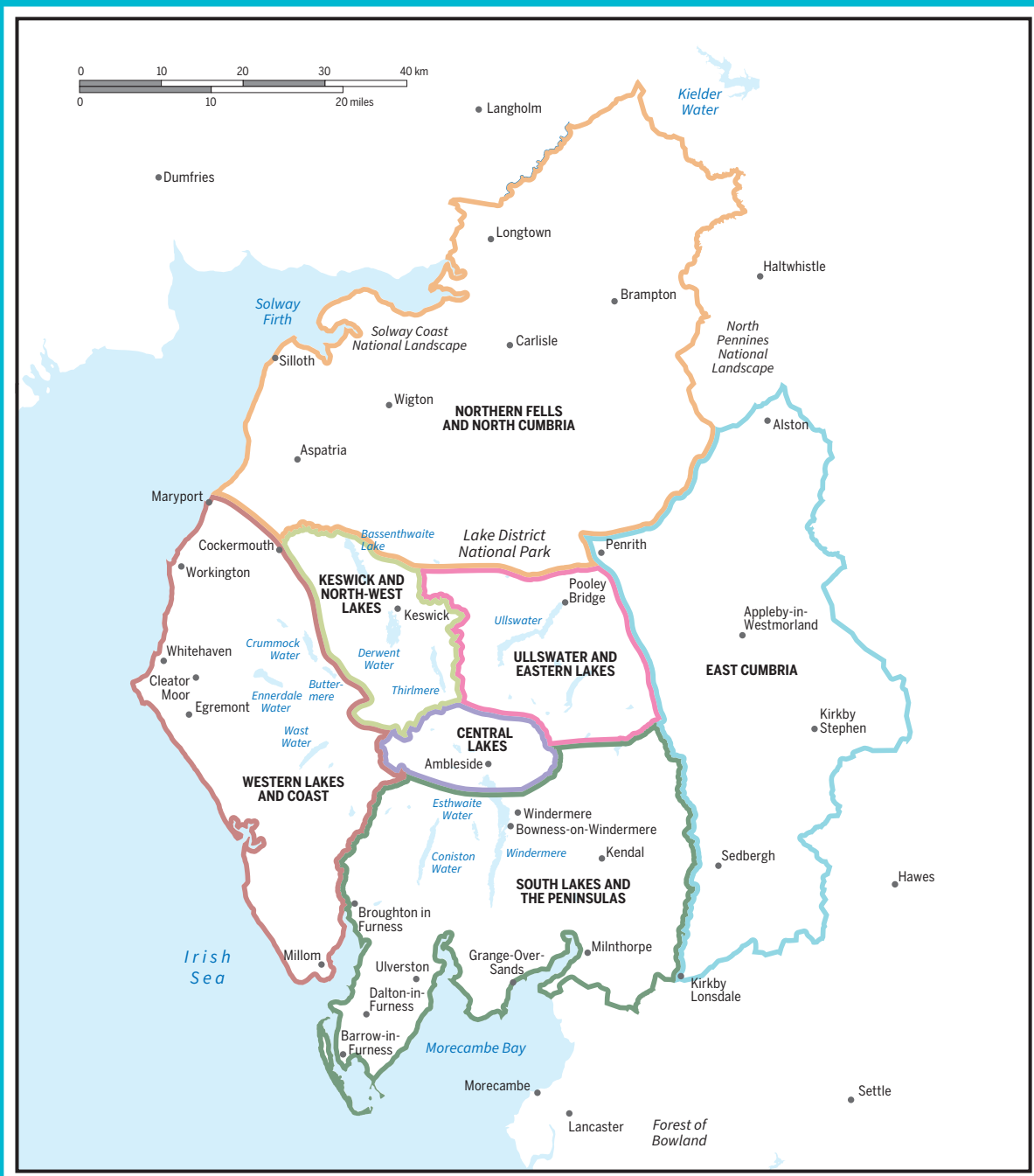


# OUTSTANDING WALKS LAKE DISTRICT



Ordnance  
Survey











## INTRODUCTION

As Windermere drains slowly into Morecambe Bay, so the landscape surrounding it becomes gentler. Apart from the fells above Coniston, the South Lakes is an area of rolling hills, wildflower-filled meadows and tranquil woodland. Beyond the National Park boundary, several fingers of land stretch out into the bay, divided by the mudflats and salt marshes of the Duddon, Leven and Kent estuaries.

Hill-walkers will be drawn to the Coniston Fells, a compact group of mountains that are linked together by a network of high ridges – some broad and windswept, others narrower and rockier. The Old Man is the highest, and most visited fell in the group, but Wetherlam, Swirl How and Dow Crag also reward exploration.

