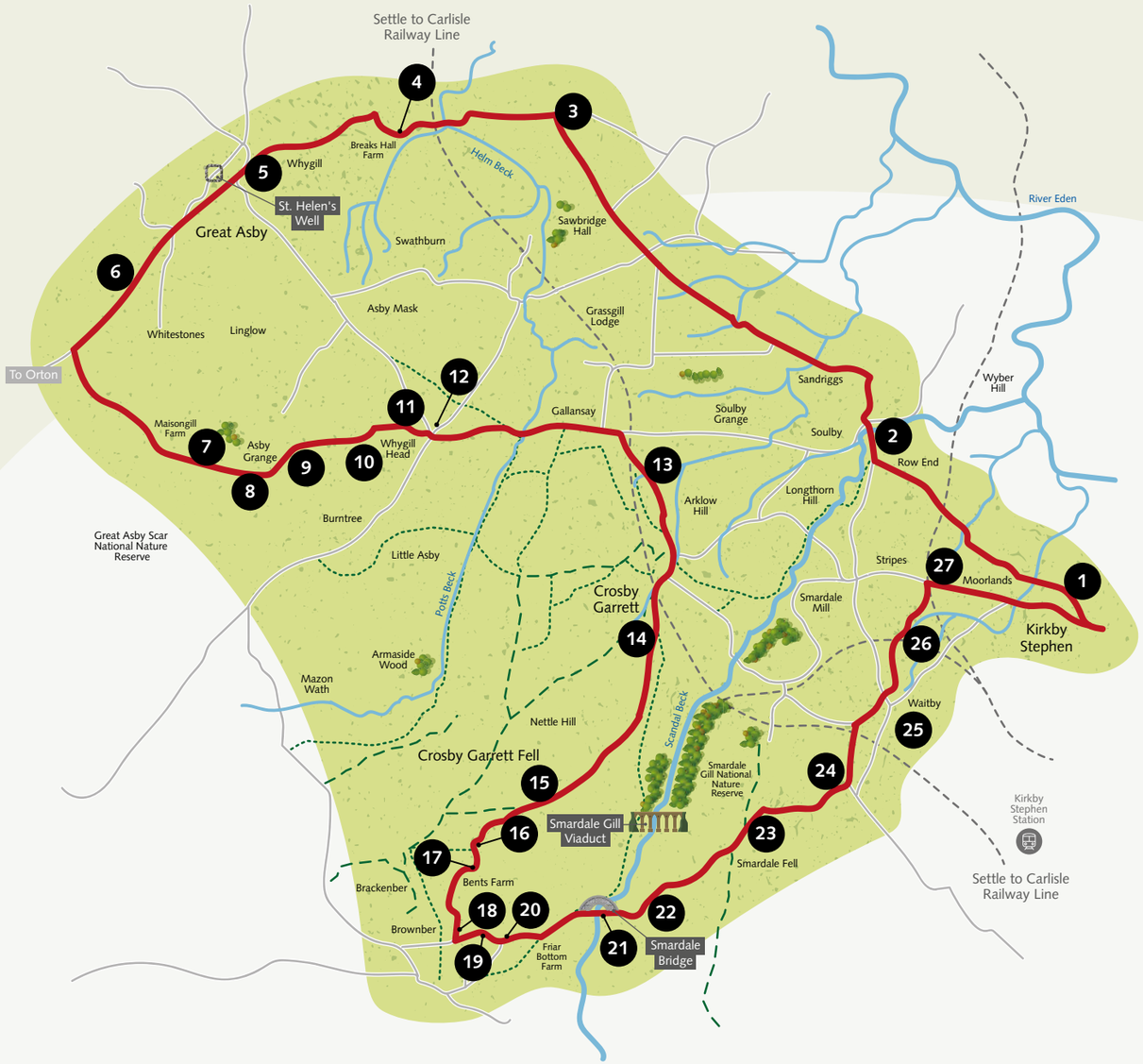


Whilst on your ride remember to:

- Respect the land - Remember much of the land is privately owned. Respect the life and work of people who live and work here.
- Respect the community - Remember to keep to rights of way, especially through fields and meadows.
- Leave no trace. Take nothing but photos. Take all your litter home.

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Kirkby Stephen Cycle

A great route for exploring the Westmorland Dales



Circular Mountain Bike Ride from Kirkby Stephen through Great Asby and Crosby Garrett:

A great route for exploring the north west corner of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The route combines sections of quiet road with tracks, byways and some bridleways across open fell. Watch out for the Helm Wind, a strong north easterly which blows down from Cross Fell and is the only named wind in Britain.

Getting there: Kirkby Stephen can be reached easily from the A66 or the M6 (junction 38) on the A685. There is also a train station on the Settle- Carlisle line at Kirkby Stephen with a connecting off-road link into town.

Parking: there is a large free car park on Christian Head road next to the secondary school.

Facilities: there are numerous shops, cafes and pubs in Kirby Stephen and also the Three Greyhounds pub in Great Asby.

Distance: 23 miles (37km)

Terrain: a few miles of quiet roads to begin and then a mix of tracks and bridleways, some of which are steep or wet.

