



Route Information

Distance 23 kilometres (14.5 miles)

Ascent 1050 metres (3450 feet)

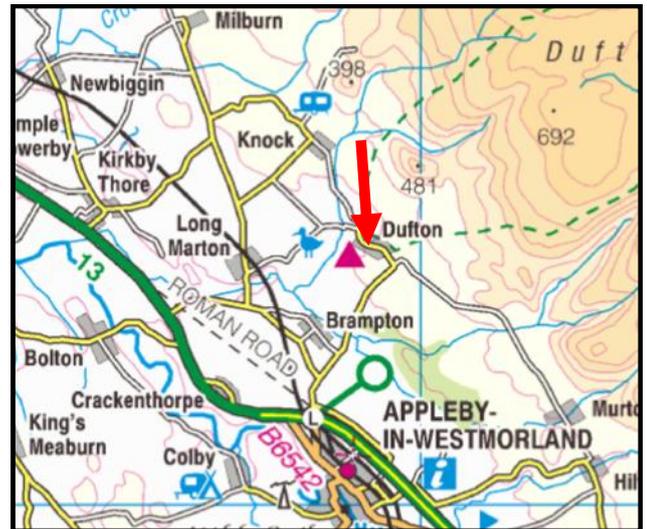
Time needed 9 hours (approx)

Start point

Dufton village green, approx 3½ miles north of Appleby-in-Westmorland. Parking available in the small car park just off the village green at NY 689 249

Public Transport

Dufton is served by bus routes 573 and 625 (limited service)



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Part of this route crosses open access land on a managed grouse moor, over which **DOGS ARE NOT ALLOWED**. This area is coloured red on the accompanying map. Access may be further restricted during the nesting season and at other times of the year. To avoid disappointment, please visit www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk to get the latest restriction information, before you set out.



Currick near Fiend's Fell, Hartside

Begin from the village car park at the eastern end of the attractive, wide, tree-lined green. Pass into the street and turn right, following the road round by Old Dufton Hall farmhouse and enter the lane to the left of the chapel, signposted 'Pennine Way to Garrigill 15 mls'.

Follow the walled lane, and as the wall ends on the left be guided by the Pennine Way sign and hand-gate into a confined flagged gillside path. This leads by further hand-gates into a farm-access lane leading to (and through) the gated yard of Coatsike.

Hurning Lane follows naturally on offering fine views of Dufton Pike, with further gates and stiles to approach and pass Halsteads, a traditional farmstead now used for stock-handling. This is the last hint of settlement on the walk until Hartside Café.

From the gate beside the buildings the Pennine Way leads up the open track, flanked by a remnant hedge. The track curves downhill to arrive at a wall-stile and gate, promptly step over the clapper-bridge spanning Great Rundale Beck. Follow on with the wallside track, gradually rising to a kissing-gate, the upper walled lane portion used for stock handling, hence the mud and need for the flagstones!

The track continues, and fording Small Burn, becomes a pleasant green way. Watch to take the left fork at the Pennine Way signpost directing along the green path, with a fine view of Knock Pike, to cross a wall-stile. An unsuspected bank of heather flanks the path which leads on with a fence left above the wide stony debris of Swindale Beck to another wall-stile and crosses the broad bridge spanning the valley beck.

The primary ascent of the Pennine scarp begins from the Moor House-Upper Teesdale NNR notice board. This draws attention to the fact that this extensive (88sq km) area of peat upland habitat is a leading resource in the study of climate change. The higher parts cradling arctic alpine plants that have survived here since the last Ice Age.

Bear up the slope on a tangible path keeping to the brow above the deeply incised cleft of Swindale Beck. The path passes a pair of casual cairns from where there is the first clear view towards Cross Fell, with Knock Pike below overtopped by the steam from the British Gypsum works at Kirkby Thore.

The path marches purposefully up the slope passing a cairn amid a loose clutter of stones soon following the western edge of Knock Hush. To all intents a natural ravine, but this was once enlarged by a sudden discharge from an artificial dam, the rush of water better revealing mineral veins - the meaning of the mining term hush.

Stones with golden trail-blazing arrows ensure the Pennine Way is never in doubt all the way up to Knock Old Man. The solid square structure is a striking landmark, marking the boundary of the Knock and Dufton parishes and constructed in the mid 19th century.



