

555 StagePath

RIDE & STRIDE BY BUS

the family way to walk

ALWAYS CHECK THE TIMETABLE - USUALLY DISPLAYED AT EACH BUS STOP – TO CONFIRM BUS TIMES FOR THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF EACH WALK STAGE.

The StagePath in the leaflet has been carefully researched and described for clarity in route finding. The maps on the other hand are very basic, as there is no substitute for carrying and referring to the correct Ordnance Survey Explorer Map, acquire OL7, OL5 and OL4 &/or the Harvey Lake District Outdoor Atlas.

Line - Journey of the 555 bus service
Dashes - the route of the StagePath
Dots - Request and Timetabled bus stop



STAGE 2

NORTHBOUND

Brockhole National Park Centre > Ambleside

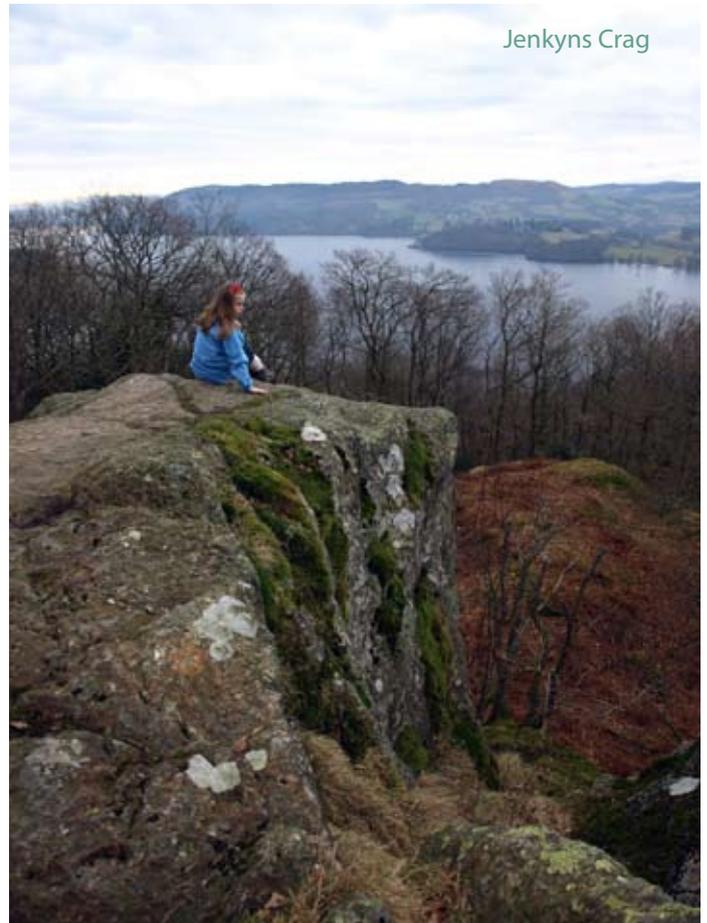
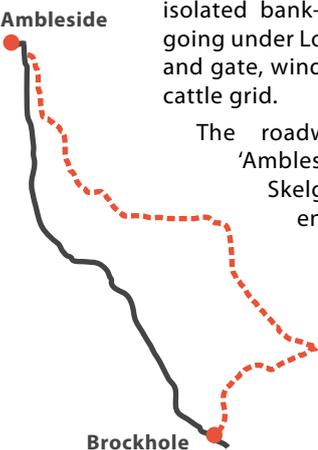
allow two hours, gently undulating

Another steady climb rewarded with memorable views over the upper reaches of Windermere visiting Jenkyns Crag in Skelghyll Wood, which provides a wonderfully intimate view of the backdrop of the lake, the beginnings of mountain Lakeland..

From the southbound bus stop follow Mirk Lane as directed on the bus stop post. This private metalled road leads past Merewood Lodge (holiday lets). As the road ends after Merewood Cottages bear up the narrow path flanked by an old wall, climbing as a rough lane between Newclose Wood and pasture. Stay on the lane leading down to a gate, cross the flag-stones over a stream and by the garden walls of Wood Farm. Stepping onto a roadway turn left, signed 'To Troutbeck & Holbeck Lane'. Respect the privacy of the large residence. Keep ahead, off the road and up the winding lane via a gate, still with woodland left and pasture right. Leaving the woodland at a stile/gate the walled track, hereon known as Grand Ma's Lane, rises to Castle Syke Farm, with the barn conversion farmhouse right and bank-barn left.

