

Distance: 18 miles (29km)

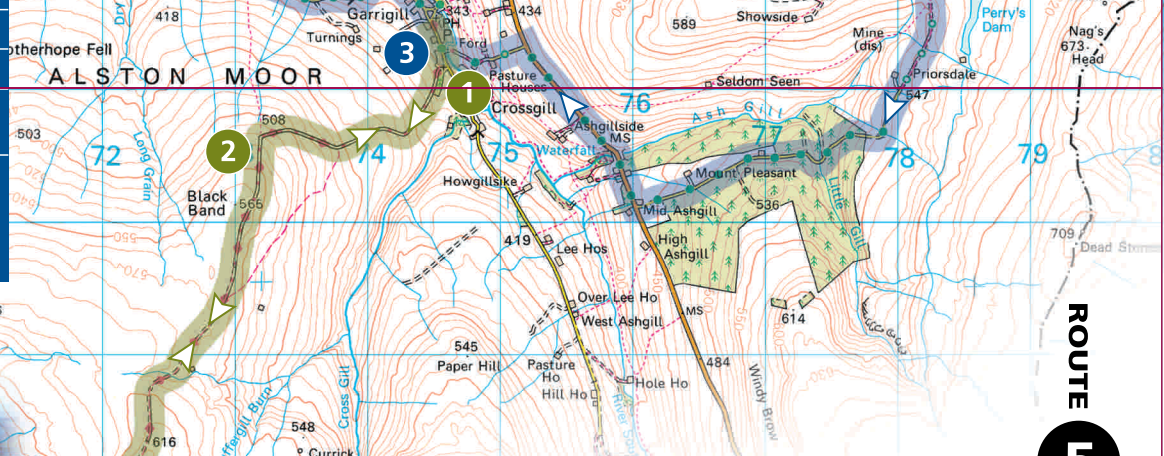
Grade: Medium - Challenge

Terrain: Bridleway, country lane, ford

Refreshments:

Cafés: Alston, Nenthead

Pubs: Alston, Nenthead, Garrigill



ROUTE
5

Cross Fell (Mountain Bike Ride)

Cross Fell and its near neighbour Great Dun Fell are ringed by an amazing network of high-level bridleways. They cross wild and exposed moorland and reach a considerable height making them the highest mountain bike routes in England, outside the Lake District. These routes are not for the fainthearted, particularly first timers to the area as they cross high and exposed moorland, and the distances and height gain involved in completing a loop are considerable. The best introduction to the style of riding they offer is to tackle an out and back ride up the bridleway that climbs to the northern shoulder of Cross Fell from the lovely village of Garrigill. There is a fair amount of height to gain on this route but it is achieved over eleven kilometres which gives most of the climbs a moderate and mostly cycle-able gradient.

Start/finish: Garrigill
GR NY 745 411

Distance: 13.7 miles (22km)

Grade: Hard - Challenge

Refreshments:

Café: Alston

Pubs: Alston, Garrigill

The majority of the riding is along access track which is stony but well-maintained, with the balance being on stony single track and a final short section on open fell side. The climb is mitigated by superb wide ranging views and interesting old mine workings passed on the way up. The descent is world class and gives long and fast bursts interspersed with cruising freewheels. There are a couple of rock garden sections to deal with through the old mine workings, and some drainage channels to negotiate, but mostly the technicalities are at the softer end of the range. Remember to always stick to the bridleways as this is a conservation area.

1 From the southern end of Garrigill follow the lane on the R that climbs past the old chapel (*bridleway - signposted for the Pennine Way*). The lane climbs a steepening route S then W on to the crest of Black Band.

2 On Black Band the track eases and turns sharp L and is followed S as it heads steadily up onto the flanks of Pikeman Hill and Long Man Hill.

3 After Long Man Hill the track enters an area of old mining activity at Cash Burn. Ignore the bridleway that turns L towards Rake End, instead continue on the Pennine Way that heads SW and climbs through a series of technical rocky sections.

4 Exciting single track then leads W across Backstone Edge and the flanks of Cross Fell to make one final climb after passing Greg's Hut (*bothy*).

5 The high point of the route is rather nondescript open fell on the northern shoulder of Cross Fell 250m after passing the Pennine Way turning. If you are feeling fit and confident you can leave your bike and head up the Pennine Way (*path*) for the short steep walk to the summit of Cross Fell.

The descent retraces the same route back down and is a truly outstanding ride. It is a popular path so take care for other users and also watch out for the drainage channels on the lower sections above Garrigill.