Knock Old Man, with Cross Fell and Great Dun Fell behind

At last you get a good view of the main ridge with the gleaming white radar globe on Great Dun Fell prominent. The way strides easily onto the large summit plateau of Knock Fell arriving at a sizeable informal summit cairn at 794m/2604ft. Mickle Fell stands out to the south-east, on the far side of the plateau beyond a pool and further stony clutter.

The Pennine Way turns north-north-east becoming more evident over stony ground to reach a flagged section, which passes a dish-shaped hollow and shallow pools to reach the access road to the aviation radar station on Great Dun Fell.

However, the Pennine Way forsakes the tarmac at a gate after approx 230m, holding to a footpath (not the bridleway, which heads off down Trout Beck towards Moor House and the Tees) that slips up through the black exposure of Dunfell Hush via steps and mounts onto the brow of the hill.



Radar station on Great Dun Fell

Keep to the right of the fenced enclosure of the radar station. Holding resolute to a north-westerly line, the Pennine Way dips to resume a stretch of stone flagging which leads on through the depression and on up Little Dun Fell. For all the benefits to the habitat the flags are hard on the thighs so it is with some relief that the turf resumes on the rise to the top.

Pass the small summit cairn advancing by a ruckle of rocks and a wind-shelter to resume the flagged trail on the descent wending down to the Moor House signboard at Crowdundle Head. Pass on through the kissing-gate and on up the long slope towards the plateau rim of Cross Fell, losing the flagging on the upper climb to reach a tall currick. Aim west-north-west to the next tall round currick, with the path leading onto to the summit of Cross Fell over a tundra-like surface.

Inevitably the wide plateau denies one the sense of depth to what is unquestionable a wonderful and immense panorama. Prevailing wind will determine which side of the wind-shelter you choose to rest and feast your eyes and appetite. To the north see the Cheviots, east the North Pennine heartland above

Weardale, south the 'golf ball' on Great Dun Fell backed by Mickel Fell seem far flung details, and west, oh yes west, across the Eden vale the stirring ranks of the Lakeland Fells with the Helvellyn range and Blencathra quickly identified.

Frequently cloud hangs over the summit making your stay a dull one in terms of lighting. If you feel you have enough time to parade around the western edge of the scarp, this is recommended to get a fuller appreciation of the remarkable Eden landscape. Is there any wonder Biblical writers chose this valley to explain the perfect origins of man!

The ridge path heads off north-west, guided by curriks, slipping down the damp northern scarp to meet the old bridleway linking Kirkland with Garrigill at a large cairn. Bear left and veer off the regular way onto a quad track after some 200m north-westwards - a quite consistent line to follow to Melmerby Fell (Knapside Hill) - onto the continuing broad watershed ridge.

Passing a cairn, the track leads over grass down to a compound sheepfold and nook wind-break built among a substantial surface outcropping of grey rock. The quad track departs from the ridge and is of no further relevance. The pathless ridge continues via a tall currick with rashes of clutter stones, peaty ground and some exposed groughs, to pass a couple more curriks before Green Hill, a low scarp of grey rock with cairns and a length of wall.

Descend the bank to find a circular sheepfold and bear left (west) with a quad track to reach a line of tall curriks. Bear north-west again continuing through a stony hollow and along the pathless ridge interspersed with curriks to reach and cross the Maiden Way.



The Maiden way, a route of Roman origin

This Roman road linked the forts at Kirkby Thore with Whitley Castle near Alston. Whitley Castle is no ordinary run of the mill Roman fort, for all it has not been excavated, nor features on heritage tours. It's day is coming! The highest stone-built fort in Britain, its situation gives it the right to be called Old Alston, for it marshalled Roman lead mining activities in the high Pennines around the headstreams of the South Tyne. If you look with keen-eyed attention you will find evidence of original stone paving and even the odd culvert, though one suspects this is a later addition, the road sustaining a working life as a bridleway to the present day.

