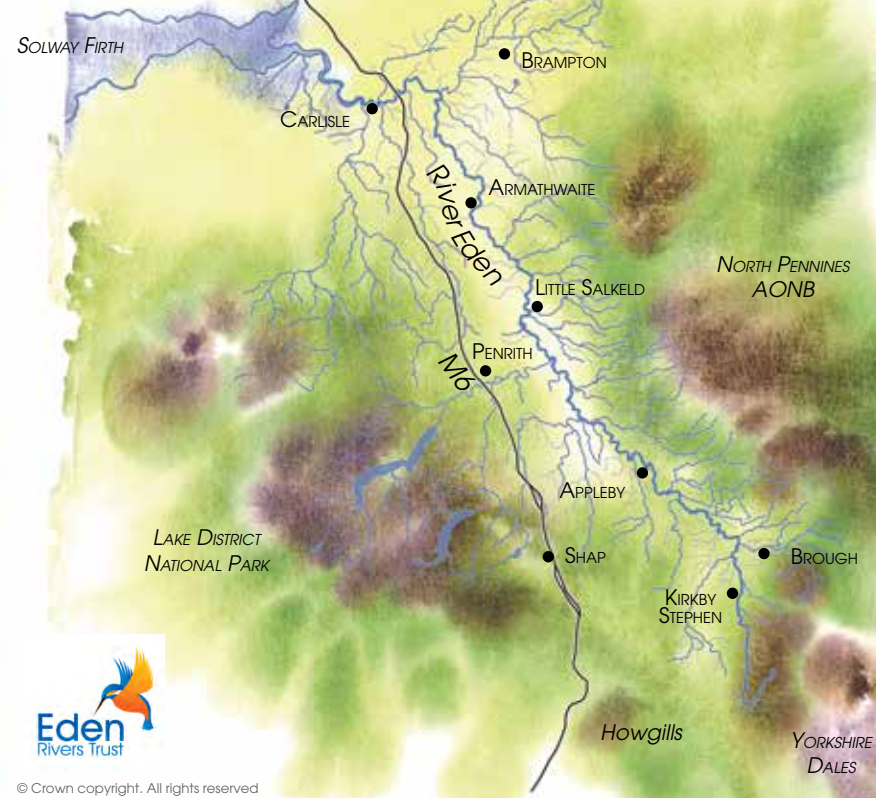




River Eden catchment area

Scottish Border



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written and designed by ECCP tel: 01228 561601



Crosby Ravensworth and Maulds Meaburn

a walk with a church, a ruined 14th century tower house, lost villages, heather moors and woodland, and the source of the river Lyvennet



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heather moorland



bridge over river Lyvennet



Crosby Ravensworth and Maulds Meaburn

*“Beautiful Llwyfenydd, by the fresh water,
Among the blossoms of Easter time,
Attended by a host
With diadems and fair thrones.”*

The Welsh bard, Taleisin

Crosby means ‘settlement by the cross’ but nobody really knows the origin of the name Ravensworth. ‘Raven’ might be a reference to the bird or the name of a man, perhaps a Norse dignitary, and ‘worth’ may derive from a Scandinavian word meaning ‘worthy’ or ‘worship’. There is the shaft of a medieval stone cross in the churchyard, minus its cross, which was broken off during Cromwell’s time. This was almost certainly preceded by other crosses erected here probably before the first church was built by the Saxons. The present church is of late Norman origin, but has been radically rebuilt and altered over the centuries. It is well worth a visit.

The area around the village is an archaeologist’s paradise and has more visible remains of ancient village settlements than anywhere else in the County.

The natural heritage is also much in evidence, with extensive areas of heathland and gill woodland which have been officially designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The river Lyvennet, which runs through the parish, is one of the Eden's most important tributaries. It flows over limestone for much of its length and supports a rich diversity of wildlife including crayfish, trout and salmon, mayflies, stoneflies and a host of birds, such as great spotted woodpecker, goldfinch and goldcrest, wherever there are trees along the rivers banks.



