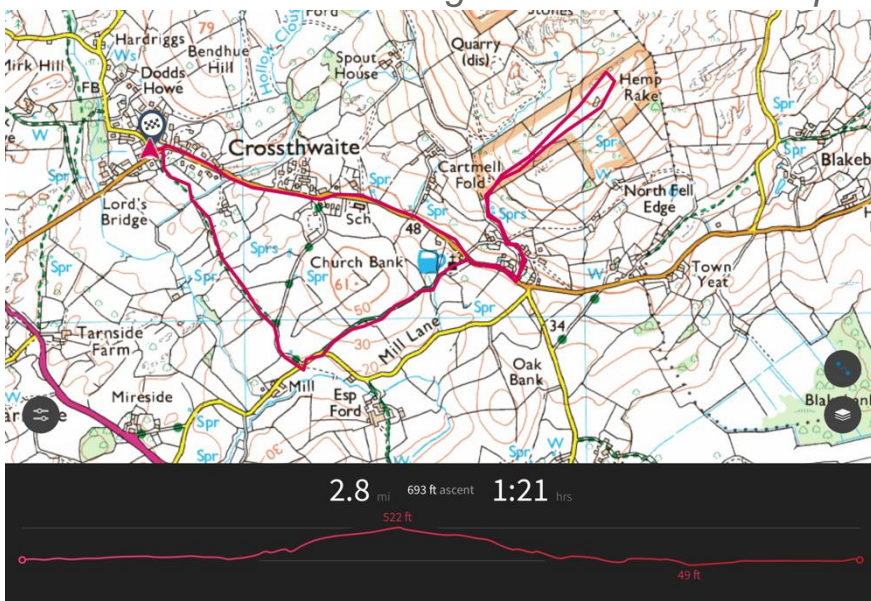


Hemp Rake and Church Lane.

Description

A short walk ideal for a 'first' or 'last' look. Less than 3 miles and only 500 ft of climbing to a beautiful viewpoint. Around 1.5 hours taking 10 minutes on the top to explore and admire.

This walk is ideal if you are short of time but want something that gets you out of breath and gets you to a height where you can see where you are. If Crosthwaite is new to you, then it's a good first look at the area and its surroundings. It can easily be done in 'civvies' as long as you're not too precious about stuff getting caught up in gorse or taking a short slip if it's muddy. The incline will get you out of breath and when you see the



Views down the Lyth Valley towards Levens (below) and Brigsteer (left).



view from the top it will inspire you to longer and stiffer walks during your stay. Coming home you walk down the ages old Church Lane, and it is easy to imagine passing the ghosts of centuries old parishioners, making their way to sing their praises to the Lord. It's the sort of walk where you too will want to give thanks for your good fortune in being here.



Tarn Hill from Hemp Rake (above) and a wonderful accidental tree sculpture on the way to the top.



The view north looking towards the Howgill Fells from the great slab of Hemp Rake (above left), and the brooding presence of the Furness Fells looking west from the top (above right).

Route

It's a straightforward walk through the village from Crosthwaite Green to Church Town to start. Just beyond the Punchbowl you come to Crosthwaite House on your left and a small side road beyond it turns into a well trodden path after a hundred yards or so. The path takes you uphill and reaches a gate beyond which is private, but open access land. You might stop here and mentally thank Tony Blair for allowing you to go further. You now have the right to roam up the hills and paths beware as these can sometimes be ill defined. The straightest way up is a steep little scramble right as soon as you go through the gate, but there is a path around 30 yards forward on the right that picks its way through the gorse till you reach open land . You are only going up for 500 feet so if it feels like a tough little climb, remember it will soon be over. Just keep climbing upwards keeping the newly planted woodland on your right and the slightly higher peaks of Tarn Hill on the left. You get to the top when you reach a huge slab of rock with a small cairn to crown it. The top is a great place to explore, but mostly you just want to sit and admire fine views in all directions.

When you have taken your fill and got your breath back then you need to return the way you came back to The Punchbowl Inn. Walk through the car park and through to the small gate below the church. This now takes you to Church Lane which starts as a track and then narrows to a path that can become overgrown. You climb a little, then go downwards until you reach Mill Lane. For a very short while follow the road right, and then up the side road right back towards the village. As you turn a corner you will see a slab gate on the left which leads you back to Crosthwaite Green, albeit with a number of further stiles on the way. Make sure you keep to the path through here as sheep and cattle graze these fields throughout the year.

Things to See on the Walk

The main purpose of this walk is to sample the area in miniature in an hour and a half.

You will see Crosthwaite as a linear village as you walk between the Green and Church. Crosthwaite has been a thoroughfare from Kendal to Ulverston since Roman times and the village's farms and houses have been built on the roadside to reflect this.

There has been a church on the site of the current one for hundreds of years, but until the 1860s St Mary's was a division of Heversham parish. The current church building dates from this time. The Punchbowl Inn is now a fine dining pub and has been a stopping place for travellers since Pack Horses and Carters would use it for refreshment.

The views from the top of Hemp Rake are, bangs for bucks, the best in the area. You get the finest view of the plain of the Lyth Valley right down to the Kent Estuary. The pretty white villages of Underbarrow, Brigsteer and Levens look delightful under Scout Scar. Turning around over Cunswick Scar you see the Howgills. Western views show you Whitbarrow, Gummers How and beyond them Coniston Old Man. All around is beauty in fact.

On the way home you really ought to sample the hospitality in The Punchbowl before taking in Church Lane feeling replete, and that all is well in the world.