Passing to the right of the pools, ascend the bank to reach the cairn on Dun Edge, the highest point on Melmerby Fell 709m/2326ft. Now happily furnished with a path underfoot, follow on to the large currick and wind-shelter on Knapside Hill. The path naturally veers north to a kissing-gate in the fence crossing Little Knapside Hill, and heads on only slightly west of north over tussocky ground slipping through a shallow gill hollow with the path rather vague until a strong path is found on the approach to a kissing-gate where a wall and fence meet. The path advances to bear up a shelf-path onto Fiend's Fell, with its OS column and cairn.

The name is enigmatic and was once ascribed to Cross Fell. Surviving here as a reminder of the Helm Wind, a wicked beast of a wind that from time to time rushes down the Pennine scarp towards the Eden valley, and can persist for days on end. The only named wind in Britain it is unique to the east fellside, and caused when an easterly weather system raises the great Helm Bar of cloud high over the Pennines and sends cold wind shrieking down the slope in an express train of pulverising air.

The path continues easily down towards a tall currick, passing to its left to reach a kissing-gate in a fence before heading on down to join the open track at a sleeper bridge ditch crossing. Turn right, following this old metalled road and complete the expedition via kissing-gates arriving into the car park behind Hartside Café.

North - South traverse, alternative route description

Route Information

Distance 23 kilometres (14.5 miles)

Ascent 640 metres (2100 feet)

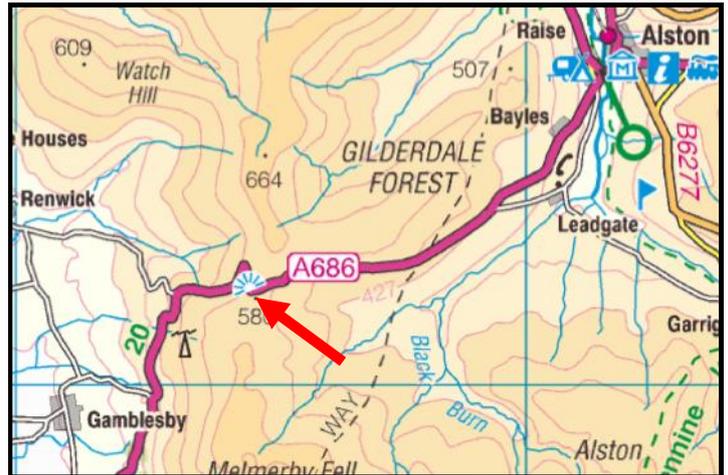
Time needed 8 hours (approx)

Start point

From Hartside Top on the A686 between Melmerby and Alston. Parking available at Hartside Top Café at the summit of the pass NY 616 418

Public Transport

Hartside is served by bus route 888 (limited service - summer only)



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Leave the large car park at the southern end, via successive kissing-gates, following the hardcore track. March westward watching for the sleeper bridge and waymark post on the left. These guide the ridge walk off the track and up the slope on a narrow trod to a kissing-gate in a fence. The path quickly coming to a tall currick, from where a quad-track leads on south to the OS column on Fiend's Fell (634m/2080ft).

Pass on by the shelter cairn to descend west by a curious stone-edged green-way. This ends as mysteriously as it began with the path swinging south to head for a kissing-gate where a fence and wall meet. Beyond, a clear path carries on aiming to a cairn after which the path fades as you descend towards the headstream of Limekiln Beck. Take advantage of the lateral grass path running parallel with the hollow (west), beneath the brow just crossed.

After some 80m watch for the feeder groughs on the far bank and cross the hollow to their right. A path of sorts becomes apparent which veers half-right to avoid the tough moor vegetation, aiming for a stand alone wooden gateway (lost fence) with timber shooting butts well in evidence beyond.

A path now remains consistent all the way up the ridge to go through a kissing-gate in a fence on Little Knapside Hill.

A clear ridge path persists south advancing to the cairn and wind-shelter on Knapside Hill (685m/2247ft). Continue along the ridge to a smaller cairn on Dun Edge, which for all its modesty is the highest point on Melmerby Fell (709m/2326ft).



Summit of Knapside Hill, Melmerby Fell

Now veer exactly south-east, without the aid of a path underfoot, as hereon there is no ridge path almost to the Kirkland/Garrigill cross-ridge bridleway in the northern shadow of Cross Fell. This line takes one over boggy terrain past the odd cairn and to the left of a linear pool to step over the Maiden Way. Navigate to the next tall currick.