Map: OS 1:25,000 Explorer OL19 Howgill Fells & Upper Eden Valley

Start: from the car park on Christian Head road, Kirkby Stephen. Grid reference (NY775088) Three words (///senior.pocketed.taskbar)

1. Turn left out of the car park and follow the road signed for Soulby and Crosby Garrett to Soulby (approximately 2 miles)
2. Go over the old stone bridge in Soulby and continue on the main route which twists though the village.
3. Carry on for about 3 miles going straight over a crossroads, passing the first of two right hand turns signed to Warcop and Blea Tarn and then climbing steeply. Just before the second turn look for a good track on your left signed Public Bridleway Great Asby.
4. Follow this track over Helm Beck and under the Settle to Carlisle railway. **At Breaks Hall Farm look for a bridleway marker on your right just before the bungalow**. Go through the gate and follow a faint track diagonally across the field and turn right when it reaches the surfaced track. Follow this track which becomes a surfaced road.



Near Kirkby Stephen - Andy Kay

5. At the road junction turn left and soon after fork right into Great Asby.

As you pass through Great Asby look for St. Helen's Well on your right. This was the main water supply for the village until the 1940s and is reputed to have healing properties.

Just after the Three Greyhounds pub turn right over the narrow road bridge and then left at the junction. The bus shelter on your left contains some interesting information about the village.

6. Stay on this road heading towards Orton and climbing uphill. Shortly after you begin to descend look for a wide tarmacked entrance splay on your left with a bridleway sign to Asby Grange. Take this and keep straight on this road to Maisongill.

Pass Maisongill Farm keeping all the buildings on your left and follow the now unsurfaced track through fields, keeping the wall to your left.

Ahead there are fabulous views of Great Asby Scar National Nature Reserve a vast expanse of limestone pavement where many rare and beautiful plants thrive.

7. You soon drop downhill to a dry valley. **Go thought the metal gate slightly to your left.**
8. The track now crosses several fields but there are direction signs at most gates to help you. Skirt above Asby Grange Farm and when you reach the farm road turn right.
9. Follow this road for about 450 metres until you come to a signpost. Take the bridleway on your right across fields.
10. In the third and biggest field head for the corner of the wall on the near horizon and then follow this wall to a wooden gate which you turn left through. Go straight ahead (**very boggy**) and then turn right through the gate in the corner.
11. Follow the fence and boggy track to the road.
12. When you reach the road turn right, go straight over the crossroads towards Soulby, dropping steeply to Potts Beck (look for the ancient clapper bridge on your right) then climbing. Take the next right-hand turn signed for Crosby Garrett.
13. Drop to the village passing under the Settle to Carlisle line and continue through keeping the stream on your left. Go under the viaduct and continue on the road crossing a cattle grid.
14. Stay on the track ignoring a bridleway on your right and keeping right when a footpath forks to the left.

After about a mile the track becomes grassy and goes through a gate. Continue in the same direction keeping the wall on your left.

It was close to here that the remarkable bronze Crosby Garrett Roman cavalry helmet was found in 2010. Dating from the late 2nd or early 3rd century it has been hailed as one of the great masterpieces of Roman metal work.

15. Ignore tracks heading uphill on your right until the wall suddenly bends away from you downhill. Here follow the grassy track rising in front of you and take the right fork about 100 metres further on.
16. This area is confusing but you are heading towards Bents Farm in the trees ahead of you. There are numerous tracks but stay roughly parallel with the wall but on higher ground above it. As you get towards the far fell wall you will meet a track which runs parallel to it. Turn left onto this and follow it down a steep stony section to a gate and a track towards the farm.
17. At the gate there is a sign asking you to avoid the yard and turn right on a permissive path. **Follow the wall over some wet ground and go through the next gate on your left**. Cross to the farm track and turn right following this down through several fields.



Smardale Viaduct - Fiona Southern

18. At the end of the track turn left following a sign to Smardale Fell. Follow this track.
19. Cross an old railway line and pass through a gate across the track where it narrows between two stone walls climbing up hill.
20. Turn left on the lane passing Friar Bottom Farmhouse and then turn immediately right onto the bridleway signed for Smardale Fell. Follow this, keeping the wall on your right when the route opens out.
21. Cross Smardale Bridge - take care on the approach as the stone slabs may be slippery in wet weather. Follow the track bearing left uphill from the bridge signed for Kirkby Stephen. Keep the wall on your left when the track reaches the open fell.

On your left as you climb you can see Smardale Gill Nature Reserve and the magnificent Smardale Gill Viaduct. Built in 1860 the viaduct was part of the Stainmore Railway linking Tebay and Darlington. It is now owned by the Northern Viaduct Trust.

22. Pass through a gate and follow the broad grass track ahead which bends to the left below a fence and takes you out onto Smardale Fell.
23. Follow the track across the fell keeping the wall to your left. Where the wall turns sharply to the left take the track straight ahead to the shoulder of the hill signed for Kirkby Stephen. Keep on this track and you will see another wall come in from the left use this as a guide as you head downhill to the road.
24. Turn left on the road crossing the Settle Carlisle railway and turn right at the junction towards Waitby.

The Settle to Carlisle railway is one of the most scenic in the country, travelling through remote areas of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and crossing the famous Ribblehead viaduct. Fortunately, a vigorous campaign in the late 1980s saved it from closure.

25. As you go into Waitby bear left at the first junction and then almost immediately right into the village. Pass Waitby Farm on your right and then take a track on your left, you will soon see a Public Byway sign to Waitby Crossings.
26. Turn right after the track crosses an old railway line and then keep to the enclosed path.
27. At the road turn right. Follow this downhill and turn left at the T junction. Pass the business park then turn right at the junction into Kirkby Stephen with the car park on your right.