

# Walk the Way in a Day

## Bonus Walk Cross Fell

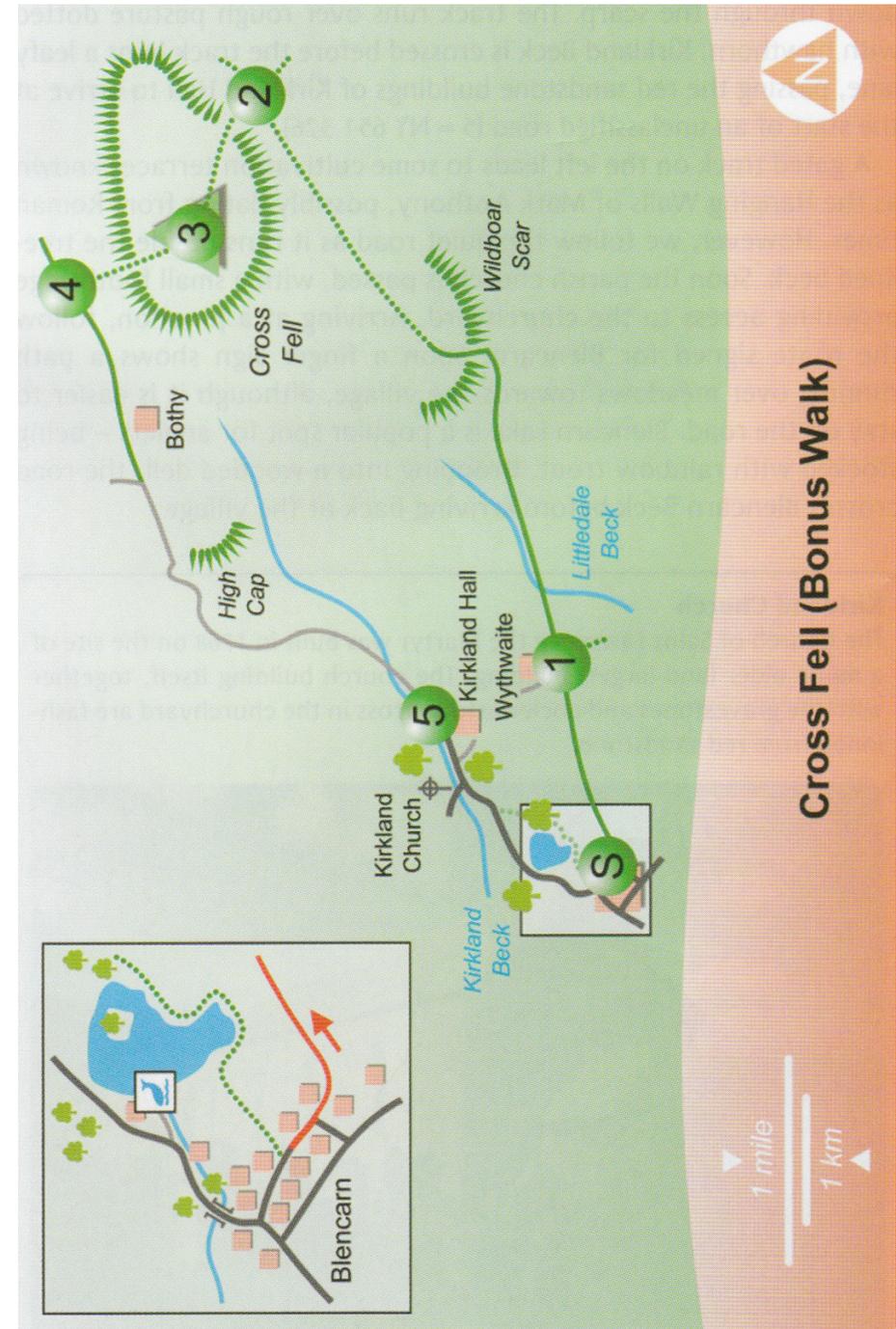
An enjoyable hill-walk climbing Cross Fell via the steep Eden Scarp. The way up onto the ridge involves some tricky navigation, so fair weather is advisable, although the descent follows a good track. This is a 'bonus' walk, offering a return visit to Cross Fell - the highest of the Pennine fells.



