

# 15 SHORT WALKS IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

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## WINDERMERE AMBLESIDE & GRASMERE

A stylized landscape illustration in shades of blue. It features a range of jagged mountains in the background, two soft, rounded clouds in the sky, and a foreground with silhouettes of various trees and a small bush. The overall style is minimalist and graphic.

Jonathan and Lesley Williams

CICERONE

# **SHORT WALKS IN THE LAKE DISTRICT**

**WINDERMERE, AMBLESIDE  
& GRASMERE**

by Jonathan and Lesley Williams

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## USING THIS GUIDE

### Routes in this book

In this book you will find a selection of easy or moderate walks suitable for almost everyone, including casual walkers and families with children, or for when you only have a short time to fill. The routes have been carefully chosen to allow you to explore the area and its attractions. Most routes are circular, although some linear walks may be included that use public transport to get back to the start. Although there may be some climbs there is no challenging terrain, but do bear in mind that conditions can sometimes be wet or muddy underfoot. A route summary table is included on page 6 to help you choose the right walk.

### Clothing and footwear

You won't need any special equipment to enjoy these walks. The weather in Britain can be changeable, so choose clothing suitable for the season and wear or carry a waterproof jacket. For footwear, comfortable walking boots or trainers with a good grip are best. A small rucksack for drinks, snacks and spare clothing is useful. See [www.adventuresmart.uk](http://www.adventuresmart.uk).

### Walk descriptions

At the beginning of each walk you'll find all the information you need:

- start/finish location, with postcode and a what3words address to help you find it
- parking and transport information, estimated walking time, total distance and climb
- details of public toilets available along the route and where you can get refreshments
- a summary of the key highlights of the walk and what you might see

Timings given are the time to complete the walk at a reasonable walking pace. Allow extra time for extended stops or if walking with children.

The route is described in clear, easy-to-follow directions, with each waypoint marked on an accompanying map extract. It's a good idea to read the whole of the route instructions before setting out, so that you know what to expect.

### Maps, GPX files and what3words

Extracts from the OS 1:25,000 map accompany each route. GPX files for all the walks in this book are available to download at [www.cicerone.co.uk/1152/gpx](http://www.cicerone.co.uk/1152/gpx).

What3words is a free smartphone app which identifies every 3m square of the globe with a unique three-word address, e.g. [///destiny.cafe.sonic](https://www.what3words.com/products/what3words-app). For more information see <https://what3words.com/products/what3words-app>.

### Walking with children

Even young children can be surprisingly strong walkers, but every family is different and you may need to adapt the timings given in this book to take that into account. Make sure you go at the pace of the slowest member and choose a walk with an exciting objective in mind, such as a cave, waterfall or picnic spot. Many of the walks can be shortened to suit – suggestions are included at the end of the route description.

### Dogs

Sheep or cattle may be found grazing on a number of these walks. Keep dogs under control at all times so that they don't scare or disturb livestock or wildlife. Cattle, particularly cows with calves, may very occasionally pose a risk to walkers with dogs. If you ever feel threatened by cattle, you should let go of your dog's lead and let it run free.

### Enjoying the countryside responsibly

Enjoy the countryside and treat it with respect to protect our natural environments. Stick to footpaths and take your litter home with you. When driving, slow down on rural roads and park considerately, or better still use public transport. For more details check out [www.gov.uk/countryside-code](http://www.gov.uk/countryside-code).

### The Countryside Code

#### Respect everyone

- be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside
  - leave gates and property as you find them
- do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking
  - be nice, say hello, share the space
- follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available

#### Protect the environment

- take your litter home – leave no trace of your visit
- do not light fires and only have BBQs where signs say you can
  - always keep dogs under control and in sight
- dog poo – bag it and bin it – any public waste bin will do
- care for nature – do not cause damage or disturbance

#### Enjoy the outdoors

- check your route and local conditions
- plan your adventure – know what to expect and what you can do
  - enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory

