

To Find The Source of the Gilpin

Description

This is a fairly strenuous walk of around 11 miles and with about 2000ft of overall elevation. None of this is tough, but combined with the length means you should leave around 5 hours to cover the route.

This is an adventure and more an exploration than a route. It's perfectly possible to shorten the walk by around a mile by following the road up the valley at the start, and also perfectly acceptable to avoid the top of Lords Lot on your way home. It's your choice and I wouldn't think any less of you if you did, however if this is your one walk in the area, just do the full route.

Route

Start by walking across your first bridge of the day, the clapper bridge left off Crook Rd into Jubilee Wood. Follow the path up in front of Mirk Howe and then along the hedgerow to Head Lane and right to Hubbersty Head. Straight ahead now towards Greenbank Farm and then through the fields to the back Winster Road. From here you need to cross the main A5074 and down the public footpath known as Hawkeheath Bank. Turn right, then right again at the first footpaths you come to. This eventually leads you to Crag Lane, back cross the main road and up the hill through Bryan House allotments.

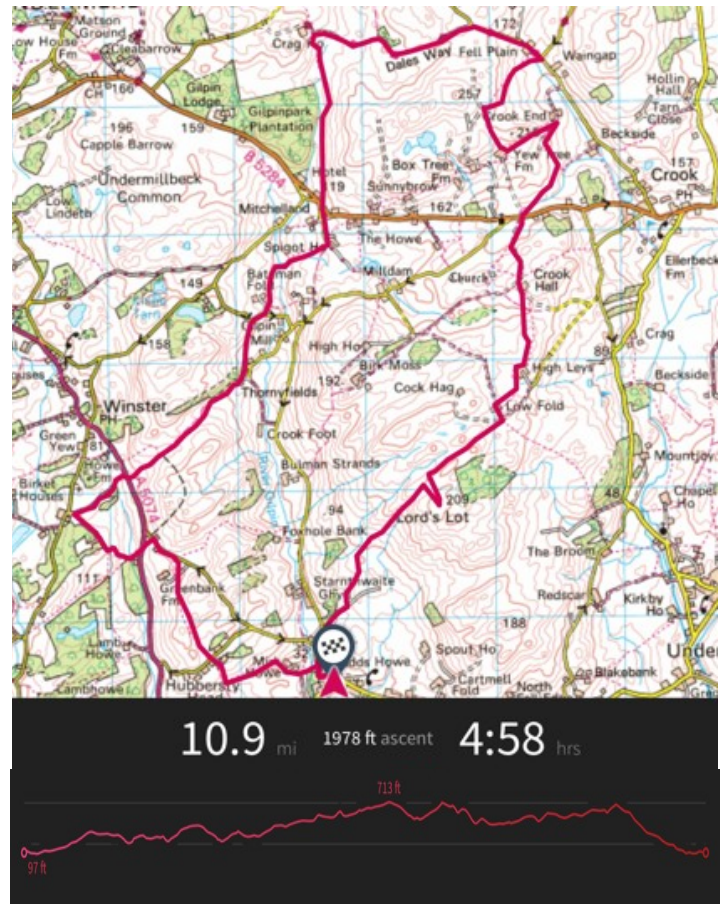
When you reach Thornyfields take the bridle path left until it meets the little road above Gilpin Mill. Turn right here and then first left past Bateman Fold and onwards. The path takes you right and back over the now diminished river then through pastureland to Spigot House.

The path now crosses the main Kendal/Bowness road and you have a lovely straight mile and a half ahead of you to Crag House.

You will by now realise you have achieved the object of your walk. I'll leave it to you to find the small spring from where our local river meets fresh air.

From here the path joins the Dales Way long distance footpath eastwards until you reach a tarmac road. You need to travel right and down towards Waingap.

A concealed stone stile on the right takes you onto a path that, at first, appears to pass through the garden of a quite grand house. After you go over the next stile this opens upwards into rough Fell again. You will see the impressive cairn on top of the hill that marks Crook Head now and the path goes to the right of this. Just before Yew Tree farm take the path left to Crook End and then right back down to the main road.



Bridges across the Gilpin.



The source of the Gilpin.

Crossing the road to Crook Hall, you now pass through the back of High Lees and onto Low Fold. A turn left and then right at the crossroads takes you through pasture and then on to the open access land of Lords Lot. The paths up to the viewpoint at the top are indistinct so you need to roam off piste to find the cairn at the top, returning the same way to the footpath after your diversion.

The footpath down the Fell isn't completely straightforward after the gate at the bottom, but you just need to make your way to lower ground the most obvious way and soon you will reach the little car track taking you to Hardriggs.

From Hardriggs just follow the road back up to Crosthwaite Green

Things to See on the Walk

Given that this is an exploration I'll only give you a few clues.

The quiet cart tracks you pass through were often enclosed main roads before motorisation. Try to envisage them when they were busy links between hamlets and farms.

There is plenty of gorse, blackthorn and beech blossom to admire during the Spring and you may well see deer, rabbits and even an occasional fox. On my last visit to Lords Lot I listened to a cuckoo for almost half a mile as I made my way over the top.

The best viewpoints are at Crook Head and then Lords Lot.

The real objective of your day is the source of the Gilpin. It is lovely river, alive with small fish and eventually it empties into Morecambe Bay. The land around its source is splendid walking country.



The prominent cairn on Crook Head (left) and a less imposing one on Lords Lot looking down on a drizzly day (Right)