Gisburn Forest are worth taking extra time to explore in more depth. The reservoir has wildlife hides dotted around its shoreline and is home to a wide variety of birdlife. Gisburn Forest is one of England's most popular mountain biking destinations with miles of challenging traffic forest tracks to explore.

## LINGER LONGER

There's plenty more to see and do in the area to extend your break a while. The entire Forest of Bowland AONB is criss-crossed with footpaths and cycle trails. Picturesque villages like Chipping, Waddington and Downham are all worthy of exploration, while the towns of Clitheroe and Bentham have more shops and entertainment to offer and are linked with good onward public transport connections. Click here for more ideas and itineraries.



## DISCOVER

### 1 The Bentham Line

Visit the pretty villages on this scenic railway linking the Lancashire coast and the Yorkshire Dales with plenty of pretty villages to explore en route. <https://thebenthamline.co.uk/>

### 2 Roeburndale

This enchanting valley is home to one of the last remaining fragments of temperate rainforest in Lancashire and a totally immersive experience in spring and autumn. Head to the pretty village of Wray to explore the valley on foot.

### 3 The Hornby Road

This wild and lonely moorland track traverses the remote uplands between Slaidburn and Wray. It's an exhilarating linear hike or traffic-free mountain bike ride for those who are up for a challenge.

### 4 Stocks Reservoir

Discover a little slice of the Scottish highlands in Bowland. Walk around the scenic reservoir and keep an eye open for the rich birdlife making its home there.

### 5 Gisburn Forest

Take a deep dive into the dense woodland of Lancashire's largest tract of forestry. Ride miles of traffic-free trails or walk to the highpoint of Whelpstone Crag for outstanding views. <https://www.forestryengland.uk/gisburn-forest-and-stocks>



## EAT

### 6 Bridge House Café

A friendly family-run café in an idyllic riverside location at the heart of the pretty village of Wray. [www.facebook.com/BridgeHouseFarmWray](http://www.facebook.com/BridgeHouseFarmWray)

### 7 The Hark to Bounty

Characterful village inn with accommodation in the pretty village of Slaidburn. <https://www.harktobounty.co.uk/>

### 8 Slaidburn Central Stores

Award-winning village shop selling essentials, local produce, maps and guidebooks, snacks and souvenirs. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063684575556>

### 9 The Parkers Arms

Widely acknowledged as one of the best gastropubs in Britain, the multi award-winning Parkers is a must-visit destination for all serious foodies. <https://www.parkersarms.co.uk/>

### 10 The Craven Arms

### 11 Gisburn Forest Café

A friendly café within the Forest itself, offering a wide range of snacks, light meals and refreshments – including ice creams and splendid home-made cakes. <https://www.facebook.com/gisburnforestcafe>



## STAY

### 7 The Hark to Bounty

Characterful village inn with accommodation in the pretty village of Slaidburn. <https://www.harktobounty.co.uk/>

### 12 Dale House Barn

An outstanding boutique B&B with bunk barn run by a very cycle-friendly proprietor. Green tourism Gold Award Winner. [discoverbowland.uk/Business/dale-house-barn-and-b-and-b/](http://discoverbowland.uk/Business/dale-house-barn-and-b-and-b/)

### 13 Slaidburn YHA (exclusive hire basis only)

[discoverbowland.uk/Business/slaidburn-youth-hostel/](http://discoverbowland.uk/Business/slaidburn-youth-hostel/)

### 14 Laythams (self catering option for longer stays)

[discoverbowland.uk/Business/laythams-holiday-lets-retreat/](http://discoverbowland.uk/Business/laythams-holiday-lets-retreat/)

### 15 Hartley's Huts

Unique luxury pods, fully equipped with wood-burning stoves and a spacious hot tub with outstanding views over open countryside. [discoverbowland.uk/Business/hartleys-huts/](http://discoverbowland.uk/Business/hartleys-huts/)