Northern Section

From the church, go over the road-bridge and turn right over the stone bridge signposted to Bankhead. Turn left through a tall wooden pedestrian gate onto the footpath to Maulds Meaburn, past the front of the farmhouse. Go through a metal pedestrian gate and along the riverbank to the other side of the field.

goldfinch perched on teasel

illustration based on © Image Steve Knell (rspb-images.com)



river Lyvennet

This is the river Lyvennet, which runs north from here via Maulds Meaburn and Kings Meaburn and then turns east, where it joins the river Eden just south of Temple Sowerby. Long valued for its prolific populations of fish, this was probably a significant factor in relation to the early human settlements. The river's name might well have come from the Welsh 'Llwyfenydd', which was apparently the place where a powerful Celtic warlord called Urien lived. His kingdom extended from the region now known as Cumbria right across into Wales, and the Celtic language spoken by his people in those ancient times was the one that still survives in parts of Wales.



arched tunnel near Flass House



Climb over the rather grand wall-stile; bear slightly to the right and cross the stone slab bridge where the path continues away from the river, which meanders off to the left.

Go over another wall-stile and cross the field diagonally to the far corner at the end of the row of conifers. Continue through the field gate and under the stone arch tunnel. This brings you out along a shaded track with a high wall alongside on your left, behind a large house called Flass. Go through a pedestrian gate and proceed along the tarmac drive to the road junction, where you turn left along the road into the middle of Maulds Meaburn.





Maulds Meaburn

Meaburn means 'stream through the meadows' and the village of Maulds Meaburn, along with Kings Meaburn, was part of a medieval manor owned by Hugh de Morville and his sister Maud. Hugh de Morville, who lived at Pendragon Castle in Mallerstang, was one of the knights who killed Thomas a Becket and, as a punishment, forfeited his portion of the estate to the Crown.

Cross the road bridge and turn sharp right over the grassy area to the river, then follow the river downstream, until you come to a weir.



A series of stepped, square pools have been constructed here to provide a 'ladder' that allows Atlantic salmon and the native brown trout to bypass the weir and swim further upstream to spawn. The Eden Rivers Trust works closely with the Environment Agency and Natural England to instigate improvements like this throughout the Eden catchment. A particular concern is the harm caused by the intensification of agriculture. The Lyvennet has suffered badly from sheep-dip chemicals getting into the water and two major pollution incidents in 2004 and 2006 caused massive damage to wildlife. Erosion is also a problem, with soil washing into the river-bed gravels and clogging the spaces where insects breed. Insects are the very basis of the river eco-system and consequently all the animals and birds that depend on them for food suffer as well.

Rejoin the main road; keep straight on, leaving the village, past the road to Appleby on your right and a single cottage on your left. Turn left through a wall-stile, where two footpaths are signposted. Take the left hand path straight across the field and go through the field gate. Bear right from here across this big field to a flat, concrete bridge over a beck, and then slightly left to go over a step-stile into the woods. Follow the path through the woods to where it joins a wider track. Turn left onto this track and follow it around to the right out of the woods through a field gate. Continue with the row of trees on your left through another field gate and then go through the first of two gates on your left. Keep straight on, with the scrubby hedge and fence on your right, through a narrow gate between two old stone 'stoops' and continue through a clump of old sycamore and ash trees until you get to the corner, where you turn sharp right by a heap of boulders.

Note the wall over to the left, with huge boulders incorporated along its base. This is a regular occurrence in the Crosby Ravensworth area, where numerous granite boulders left behind by the melting ice age glaciers were utilised in the building of field boundaries.

granite boulders

Keep the field boundary on your right and proceed to the barn ahead. Pass to the right of the barn through the field gate and then bear left.



crows at Crake Trees, lino print for bronze panel

Ignore the bridleway gate over on your left and walk straight ahead past the cluster of four oak trees. Keep going diagonally across this field to the far corner, through a field gate and onto a track alongside a beck. Where the track crosses the beck, turn left, go over a wall-stile and then follow the beck to where it rises from under the ground and climb over another wall-stile. Carry straight on to the other side of this field, over a wooden step-stile into the corner of the next field and continue with the field boundary alongside on your left. Turn left over a wall-stile from where the path goes down hill, over a second wall-stile, to Crake Trees.

