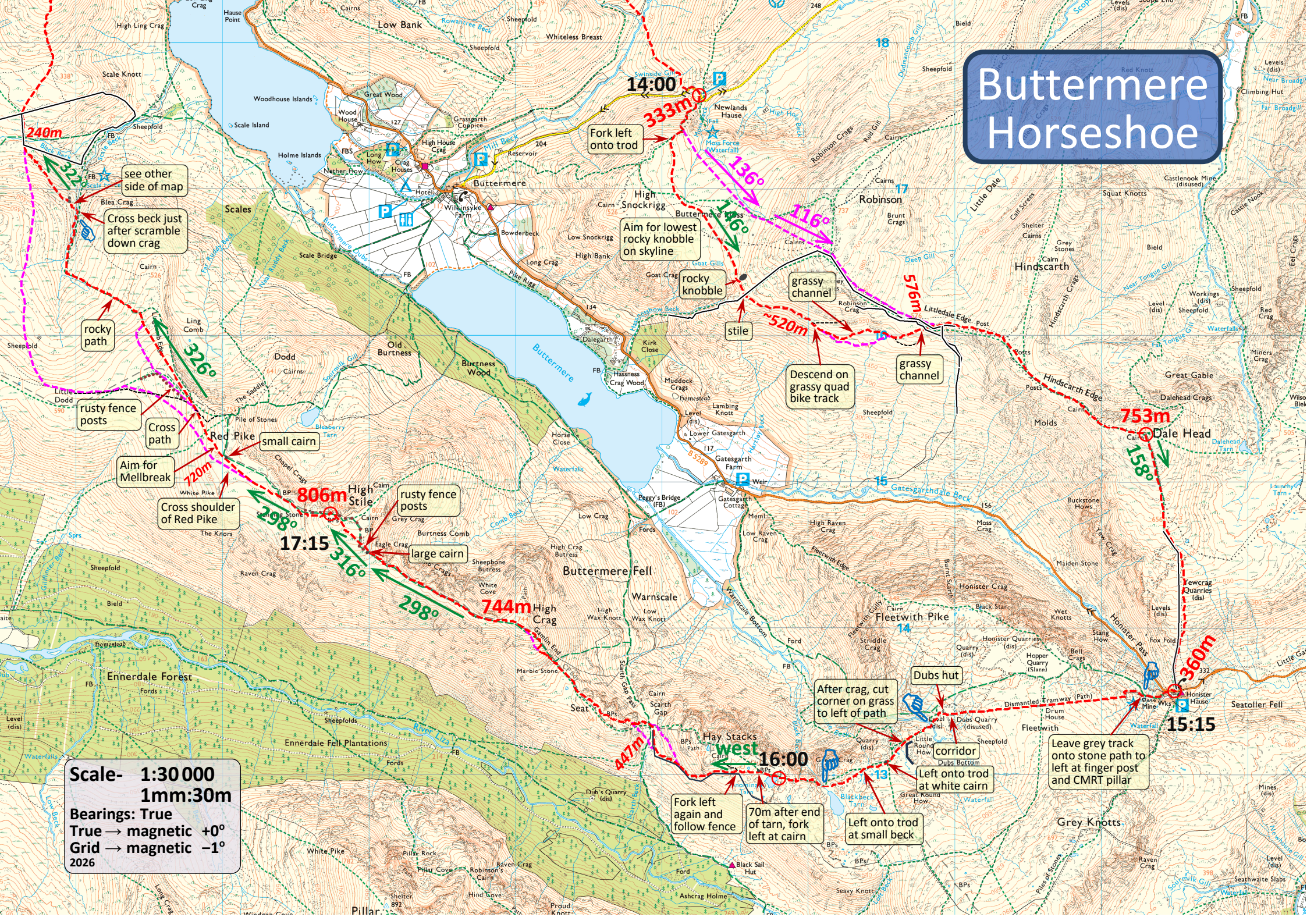

Buttermere Horseshoe
Turn left after pub
Flagged to here
Track then road
Trod to right begins just above drop into grassy gill
400m
306°
Mellbreak
Go left after small drop
512m
18:30
272°
gate
30°
240m
Follow fence
When above boulder, push up left through bracken for 10m then follow its top edge. Continue back into bracken onto better trod
322°
Cross beck just after scramble down crag
Ascend boulder scree staircase to its end, push upwards through heather for another 10m to trod, turn right
rocky path
326°
rusty fence posts
Cross path
Red Pike
cairn
Aim for Mellbreak
720m
Cross shoulder of Red Pike
298°
806m
High Stile
rusty fence posts
17:15
316°
large cairn
Hopegill Head
770m
148°
Whiteside
707m
162°
Sand Hill
234°
Grasmoor
852m
13:15
266°
126°
large cairn
200°
Crag Hill
Derelict wall
660m
Whiteless Pike
120°
144°
14:00
333m
Lake District
Cumbrian Mountains
BUTTERMERE CP
Crummock Water
Buttermere
Scales
Low Bank
Rannerdale
Rannerdale Knotts
Cinderdale Common
Loweswater
Scale Force
Moss Force (Waterfall)
Scale Bridge
Starling Dodd
Little Dodd
Great Dodd
Red Pike
High Stile
Grasmoor
Whiteless Pike
Crag Hill
Hopegill Head
Whiteside
Ladyside Pike
Sand Hill
Gasgale Gill
Brackenthwaite Fell
Buttermere Fell
Warnscale
Scale: 1:30 000
1mm:30m
Bearings: True
True → magnetic +0°
Grid → magnetic −1°
2026


Buttermere Horseshoe
14:00
333m
Fork left onto trod
136°
116°
146°
Aim for lowest rocky knobble on skyline
rocky knobble
grassy channel
stile
~520m
576m
Descend on grassy quad bike track
grassy channel
753m
Dale Head
158°
240m
322°
see other side of map
Cross beck just after scramble down crag
rocky path
326°
rusty fence posts
Cross path
Red Pike
small cairn
Aim for Mellbreak
720m
Cross shoulder of Red Pike
806m
High Stile
rusty fence posts
298°
17:15
316°
large cairn
298°
744m
High Crag
447m
Hay Stacks
west
16:00
Fork left again and follow fence
70m after end of tarn, fork left at cairn
Left onto trod at small beck
Left onto trod at white cairn
corridor
Dubs hut
After crag, cut corner on grass to left of path
Leave grey track onto stone path to left at finger post and CMRT pillar
360m
15:15
Scale- 1:30 000
1mm:30m
Bearings: True
True → magnetic +0°
Grid → magnetic −1°
2026

Files:

Route gpx - the suggested route
Route and alternatives gpx - the suggested route plus alternative lines
Map and notes (Word and pdf) - race map plus tips
Notes - extra notes, more tips and information

Map key:

dashed red line - suggested route
dashed magenta line - alternative route possibilities
