

Backbarrow and Bigland tarn

We start at a convenient lay-by on the B5278 just South of Haverthwaite. If you are using Satnav, then the postcode for the Clock Tower Works at Low Wood - LA12 8LY will get you reasonably close, and for more precision, What-3-Words tag **blinks.firewall.skins** pinpoints the lay-by. For paper map users the grid reference is SD34578337.

From the parking area, we head back down the road toward the river Leven. Carry on for a short while until the road forks - we take the much smaller road on the right, passing some impressive gates, as the main road bears left and heads to the bridge over the river. Head down the lane toward the small hamlet at Low Wood, with the impressive clock tower visible as a landmark.

As we head out of the village, and head slightly uphill, the road veers sharp right – and our route carries straight on and is clearly signposted for Trundle Brow.

Our path follows a leet uphill for a while, although it may not always be visible, and we walk up through pleasant woodland for a while, until the views open up on the left with Backbarrow in the distance and Massicks Wood on the opposite side of the Leven Valley.

We stick with this path until it meets a small road where we turn left and start walking downhill toward Backbarrow.

A short distance after joining the road. Look out for a playground on the right and take the path through the playground and past the bungalow into the woodland known as Bishop's Allotment. The path here tracks along contours and at times is narrow and routes through thick bracken with a fence and/or drystone wall on the left throughout.

The path we are on eventually goes as far as Newby Bridge, but we need to head off East long before then. So, look out for a distinctive stile on our left where another path comes up from Backbarrow. At the stile we take the less obvious path up the hillside on the right to pick up a drystone wall which we follow uphill toward the corner of a patch of woodland known as Hoggarth's Plantation.

We enter the plantation via a ladder stile and then turn left along a narrow path which soon becomes a track.

The track we are on is part of a network of forestry tracks in the plantation, but navigation should not be difficult as long as we head consistently East. Take care at the last branch though, where the walk leaves the wider track as the right hand branch of a fork.

We head down to a gap stile which takes us onto a minor road called Hazelrigg Lane. We turn right and walk along the road for a while until we arrive at the farm buildings at Hazelrigg where the road bears left leaving us to continue ahead, past the dead end sign onto what is now just a track, passing through pleasant woodland.

This soon arrives at a metal gate with a stile to the right leading us onto more open land where the lane heads to a farm (Field End). Here a well-marked diversion takes the path around the farmyard to head up Knotts Hill to enter the northern limit of Seate Plantation.

We follow a drystone wall for a while now (with the wall on our left) until we arrive at a gap stile into the plantation. This is soon followed by a small step stile. From here the path is somewhat less than

clear at times, and there are many minor paths which may distract, so regular checks of the GPS are recommended.

If in doubt, once we are in the plantation, the path takes us due East until we meet a gate where we enter more open land again. We continue in a generally Easterly direction, although the path meanders around to find a clear route through the somewhat lumpy terrain, until we see a pair of gates in the field below us. We head for these and go through the gate on the right to head for the farm and cluster of houses in the distance. This is Seatle.

The footpath climbs a steep stile just before the farm and then passes behind the farm to exit via a metal gate onto a rough lane. We follow this to the left for a while, looking out for a smaller lane on the right with a small stone barn at the end of that lane.

At the barn, we find a stile on the left and enter the field. The path continues diagonally across the field to a small stile in a fence which gives us access to the southern end of Seatle Woods. The path through the woods is not particularly clear, and a number of fallen trees require diversions. In general, we need to head Southeast to find the fence at the far side of the wood, where we should see another stile.

The stile takes us into a field which we cross to find another (somewhat overgrown) stile onto a minor road. We take this to the right and follow the road until we see a sign for High Cark. Here we take the road down to High Cark Hall. This 17th century farmhouse has grade II listing. The path continues along the front of the hall and then along a lane to a metal gate. We pass through the gate and then head right and slightly uphill, now heading North toward Gill Wood.

Just before Gill Wood, the path heads left (and westward) to re-enter Seatle plantation at a kissing gate. The path through Seatle Plantation, like many woodland paths in this area is somewhat affected by trees damaged during storm Desmond, so the viable routes on the ground may no longer match the track on the OS map. This area is well walked though, so the "new" paths are generally quite easily seen and take us West through the plantation to exit onto a heath at a wooden gate.

From here we follow a clear lane round to pick up a minor road where we turn right to pass Mungeon Farm on the right and then to head uphill toward Back Reddings Wood. Difficult to miss on the left is the entrance road to Bigland Hall, and the path gives us a right of way down toward the stables before turning left to head toward the tarn. Lots of helpful signage makes it clear where we should be.

After passing the Icehouse, we look for the stream exiting the tarn, and turn right along the lane that follows the stream. This takes us Northwest, away from the tarn, and down to a gate into the top end of Birk Dault woods. From here the path is steep, and at times quite slippery, but remains easy to navigate, heading Northwest and eventually returning to the B5278 just a few metres from where we parked.

- **Total distance 15.3 km (9.6 miles)**
- **Total Ascent 530 m**
- **Challenging walk**