



Route Information

Distance 10.6 kilometres (6.6 miles)

Ascent 440 metres (1450 feet)

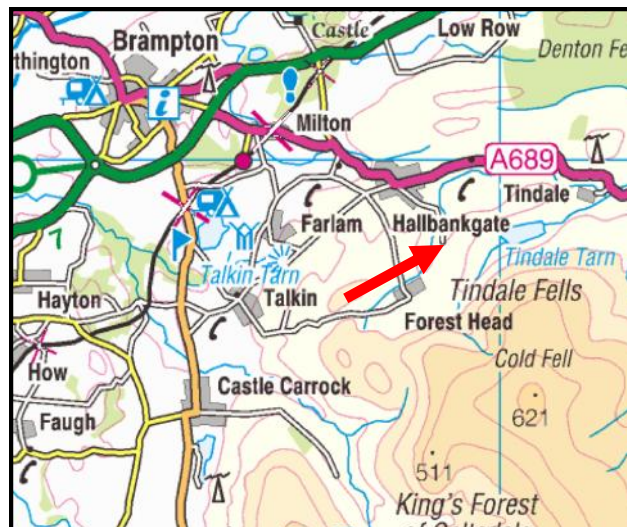
Time needed 4 hours (approx)

Start point

From Hallbankgate on the A689, branch off at the Belted Will following Crossgates Road via Park Terrace to reach the road-end car park beyond Clesketts, NY 589 585.

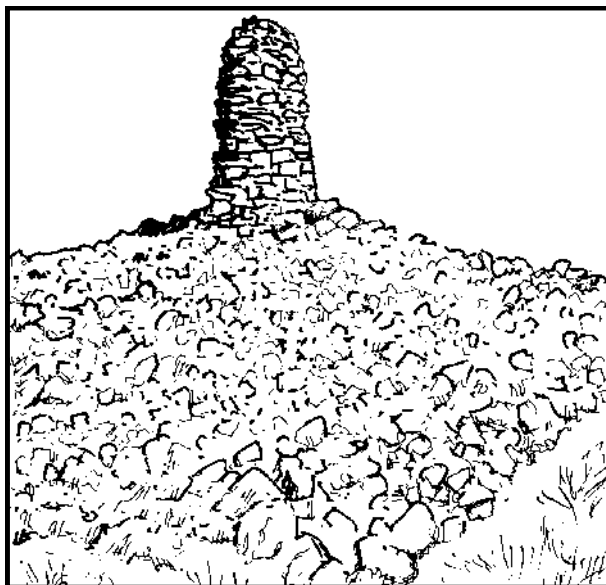
Public Transport

Hallbankgate is served by bus routes 94 & 97 (limited service)



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Curragh and tumulus at the top of Tindale Fell

Cold Fell is the northernmost hill in the Pennine chain, a two-thousand foot mountain on the bagging (bragging) lists, but primarily a high place of peace and exultation for the discerning walker and ornithologist.

The mountain walk leaves the small car park and embarks south via the cattle grid/kissing gate and follows the open track by Tortie Cottage.

This curious name has been suggested to infer 'tortoise-shaped hill' and there is no doubt that the adjacent hill conforms to the required outline. In 1613 it was spelt 'Tortoy', in 1827 'Tortise' - conclusive? Reminds me of the guy who went to a fancy-dress party dressed as a tortoise. He duly arrived with his girl-friend riding on his back, when confronted he said "oh, that's Michelle!"

Notice the Tortie Stone, the large boulder in the field on the left after the cottage. This stone bears small cup marks, a rare instance of prehistoric rock art in Cumbria, very prevalent in Northumberland.

The track ventures up to the old colliery terrace of Howgill, whereupon turn sharp left, via the gate. The obvious path ahead leads down to Tindale Tarn via Stagsike, the Geltsdale RSPB Reserve office (perversely most of the reserve is not in Geltsdale!).