The ruined building dates from the 14th century and originally consisted of a two-storey fortified tower house, with a banqueting hall and attached chapel. The original, medieval, timber-framed great hall was demolished in the late 16th century. The word 'crake' is associated with carrion crows or ravens, but it could be an indication that the now very rare corncrake once frequented old meadows in the vicinity.

From the back of the ruin, go round behind the farmhouse and its outbuildings, over a wall-stile, bear left across the field, traverse a wooden step-stile and then another immediately to the left. The path goes off at an angle from the fence on your right, to a field gate which is well to the right of the telegraph pole and rectangular box ahead.

Go through the field gate and follow the farm track down to the farm buildings.

When you arrive at the farm buildings, the public right of way turns right and goes through the middle of the farmyard, but you are invited to use a permissive path straight on and round behind the barn: modern farmyards are frequently full of hazardous activity and better avoided. A wooden step-stile behind the barn brings you back onto the public path, out onto the road and back to the Church.



Southern Section

The southern section of our route is longer and more strenuous where it goes up onto the fell and involves walking across heather moor. Dogs are permitted at all times on the public paths but the route relies on 'open access' where there are restrictions in operation (see inside cover).

If visibility is poor or weather conditions challenging, it may be advisable not to attempt it.

Walk through the village to Town Head.



Crosby Ravensworth moorland

Earthworks

*"Ill Fares the land, to hast'ning ill's a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;"*

Oliver Goldsmith

The area around Crosby Ravensworth, Shap and Ravenstonedale is remarkable for its stunning array of ancient earthworks. These are best identified from the air and easily missed at ground level, but the observant walker can gain a fascinating insight into human antiquity by careful inspection of the lumps, bumps and hollows encountered in the landscape.

Prehistoric people made little impact on their environment as they were nomadic hunters and gatherers, but once they started domesticating animals and growing crops, in Neolithic times, they became more settled. Their lives revolved around shelter, farming, fishing, conflict, burying their dead and religion, and all of these activities are enshrined in grass covered mounds, banks and ditches to this day.

Burial mounds particularly are abundantly evident throughout the British Isles. They have provided archaeologists with a wealth of information, not only from the way they were constructed during different periods and the human skeletons they contained, but also from the great range of artefacts found in them.

Romano-British settlement (earth bank remains)



Half way along, on your left, you will pass the old village pinfold which was restored as part of Cumbria County Council's sheepfold project with the internationally renowned environmental artist, Andy Goldsworthy. This is one of six containing an egg- or seed-shaped cairn, which symbolises the protective role of the farmer in relation to our landscape heritage. A pinfold was originally used as a pen where stray sheep were kept until claimed by their owners.