# ROUTE SUMMARY TABLE

WALK NAME	START POINT	TIME	DISTANCE
1. Bowness, Windermere and School Knott	Bowness steamer pier	2½hr	8.5km (5¼ miles)
2. Windermere, Orrest Head and Holehird Gardens	Windermere Tourist Information Centre	2¼hr	6.5km (4 miles)
3. Near and Far Sawrey, and Beatrix Potter's Hill Top	Ferry House, western shore of Windermere	2hr	7km (4½ miles)
4. Windermere's western shore and Wray Castle	Ferry House, western shore of Windermere	1¾hr	7km (4½ miles)
5. Troutbeck village and upper valley	Town Head, Troutbeck	2½hr	9km (5½ miles)
6. Wansfell, Troutbeck and Robin Lane	Salutation Hotel, Ambleside	3½hr	11km (7 miles)
7. High and Low Sweden Bridges from Ambleside	Salutation Hotel, Ambleside	1¾hr	5.5km (3½ miles)
8. Lily Tarn, Windermere view and Galava Roman Fort	Salutation Hotel, Ambleside	2¼hr	7.5km (4½ miles)
9. Loughrigg from Ambleside	Salutation Hotel, Ambleside	3hr	10km (6¼ miles)
10. Ambleside to Elterwater	Salutation Hotel, Ambleside	2hr	7.5km (4¾ miles)
11. Elterwater and Red Bank	Elterwater	2½hr	6km (3¾ miles)
12. Dove Cottage, Grasmere and Rydal	Grasmere	2½hr	10km (6¼ miles)
13. Silver How from Grasmere	Grasmere	2¼hr	5km (3 miles)
14. Easedale Tarn	Grasmere	2¾hr	8km (5 miles)
15. Helm Crag – The Lion and the Lamb	Grasmere	2½hr	7.5km (4¾ miles)

HIGHLIGHTS
Low fells, tarns and a viewpoint
Gardens, woodland and views
Hill Top, woodland and scenic villages
Lake views and a castle, optional lake cruise
Traditional Lakeland village in a beautiful valley
Waterfall, summit views and ancient village
Low fells and ideal picnic spots
Pretty tarn, lake views and Roman fort
Summit, fine views and a cave
Low fells, lakes and waterfalls
Low grassy fells, views, woodland
Wordsworth, museums, two lakes and views
Summit with panoramic views
Iconic tarn and stepping stones
Rewarding steep climb and great views

## SYMBOLS USED ON ROUTE MAPS



Start point



Finish point



Start and finish at the same place

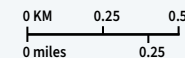


Waypoint



Route line

**MAPPING IS SHOWN  
AT A SCALE OF 1:25,000**



**DOWNLOADED THE GPX  
FILES FOR FREE AT**  
[www.cicerone.co.uk/1152/GPX](http://www.cicerone.co.uk/1152/GPX)



*Walkers enjoying spring woodlands by Windermere (Walk 4)*

## INTRODUCTION

In 1951 the Lake District became the UK's second national park and in 2017 was awarded UNESCO World Heritage status. Today, it welcomes millions of visitors every year, many of whom come to experience the fantastic walking opportunities. Windermere is England's largest natural lake and, together with Rydal Water and Grasmere to the north, forms the main focus for these walks.

The landscape you see today was formed millions of years ago: the ridges, lakes and tarns created by the eroding forces of glaciers and rivers. There are mountains and hills (known locally as fells), woodland and grassy slopes, and valleys filled with lakes, streams, rivers and waterfalls. Distinctive drystone walls divide the land, with lower areas farmed and higher fellsides grazed by hardy fell sheep.

### Walking in the Lake District

The walks in this guide cater for most abilities and ambitions, with fantastic views to reward even modest ascents. Each walk has special interest, including waterfalls, caves and historic sites. Also, you're never too far from a pub or cosy tea room to indulge in some well-earned refreshments!

Every season offers a delight. In spring snowdrops, daffodils and bluebells carpet the ground. Warm summer days offer long daylight, while in autumn the hillsides turn fiery colours, and the purple heather in September is astonishing. Winter is colder and wetter, but frosty winter days have a magic all their own, providing you're properly dressed, and the paths aren't icy.

