

Gummer's How and Cartmel Fell

We start from a free car park on land owned by Forestry England on Fell Foot Brow. To find the right road, take the A590 to Newby Bridge and then at the roundabout take the A592 toward Bowness on Windermere. After 1km look for Fell Foot Brow on the right – the car park is about 500m up the road sited on the right. If the car park is full, don't worry return to the road and use a layby. The OS grid reference for the car park is SD38958763, and the corresponding what-3-words tag is **nothing.scuba.galloping**. If you are using Satnav to get there then Fell Foot Brow, Staveley-in-Cartmel, Ulverston LA11 6NX should work.

Once at the car park, head away from the road and look for the path on the left hand side of the car park. This leads through woodland and back to Fell Foot Brow at a wooden gate. We cross the road and continue with a path directly to the viewpoint at Gummer's How. The route to the summit is clear and easy to but as we progress further toward the How, the path becomes steeper and quite rocky – it is possible to take a very direct route to the cairn at the top of the hill, but we recommend the gentler path round the easter flank. Once at the top, we get a great view of Windermere and we are reminded just how long the lake is. We now retrace back to the road and head left up Fell Foot Brow. We follow the road for just 400m and then look for a lane on the right – this heads down toward a farm at Sow How: We have Astley's Plantation on the right and great views over toward the Heights on our left.

As we follow the lane down between the drystone walls there are a number of paths and tracks into the plantation on the right – we ignore these for now and continue down to the farm, taking the roadway between the farmhouse and barns and continuing Southeast until just 50m past the buildings we take a left turn onto a track heading northeast and to Sow How Tarn. The track soon veers left, but we carry straight on and through a gate as we climb toward the tarn.

Beyond the embankment at the edge of the tarn, the path heads Northeast and up to a gate, to continue through the next field and on toward the woodland, which we enter on the track that leads to Heights Cottage. Not quite on the track, and so not immediately visible, there is another tarn to our left as we head through the woods – this is Middle Tarn, and there is a footpath up to it should you wish to make a short detour.

The track soon leaves the woodland and continues with a drystone wall to our right, until we arrive at a large farmhouse and barn – no longer occupied. This is Heights Cottage. The lane goes past the back of the building, and we then head sharply to the right and follow the route down the side of the barn and down toward a gate adjacent to a stand of trees.

Beyond the gate we are on Raven's Barrow. There are designated footpaths on the Barrow, but the area is also Open Access Land, so we can pick our own route, and we take a route that is not specifically marked as a path on the OS map. If you are concerned about navigation here, don't be – take our GPX with you on your phone to check the route, or if that's not possible, simply head westward from the stile and when the path forks keep right. You will climb a little and then see a cairn described on the OS map as a monument.

Having viewed the monument, we continue west and see a church in the distance, and well below us. This is St Anthony's at Cartmel Fell – and that's where we head next. The path down the hill is quite steep and needs some care when wet – as does the stile over the drystone wall that we encounter halfway down. From here we are back on marked paths – in fact there are two paths as we come over the stile – we need to bear right and head down to road.

At the road we notice an interesting, inscribed signpost opposite and take the indicated route down to the church, which is just 100m down the track – we enter the church grounds via a stile into the well-kept graveyard.

As we leave the church and head up toward the Lychgate, we pass a war memorial that remembers thirteen local men lost in the two world wars, and then arrive at the village hall – once the schoolhouse. An interesting ceramic frieze and an interpretation board are worth taking the time to read before we head South away from the church and down to a small road.

We cross this and continue in the same direction on the far side, heading through woodland until we arrive at a minor road where we head left for a while. We follow this road down to a staggered crossroads. The road we are crossing is the larger of the two and we need to make sure we carry straight on, on the smaller track ahead.

We follow the path South through the woods, cross Spannel Beck at a small wooden bridge, then walk behind the house at Little Thorphinsty. The path branches here and we need to make sure we keep left – so that we remain on a southerly course through more woodland until we arrive at a road next to a large barn. We head right here and walk uphill past Thorphinsty Hall.

Just 50m beyond the house we take a marked footpath on the left back into dense woodland – this is Crag Wood. The path initially continues south, until we meet a field within the woodland which we cross to a gate diagonally opposite. We then start to veer right such that we end up heading west – in practice this is not especially noticeable on the ground as the path meanders around trees in a way that defies such straight line thinking. Be prepared for the last section of Crag Wood to be quite steep though!

Eventually we arrive at a minor road and couple of buildings. We head right here and then see a fingerpost – we take the route to Simpson Ground, which takes us up to a wonderfully atmospheric derelict farm at Pattison How. The path continues past the derelict farm and swings round slightly to the right – we need to look for a stile in the drystone wall opposite and then take the potentially boggy path up to the next set of farm buildings at Simpsons Ground. The path crosses two wooden footbridges and then heads to the left through the farm buildings and up the track toward the woodland. On the way, we pass a set of three millstones and then take a path signed as a bridleway to Staveley in Cartmel. Although Staveley is the destination of the bridleway, it is not where we are going – after just 100m we follow a track round to the right to find the dam at the end of Simpson Ground Reservoir. We walk along the front of the dam and then pick up a path at the far end which heads round to the right through more woodland.

The path heads northeast for a while now – though as before it meanders around amongst the tress so will not feel like a straight line. We eventually exit into more open land to see the path fork – we keep left and then stay with the path as it bears left to bring Sow How into view again. We are on the home straight now. We walk back up through the farm and then back onto the lane we used earlier in the day, following it almost all the way back to Fell Foot Brow. Just 50m before we get that for though, we see a footpath on the left which takes us back through woodland to the car park where we started.

- **Total distance 14.3 km (8.9 miles)**
- **Total ascent 467 m**
- **Moderate walk**