Thirteen hardy souls met in Waddington at 9am on a cold Sunday morning. Whilst it was overcast it was at least dry and not windy after the recent storm Arwen. We welcomed two new members, John and Loy, and a guest walker Andrew Stachulski. Andrew had given a presentation to our Group on Zoom earlier in the year on The Forest of Bowland based upon his book of the same title. It was great to see him in person and to walk around a lesser-known part of the Forest of Bowland AONB.

The West Lancashire Group of the LDWA staged a Kanter each year with the first being in 1998. This was an event when walkers had to navigate between a given list of grid references. I had been keen to resurrect some of these old walks and had originally planned this walk for 2020 but due to Covid it had to be cancelled. The original 1998 Kanter was 20 miles long so with the short day in December the route had to be shorten. I thus missed out the most northerly part of the loop, which took in Dunsop Bridge.

The walk begins by exiting the pretty village of Waddington and taking to paths across fields to Bashall Eaves. There are great views back across the Ribble Valley to Pendle and coming ever nearer ahead is the north face of Longridge Fell. In addition, there is a pretty stone pedestrian bridge called Saddle Bridge, a traditional stone Cheese press and a trig point at 139m on this part of the route.

When recceing the route, I took the paths west via Aigden Farm, but the path was little used and almost impassable with a number of streams to be crossed. So, we took the alternative using what turned out to be a good track from Mason House. This took us to Limes Wood with out first evidence of the impact of Storm Arwen with trees blocking the path through the wood in one part. Then it was out of the woods and across some very soggy fields to the Roman Road at Lees. From here we made a slight detour from the original route by using the road to Whitewell to gain time. At Ing Wood we came off the road and used the fields on the eastern side of the Hodder valley to finish the first half of the walk at the Inn at Whitewell. The views on this stretch are just beautiful looking up the Hodder valley and across to the Southern Bowland Fells. I had hoped to lunch on the bank of the Hodder just over the steeping stones but unfortunately today they were almost completely submerged.

After a lunch in the cold, spent around the churchyard, the climb out of the Hodder valley up to Crimpton was welcomed by most. After the initial steep road section, the path is little used but the views at the top are great including a snow-covered Pen y Ghent. We then climbed up to our second trig point at Browsholme Heights, which at just 294m was the highest point of the day. It is then downhill to Browsholme Hall with more great views including across to the Fylde coast. We had been given permission by the Parker family, who have owned the Hall for over 500 years, to walk through the grounds. This was greatly appreciated by all and I for one will make sure that I visit again shortly.

The last part of the walk is largely along lanes except for the final leg back into Waddington but it is still pleasant, and we could see the colours in the sky from the sun setting behind Longridge Fell. We finished back at the cars at about 3.45pm just before it began to go dark. A good walk especially in Winter – well done to the original members who created this walk.