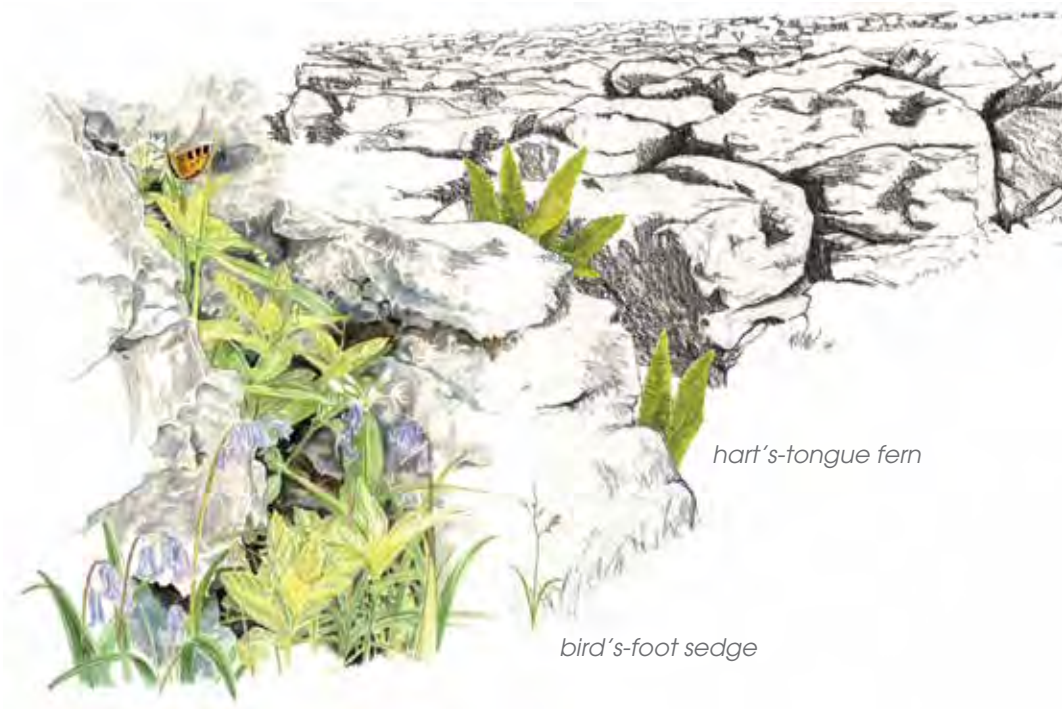
Turn right by Holly Cottage along the wide bridleway track signposted to Sproat Gill and Oddendale, and keep to the surfaced track. After about one kilometre, where the track splits, our route bears left and continues alongside the wall over on your left. As you proceed, the track's surface deteriorates, becoming more rutted for a while and then continuing as a soft grassy path up onto the fell.

Look out for the earth bank remains of a Romano-British farmstead and settlement over to your right. This is one of many such settlements in the vicinity of our walk.

Just past the wall corner keep straight on, ignoring two other faint tracks going off to the left and another a short distance further on, forking to the right.

The line of a Roman road, called Wicker Street, runs parallel with our path, 200 metres west of here, up past the Black Dub Monument. Half way along, there is a round cairn well over to your right which might have been a Roman signal station. Opposite this, 150 metres from the path, over to your left, there is a small stone circle near the corner of the wall.

There are several areas of limestone pavement. These distinctive platforms of rock, laid down some 350 million years ago, when this area was under a shallow warm sea, were subsequently scraped and scoured by glaciers during the Ice Age. Years of weathering created the deep fissures, known as 'grikes', and divided the platforms into flat blocks, known as 'clints'. The surface is patterned with small gutter-like features called 'runnels', which channel water into the grikes, where the shady, humid conditions support a rich and characteristic flora, including hart's-tongue fern, male fern, wood anemone, herb robert and rarer plants, such as bird's-foot sedge and mountain melick.



hart's-tongue fern

bird's-foot sedge

The path comes to a junction where you turn left and join Wainright's well-trodden Coast to Coast route, which goes down the slope, past a very large boulder, crosses the beck and continues past the corner of the wall in the distance. Before you go down the slope, however, we recommend that you visit the Black Dub Monument. This is situated near the beginning of the meandering beck, 600 metres along the track, which veers off at an angle to your right.



limestone pavement

The Black Dub Monument was erected on the 13th August 1843 to mark the source of the river Lyvennet. King Charles II rested here with his thirsty soldiers and their horses on a hot August day in 1651, on their journey south from Scotland, following the king's coronation. The inscription reads:-

Here at Black Dub
The source of the Livennet
King Charles the II
Regaled his army
And drank of the water
On his march from
Scotland
August 8 1651



Black Dub Monument

From the monument, trace your steps back to the Coast to Coast route.

