

PARK&STRIDE

with Mark Richards
on BBC Radio Cumbria

25 Grange Fell from Grange-in-Borrowdale



River Derwent at Grange

distance : 8 km/5 miles

time : 4 hours

ascent : 400m/1,310ft

grade : energetic

MAPS (Harvey Superwalker Map) Central Lakeland
(Ordnance Survey) OL4 North-western area

PARK BUT THINK BUS!

One may start from either the Grange Bridge or Rosthwaite village bus stops. If you have to drive then use the National Trust car park in Rosthwaite, if this is full use the adjacent Community Hall (parking fee for hall funds) GR 258148.

The Jaws of Borrowdale

Ruskin said that mountains were the beginning and end of all natural scenery. Wainwright considered the Jaws of Borrowdale to be the most beautiful square mile in Lakeland. From this one must deduce that the environs of Grange-in-Borrowdale are indeed England's finest scenic moment. This walk sets out to discover something of this genius loci, to savour the rich mix of native woodland amid a glorious tangle of rugged hills. At the same time seeking to foster use of the extra special public transport facility the 'Borrowdale Rambler' bus. Service 79 plies the valley from Keswick to Seatoller every daylight hour throughout the year, bravo Stagecoach. Why bring your car into this heavenly place if you don't have to?

The walk is described with 'green' travellers to the fore and therefore strides out from the earlier bus stop at Grange Bridge. By which means putting emphasis on the climb onto Grange Fell at the outset, it is always better to get the sweating over early on! The walk ranges over King's How which commands a marvellous outlook across the gulf of the Jaws to Goat Crag and the rugged flank of High Spy. Heading on through the heather banks to the highest point of this knobbly plateau, namely Brund Fell, before turning down by Puddingstone Bank to join the regular bridle-path linking Watendlath with Rosthwaite. Reaching the valley floor the walk then turns north with the option of either the scenically scintillating trail beside the wood-shaded rocky bed of the Derwent, or dependant on energy levels or inclination, claims the entertaining prize of Castle Crag. Julia Bradbury in her TV 'Wainwright Walks' series pronounced this little eminence as her favourite fell top, and who could deny her the indulgence of so lowly a summit, lying in such delectable surroundings?

Have bus will travel... and walk!

From the bus shelter on the east side of Grange Bridge walk south. Immediately after the guest house find a bridleway hand gate up the bank left from the road. Follow the path naturally through the open birchwood and marshy flushes crossing a low ridge to a hand gate in a wall. As the path descends fork right, short of the next hand gate, the path dipping through a stony hollow in the woodland beneath Greatend Crag. The path sets store on a steady ascent soon supported by firm steps, a magical staircase



Grange Bridge and
Borrowdale Rambler bus stop

to the upper storey. Emerging from the tree canopy the path levels keep to the stepping stone trail rising again to curve right of the damp lateral valley climbing to the north end of King's How ascending via the Edward VII memorial plaque set into a rock alcove directly below the summit. The cairnless top of King's How 392m/1,286ft is the most prominent of the three 'summits' that comprise Grange Fell. Ether Knott 'the heather eminence' is the most northerly and just one metre lower than Brund Fell, the highest at 416m/1,365ft, lying to the south and is the next objective of the walk. The name Brund is thought to refer to a tradition of 'heather burning'.

Continue naturally over the top watching for a break left as a small stone marker is seen ahead, traverse the end of the marshy lateral valley crossing the fence stile. Continue past a ruined fold to cross a ladder stile, rise beyond a second ruined fold and as it seems the path is missing the main summit the key path turns acutely left. Advance up past the first rock turret to reach the narrower rock castle, the actual summit of Brund Fell. Note the volcanic swirls in the rock. Nearby stands the jaunty-sounding outcrop Jopplety How. The path continues down to a new ladder stile over the bounding wall, where turn right, initially avoiding the marshy ground, but then keep by the wall descending to the top of the Watendlath/Rosthwaite bridge-path at the gate. Go through and follow this down by a series of three further gates by Hazel Bank to cross the Stonethwaite Beck bridge into Rosthwaite opposite the bus stop, turning left to the post office/shop (of course you may simply wait for the next bus and hop aboard to return poste haste to Keswick!

Rosthwaite has two hotels to distract your striding flow, the Royal Oak and Scafell, which lie beside the main road ahead. However, you may be content to frequent the Flock-In tearoom, which lies en route opposite Yew Tree Farm, so go right following the village lane leading by the National Trust car park and Community Hall. Leave the road at the bend passing between the farmhouse and tearoom barn entering a walled lane. Yew Tree is a genuine working farm, which boasts periodic royal patronage.

The ensuing lane leads to and alongside the River Derwent to cross the neatly cobbled New Bridge, which really does look new.

Valley path: Turn immediately right if your muscles decree an easier return leg. This path, part of the Cumbria Way, leads by pasture gates into luxuriant native woodland and weaves a lovely way above and

then in harmony with the river till it meets up with the higher route by the Gowder Dub bend in the river. A simply gorgeous spot to linger, sit and watch the crystal waters dancing over the large boulders in the riverbed. Keep a keen eye out for the furtive dipper a little bird that really does bob, Cumbrians call them dukers (not an allusion to the heading talents of Gretna's star striker Kenny Deuchar!).

Castle Crag route: Turn left and cross the first of a pair of footbridges and the mid-point stile. Follow the beck to a gate crossing a small footbridge to stile where bear away from the beck climbing the bank into bracken, pass through a gate at the top continuing uphill to meet up with the contouring Seatoller/Grange path. Turn right thereby joining the Allerdale Ramble heading north. The path crosses Tongue Gill heading for the wild valley 'behind' Castle Crag. The inviting spur path climbing steeply up a slate trod right onto the diminutive pulpit peak itself, a moment of no less charming elation. Unwind your ascent to continue descending to reach the bonny banks of the Derwent in circumstances reminiscent of a Scottish glen.

The bridleway weaving on north through wood-flanked pastures onto a minor road leading directly into the community of Grange-in-Borrowdale, beside the first of two tearooms. Go right to cross the braided Derwent via Grange Bridge. A lovely spot to reflect on the walk and consider the beauty of trees, rock and wotter!



After-walk refreshment

The Scafell and Royal Oak Hotels and the Flock-in Tearoom in Rosthwaite and two tearooms in Grange-in-Borrowdale... you're spoilt for choice!

Wooded slopes of King's How from Quayfoot car park

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