Notice that there are an abundance of curricks (tall cairns) on the ridge, few if any, can be said to have been erected to guide ridge walkers. Their origins were far

more to do with the working life of shepherds and their need to navigate across the plateau. Nonetheless, the irregular sequence of curricks are useful, and as many are beautifully constructed one is naturally inclined to pay them an admiring visit.

En route, pass what looks like a shooting butt wall, but unlikely in this situation and there are patches of limestone clitter to weave through too. Further along one comes to a staggered trio of curricks set on a great stony patch reached through a slack (hollow). Bear left with the quad track which leads by a currick in a pool and round to a circular sheepfold.

Continuing still south-eastwards, head up the grass bank onto the appropriately named Green Hill. Pass on by some sink hollows to reach a low stony scarp with cairns (that on the east side are decorated with two lengths of lead-mine track) and wind-shelter walls on the west side.



Currick on Green Hill, looking to Cross Fell

Striding on with a further rash of limestone clint and feature currick, weave through the peat groughs aiming for another currick in an otherwise featureless setting. This leads to a distinct stony prow where stands a sheepfold with a complex layout and a small alcove wind-shelter. March on to arrive at a quad track which is your guide to the Garrigill/Kirkland bridleway, an old corpse road.

Bear left to the tall cairn from where there is a long view down the valley NNE to Alston. Here break right on a regular path (Pennine Way) to ascend the scarp slope, negotiating several spring rivulets, and aim for the prominent cairn on the skyline, thereby reaching the plateau edge of Cross Fell.

The path angles SSE via successive low curricks to reach the dilapidated cross-wall wind-shelter and adjacent white-washed OS column at 893m/2930ft.

The wind-shelter is not the origin of the Cross Fell's name, though it enables you to cheat the draught as you take a well-earned break. The summit panorama is huge, though the plateau restricts it to a consistently thin band. The best outlooks, as you may expect, are from the western rim over the wide Eden valley to Lakeland's exciting peaks, though understandably most visitors content themselves with the summit.



View over the Eden valley from the fell side

You are now only just over half-way to Dufton, with much wonderful walking yet in store. Continuing south-east complete the crossing of the plateau upon a typical tundra surface and ground flora, passing two curricks, the second a lofty creation of less tidy form that its predecessor.

The path leaves the plateau to join a long flight of slabs which crosses the line of the old bridle route from Blencarn to Garrigill. This can be a useful escape route, like the bridleway on the north side of Cross Fell to Kirkland. This one leads down the great scarp of Wildboar Scar into Littledale for Blencarn or by the enigmatic Hanging Walls of Mark Anthony (medieval cultivation terracing) to Kirkland.

Ahead Little and Great Dun Fells draw attention, with Cow Green Reservoir a more distant feature half-left. The paved way comes down to Tees Head, slips through a kissing-gate and passes by a Moor House-Upper Teesdale National Nature Reserve notice board.

So begins the rise onto Little Dun Fell, the slabs end three-quarters of the way to the first top, where a wind-shelter is situated. The close-cropped turf

continues towards the modest summit cairn (842m/2762ft). A fenced area on the east slope allowing natural herbage to flourish exempt from sheep's teeth. The fell-name a simple description of its dull brown surface colouring.

Descend into the next depression where yet more slabs are laid to concentrate walker's passage. The path is ushered over the left-hand shoulder of the fell, the summit requisitioned by the NATS radar station with its distinctive white sphere, twin white pegs, clad building and sundry other structures and masts.

The path heads straight on moving down to cross Dunfell Hush. The black shale was exposed by prospecting lead miners channelling water to reveal the near-surface mineral deposits. The path leads on to join the access road from the radar station at a hand-gate, and sign 'Dufton 5½ miles'. Follow this to the right-hand bend here take heed of the 'Pennine Way Dufton' sign. The path heads past two further fenced enclosures and along a paved section beside sheets of water.



Prospector's pit on the rise to Knock Fell looking back to Great Dun Fell

The paving leads on by a shelter cairn to traverse the flat plateau of Knock Fell to its summit currick (794m/2604ft) from where one gets the best view of Mickle Fell (788m/2585ft). Until 1972 this was the highest point in Yorkshire, since when it upholds the same status in County Durham.

