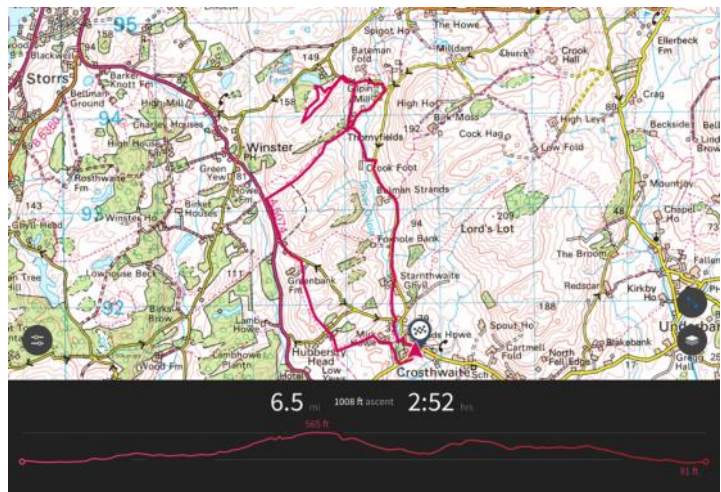


Cat Crag and Knife Tarn

Description

A walk that covers small country lanes, farm tracks and public footpaths to a beautiful tarn and fabulous viewpoint. Around 6 miles and 1000ft of gentle ascent. A three hour round.

Knife Tarn is the beautiful lake of the Gilpin Hotel. It is privately owned but can be viewed from the road over to Winster or better still from its southern bank which sits on Batemanfold allotment which is public access land under the 'right to roam' legislation. This walk illustrates the frustration of this legislation as access to Batemanfold is awkward. There is a good farm track of around 150 yards which links the allotment with the little back road to Winster through a metal gate. The allotment itself abuts this road and the problem could be solved by a ladder stile over the stone wall but sadly there currently isn't one. For walkers who feel the need to ask permission then the best way might be to pay for a coffee at Gilpin Lake lodge and use their grounds to walk to Cat Crag from. I'll leave it with you.



I would suggest an anti-clockwise route up the Gilpin valley to start off with.

Route

You should walk the mile and a half to Crook Foot whichever way you want, the road walk is interesting but if this is new to you divert over into Jubilee Wood across the clapper bridge and take the path through Starnthwaite Ghyll for a diverting alternative.

Crook Foot is a private residence so make sure you stick to the old track along the river to Thornyfields. From here take the track at the back of the farmhouse towards Crook and on reaching the road turn left and after a couple of hundred yards left again. From here you will see the metal gate leading to the private farm track to the back of Knife Tarn.

Cat Crag is beyond Knipe Tarn and there are some little folding hills and valleys leading you up to it. Don't go beyond a stone wall, just turn left up the hill and you will see trees and a large slab of rock at the highest point around. When you've had a look around retrace your steps to the back Winster road and head down to Gilpin Mill for a look. As the road heads up to Shepherds Yeat you need to turn right and back down to Thornyfields.

You have basically walked a circle to take in the sights, but now take the path at the rear of the converted barn and walk uphill and then across Bryan Houses Plantation to the A5074. Here turn left for a few hundred yards and then left again to the tiny road back towards Crosthwaite.

Your choice again now. The road takes you eventually to Hardriggs and is a delight. If you have an aversion to road walking then take the path past Greenbank Farm and up to Hubbersty Head before walking across Mirk Howe back to Crosthwaite Green.



The island on Knipe Tarn is a home for swans to make their nests. (left)

On the way to Cat Crag is this hillock with a copse on top. (above)



The sunshine highlights the path alongside the Gilpin to Thornyfields. (above)

Knipe Tarn looking lovely in sunshine too. (above right)

The view back down the Gilpin valley



Things to see on the walk.

The farm buildings at both Crook Foot and Thornyfields are beautifully maintained and each have magnificent Westmorland hatbox chimneys.

Knipe Tarn might be artificial but is undeniably beautiful. The tree covered island is home to swans and water birds are in their heaven at this lovely spot.

Cat Crag is a terrific height with views all round. I particularly like the view back down the Gilpin Valley towards the Lyth valley and Kent Estuary, but all around is lovely. The northern view with Loughrigg in the middle distance shows you the way to tougher walks.

Gilpin Mill was a working water mill from the 1500's to the late 19th century. It is now a very well reviewed b&b, though the mill race and buildings still invite viewing.

Rabbits abound through golden gorse on Bow Mabble Breast and you may see deer on any of the hills around here.