

Smardale Gill

Distance: 7km (4.5 miles)

Time: a minimum of 2 hours

This lovely gentle route using a long section of old railway line, including crossing the spectacular Smardale Gill viaduct.

Accessibility: very accessible walk along the old railway. The return route is on tracks but does include some gradients and poorer surfaces.

Parking: Limited roadside parking on Kelleth Lane close to Newbiggin-on-Lune and just off the A685. (CA17 4NY)

Other transport: Buses from Kirkby Stephen and Tebay

Toilets: nearest public toilets at Orton Market Hall and Kirkby Stephen

Refreshments: Lune Springs Garden Centre and Café. Pubs in Ravenstonedale.

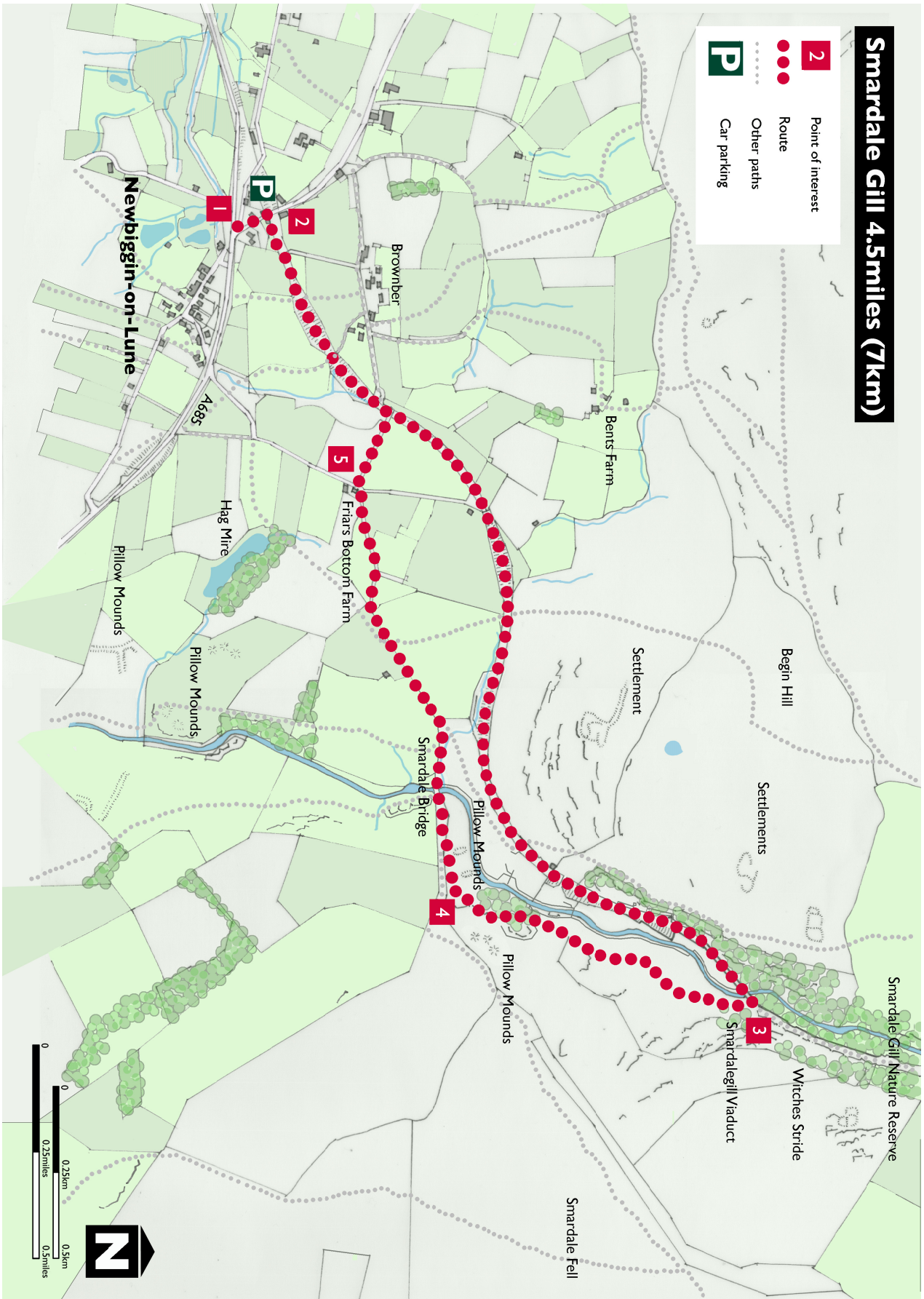
Closest National Park Centre: Hawes National Park Centre DL8 3NT (call 01969 666210).

Upper Eden Visitor Centre, Kirkby Stephen CA17 4QN (call 017683 71199)

Route description

1. From the parking spot, go back towards the main road and then turn uphill on the minor road signed to Great Asby. Walk up this road for 100 yards and turn right into the imposing entrance to Brownber Hall with its stone gate posts and lodge.
2. Follow the driveway for a short distance to the old railway and entrance to the nature reserve on your right. Pleasant walking along the old railway takes you through lovely countryside to Smardale Gill viaduct. This spectacular 14 arch viaduct was completed in 1861 and formed part of the Stainmore Railway – connecting Bishop Auckland and Tebay.
3. After crossing the viaduct you can continue to follow the railway path further into the nature reserve if you wish, which has wonderful wild flowers in spring and a good chance of spotting red squirrels. To return by a different route go over a stile on your right immediately after crossing the viaduct. Follow this permissive path along the valley side until you cross another stile to meet another track.
4. Turn right and follow the walled track as it drops to cross a bridge over a stream. Up the other side and stay on the track through to Friar's Bottom Farm.
5. Take the track opposite the farm signed 'bridleway'. This goes over a small hill and then reaches the railway line again. Turn left and follow the railway line back to your starting place.





NATIONAL PARKS
Britain's breathing spaces