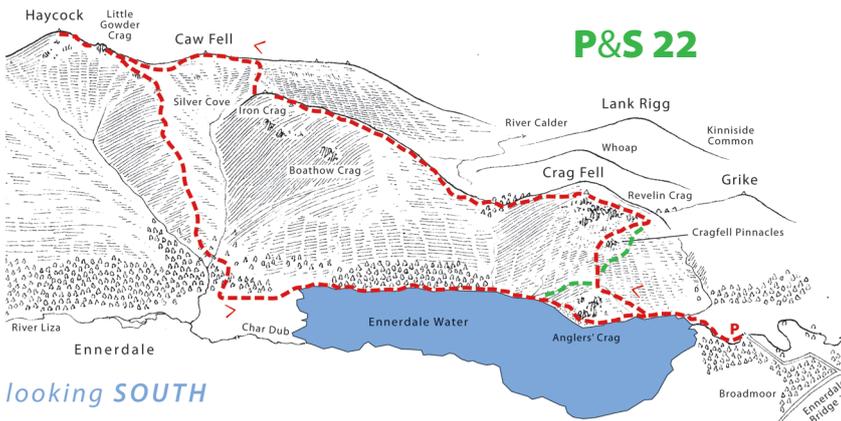


PARK & STRIDE

with Mark Richards
on BBC Radio Cumbria

22 Haycock from Ennerdale Bridge



distance : 20km/12.5 miles

time : 9 hours

ascent : 945m/3,100ft

grade : strenuous

MAPS (Harvey Superwalker) West
(Ordnance Survey) OL4 North-western area

PARK

Drive to the village of Ennerdale Bridge, turn east at the primary school, fork right at the Broadmoor Forest Enterprise sign to reach a naturally well-screened car park at Bleach Green Cottages GR 086154.

Venturing into Wild Ennerdale

Entering into the spirit of Wild Ennerdale, this expedition ventures onto the high southern skyline ridge of the valley to claim the comparatively remote summit of Haycock. In the process getting close up to the curious curtain of rock known as Crag Fell Pinnacles, striding beside the well-constructed ridge wall over Iron Crag and visiting four very different summits each notable viewpoints to savour. The latter stages of the walk runs down through the heather and along the bowered southern shore of Ennerdale Water in the company of the Coast to Coast Walk and scrambles over the craggy base of Anglers' Crag.

Getting into stride

Leave the cosy environs of the car park, via the hand gate, strolling close to the meandering River Ehen, the path leading smartly to the outflow of the great lake, a place of congregation for families and friends. Ahead across the lake rises Great Borne backed by the High Stile range, while close at hand Crag Fell, with the Anglers' Crag promontory thrusting into the dark blue waters. The path wanders by a small footbridge to a hand gate entering the National Trust's Anglers' Crag land holding. It con-

tinues at lake level, though be watchful for the indistinct fork in the way, midway towards the headland. Take the rising path moving easily up to the saddle of the Anglers' Crag headland. Visit the craggy headland's crown. Quite a viewpoint in its own right commanding Ennerdale Water, notice the mid-lake shallow isle. Beyond see the afforested slopes of Bowness Knott before Great Borne's scree-scarred slopes. Ennerdale's majestic flanking fells are well seen, with Pillar the most eye-catching object of your attention.

Step back onto the saddle and branch south. With the objective of a close inspection of the Crag Fell Pinnacles your choice of path is critical. Quickly the path forks, the more obvious right-hand path leads securely under the pinnacles, but once beyond you will have to clamber up the rough bilberry bank and backtrack over the brow to get that all important close up view. However, if you take the left-hand fork, which looks little more than a sheep path, straight up the slope skirting the fans of scree into a shallow rake one may clamber up close above the feature. The name pinnacles is a trifle over-egging the matter, though the end rock tower of this curtain of slumped rock certainly meets the criteria or critical mass. The area behind, in the shadow of the Revelin Crag edge, is fun to explore, and various creative camera angles on the shapely rocks can be found to encourage an indulgent few minutes.