At the road turn left, following Holbeck Lane (minor road) with handsome views over Windermere. After 220m bear off right along the private road signed 'Skelgill Farms and flats only'. Shortly after Close Cottage the Langdale Pikes come into view ahead, further along are grand westward views over Windermere's Pullwood Bay, backed by Black Fell and the Coniston Fells. From a gate the unenclosed road leads on passed an isolated bank-barn rising via a hand-gate/gate, going under Low Skelghyll then up by a bank-barn and gate, winding to cross Hol Beck kissing-gate/cattle grid.

The roadway passes a bridle-way sign 'Ambleside 1¼ miles' then enters High Skelghyll farmyard, an active working environment. Re-double your respect for the occupant's privacy, as the right-of-way runs close to the farmhouse. Continuing via the gated sheep holding pens, contour on the path to a gate into open woodland with a clear view down to the Low Wood Hotel, and down the lake



Jenkyns Crag

to Gummers How and Claife Heights. The path descends easily levelling beside a low wall the National Trust sign by a gap gives access to Jenkyns Crag, a rocky headland and a 'must-visit' station. It overlooks the upper reaches of Windermere with Wray Castle and Blelham Tarn intimate features in view across the placid lake, and westward to the Coniston Fells. The track continues winding on the old pitched way, keep down left at a lateral path junction, cross a culverted bridge over Stencher Beck. Duly the track draws by a laurel hedge and wall into Skelghyll Lane. The lane becomes a walled road descending to the junction with Old Lakes Road, turn right passing between Heart of the Lakes/Organico and the Ambleside Mountain Rescue Base at Fisherbeck. Continue on down to the main Lake Road, cross and go right. Turn left along Kelsick Road by the Homes of Football Gallery to arrive at the glass-canopied bus stop.

STAGE 2

SOUTHBOUND

Ambleside > Brockhole National Park Centre

allow two hours, gently undulating

Get away from the crowds and lakeshore traffic to survey Windermere and the grand backdrop of mountain Lakeland from on high. The route having climbed to Jenkyns Crag and High Skelghyll progressively descends by a series of lovely lanes to Brockhole, where you may fill your mind with the wonders of Lakeland for another day.

Walk up Kelsick Road, turn right by the Homes of Football gallery, bear left at the road plaque 'Old Lakes Road'. This side road rises and descends by 'Ambleside Backpackers' and the Heart of the Lakes offices in Fisherbeck. Notice the Norwegian cabin across the public car park on the far side of the main road, this was originally located in Coniston and was used as W.Heaton Cooper's studio (see his distinctive water-colours in the Grasmere studio shop). Pass on behind the Mountain Rescue base seek Skelghyll Lane, the branch road rising left at a white-washed house, the speed sign is signed 'Jenkins Crag, Skelghyll and Troutbeck bridleway'.

Climb steadily, keeping right at the bridleway sign 'Jenkin's Crag and Skelghyll Woods', enjoy the handsome views over Ambleside Waterhead and the upper portion of Windermere. The metalled road becomes a rough lane entering Skelghyll Woods (National Trust). Keep rising by the wall, later a laurel hedge, then by a low level metal sign at a path fork. The roughly cobbled path rises, crosses Stencher Beck becoming level with a wall on the right. Take the opportunity to slip through the signed gap to visit the Jenkin's Crag rock ledge viewpoint, revel in the gorgeous prospect over Windermere. Return via the gap onto the broad path go right, signed 'Troutbeck via Robin Lane'. The path rises a little further, passes a seat to leave the woodland at a gate.

