

10 miles/16.1km

## High Cup Nick

Dufton village, lying 3/2 miles (5.5km) from Appleby, nestles below the westerly slopes of the High Pennines and just above the Eden valley. Picturesque houses line the oblong-shaped tree-shaded green on which a splendid sandstone horse trough stands. The arrangement of the houses provides some protection from the Helm, a violent north-easterly wind, which gathers strength over Cross Fell and then descends, turbulently, down the treeless slopes to the valley floor. Dufton is the centre of the area affected by the Helm. By the time it reaches Appleby the air has become less disturbed. It occurs most frequently in late winter and spring. At High Cup Nick, the dark basalt Whin Sill has been dramatically and attractively exposed by glacial activity, contrasting sharply with the lighter-coloured limestone round about. Further north, Hadrian built his wall on Whin Sill and to the east, Cauldron Snout and High Force descend over it.

## The walk

1 Turn right (south east) on leaving the parking area and follow the road as it bears left and then right. Walk to the edge of the village. Just beyond the village name plate, go left to stride up a gradually ascending narrow road, signposted PW, High Cup Nick'. Go past Bow Hall (tea and coffee stop) and stroll on along the continuing signposted track. Ignore the track on your right (this is the end of the walled track you may wish to return by after heavy rain). Carry on the gated way over moorland,

with a wall to your left.

2 Follow the track as it makes a right-angled bend and then curves left, round Peeping Hill, to go on through a pleasing hollow of limestone outcrops. Climb the next stile and continue by a fine lime kiln. Ascend the arrowed way. Beyond the next corner enjoy your first ascending view of High Cup Nick, with its angular blocks of Whin Sill forming the rim of the U-shaped glaciated valley, through a 'nick' with a small beck meandering through. Then the path brings you close to the edge of the basin and winds across a springy grass area to come to the 'nick'.

3 Turn right just before the stream to follow a narrow green track. Curve round right under the huge crags until you reach a boulder field, which you should cross with care. On reaching the grassy area beyond, begin your descent to come close to the beck. Follow it downhill. Cross another boulder field. Look here for the many small plants growing between the rocks in their own microclimate. Stroll on to step across the two tributaries of the beck and go on, now with the united beck to your right. Look up to see a slender pinnacle known as Nichol's Chair. On the top of this a Dufton cobbler is said to have repaired a pair of boots!

4 At the wall corner, go ahead, keeping the wall to your left, and climb the stile through it. Just beyond, look for two more streams emerging from underground. Move a few yards from the wall to join a tractor path to

hard

continue on down the valley, moving steadily away from the wall. Where the way becomes very wet, move left, to slightly higher ground, in line with the lowest hawthorn bush. Pass below the fine limestone Middleton Crag. When the path disappears go on, keeping to the left of the next small hill. Here join a good track and continue descending. Cross a ford and go through a gate and walk on to pass to the right of Harbour Flatt Farm.

5 Once beyond the buildings bear half right, keep right of a copse, and go on to climb a stile to a narrow road. Turn right and stride for just over half a mile, with a glorious view to the right of High Cup Nick. Then take the signposted right turn. (If the weather has deteriorated, you may prefer to continue along the narrow lane for another mile to Dufton.) Follow the arrowed way left of Keisley House and stride the gated way, keeping the wall to your left. Pass Town Head Farm, below Keisley Bank.