Branch off this path at once, right signed 'Bruthwaite Viewpoint'. The path, formerly a track created to support grouse management and shooting parties, climbs to a bulldozed shelf from where it dwindles to

a grass path, passing the Bruthwaite Viewpoint signboard. A good moment to pause and look back over your line of approach. The path wanders on to a fence stile and hurdle-gate. From here one has options. The primary route sticks resolutely to the path/part quad-track venturing up to the peaty headwaters of Howgill Beck.



View from the track above Howgill cottages

However, an off-the-beaten track option can be considered which climbs directly from the stile heading slightly north of east by the odd pockmarked quartzite outcrop. There is no path and the going is quite tough over tussocky moor. Pass the odd remnant corrugated iron shooting butt to reach the impressive tumulus marking the summit of Tindale Fell 547m/1795ft.

The massive elevated heap of stones, presumably the resting place of Bronze Age chieftains, is surmounted by a handsome currick and a less than laudable wind-shelter. This cairn is a landmark in its own right, the visual high point seen by travellers looking south from the A69. As a viewpoint it has great potential, to the Cheviots in the north-east beyond the Whin Sill of Hadrian's Wall and north-west to the hills beyond Bewcastle into Scotland. Incidentally the term currick derives from the Welsh 'careg', also surviving in variant forms in the local village-names Castle Carrock and Croglin. The place-name Tindale shows a linkage with the River South Tyne.

Stride south on a faint path crossing the line of an old dyke, which actually straddles the fell. Veer right to reach the obvious cluster of stones, part fashioned into a defunct shooting butt. Keep along the diminishing edge to meet up with the main route (quad path) trending left past a shooting butt. Cross peaty ground passing a stake to gently rise to

meet a fence at an angle. Some 250m down the fence-line see a large broken sheepfold and a currick formed into a throne. Follow the fence uphill to reach the stile and the summit tumulus of Cold Fell 621m/2037ft.

The cairn, built in antiquity, is deep set in the peat. The dome-shaped cairn is of modern construction (built in memory of Joe Fotheringham), on the east side of the OS pillar stands a rude wind shelter. The Bronze Age tumulus has taken some stick of recent years, the majority of visitors see them as just stones, not an ancient mausoleum, but then this is in the nature of continuity in a high passing place. A smaller cairn stands awkwardly tilted on the northern edge, a sighter for the summit from the valley. Keen eyes will spot Hartside Café nine miles as the crow (curlew) flies, the zig-zag ridge and boggy terrain making it equivalent to fifteen sluggish miles for anyone contemplating the trek. The necessary Open Access furniture has been installed to enable one to make journey.

Head west with the fence close right upon a narrow trod in the heather and bilberry. At the fence junction be sure not to be lured left – for the fence leads over Tarnmonath Fell. Cross this fence tight at the junction and keep north-west. A quad track assisting strides until a shoulder gives an abrupt heathery step down, thereafter stride on a little distance from the fence to reach the brink overlooking Geltsdale. A small cairn stands to the left, and up the bank right a large currick enjoys the best vantage over Gairs.



View over Gairs and Geltsdale, with the Northern Lakeland Fells in the distance

Backtrack to pass the smaller cairn, descend the bank avoiding the bracken to reach the tramway.

