

Over the hill to Broom Lane

Description

A circular walk of less than six miles to take your time over. A short ascent of the Gilpin valley side of around 15 minutes. Around three hours at a leisurely pace.

I enjoy this walk in winter when a bit of road walking is a relief from muddier paths. It's perfect to enjoy between a cooked Sunday breakfast and a pint whilst reading the papers as it gets dark before a late Sunday roast. Get the picture? Wellie walk in Winter, it does get muddy.

Route

Set off over the little Clapper bridge into Jubilee Wood and follow the line of the river Gilpin up to Starnthwaite Ghyll. You will already know why I advised wellies. From Starnthwaite take the valley road to the footpath right immediately before Bulman Strands Farm. If it is December or January you may now begin to curse me as the footpath up the side of the valley is often also a run off for rainwater from the Fell and so it can be either icy or very muddy at this time. Trust me it's worth it..

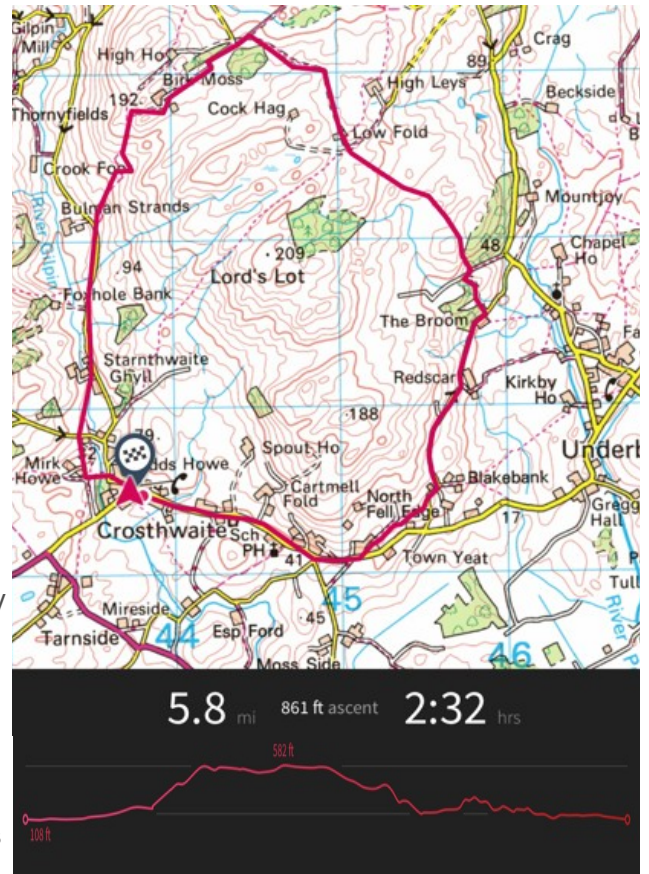
The path up the side of the valley turns into an old cart track and you should watch out for a turn right, through a gate towards Birk Moss. After this you may be relieved to reach a tarmac farm road which you follow gently downwards until reaching a path over pastures and stiles towards Low Fold. As you get to the highest point on this path it's worth looking back for a magnificent view of the Langdale Pikes, around 15 miles away.

If you are lucky at Low Fold you may get to have a chat with Angela or one of her family. The very opposite of stereotypical unwelcoming farmers. Don't stop long though, they're busy and you are only half way.

Straight across at crossroads towards Underbarrow. If you look left here you may be surprised to see a group of golfers teeing off from the 5th tee at Beckside Golf Club. (Golfers make a mental note to bring your clubs next time). You gently descend through some fine open fields towards Mountjoy Woods. The descent down from here is short but might be slippery in winter.

When you meet the tiny track at the bottom turn right for 50 yards or so and then left over a wooden stile. The path from here runs alongside a pretty beck set in woodland. After a stone stile you reach Broom Lane and turn right.

From here it's tarmac all the way home, but don't be disappointed, you have had your share of 'slutch' for the day. Towards the end of Broom Lane after about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile there is a path on your right that cuts off a corner and takes you back towards the blacksmith at Town Yeat. From here you can walk past the Punchbowl where you started. Let me correct that. From here you should head to the Punchbowl for a pint, the Sunday papers and the Sunday roast that you have been thinking about since Breakfast. It's what winters are made for.



Harrison Stickle and the Langdale Pikes from above Low Fold



Wonderful cattle in grazing in Autumn

Things to See on the Walk

If, as I advise, this is a Winter walk you will find yourself staring at your feet for some of the time but do look up. The Autumn and winter colours are incredible from October onwards. Browns, russets and yellows. There will be times when you want to kick the leaf litter in the air like an 8 year old.

In Spring there are delightful carpets of wild daffodils and then bluebells in the woods on the Underbarrow side.

There are plenty of viewpoints. From the tops around Low Fold there is magnificent scenery eastwards towards the Howgills, Cunswick Scar and Scout Scar. You also get a tantalising glimpse from here of the Kent Estuary which often looks silvery in winter sunshine.

But, best of all, is the view of the wood burner in the Punchbowl from the comfort of a soft sofa with a pint of local beer in hand as it's getting dark outside.

Winter.....makes you almost look forward to it.