This area of heather moorland is undergoing habitat restoration under a Countryside Stewardship Scheme with a partnership between the owners, the Lowther Estate Trust, the graziers and Natural England. There is a dog exclusion in place, between 1st April and 31st July, to try to protect ground-nesting birds and sheep with young lambs from disturbance. It is a very sensitive area and is subject to high fire risk in dry periods.

Crosby Ravensworth Fell is important as one of the few remaining areas of lowland heathland within Cumbria. Now a rare and threatened wildlife habitat, with losses between 1940 and 1970 estimated at about 70%, it is dominated by ling and bell heathers, with other associated plant species including wavy hair grass, heath bedstraw, tormentil and bilberry. There is also an abundant ground layer of mosses.



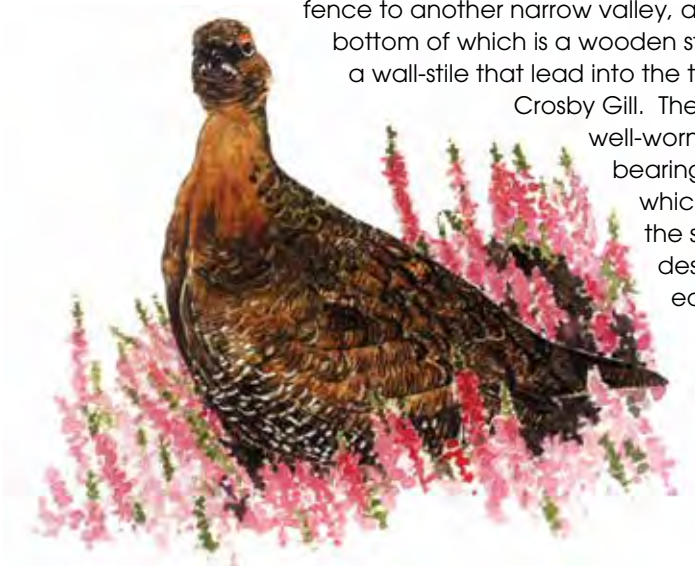
golden plover

Typical birds include golden plover, redshank, oystercatcher, curlew and lapwing. There are also red grouse and the heathland is managed for shooting. The mossy lumps across the heath are old shooting stands.

From the wall corner, follow the grassy track with the wall alongside on your left. Keep following the wall down to the left at the next corner to where a beck cuts across a second corner and then turn right, still with the wall on your left.

Just before you get down to the second corner, look over the wall and you will see a small stone enclosure which is marked on maps as the Kings Well.

The path descends into a steep little valley, with a beck running through it, climbs up the other side and continues alongside the wall and a parallel fence to another narrow valley, at the bottom of which is a wooden stile and a wall-stile that lead into the top of Crosby Gill. There is a well-worn trod bearing right which makes the short descent easier.



red grouse



Crosby Gill woodland



A brief detour up the valley to the right enables you to visit the stone cairn known as Robin Hood's Grave. Nobody knows why it has that name, but it provides an intriguing link, in the context of Wainwright's Coast to Coast route, with Robin Hood's Bay on the North Yorkshire coast.

Once over the wall-stile into Crosby Gill, carry on down through the wood, go through a pedestrian gate at the bottom onto a grassy bank, and bear to the right of the trees, where a small beck emerges from the hill side and flows into the river Lyvennet in the steep gill below. Rather frustratingly, the public right of way continues to bear right from here up the bank and away from the tantalizing wooded valley, between a scattering of hawthorn and birch trees, out onto a wide open area of grass where you bear to the left. The route now joins a track which climbs steeply up to the right, out of the valley.



hawthorn blossom

The farm around Crosby Lodge consists almost entirely of land which was enclosed as a deer park in 1336. It extended to about 700 acres and several lengths of earth dykes and ditches survive round its perimeter. Crosby Gill is now protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. It consists of a mix of woodland and open grassland supporting a rich variety of flora, some of which is nationally rare or uncommon. Birdseye primrose is fairly abundant and the main herb species are common rock rose, salad burnett, wood cranesbill, herb paris and several species of orchid.