When the weather places the high fells beyond reach, or when you fancy something a little easier, Cumbria's south has lots to offer. For those seeking something off the beaten track, the Duddon Valley, also referred to as Dunnerdale, is hidden away to the west, and reached via Broughton in Furness. The Lake District's most densely wooded region is found between Coniston Water and Windermere, England's largest natural lake. Grizedale Forest, Claife Heights

and the Rusland Valley are criss-crossed by paths for walkers and off-road routes for cyclists and mountain bikers. This is also where Tarn Hows can be found, one of Lakeland's most popular low-level beauty spots, and the more secluded Blelham Tarn. This is Beatrix Potter country, where the children's writer lived for many decades – and where scenes from the 2006 biopic *Miss Potter*, starring Renée Zellweger, were filmed.

Viewpoints on the eastern side of Windermere, including Gummer's How and Orrest Head, can be climbed relatively easily, the latter accessed via a zig-zagging path suitable for more robust mobility scooters. Further south, the fascinating limestone landscapes of Whitbarrow, Hampsfell and Arnside are great places for spotting wildlife, including rare butterflies.

Windermere village, Bowness-on-Windermere, Coniston and Hawkshead offer the widest range of visitor facilities, including accommodation, restaurants, pubs and museums, but become busy in the summer and on bank holidays. Kendal, closer to the main transport arteries, is a fine base for exploring. It has good road links with attractions such as Sizergh Castle and Foulshaw Moss, as well as the attractive villages of Cartmel and Grange-over-Sands.

**Left:** Sculpture of two bathers in Grizedale Forest.

**Above:** Windermere Jetty Museum.





## LOCATION

### 10 Side Pike and Lingmoor Fell

Lingmoor Fell and the subsidiary summit, Side Pike, occupy a wedge of high ground that is squeezed in between the valleys of Great and Little Langdale. This walk, which also visits the beautifully situated Blea Tarn, is perfect as an introduction to fell walking – it's short, climbing to just 1,538 feet (469m), but covers some rugged terrain surrounded by magnificent fell scenery.

The adventure begins before you even lace up your boots; the Blea Tarn car park is the starting point, situated in a hanging valley that is reached by negotiating narrow, twisting lanes that climb steeply. With that challenge out of the way, it's time to set off... First stop is Blea Tarn itself. A good path completes a partial circuit of the water, making easy work of this first mile, although time should be allowed for simply stopping and staring. The tarn sits in a gorgeous bowl – lightly wooded and with steep slopes to the east and west – but it is the Langdale Pikes, framed in the gap created by Blea Tarn Pass, that make this such a photogenic scene.

A short ascent then leads to the saddle between Side Pike and Lingmoor Fell, from where the views really begin to open out. There's some rocky ground to contend with as you follow the ridge wall to Lingmoor Fell's summit, but the unfurling scenery more than makes up for the effort. This all-too-brief flirtation with the fells ends suddenly with a short, steep descent back to the car park.

**DIFFICULTY** ●●

**START** Blea Tarn

**DISTANCE** 2.9 miles (4.6km)

**HEIGHT GAIN** 1,115 feet (340m)

**APPROXIMATE TIME** 2 hours

**ROUTE TERRAIN** Good tarn-side footpath; rough fell paths

#### GETTING THERE



National Trust's Blea Tarn car park (pay and display),  
LA22 9PG

#### OS EXPLORER



OL6, The English Lakes:  
South-western area



NY 295 043



Scan Me

**Left:** Langdale Pikes from Lingmoor Fell.













# PICTURE PERFECT

- 19 Sunset on Derwent Water, Keswick.
- 20 Looking beyond Borrowdale's autumn treetops to Skiddaw.
- 21 Festival of Lights on Cat Bells.
- 22 Bench beside Derwent Water, Stable Hills.
- 23 Keswick Mountain Festival.
- 24 The Mountain Rescue stretcher box at Sty Head.





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# THE WALK HIGHLIGHTS

Striding Edge is regarded as a scramble because traversing it involves the use of hands. It's at the lower end of a 'grade one' scramble though, so, for much of the year, it's the perfect introduction for hill-walkers who want to tackle more adventurous terrain.

That's not to say it's not dangerous. Many have lost their lives on Striding Edge, and there are two memorials to accident victims. The most famous of these was Charles Gough. His rotting remains were found in 1805 at the base of nearby crags, prompting both Sir

Walter Scott and William Wordsworth to write about it. It wasn't so much the death itself that inspired them though; it was more the story of Gough's dog, which remained beside its master's body until it was discovered three months later.