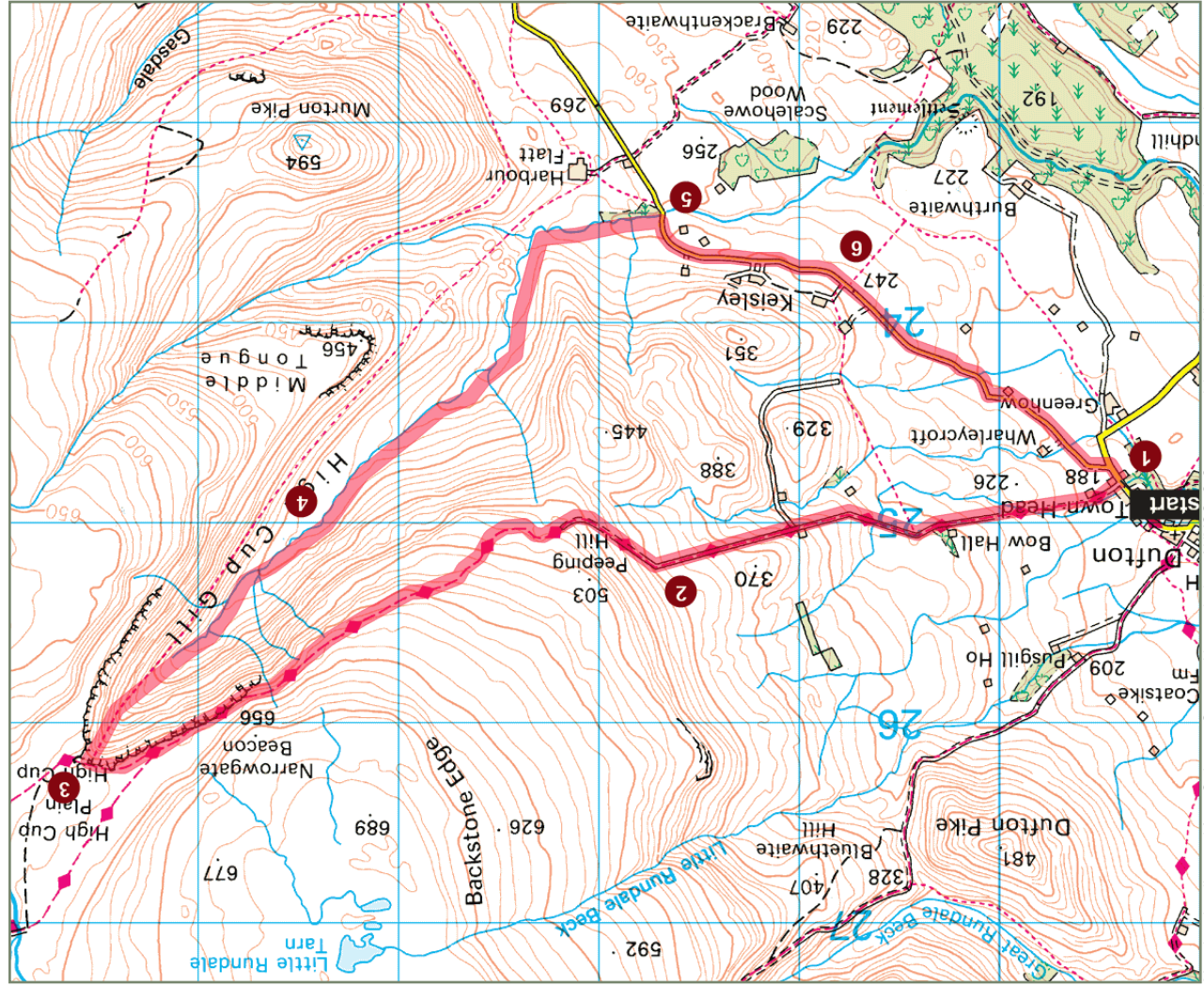
6 At the point where the wide walled track, or outtake, goes off right, a decision has to be made. If the continuing right of way, which goes straight ahead through the left of two gates towards Bow Hall, is impassable, walk the outtake to join the PW. Whichever return route you have taken, just turn left to Dufton.

**DETAILS**  
Country Walking ID 2142  
Mag Route 19, March 1999  
Region North  
Area North Pennines  
Length of walk 10 miles/16.1km  
Time needed 5 hours  
Difficulty Hard

**IS THIS WALK FOR YOU?**  
Terrain Pennine Way (PW) to the Nick – wide and clear but watch for arrows indicating a diversion. The descent to the valley bottom requires care as you drop down over boulders and steepish grassy slopes. Short road walk. After a wet spell the right of way to Bow Hall (and refreshments) can become impassable, in which case return by the narrow road or take the 'outtake' to rejoin the PW.  
Stiles 2  
Suitable for dogs

**PLANNING**  
Parking Free car park at east end of Dufton  
Start grid ref NY694248  
Nearest town Penrith  
Refreshments Stag Inn, Dufton, and at Bow Hall on the PW  
Public toilets Car park  
Public transport Fridays only using Appleby Local Services, Robinson 573. Journey Planner inquiry line 01228 606000  
MAPS Ordnance Survey Outdoor Leisure 19

MARY WELSH



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