

## Smardale Walk E

**Start:** Newbiggin-on-Lune

**Grid Ref:** NY 703 053

**Nearest postcode:** CA17 4NY

**Distance:** 8.6 miles / 14 km

**Terrain:** Tarmac, hard track, open fell

**Ascent:** Approx. 100 metres

**Difficulty:** Easy walking on the flat, along the route of the dismantled railway for over 4km to Smardale, then on tarmac lanes to Crosby Garrett. From there, the route follows grassy tracks and bridleways over Crosby Garrett Fell.

**Parking:** Roadside parking.

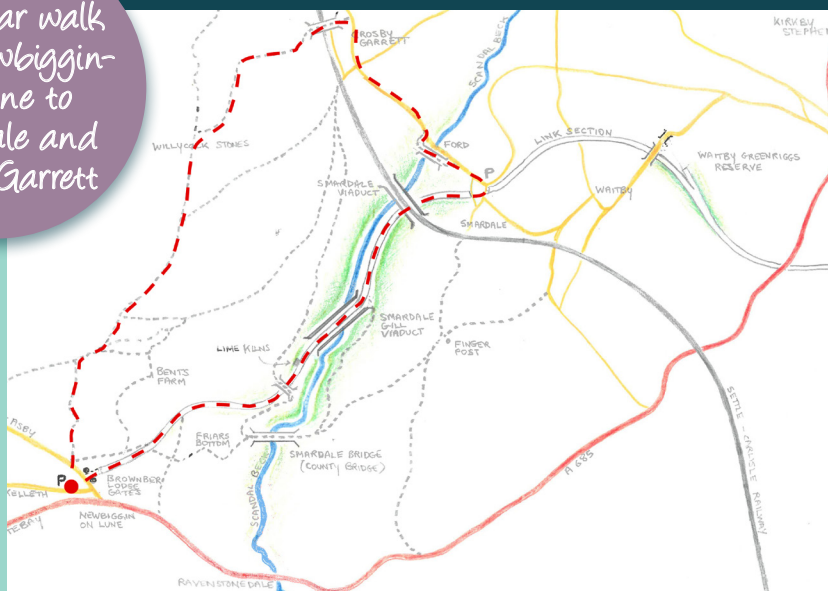
**Public Transport:** A limited bus service runs from Kendal, Sedbergh and Brough to Kirkby Stephen. The Settle–Carlisle railway goes through Kirkby Stephen.

**Directions:** Leave the A685 at the western end of Newbiggin-on-Lune signed to Asby (heading north). Turn immediately to the left and park by the roadside.

**Facilities:** No facilities along route.

**OS Map:** OS Explorer map OL19.

*A circular walk from Newbiggin-on-Lune to Smardale and Crosby Garrett*



Map by Richard Hughes. Smardale landscape by John Morrison.

## The route

- ❖ **A varied walk through grassland, woodland and open fell with plenty of opportunities to enjoy wildflowers, birds, butterflies and bees.**
- ❖ **Look out for red squirrels as you make your way towards Smardale – there are feeders along the track and around the visitor hut.**
- ❖ **Fascinating archaeological history from the Romano-British times to the railway heyday.**

Return to the minor road towards Great Asby and after 50 metres turn right between the imposing stone gateposts. Walk past the house and proceed along the lane until you come to the Smardale Nature Reserve entrance.

Follow the line of the dismantled railway for over 4 km until you get to Smardale. This is easy walking on a flat surface and

you will pass a limestone quarry with old lime kilns (see the interpretation board) and pass over the spectacular Smardale Gill viaduct and under the Smardale viaduct (Settle–Carlisle line) on the way. There are wildflowers aplenty all through the spring and summer and you may be lucky enough to spot red squirrels or some of the rarer butterflies.

At Smardale you might choose to take a small diversion to the right for a few hundred metres to call in at the Smardale Nature Reserve visitor hut, which is staffed at busy times over the summer months and has a selection of information boards.

Otherwise, at Smardale take the lane left towards Crosby Garrett (Beck Lane) and descend to the footbridge that crosses Scandal Beck by a ford. The lane now changes its name to Tarn Lane and rises for 1 km uphill towards Crosby Garrett.

At Crosby Garrett cross the beck, turn left, and then turn right immediately (do not go under the viaduct) and ascend, ignoring a footpath to the left. Bear left over the railway and take the



## Smardale Walk E route – continued

wonderful old track that is Ladle Lane. This sunken path becomes a bit of a watercourse in the wet and the surface can be uneven but the views make it worthwhile. Ladle Lane then veers South and you join another track (taking a left turn) to go past the wonderfully named Willycock Stones. Carry on over Crosby Garrett Fell (South and then South West) until you meet a number of other tracks in the region of Bents Farm by the drystone wall.

Don't go down to Bents Farm but find the bridleway that heads due South towards Intake and then meets the Asby Road near Home Farm. A left turn will now take you downhill and back to the start.



### Before you set off

The weather in Cumbria can change quickly, particularly on the fells, so please be prepared, as changes in weather can alter the difficulty of a route. Appropriate clothing can make all the difference – it is important to be warm, comfortable and dry when out exploring.

An Ordnance Survey map of the area, a compass and the knowledge to use them are invaluable.

Please observe the country code when out walking and, where possible, stick to public footpaths and bridleways. Stock is frequently grazing in these areas so dogs must be kept under control.

### Wildlife Highlights

Visiting this nature reserve allows you to explore an unspoilt corner of Cumbria where stunning scenery and wildlife-spotting opportunities await at any time of the year.

The nature reserve itself offers something for everyone: from the the species-rich grasslands around the former quarries to the beck below and fells above, each area has its own community of plants and animals, as well as a fascinating history.

Resident birds include dipper, long-tailed tit, great spotted and green woodpeckers, goldfinch and treecreeper. From April, these are joined by chiffchaff, pied flycatcher and willow

warbler when they arrive for the summer breeding season.

Typical woodland plants like primrose, bluebell and wild garlic flower in the spring and you'll see dead wood and fallen trees, which provide homes for insects. Remember to look up as you may spot a red squirrel or two!

Wildflowers fill the meadows and banks from spring to autumn – common rock rose, wild thyme, bloody crane's-bill and devil's-bit scabious are found in the area around the limestone quarry and orchids bloom in the banks.

The Scotch argus butterfly is found here at the southern limit of its range and the nature reserve is also home to a large colony of northern brown

argus butterflies. Other butterflies include dark green fritillary, red admiral, common blue, meadow brown and orange-tip.

This is a walk full of interesting history with plenty of wildlife-spotting opportunities!



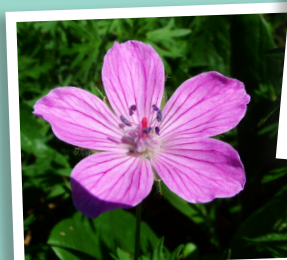
The footpath towards the lime kilns



The lime kilns



Crosby Garrett Fell



Bloody crane's-bill



Great spotted woodpecker



Red admiral butterfly

Please note: Smardale Gill viaduct is owned and managed by the Northern Viaduct Trust, [www.nvt.org.uk](http://www.nvt.org.uk)



**Cumbria**  
Wildlife Trust

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