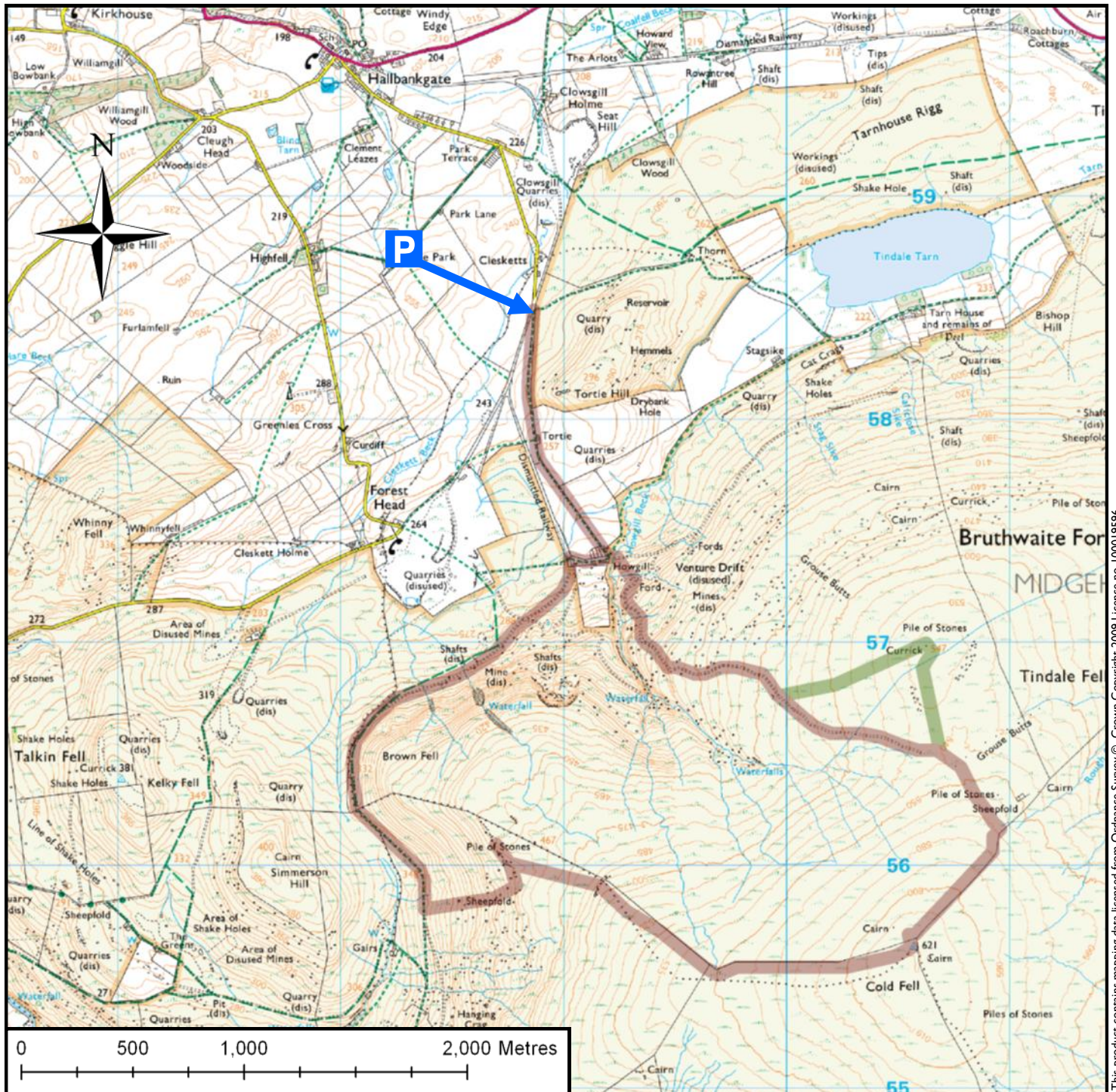
Turn right and duly pass through the gate at the foot of the fence off Brown Fell, followed whilst on the moorland section above. The Gairs Colliery Tramway gives easy walking. You may notice the modern deciduous plantings in sheathes on the hillside; the RSPB are recreating Bruthwaite Forest, a diverse habit for the benefit of birdlife in particular. The tramway slips through one cutting en route to a kissing-gate by a shed occupied by donkeys. Continue to a gate into the environs of Howgill terrace, passing quietly through to

reconnect with the approach track via Tortie to complete your tour for tea! Better still the Belted Will in Hallbankgate or Blacksmiths Arms in Talkin.

Walkers new to this area should make a point of visiting the RSPB's Stagsike information point and the hides at Tindale Tarn to learn of the importance of this locality for wildlife and the efforts being made to secure diversity.

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For a gallery of pictures to this walk visit: www.markrichards.info



Parking Place



Line of Route



Alternative Route