The contouring path enters High Skelghyll farm's gated farmyard (please respect the privacy of the people living here, it is still an active farm). The ensuing open road leads past a three-way sign, proceed along the metalled road via the kissing-gate and cattle grid. Descend by the barn and beneath Low Skelghyll via a gate. Still on an open road descend the next pasture to a further bank-barn, passing through a gate into a walled lane. Follow this private road via Close Cottage turn left at Holbeck Lane, a public road. Continue to the bridle-lane branching right at Castle Syke Farm, a sign with naïve lettering indicates this is 'Grand Ma's Lane'.

Follow the track down between the farmhouse and large bank-barn via a gate into the edge of woodland, hereon known as Mirk Lane - which meant 'the dark way'. Wind down via a further gate to the metalled roadway at Wood Farm, a private residence with an ornate garden. Leave the road at the green 'Private no right of way' notice and low set public footpath sign, bear right by the garden wall. Cross a gill via flagstones pass through the gate. Follow the lane beside the woodland leading down to the roadway at Merewood Lodge, continue to the main road at corresponding bus stops (with pedestrian island).

After the roundabout pass (or visit) Armit Museum, then follow the left-hand roadside footpath beyond the Medical Centre. Cross to the Lodge at the gated entrance to the Rydal Hall drive just after the 30mph limit signs and the bridge over Scandale Beck .

Follow the fenced drive through parkland with handsome views ahead to the ridge-end Nab Scar and the high fells at the head of Rydal Beck valley. Go through the camping site car park, cross over cascading Rydal Beck, via the Old School Room Tea Room, behind Rydal Hall to reach Rydal Lane. Turn down left by the entrance to the lovely Rydal church, with its famous daffodil gardens. The bus stop is at the foot of the hill.



Rydal Hall tea room



Armit Museum

STAGE 3

SOUTHBOUND

Rydal > Ambleside

The ultimate stroll - giving you time to indulge in Rydal Church, Dora's Field, Rydal Mount and Rydal Hall tea room, before venturing through the gracious park and Ambleside, where another pleasurable hour can be spent in the Armit Museum before partaking of the goods in the many retail and refreshment outlets in this popular little Lakeland town.

Ascend Rydal Lane. For an early diversion go left through St Mary's churchyard for a simple stroll around Dora's Field, abundant with daffodils in spring. Higher up the hill is Rydal Mount, one of Cumbria's cultural treasures, dedicated to the life William Wordsworth. The world-renowned poet lived his final years here and was responsible for laying out the romantic gardens, it remains in the care of his descendants (entry fee/tea-room).

Ignore the first access to Rydal Hall take the lane above, clearly waymarked 'footpath to Old School Room Tea Room', what more inducement do you need? Pass close behind the imposing Rydal Hall, now Carlisle's Diocesan ecumenical conference centre, retreat, and youth centre.

Enjoy Rydal Beck's dancing waters, tucked in beside the tea room, before heading on along the track waymarked 'footpath to Ambleside' accessed via the camp site car park. At a gate the footpath becomes a fenced lane leading to a Hall Lodge and gate onto the main road (request bus stop). Cautiously cross the main road, go left along footpath, keeping left cross Scandale Beck to duly enter Ambleside. Pass the Health Centre (request bus stop) to reach the roundabout by the Armit Museum, another treasure well worth investigating. Pass Bridge House (The National Trust's smallest property), follow the main road lined with shops. Crossing Rattle Gill go up by the Post Office/TIC, swinging down right by The Market Hall. Turn right into Church Street by Greggs bakery, notice the wall plaque to William Wordsworth immediately below. Coming to the Conservative hall turn left along King Street to reach the Kelsick Road bus stop.

STAGE 3

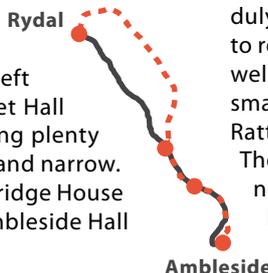
NORTHBOUND

Ambleside > Rydal

walking time barely half-an-hour

A gentle wander through Rydal Park with the bonus of Rydal Hall's lovely Old School House Tea Room and Rydal Mount, Wordsworth's final home.