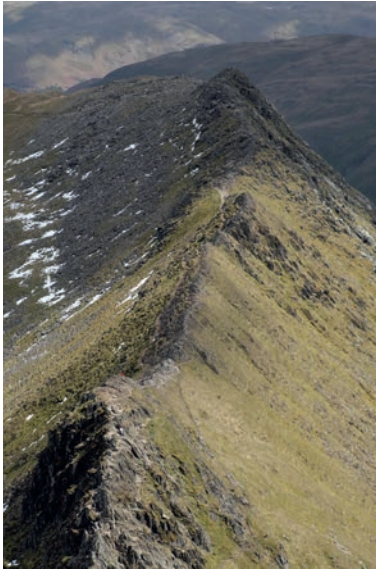
Helvellyn stands at 3,116 feet (950m) in altitude and, after visiting the summit, the route stays on the high ground to cross Nethermost Pike and Dollywaggon Pike. This provides walkers with a chance to admire the sculpting carried out by ancient glaciers. Striding Edge and its neighbour Swirral Edge were created by glacial erosion, freeze-thaw weathering creating their sharpened

crest forms. They cradle Red Tarn, the massif's main corrie tarn, the result of glacial excavation – just like the corries, or cirques, directly below the two pikes. Grisedale is also the result of glaciation, the existing river valley having been transformed by glacial plucking and abrasion.

Part way down Grisedale, the route passes Ruthwaite Lodge, a former shooting hut now maintained by Outward Bound Ullswater. It is dedicated to two of the organisation's instructors who were killed on New Zealand's highest mountain, Mount Cook, in 1988.







“ Striding Edge is regarded as a scramble because traversing it involves the use of hands ”



**Top left:** Striding Edge.  
**Above:** Grisedale.  
**Top right:** The lichen-covered memorial to Charles Gough near Helvellyn's summit.  
**Bottom right:** Ruthwaite Lodge.  
**Left:** Looking down on Swirral Edge from Helvellyn.





# DON'T MISS

## Haweswater badgers

Satnav: CA10 2RP



The RSPB's Wild Haweswater nature reserve covers almost 7,500 acres. Among the few visitor facilities is a custom-built badger-watching hide in the Naddle valley. Visitors must book it for exclusive hire on summer evenings and watch as the badgers emerge from the nearby native woodland to forage for worms and insects.




**Website:** [rspb.org.uk](http://rspb.org.uk)

**OS Explorer:** OL5; NY 509 153

**Directions:** At the eastern end of Haweswater Reservoir near Burnbanks, 1.9 miles (3km) south of Bampton

**Car parking:** Pre-booked parking at the RSPB's Wild Haweswater office

 Check when making the hide booking: [haweswater@rspb.org.uk](mailto:haweswater@rspb.org.uk)

**Bus:** None

## Shap Abbey

Satnav: CA10 3NB



Shap Abbey was established in 1199 by Premonstratensians, the canons reaching the peak of their powers in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. This was when the west tower was built. The tower, still standing, is the most impressive part of the ruins but the foundations of other buildings can also be seen. Open all year, entrance is free.



**Website:** [english-heritage.org.uk](http://english-heritage.org.uk)

**OS Explorer:** OL5; NY 547 153

**Directions:** 1.3 miles (2km) west of Shap village; 5 miles (8km) from M6, junction 39

**Car parking:** Shap Abbey car park, charge (free for English Heritage members)

 No accessibility

**Bus:** [stagecoachbus.com](http://stagecoachbus.com); 106 Penrith to Shap

## Ullswater 'Steamers'

Satnav: CA11 0US



The Ullswater Steam Navigation Company's boats began transporting passengers and goods in 1859. Although they have since been converted to diesel, two of the original steam yachts still operate. These and other boats ferry passengers between Glenridding, Aira Force, Howtown and Pooley Bridge. Double check their timetables as sailings differ according to the season.




**Website:** [ullswater-steamers.co.uk](http://ullswater-steamers.co.uk)

**OS Explorer:** OL5; NY 390 169

**Directions:** Glenridding, on the A592, at the southern end of Ullswater

**Car parking:** Glenridding car park, CA11 0PS, close by

 Level access and toilet on Lady Wakefield (contact Ullswater 'Steamers')

**Bus:** [stagecoachbus.com](http://stagecoachbus.com); 508, Penrith to Patterdale, and 509 (weekends), Keswick and Penrith to Patterdale



## Ullswater daffodils

Satnav: CA11 OJS



The daffodils along Ullswater's shore near Gowbarrow Park are said to have inspired William Wordsworth's famous poem – after he walked the lakeshore with his sister Dorothy and she wrote about it in her diary. Although not all the flowers that exist there today are of the native 'Lent lily' variety, they still make a dazzling display in the spring.