*common
spotted
orchid*



*wood
cranesbill*



herb paris

Keep on the track as it curves to the left and brings you to the top of the slope. The track is well surfaced at this point and continues straight ahead with some limestone crags and a wall along the near horizon over to the right. Crosby Lodge farmhouse and outbuildings come into view.

Go through the field gate and follow the track which meanders to the right and then left. The track turns right through a gateway to the farm buildings but our Public Footpath leaves the track and continues straight ahead through the field gate below and to the left of the house. Turn right, just past the rocky outcrop, and right again through a pedestrian gate just beyond the back of the house. Turn sharp left through a second pedestrian gate, cross the field corner, go over a wall-stile and turn left, down a surfaced farm track to the river.

The scrub woodland area on your right is the site of another Romano-British village. It is considered to be the best preserved of all the Crosby Ravensworth settlements, although an overall appraisal is difficult due to the presence of the trees and bushes. Closer inspection reveals a complex pattern of hut circles, enclosures with 2 metre high walls, trackways and small fields.

Don't cross the river, but turn right over the small beck, through a field gate and up a stony track. When you get to the top of the stony track, go through another field gate and turn left, keeping the fence on your left. At the fence corner, bear slightly to the right and go straight on, with a row of ash trees and a scrubby copse on your left. Climb a wall-stile and follow the riverbank through two more field gates, and then a step-stile and a wall-stile out onto the lane.



river Lyvennet, Crosby Ravensworth

Turn left over the stone bridge and then right over a wooden footbridge, through a wall-stile into the field. The path deviates from the river across to the left, where you cross a step-stile into the wooded corner of the next field. Follow the field boundary with the fence alongside on your right until you briefly join the river again, where you go over a step-stile, and then turn right over a ladder-stile. Turn left, away from the river, through a field gate onto a surfaced track back to the village.

LOOK OUT for 6 bronze motifs:- a great spotted woodpecker • carrion crows • a village pinfold • celtic farmers • the Black Dub Monument • a curlew

'Discover Eden' is a countryside recreation and interpretation programme being managed by East Cumbria Countryside Project in partnership with the Eden Rivers Trust supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Fourteen circuitual routes at dispersed locations throughout East Cumbria provide an opportunity to explore the great scenic diversity associated with the Eden catchment landscape.

Each route is well way-marked with arrows and the distinctive 'Discover Eden' kingfisher logo. Watch out for a series of small bronze panels etched with motifs depicting aspects of human and natural heritage. Rubbings can be taken from these using paper and crayon.

By walking all the routes you can eventually collect rubbings of eighty four images.



bronze motifs by Pip Hall

Brief route details:

Two walks from Crosby Ravensworth church, which can be combined as one. On Crosby Ravensworth Fell there is a dog exclusion in place between 1st April and 31st July.

Parking: parking alongside the road near the church

Northern Route: Crosby Ravensworth church – river Lyvennet – Maulds Meaburn – Crosby Ravensworth church

Length: northern section 3½ miles 5.5 kms 2 hours

Grade: northern section moderate

Southern Route: Crosby Ravensworth church – Crosby Ravensworth Fell (Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation) – Black Dub Monument – Robin Hood's Grave – Crosby Ravensworth village