red text - elevation in metres (those in italics are approximate and mark changes in direction and other useful points)
green text - bearings (true); average over length of arrow
black times - cut-off times at checkpoints
blue fingers - location of water sources

A few more comments:

1. I've shown some small sections of paths/trods not shown on OS maps. This is so you know they are there and don't follow them!
2. A major route choice is up and over the shoulder of Robinson or the traverse on its southern flank. Going up and over is the more straightforward but you'll have to be a good climber to negate the extra height gain.
3. You could traverse around Seat, reversing the Ennerdale route, but it doesn't look worth it and I don't know if anyone's tried.
4. On the descent from Red Pike, I now head to the rocky path – I used tocut cross-country but it's quite treacherous. There's a temptation to run on the grassy areas to avoid the heather, but the reason the heather doesn't grow there is because it's very wet and is riven with hidden channels. I nearly broke my ankle dropping into one. The path is rocky but at least you can see where you're putting your feet and it's faster. Once across Scale Beck, it's steep and rough for a few minutes before levelling off and a trod is reached which gradually descends. Some folk cross the beck earlier, which I've tried, but there's only the occasional faint trod, is completely unrunnable and is no quicker. The big loop around the top of Scale Gill was taken by the winner, James Harris, in 2024, but is no quicker. I've not tried it but it appears to be pathless. Descending past Scale Force results in 50m more reascent and takes at least 3 minutes longer.
5. If you are going to run along the track in Mosedale you might as well drop directly from the summit of Mellbreak; it's through bracken but doable. (Although, the bracken may be a little too high at this time of year.) The narrow trod is rocky, undulates and seems to go on a long time before salvation arrives. There's probably nothing in it timewise between track and trod, it depends on which type of running you prefer. The descent to the track is so steep I would probably get cramp and the track so level I would have to walk it!
6. Take the schedules with a pinch of salt; how your pace varies during the race may not be the same as the average. For example, the 11 runners averaged to give the 6:30 schedule, at the finish their spread of times was only 2.5 minutes but at Innominate Tarn their spread was 30 minutes. One of the runners took 2:22 to reach the finish from there and another 2:51.