

A Yomp down Whitbarrow

Description

Some walks are just meant to be done at a yomp and this is one. On top, Whitbarrow is easy limestone walking and it compels you to stride out. Although this is a longish walk, a strong walker will complete this 12 mile round in a little over 4 hours. More senior ones like me may take up to 5.

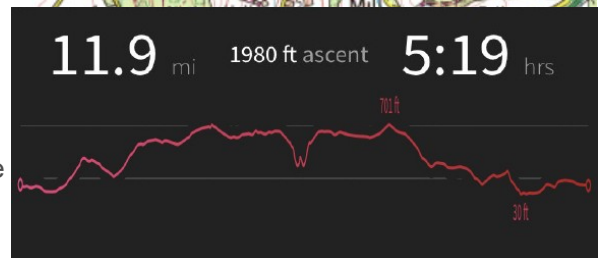
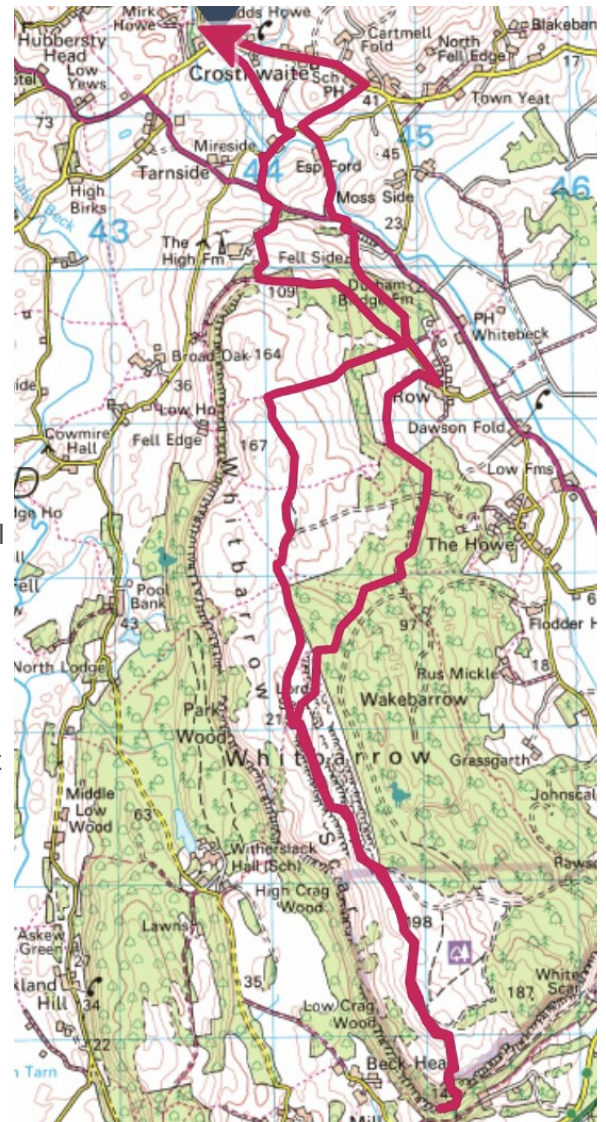
Whitbarrow is simply a delight in every season. Frozen winter days in sunshine offer magnificent views of snow covered neighbours. In spring the land colours up and fresh growth pokes its head through the grikes on the limestone pavements. A 20 minute ascent to the plateau is amply rewarded by the enormous amount of interest to be found all around. You can walk with freedom on most of Whitbarrow. Large chunks of the Fell are owned by the parishioners of Crosthwaite and Lyth, and much of the rest is a nature reserve. There is a right to roam, but good well trodden paths abound to guide you too. On Whitbarrow, if the spirit takes you, you can feel close to heaven. If it doesn't, then just be content to enjoy some of the best views in England.

Route

You will want to get onto Whitbarrow as quickly as possible, and it is best to take the path through the houses directly south from Crosthwaite. Once you are through the wooden gate, you reach open fields and a path through them that takes you over several stiles until you reach mill lane. From here, turn right past the mill and over the little bridge. At the corner, leave Mill Lane and pass through a short glade to Lyth Lane. You need to cross this and turn left for a few dozen yards before turning up the marked path and climbing towards The High Farm. Just before reaching the buildings there is a path on the left which continues up a grass pasture to the top corner of the field. From here, pass through a couple of stone stiles and continue through a little wooded area to Whitbarrow Rd. Turn left here, and walk down Whitbarrow Rd to Row Head. Just before the cottages on the left is a path through parkland that takes you up to the Fell proper.

After a gate you follow the track for around a mile through Township Allotment. Eventually this reaches a ladder over a stone wall taking you into a delightful wood of silver birch. You need to follow the path past impressive limestone scenery and trees bent into shape by the prevailing winds. Lords Seat has a magnificent cairn and you should stop your yomp here to look all around you.

Continue down the gradual limestone slope beyond the summit, and follow the path south. This takes you to a stile over a wall into Farrer's Allotment. The south of Whitbarrow becomes rockier, and when you eventually get



The Kent Estuary on Morecambe bay from a lookout above Mill Side looking towards Blackstone Point near Silverdale.



Windswept on Whitbarrow. There is no shelter from the wind on this strange and delightful Fell.



a view of the River Kent on your left, follow the path down the slope and into the edge of Buckhouse Wood. You only need to go far enough into the wood to reach a gate and wall, with a short deviation right bringing you to a crag revealing magnificent views of the bay. You have earned a rest here.

The walk then retraces back to Lords Seat. This is no bad thing, as the view is now of the fells to the west, the Winster Valley and eventually Lakeland's central fells.

From Lords Seat we take a different way home. Start to descend the same way you came, but keep right until the little limestone cliff gives way to a made wall. There is a stone stile over this which you should take. Beyond the stile after a short downhill walk the path veers left. Look out for this turn, as missing it will take you along the wrong path for this route.

A steady downhill for over half a mile takes you to a gated T-junction. Turn left here, and shortly afterwards climb over a stone stile back through Township Allotment. Paths through here are plentiful, so just try and follow your map. Although you are aiming to go straight on, you will find that the path curves back up the Fell before opening up into a large pasture. You could be in the Yorkshire Dales here, with the pretty village of Row below you. The path takes you to Whitbarrow Rd, back through Durham Bridge Woods and down through Fell Side farm back to the A5074.

Turn left for a very short road walk and then right on the farm track to the abandoned farm at Esp Ford. You are now back on Mill Lane and can make your way back to Crosthwaite Green by any one of the little paths you see on your map.



Whitbarrow can be magical in winter



Pearl bordered fritillaries

Things to See on the Walk

There is so much that a brief description won't do it justice.

The views are simply magnificent and on a clear day you can see down to Blackpool Tower and up through Dunmail Raise to Skiddaw. To the west from Caw to Wetherlam are the Furness Fells beyond Cartmel Fell. North and West you get Scafell Pike, Crinkle Crag and the Langdales. To the north Red Screes and High Street. The Kentmere range and beyond them the Howgills are north west and then above Scout Scar you can look east towards Farleton Knott. Ingleborough is behind this. In the south east you see Lancashire's Forest of Bowland moors and fells just behind Arnside Knott. You really are packing a lot in when viewing this unique 360 degree panorama.

Whitbarrow has unique flora and fauna and I would simply advise you to read up on it before setting off on this walk.