The exiting path, stage west, basically contours round to the plain fell edge, meeting a rising path over a curious grassy rampart. Switch up the edge passing an old metal strainer post to wander along the lip of the escarpment. Revel in Revelin's outlook high across the mighty lake to the ever more impressively displayed mountains surrounding and compressing Ennerdale proper. Revelin is an intriguing

name, Sheffield climbers will recognise the name from their own Revelin Edge north-west of the city. A suitably large cairn marks the summit of Crag Fell 523m/1,716ft. Achievement of the first summit of the day is always a satisfying moment especially one so well favoured, the situation confirming one is at the portals of a great valley. Back to the near west the plain-featured fell Grike is seen crowned with a considerable cairn. While the low country to the north-west leads the eye to coastal Cumbria with the potential to see the Scottish hills beyond, notably Criffel near Dumfries. Wander onto the second top a mere metre lower, but no less scenically endowed.

Attention now turns to the inviting ridge of Iron Crag rising some distance away beyond a finger of forestry in the depression to the south-east. The path leaves the summit approximately south, there is a regular path, which drifts easily and naturally south-east after some three hundred yards, heading down to a light fence stile at the leading corner of plantation. Traverse the heather clearing passing wind-blown conifers to join a track at a cairn. No sooner have you set foot on the track as you are impelled to strike right down a damp shaded forest break. As this forks keep left on a rough path that leads to a fence stile beside a fixed gate.

Freedom again. A steady ascent begins with the handsome drystone wall climbing the ridge for company, the construction will or should impress, great craftsmanship deserves admiration. This pasture is part of the vast Kinniside Common, the impoverished white grass, with little else, indicative of a tradition of heavy sheep stocking. Contrast the dense blanket of heather and bilberry rampant over the wall. The wall first climbs above the unseen Boathow Crag then with a ruckle of rock mounts onto Iron Crag's crest, again the named crag lies out of sight on the east side of the ridge. During the ascent the lonely single gill-scarred slope of Lank Rigg (which meant 'long ridge', though might be thought better deserving the name Blank Rigg!) is seen across Worm Gill, the term 'worm' in all probability an inference to a traditional haunt of adders.

There are three hand gates in the wall that may be used to venture through the third gate gaining access to Iron Crag's summit cairn 640m/2,100ft, a further cairn stands beyond the habitat monitoring enclosure, on the southern edge, a fine viewpoint across the head of Silver Cove to Haycock. The enclosure proves the grazing regime over the whole of the Iron Crag ridge is in balance, there being negli-

gible difference between that within and that without.

Continue on the Kinniside Common side of the wall descending through the depression to mount the blunt north ridge onto Caw Fell. Reaching the wall corner one might bear right to pass the shallow wind shelter to visit the western brink cairn, with the towers of Sellafield dead ahead, glancing down on Stockdale Moor, with its evidence of ancient settlement. The more likely course is to turn left with the broken wall and new fence, the summit cairn of Caw Fell, reached via fence stile. The fence has been installed to nurture these high sub-alpine meadows. Step back over the stile continuing on the south side of the wall to either climb the broken outcrop of Little Gowder Crag, or skirt to the right, avoiding all trace of rock. The ridge wall guides unerringly to the marvellous top of Haycock. There are two cairns of equal height on either side of the broken wall, the shelter cairn on the north side the better viewpoint by a whisker. The most arresting point of interest is Scaffell Crag and to a lesser degree, Seatallan, the latter best viewed from the outcrop to the south, above Gowder Crag.

Our trail now turns tail backtracking beyond Little Gowder Crag to cross the first stile right and angle across the slope passing over the top of the prominent outcrop to join the path descending Caw Fell's north ridge this leads down latterly through heather to a fences stile continuing into light woodland, branching left at the foot to cross a footbridge spanning Silvercove Beck. Starling Dodd becomes a prominent subject above the conifers to the north. Galloway cattle graze in this partially felled enclosure. The path leads to a track junction, keep right to reach the forest exit gate. Go through, but turn immediately left, via the kissing gate, in so doing joining A Coast to Coast Walk. Follow this in pasture via a stile and a succession of hand gates in coming alongside the southern shore of Ennerdale Water, beautifully fringed with native woodland and pitched to cope with long-distance trekkers. The path eventually rising above the steep scree tilting into the lake, onto Robin Hood's Chair, beneath Anglers' Crag. Hands may be called into play in working over this minor rock obstacle. Thereafter the path dips back to shore level and reconnects with the out walk leading to the lake outflow.

After-walk refreshment

Shepherd's Arms Hotel and Fox and Hounds Inn in the village of Ennerdale Bridge.