Walk through the car park, along King Street, turn right up Church Street. Notice a wall-plaque recording The Office of William Wordsworth as distributor of stamps for Westmorland 1813-43, below Greggs on the right. Turn left along the main street rounding by The Market Hall and the Post Office cum Tourist Office, offering plenty of retail diversion to lure you off the straight and narrow. Wander on down the street passing the tiny Bridge House (National Trust), built as an apple store for Ambleside Hall it was set on the bridge to evade land tax.





Rydal Mount

STAGE 4

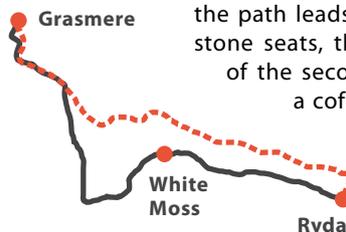
SOUTHBOUND

Grasmere > Rydal

The easiest stage yet, and for many the most romantic. For all the popularity of the Wordsworth story, there is a magic in the air as you walk by Dove Cottage and embark on the far from morbid Coffin Route. This bridle-path leads on well above the busy road to give enchanting views over Rydal Water to Loughrigg Fell to reach to Rydal Mount, an experience to be enjoyed at any season.

From the crossroads by Sam Read's book emporium, walk south along College Street, along the village street passing Sarah Nelson's little shop, source of a much-loved gingerbread. William and Dorothy Wordsworth's grave can be seen in St Oswald's Churchyard. Continue along the footpath beside Stock Lane leading to the main road roundabout. Keep to the right, immediately cross the main road into Town End, passing the Wordsworth Trust's smart contemporary visitor centre. The road leads via Dove Cottage and ascends the hill to How Top, keep left, climbing with the road by Skater's Tarn.

Continue along the level road, which becomes a gravel lane after Dunnabeck then leads on to Brockle Cottage. After a hand-gate the bridleway continues as a wall-side path, effectively contouring along the hillside. Never in doubt, the path leads through a gate to reveal two stone seats, the block of stone at the back of the second was originally the basis of a coffin rest. You might wish to rest your bones here temporarily to enjoy the lovely view over Rydal Water! The level path leads via a further gate, rises by fallen trees to a gate into a lane.



Glance over the tall wall to glimpse Rydal Mount's beautiful landscaped garden just before passing through another gate. Continue by the back-wall of The Mount, bear right do



Wordsworth Trust Visitor Centre, Grasmere Townend

STAGE 4

NORTHBOUND

Rydal > Grasmere

allow an hour for this easy undulating stroll

Most of this stage runs comfortably above the road providing romantic views over Rydal Water and the backing Loughrigg Fell, delightfully distanced from the traffic at lakeside, coming easily down by Tow Top and Dove Cottage entering Grasmere along Stock Lane.

Ascend Rydal Lane from the bus stop, passing the entrances to Rydal Hall and The Mount. Climbing the short concrete way turn immediately left along lane above Rydal Mount, with the bridleway sign 'Grasmere'. Go through the gate and along the high walled lane, briefly glimpse over the left-hand wall into Wordsworth's romantic style landscaped gardens. After a second gate the lane opens with the path winding on ahead, there are some lovely views through the trees to Rydal Water.

The undulating path is never in doubt and leads to a gate at a wall corner. Contouring on through an open gateway the path leads by two stone benches, the backing stone of the first being the base of a coffin rest, now somewhere for you to rest your legs too! Another gate, the path now runs on close to a wall leading via a hand-gate to a path junction below Brockle Cottage. Continue on the track, then metalled road at Dunnabeck leading by Skater's Tarn at the junction with the bridleway from White Moss (bus stop). Flanked by trees and bracken the road leads via How Top with the lovely view of Silver How ahead, across Grasmere lake.

Winding downhill the road passes by Dove Cottage and the Wordsworth Trust's contemporary visitor centre in Grasmere Townfoot (tea rooms close by). Cautiously cross the main road, from the roundabout turn into Stock Lane, the footpath leads into Grasmere. Follow on round by the church and Sarah Nelson's Gingerbread Shop, branch right along College Street to the cross roads by Sam Read Bookseller. (The northbound bus stop facing, and southbound to the left, opposite the Heaton Cooper Studio).