Miles without Stiles 30: Braithwaite to Force Crag Mine

Details

Route type: For some. A strenuous route that goes right into the heart of the hills. The gradients are not steep, but rise continuously and the track is rough in places OS Explorer Map OL4

Distance: 8 km or 4.9 miles

Start point: Small quarry car park above Braithwaite grid ref. NY 227238

Turning point: Force Crag Mine - grid ref. NY 201217

Facilities: None on the walk but there are pubs at Braithwaite plus the visitor centre and café at Whinlatter

Getting there: Bus: X5, 77 / 77A and the Osprey services all run from Keswick to Braithwaite. Car: A66 to Braithwaite and the B5292 to Whinlatter

Route

This old mine track ascends gradually into Coledale, revealing dramatic views of the hills and a high fell experience.
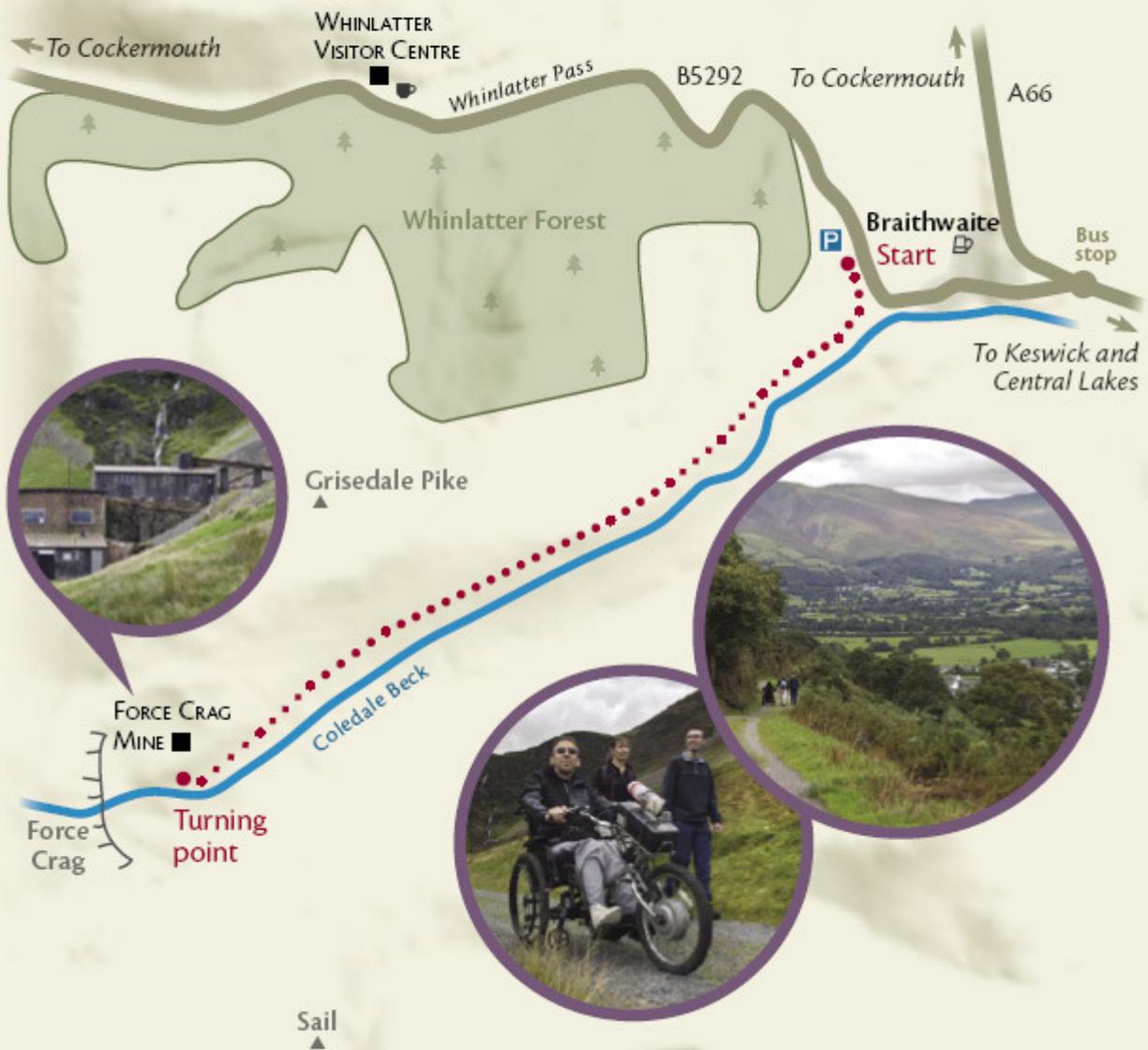
The route goes through a gate and rises at a gradient of around 1:10 for 200 metres. It has a well-drained and smooth surface. Go through another gate and the mountain views really open up with Outerside, Eel Crag and Grisedale Pike dominating. Don't forget to look back to see Braithwaite village nestling below. Skiddaw, Blencathra and the northern end of the Helvellyn ridge form a stunning backdrop.

The old track undulates gently to imposing Force Crag and the old mine buildings, a scheduled ancient monument. Workings date back to the 1500s, but the mining industry really thrived from the mid 19th century onwards. Mineral deposits of zinc, copper, lead and barite were all mined and processed here for use in the glass, paper and chemical industries. Force Crag was the last working mine in the Lake District and closed in 1991. National Trust information panels outline its history or you can read more on our Northern Lake District archaeology section.

Map

Route 30: **Braithwaite to Force Crag Mine route:** for some

Route
30

To Cockermouth

WHINLATTER
VISITOR CENTRE

Whinlatter Pass

B5292

To Cockermouth

A66

Whinlatter Forest

Braithwaite
Start

Bus
stop

To Keswick and
Central Lakes

Grisedale Pike

FORCE CRAG
MINE

Coledale Beck

Force
Crag

Turning
point

Sail

• • • • • route for some	P	car parking
——— road	pub	pub
〰〰 river	⌢⌢⌢	escarpment

1 km

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Lake District
National Park