- Length: 10¾ miles (17½ kilometres)
- Ascent: 2,526 feet (770 metres)
- Highest Point: 2,930 feet (893 metres)
- Map(s): OS Explorer OL Map 31 ('North Pennines - Teesdale & Weardale') (West Sheet)
- Starting Point: Blencarn village centre, Upper Eden Valley (NY 639 312)
- Facilities: None.
- Website: <http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way/route/cross-fell-bonus-walk>

### The Eden Scarp

The eastern approach to Cross Fell hardly does the hill justice, so this bonus walk offers a return visit via the western scarp of the Pennine ridge. Blencarn is 7 miles (11½ kilometres) north-west of Appleby-in-Westmorland, and can be difficult to locate among the maze of narrow roads criss-crossing the area. It is nevertheless a pleasant little place, with red sandstone cottages clustered around a village green. There is roadside parking near the village hall. The first part of the walk follows a bridleway for 4½ miles (7½ kilometres) up onto the ridge. Passing through a gate at the east end of the village, a finger sign shows a rough track heading north-east over grazing land and through a broom thicket. Looking ahead, tree-lined pasture can be seen running right up to the foot of the scarp, from where steep grassy slopes reach up towards extensive scree fields.



Leaving the track as it swings through a gate on the right, continue on towards Wythwaite farm (1 = NY 654 316).

Passing through a gated sheepfold and fording Littledale Beck, the grassy track continues through an area of bracken before heading steeply up the valley side. Cresting the rise, the radar dome on Great Dun Fell comes back into view, perched above the unsightly barytes mine at Silver Band. The route now takes a dramatic swipe across the face of Wildboar Scar. Whilst the track is fairly wide, there are steep slopes to the left. Swinging around to head north-east, a small cairn marks the start of a faint path climbing through scree fields. Passing an upright stone, continue across tussocky grass above the deep valley of Crowdundle Beck. A few small cairns provide reassurance of the route, although these are widely spaced and navigation can be tricky in poor visibility (the temptation to leave the path and head straight up the treacherous, scree-covered flanks of the plateau should be resisted). The path eventually levels-out before meeting the Pennine Way at an altitude of 2,608 feet (795 metres) (2 = NY 697 339).

### **The Plateau**

The next part of the walk follows the Pennine Way over the plateau, a distance of just 1¼ miles (2 kilometres). Breaching the scree belt to arrive at a tall cairn marking the edge of the plateau, continue west-north-west towards the summit (3 = NY 687 343). Having climbed the dramatic Eden Scarp to get here, Cross Fell seems a very different hill to that encountered on the previous walk - more like a mountain in fact! From the OS pillar, head north-north-west towards a beehive cairn, then down through the scree belt to join the old corpse road coming up from Garrigill (4 = NY 684 352).

### **The Corpse Road**

The return route follows this down to Kirkland, then a quiet road back to Blencarn, a total of 5 miles (8 kilometres). Following a chain of cairns over the watershed, the views across the Upper Eden Valley are stunning.

A derelict shed off to the left is marked on the map as 'bothy'. The rough track heads steeply downhill before crossing a mossy mire. As a stony track joins from the right, the grass verge will be preferred. To the right is the deep valley of Ardale Beck, its slopes marked by scars and scree. At the foot of the valley can be seen a small pike - Lad Slack - around which Maiden Way once climbed.

Passing a cairn, the track starts zigzagging downhill. Diverging from the valley, the way ahead runs beneath a promontory with a scar on its nose (High Cap). To the left is Kirkdale - another deep valley cutting down through the scarp. The track runs over rough pasture dotted with hawthorn. Kirkland Beck is crossed before the track joins a leafy lane, passing the red sandstone buildings of Kirkland Hall to arrive at the start of an unclassified road (5 = NY 651 326).

A gated track on the left leads to some cultivation terraces known as the Hanging Walls of Mark Anthony, possibly dating from Roman times. However, we follow the quiet road as it runs beside the tree-lined beck. Soon the parish church is passed, with a small footbridge providing access to the churchyard. Arriving at a junction, follow the route signed for Blencarn. Soon a finger sign shows a path running over meadows towards the village, although it is easier to stay on the road. Blencarn Lake is a popular spot for anglers - being stocked with rainbow trout. Dropping into a wooded dell, the road crosses Blencarn Beck before arriving back at the village.

### **Kirkland Church**

*The Church of Saint Lawrence the Martyr was built in 1768 on the site of a much older (and larger) building. The church building itself, together with the gravestones and ancient stone cross in the churchyard are fashioned from red sandstone.*

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