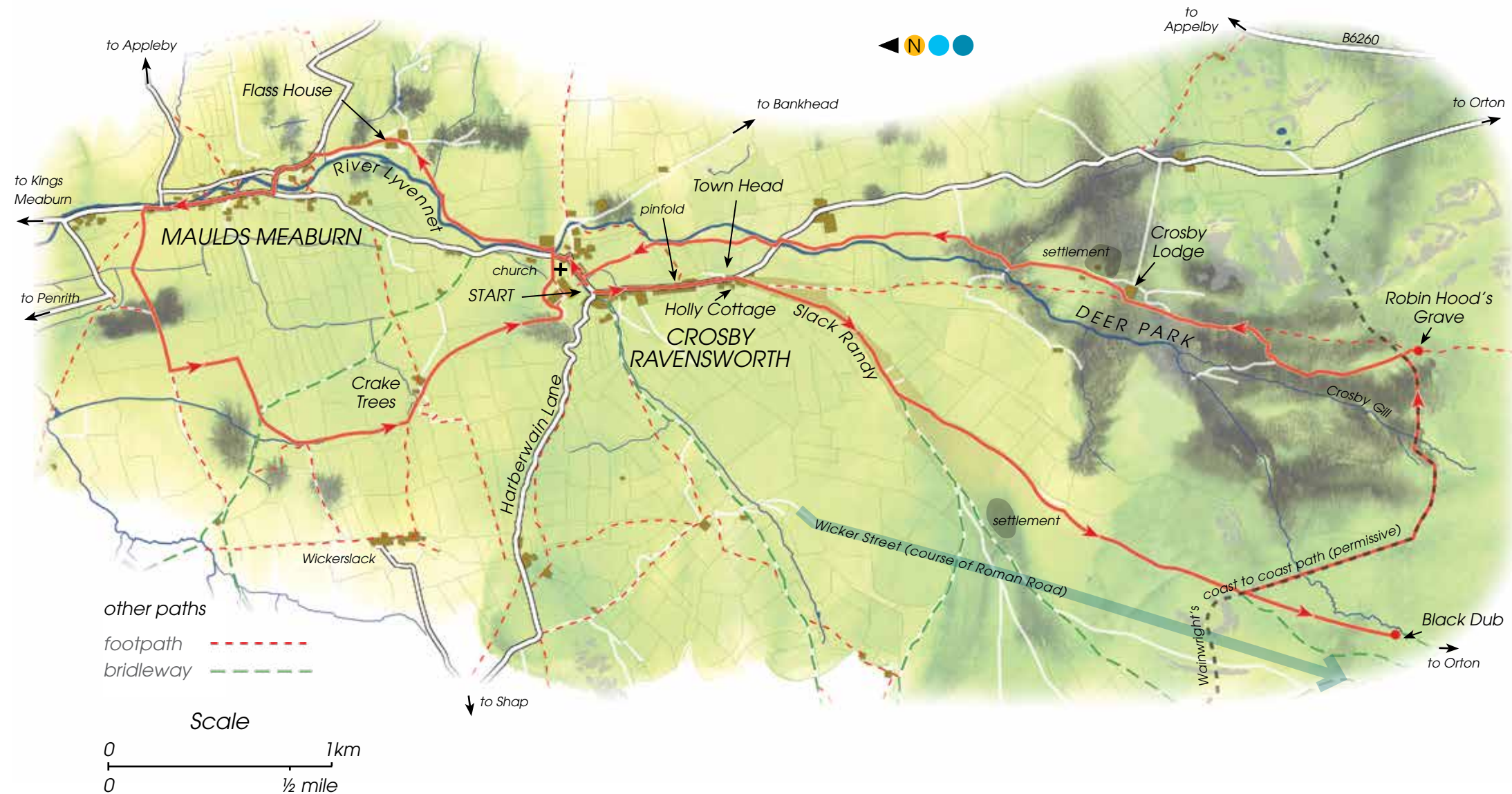
Length: southern section 6 miles 10 kms 4 hours

Grade: southern section strenuous

Clothing: boots and warm waterproof clothing

The southern section of our route is more demanding, particularly where it traverses the heather moor between Black Dub Monument and Robin Hood's Grave.

Please leave gates as you find them, leave no litter, be aware of the risk of fire and keep dogs under close control.



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4. Mosedale near Caldbeck 5. Haaf netting in Solway 6. Ravenstonedale
7. Appleby horse fair 8. River Eden near Wetheral 9. Pendragon Castle