After all the ups and downs of the watershed ridge it is time to turn south-west and begin the four-mile descent to Dufton. The first objective is Knock Old Man. One can deduce that this squarely built currick has been a landmark for several centuries and is a good spot to bid your final dues to Cross Fell, making a fine foreground subject for a photo.

The path winds down Green Hill by Knock Hush, which looks totally natural, but the name suggests miners of old tampered with it to reveal evidence for underlying minerals.

The path passes the odd cairn during a straight-forward descent, latterly enjoying a fine view of the lower gorge of Swindale Beck into which Knock Hush drains. Knock Pike takes centre-stage ahead, the wisps of steam beyond emitting from the Kirkby Thore gypsum works.



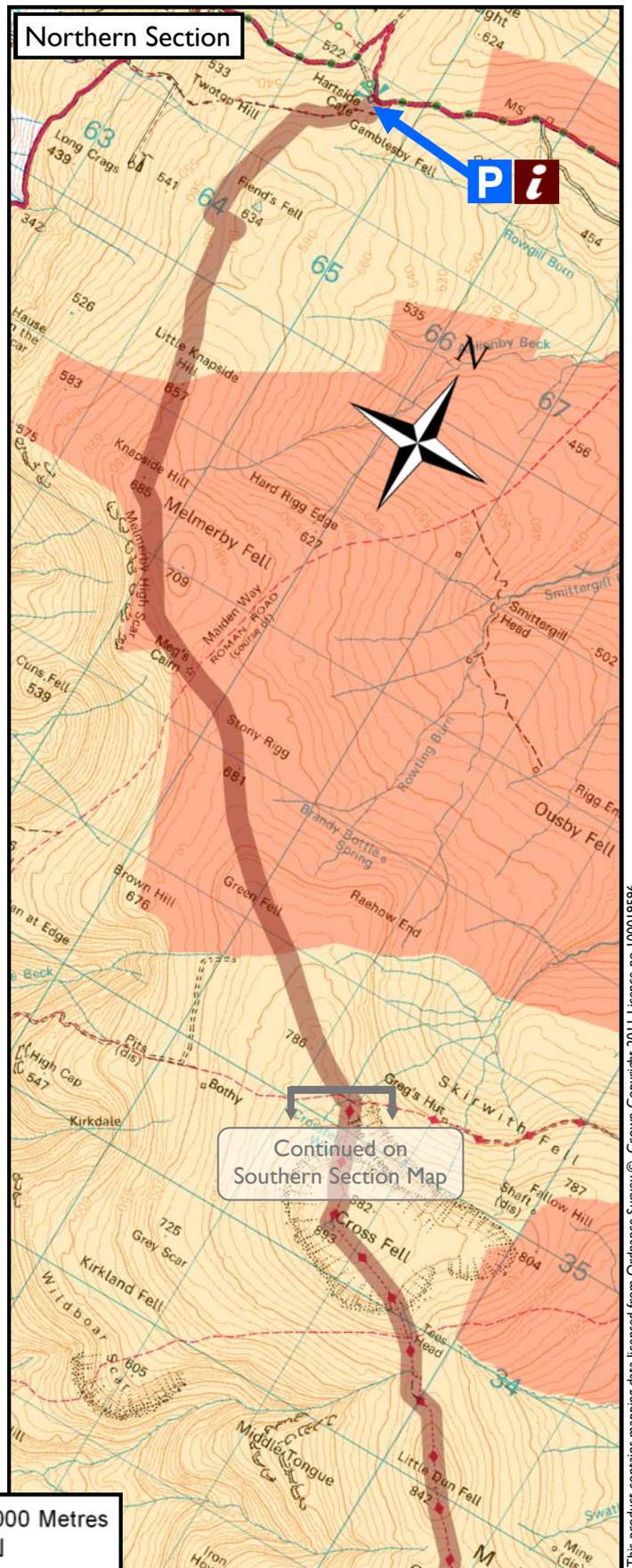
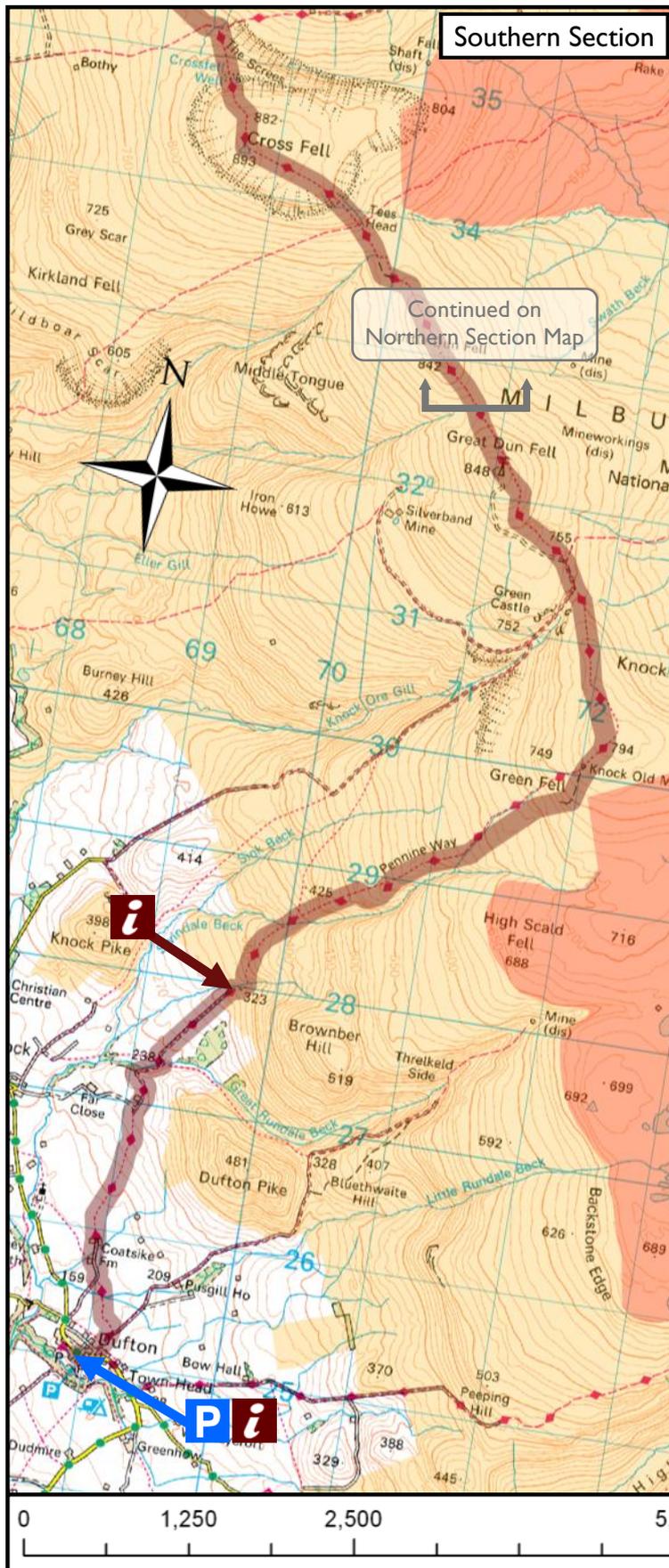
View over Knock Pike towards the Lakeland Fells

Cross the wooden bridge and bear immediately right, crossing the fence-defended wall-stile. Now advancing downstream beside a lovely growth of heather, cross a second wall-stile to open pasture with a green path leading on to merge with a green-track.

Keep right downhill curving over Small Burn following a wall to a gated lane; a marshalling yard for farm stock. All attempts to ease the passage for walkers has been to no avail, and after wet weather you're set for muddy boots here, even if you avoided it all on the ridge!

The lane heads on down with a fine view of Dufton Pike and the native oakwood in the dale. Crossing Great Rundale Beck via a tidy flagstone bridge and stile, follow the ensuing track leading right, which leads over the brow of Cosca Hill to a gate at the old farmstead at Halsteads.

Hereon the Pennine Way follows a gated green lane (Hurning Lane) through Coatsike farmyard. Keep to the Pennine Way, following the waymarks to eventually join the road and bear right to the village green.



-  Access Land
-  Line of Route
-  Restricted Access
-  Access Information
-  Parking Place