

Ravenstonedale and Newbiggin-on-Lune

We start at Ravenstonedale, a quite village with ample roadside parking. Take the M6 north to the Tebay exit and then take the A685 toward Brough. Continue through Newbiggin-on-Lune, which we walk through later in the day, and then ½ mile later look for the sign to Ravenstonedale on the right. Follow the road down into the village and park at the car park near the church, or at the roadside toward the Kings Head. If you are using Satnav to get there, then the address for the Kings Head is Riverside, Ravenstonedale, Kirkby Stephen CA17 4NH, or the What-3-Words tag is **stored.lashed.slant**, corresponding to the OS grid reference NY72130426.

We walk toward The Black Swan pub, but 50m before we get there, we take a small lane on the right signed to indicate that drivers should ignore satnav instructions to use this road. This brings us to the edge of a farm where we follow the footpath indication and head right passing along the side of a farm building to a point where the path forks. We could go straight on, or as we do for this walk, head left and slightly downhill along a green lane with great views of the Howgills ahead of us.

After just 30m or so the lane comes to an end, and we head right into a field – the path is generally clear, and heads to the opposite corner where we pick up a track that heads slightly left and down to a bridge over a beck. We cross the bridge and then head uphill, looking for a stile in the wall to our right just 20m ahead. This takes us into a field where we head west, keeping to the drystone wall at our left to avoid trampling the meadow. At this point we use the attractive farmhouse at Greenside as our landmark – and once we get to the field in front of it, follow the path round to the left and then through the yard to the minor road.

We turn left on the road and walk passing a curious sign warning us about mines. And then head slightly downhill toward High Greenside. As the road starts to bear right and go downhill, we see a stile on the right which takes the path through fields at the back of the farm, then through a couple of hay meadows, eventually emerging at another minor road, at Will Hill. We head right on the minor road, and after just 100m or so cross a bridge over the beck to continue north past the farm. Don't be too surprised if there is no evidence of water though, the name of this river is Dry Beck, so clearly there is an expectation that it is somewhat seasonal.

We continue north for 100m still on a fairly broad track. As it reaches a gate into a field we have a choice. There is a path to the right going through fields to Newbiggin-on-Lune, or a narrower route taking a more direct route to the village – we take this one, but if you miss it and accidentally take the other, it only adds a few metres to the route. We initially walk through a quite overgrown and narrow section but soon emerge into open fields where we again stay to the left. A short while later the path emerges onto the road at Newbiggin-on-Lune, where we turn left, and almost immediately find ourselves in the centre of the village, with the old chapel directly in front of us.

At the old Chapel we head right and walk down to the busy A685, which we cross with care. Once on the far side of the road we continue up the track opposite. We soon pass under a disused railway bridge and then stroll uphill slightly to Brownber, where we meet the Tower House, then head right, and soon arrive at the obvious track bed of the disused railway. We take the path to the left and walk along the railbed for the next mile or so.

Pressing on, our next landmark, just 100 ahead is the Smardale Viaduct. At the far side of the viaduct we see a stile leading to a permissive path down the far side of the valley on our right.

As we follow this pleasant path down through the trees we get great views of the viaduct on our right. We soon arrive at a drystone wall where a gate gives access back to public footpaths, where we go right and continue downhill to the rather lovely Smardale Bridge – which like its rather larger neighbour crosses the wonderfully named Scandal Beck.

There are paths back to Ravenstonedale on both sides of the bridge – we took the one on the far side, which we accessed by crossing the bridge and then heading uphill for 20m or so to find the stile on our left. This leads to a path which we follow for a while using the left hand side of the woodland at the top of the rise as our landmark. At the edge of the woodland, we see a gate and follow the path along the bottom of the tree line for about 50m. We then continue along to another gate then clamber down the steep scar and approach Scandal Beck.

We cross a stile and almost immediately after, a small bridge, then climb up to a farm track. We are not on the track for long though – the footpath leaves on the left to head back down to the riverbank, which from here onward would best be described as pungent: There is a sewage treatment plant adjacent.

We pass a curious “Dexion” bridge, and then walk under the main road to arrive back adjacent to the Kings Head, where the walk ends.

- **Total distance 11.1 km (6.9 miles)**
- **Total ascent 199 m**
- **Easy walk**