

Crosby Fell, Stone Circles and Robin Hood's Grave

Distance – 12 kilometres

Recommended Time – 3 hours **Standard** – Moderate

Park or make your way to the walled hamlet of Oddendale (OS ref 592134). This is a Roman Road and also Wainwright's Coast to Coast path joins the old road here.

A romantic view of the Romans travelling through Cumbria has them braving the wilds of High Street climbing from Ambleside onto that windswept ridge of 8 miles before descending into Askham and Penrith. In reality the Romans used this road a lot more. Several parts of it are not public rights of way, but this is a good section with plenty of views on a fine day. It has come from Brougham Castle, about 15 kilometres north near Penrith and is headed to Tebay, about another 10 kilometres south.

After only 500 metres, just off the track to the right you will see The Oddendale stone circle (OS ref 592129). This comprises two almost perfect concentric rings of stone. There are 34 stones in the outer ring which is 28 metres in diameter and 23 stones in the inner circle surrounding what was almost certainly a burial mound. This dates to the Neolithic times, about 2,872–2,350 BC.

Follow the path as it appears to head to the summit you can see, that of Crosby Fell. This means staying on the right fork and leaving the Wainwright path (for now at least) as it heads south (598119).



NEW ING
LODGE



After approximately a kilometre (601110), should you want to visit the summit, (and why not, see one of my favourite quotes below) It is a 10 minute detour to the right here.

"Let us stop here a little while longer. It is good to rest on the summit and to dream amongst the clouds for a few short moments of one's life." ("Peaks and Precipices" - Guido Rey).

Back from the summit and there is a cross path here, and a small pile of stones, so if you choose not to go to the summit, this is the highest point you will reach on this walk. Continue for about another kilometre until you reach a grouse hunting shed on the left of the path. Here take the left rough quad bike track through peaty heather (this is not marked on maps). After about two kilometres across the moor this runs into the Holloway.

A Holloway is an ancient path that over the years of use has hollowed out its way. From MacFarlane's book. This footpath still runs between the graveyard in Orton and Crosby Ravensworth. This hollowed section is a wonderful place to walk in all weathers, and trust me, it gets all weathers. Head right and it continues as a Holloway for several hundred metres before reaching a stile and then descending the hill into Orton. Head left, and after only fifty metres you will reach Robin Hood's Grave.

This is one of several cairns that is supposed to lay over the remains of Robin Hood, the theory being that no one would know for sure under which of the cairns his bones actually lay.

50 metres further from the cairn the path meets Wainwright's Coast to Coast path. This part of the moor is very quiet these days, though the Wainwright coast to coast path is the most popular long distance footpath in Europe. Walkers pass all headed east towards Kirby Stephen, and pretty much always between 10 and 11:30 am in the morning. At other times, and certainly out of season you are pretty much guaranteed to have the place to yourself.

It has quite a history. Several million years ago it used to be an inland sea. Coral has been found here. There are rare orchids, though finding them is easier some miles east above Great Asby. Considerably more recently, in the 1940s and 50s it was an artillery range. So if you are hunting for coral you may find gun shells instead. These days the landowner is trying to repopulate black grouse for hunting purposes.

Robin Hood's Grave is a great place for a rest and snack. It is often missed by coast to coasters whose path is only about 10 metres away. If you consider the direction they are headed you can probably see why, it actually isn't visible to them.

Turn left on to the Wainwright path, heading against the traffic as it were, and continue past the huge stone left from the ice age (glacial erratic), and the stone circle remnants, back towards where you left this path earlier and retrace your steps to Oddendale.