## Lowther Castle

Satnav: CA10 2HH



Lowther Castle was built for the first Earl of Lonsdale, William Lowther, in 1814 but had to be dismantled in 1957 after the family's wealth was squandered by the fifth earl. The shell that remains is the centrepiece of a visitor attraction that includes a café, landscaped gardens, woodland trails and a huge adventure playground.

## Dalemain

Satnav: CA11 0HB



The home of the Hasells since 1679, Dalemain started life as a pele tower in the late 12th century. It still has medieval features, including the old hall, but much of the mansion dates from the Tudor and Georgian periods. Tickets include a guided tour of the house and entry to the gardens, renowned for their roses and Himalayan poppies.





At Aira Point

**Website:** [nationaltrust.org.uk](http://nationaltrust.org.uk)  
**OS Explorer:** OL5; NY 400 200

**Directions:** On the north shore of Ullswater, off the A592 at Aira Point

**Car parking:** National Trust's Aira Force car park (pay and display)

  Level access to Aira Green and disabled toilet

**Bus:** [stagecoachbus.com](http://stagecoachbus.com); 508, Penrith to Patterdale, and 509 (weekends), Keswick and Penrith to Patterdale





**Ferry:** [ullswater-steamers.co.uk](http://ullswater-steamers.co.uk); from Glenridding Pier to Aira Point (seasonal)



**Website:** [lowthercastle.org](http://lowthercastle.org)  
**OS Explorer:** OL5; NY 522 238

**Directions:** Near Askham, off the A6, 5 miles (8km) east of Pooley Bridge

**Car parking:** Lowther Castle car park

  Castle ruins and garden;   estate grounds


**Bus:** [stagecoachbus.com](http://stagecoachbus.com); 509 (weekends), Keswick and Penrith to Pooley Bridge



**Website:** [dalemain.com](http://dalemain.com)  
**OS Explorer:** OL5; NY 477 269

**Directions:** Off A592, 2.2 miles (3.5km) south-west of M6 junction 40

**Car parking:** Dalemain car park

  Ground floor of house, garden and tearoom are accessible

**Bus:** [stagecoachbus.com](http://stagecoachbus.com); 508, Penrith to Patterdale



## LOCATION

### 56 Campfield Marsh and Bowness Common

Lowland raised peat bogs, such as those on the Solway Coast National Landscape, have seen a decline of about 94 per cent across Britain since the start of the 19th century – largely due to drainage, agricultural intensification, afforestation and peat extraction. Bowness Common, including the RSPB's Campfield Marsh, is now protected as part of the South Solway Mosses National Nature Reserve.

Starting from the RSPB car park, the walk sets out between areas of wet grassland. The teal, wigeon, shoveler and other ducks that flock to these wetlands in winter can be seen from the viewpoints and hides lining the track. Beyond wet woodland, a long section of boardwalk leads out across the open expanse of the peat bog.

The reserve's vast scale is best appreciated from Rogersceugh, perched on a glacial deposit known as a drumlin. It may be only 79 feet (24m) in altitude, but, because there's nothing higher for miles around, the views are tremendous. One of the abandoned farm buildings here, open to the elements on its north side, contains information panels and a bench – a sheltered spot to pause and enjoy views which also encompass the Scottish hills, the Lake District and the Pennines.

The final part of the walk is on quiet lanes, firstly leading into Bowness-on-Solway, home to St Michael's Church and The Kings Arms pub; and then out beside salt marshes. If you didn't manage any refreshment stops along the way, self-service hot drinks are available in the RSPB visitor centre at the end of the walk.

**Right:** Across the Solway Firth to Criffel in Dumfries and Galloway.

#### DIFFICULTY ●

**START** RSPB Campfield Marsh

**DISTANCE** 6.8 miles (10.9km)

**HEIGHT GAIN** 120 feet (35m)

**APPROXIMATE TIME** 2¾ hours

**ROUTE TERRAIN** Nature reserve paths and tracks, damp in places; a long section of boardwalk; lanes

#### GETTING THERE



Bus service 93, between Carlisle and Bowness-on-Solway, to the bus stop on the walk route but 1.5 miles (2.4km) east of : [stagecoachbus.com](http://stagecoachbus.com)



RSPB Campfield Marsh car park, CA7 5AG, using the reserve's main entrance at North Plain Farm, 1.5 miles (2.4km) west of Bowness-on-Solway

#### OS EXPLORER



314, Solway Firth



NY 197 614



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## SOME OF THE SPECIAL PLACES FOUND INSIDE THIS BOOK

Rannerdale bluebells, launch on Windermere,  
Skiddaw from across Bassenthwaite Lake, whooper  
swans on Solway Firth, 'La'al Ratty' at Dalegarth  
Station, Moot Hall in Keswick, Aira Force



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