

HIGH STREET STROLL

This is an anytime challenge walk in the Lake District, of some 30 miles, intended to provide an interesting tour of Central/Eastern Lakeland, whilst avoiding the majority of visitors to the area.

The route can be attempted in either direction, and there are several convenient starting points, but the following description starts in Ambleside and travels in an anticlockwise direction.

Leaving Ambleside by the Old Lake Road, behind the main street, take the bridleway through Skelghyll Wood. Beyond High Skelghyll choose the left hand path to join the Hundreds Road, which leads to Troutbeck(407026). Cross the main Kirkstone road and pick up the Garburn Road leading over into Kentmere(461042). Follow the metalled road on the eastern side of the valley until Nunnery Beck has been crossed, and then take a footpath on your left, leading to Overend. Take the upper grass path, not the cart track, which leads somewhat vaguely across a small ford and then past a stone slab inscribed "To Mardale", until the stone shelter at Nan Bield Pass(452096) is reached. There are traces of an old fence from here, over Harter Fell with magnificent views of Haweswater, as far as Gatesgarth Pass. A more distinct fence is then joined which leads over Branstree, to Selside Pike(491112).

The walk then turns East, over Nabs Moor, to the remote valley of Mosedale (506109), which is seldom visited these days. In Swindale you can reflect that it was once proposed to flood the valley in order to slake the thirst of Manchester, but fortunately this idea has been abandoned. However you might see the remains of the church and the school - supposedly the smallest in the district - which were demolished in readiness for the deluge. From Swindale Head(504125) take the old Corpse Road to Mardale. This track was once used to carry the dead of Mardale, strapped on horseback, to Shap for burial. No such problems these days; nobody now lives in Manchester's watering hole. A former Admiral of the Fleet was born in this valley; now he could float his flagship with ease above his flooded home.

The metalled road is followed to it's terminus and then the path around The Rigg is followed until Riggindale Beck has been crossed. A steady climb over Kidsty Howes(462126) leads to Rampsgill Head and the old Roman Road. Leave this and follow the stone wall which leads unerringly to the trig. point on High Street(441111). Horse races were held here at one time, and the O.S. still use the name Racecourse Hill on some maps. The path over Thornthwaite Crag is straightforward, but some care will be needed on the ascent of Stony Cove Pike. At Kirkstone Pass(401080) take the Ambleside road, but turn off after Pets Bridge. Cross Stock Ghyll and follow the track past Stockghyll Force, and the tourists, back to the fleshpots of Ambleside.

Once the walk is over you may obtain suitable badges and certificates (65p & 15p) by sending an S.A.E. (9 x 5) to

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