For over 300 years visitors have fallen in love with the magnificent Lakes scenery – and with so many stunning views, there's every chance you'll find yourself similarly captivated!

The Lake District is one of the wettest areas in the UK, so be prepared for some rain and damp ground. Take special care on stony paths, which can be quite slippery when wet. When the sun shines the landscape and views are incredible, and when it rains, enjoy waterfalls at their most spectacular.

### Things to see

Busy Windermere town and neighbouring Bowness have direct access to the lake and are popular bases, with numerous tourist attractions. Both towns have walks to points where you can enjoy great panoramas



*Shops, cafes and attractive buildings in lively Bowness*

from modest hills. Other attractions include the World of Beatrix Potter at Bowness, and activities at the National Park Centre Brockhole.

At the head of Windermere and surrounded by rugged fells, Ambleside is an ideal walking centre, and has various other sport and leisure facilities, numerous pubs and cafes, the Armitt museum and gallery, and the remains of the Roman fort of Galava.

Grasmere is strongly associated with the poet William Wordsworth, who described his home at Dove Cottage as ‘the loveliest spot that man hath ever found’. Allan Bank and Rydal Mount were also owned and enjoyed by Wordsworth and his family. A visit to Dove Cottage and the Wordsworth Museum next door is recommended. Grasmere is also

known for gingerbread, and for the Heaton Cooper Studio, which exhibits and sells high-quality works by various artists. To the northeast rises Helvellyn, England’s third highest peak, while Helm Crag, Silver How and Loughrigg surround the village.

### Where to stay

If you base yourself anywhere in Bowness, Windermere, Ambleside or Grasmere you should find it easy to access all the walks in this book by bus.

Accommodation is plentiful, catering for all budgets and tastes, including hostels and camping. Bowness, Windermere and Ambleside are the main hubs while Grasmere is smaller, with a more limited selection of shops and cafes. Windermere is the

only centre with a large supermarket (by the station), and a more extensive choice of shops.

### Travel

Windermere is accessible by train, bus or car. However, as most of the walks are either from the main bases or served by good public transport, you can easily leave the car at home.

Frequent 555 and 599 buses link Windermere, Ambleside, Rydal and Grasmere, while other routes serve valleys. Single journey tickets can be purchased, but if you plan to take more than one bus in a day the all-day pass is a worthwhile investment.

Lake cruises are extremely popular, and a great way to explore different parts of the lake shore, or

just sit back and admire the views. The ferry across Windermere from Bowness provides easy access to the west shore and Sawrey villages, while if you want to cycle, all types of bike and e-bikes are available to hire from various locations, and there are numerous signed cycle routes, many traffic-free.

The Lake District becomes seriously congested during high season so consider leaving your car at home. Convenient car parks are identified for each walk but will fill quickly. If you park by the roadside or in a layby, keep passing spaces clear and never block access. Lake District roads are twisty and often single-track. If you aren’t confident reversing into the nearest passing space, you’re probably better off using public transport.



*Grasmere village green, looking north-east towards Stone Arthur (Walks 12–15)*



## WALK 1

### Bowness, Windermere and School Knott

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<b>Start/finish</b>	<i>Bowness steamer pier</i>
<b>Locate</b>	<i>LA23 3HQ ///share.kite.flotation</i>
<b>Cafes/pubs</b>	<i>Cafes and pubs in Bowness, none on route</i>
<b>Transport</b>	<i>Buses 555, 599, 755. Lake steamer from Lakeside and Waterhead</i>
<b>Parking</b>	<i>Glebe Road car park</i>
<b>Toilets</b>	<i>Next to tourist information centre</i>

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Escape the crowds of Bowness and enter a world of birdsong, grassy hillsides, woodland and pretty tarns. From School Knott there are exceptional views to the eastern and central fells – the distinctive Langdale Pikes providing a backdrop with the ribbon of Windermere’s waters below. The route follows the well-signed Dales Way for much of the time.

**Time:** 2½ hr  
**Distance:** 8.5 km  
(5¼ miles)  
**Climb:** 270m

**Panoramic views, meadows, woodland and tarns, using clear paths**



*Woods and meadows on the Dales Way north of Brant Fell*



## SHORT WALKS IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

**1** With your back to the lake turn left along the Promenade then fork right up St Martin's Hill, cross straight over Kendal Road into Brantfell Road and begin to climb steeply. When the road ends, pass through the gate and continue climbing – you are now on the Dales Way. Pass through a gate crossing a track and go straight ahead. [The track to the right leads to a viewpoint, with paths leading to Brant Fell.](#)

**2** At a junction of paths (with stone steps ahead) continue on the Dales Way to the left through a gate. Cross over a small road leading to a farm, through a gate then keep right next to a wall. Pass through a kissing gate in the wall and continue straight, still signed for the Dales Way. Briefly join a small road then turn left to walk beside a small tarn. Pass through two kissing gates beside **Matson Ground Farm** and continue ahead to reach a road.

**1** *The highest mountains near Grasmere and Ambleside are Helvellyn (950m) and Fairfield (873m). The highest mountain in the Lake District (and England) is Scafell Pike at 978m.*

**3** Turn left and walk along the lane, passing Lickbarrow Lodge (a good example of an Arts and Crafts house), then past woods on your right.

**4** Just after the woods turn right onto a single-track road and walk past **High Lickbarrow Farm**, with its topiary and wonderful views, with School Knott now seen above and slightly to the right. Ignore the path to the right on a bend and continue along the lane past an old stone cottage (Old Droomer).



**1** *Herdwick lambs are born black and turn brown then grey as they get older. Another popular breed is the Swaledale which have black faces with white around the eyes and nose.*

**5** Pass through a gate and turn right on the path up through woods signed to School Knott. The path rises through a broad grassy clearing to a gate leading onto the open fell. Follow



the broad grassy path to reach **School Knott** (232m), after about 1hr 15min walking.

**School Knott stands above the site of an old grammar school. Established in 1637, it closed in 1965 when the Lakes School was built at Troutbeck Bridge. The simple rocky outcrop has no cairn or trig point but makes a perfect picnic spot.**

*An easy grassy descent towards School Knott Tarn*



**6** To descend, head south from the summit towards School Knott Tarn and a small group of pine trees. Swing to the right and continue down, keeping the stone wall to your left, then turn sharply left to join a broad path past a pretty tarn. Continue along this track for 1km to meet the main Crook road.

**7** Turn right on the footpath next to the road then right again, taking the left fork signed to Low Cleabarrow Business Centre. After 300m turn left, signed 'Dales Way', across fields with marker posts showing the route to reach the road near **Matson Ground Farm**. Cross straight over the road

and now retrace your route, following Dales Way signs back to **Bowness**.

#### — To shorten

A very short alternative is simply to walk to the first viewpoint (just above the houses), or to Brant Fell, and return the same way. If you have a car, you could park on the Crook road opposite Windermere Golf Club (at [/// scribble.redeeming.lion](http://www.scribble.redeeming.lion)) and walk directly on the track to join the main route at Old Droomer (Waypoint 4). This circuit would take about 1hr 30min.

## High Lickbarrow Farm



*High Lickbarrow Farm nestles in gardens with superb topiary*

High Lickbarrow Farm is a National Trust property, formerly owned by Michael Bottomley, a renowned local architect and artist. For over 60 years he lived at High Lickbarrow, which was purchased by his parents in 1947 and traditionally farmed by his father and sister Elizabeth.

Much of the surrounding land is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and grazed by Albion cattle. The breed is noted for its docile nature and is ideal for conservation grazing. You will also find these cattle grazing the slopes of Gummers How. Although the area is surrounded by housing, the land is full of biodiversity with extensive areas of wildflower-rich pastures, abundant bird song and becks full of native white-clawed crayfish.

# 15 SHORT WALKS IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

## WINDERMERE, AMBLESIDE & GRASMERE

Get outdoors and discover the best of the area with 15 short walks chosen by experts, for all abilities.

- ▶ Walks under 3 hours plus one challenge route
- ▶ Easy to follow with clear route descriptions
- ▶ Facilities, parking and highlights for every route
- ▶ No specialist gear needed
- ▶ Ordnance Survey mapping



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