



Outdoor Adventures with Children

Lake District



About the Authors

Rachel Crolla and Carl McKeating live at the edge of the Yorkshire Dales with their two young adventurers. They have visited the Lake District on family holidays since their own childhoods and have fond memories of being taken on some of the routes in this book. They are both passionate about passing on their love and respect of outdoor environments to a new generation. Rachel and Carl are outdoors writers and photographers who have hiked, scrambled and climbed all over Europe, exploring the major mountain ranges. They also enjoy cycling. In 2007, Rachel became the first woman to climb to the highest point of every country in Europe. The couple's resulting guidebook, *Europe's High Points*, was published by Cicerone in 2009. The couple have since worked on guides to Snowdonia, France and Northern England. When they are not having outdoor adventures, Carl is working on his doctorate about Mont Blanc and Rachel is a teacher.

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Outdoor adventures with children Lake District

40 family days with under 12s exploring,
biking, scrambling, on the water and more

by Rachel Crolla and Carl McKeating

CICERONE

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Front cover: Striding down the flanks of Loughrigg, high above Grasmere (Adventure 7)

Half title: There is always plenty to find on the beach at Maryport (Adventure 38)

Acknowledgments

This book has been in the pipeline for a long time. Born from the love of the outdoors that was kindled in us as children and that we wished to pass on to our own and other children, it has only come to fruition thanks to the invaluable help and support of many people. Thanks in particular to Joe, Jonathan and Lesley Williams and the team at Cicerone for believing that this project was worthwhile.

It has been our pleasure and privilege to go out adventuring with some keen members of the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts. Thanks in particular go to Julija Moskalina, Ayrton and Lydia; the Hatch family; Dave, Sally, Heidi and Lucy Emery; Mark, Sam and Luke Barrett; Dougie and Robbie Thistlethwaite and family; Natty, Rafferty and Monty Truss and family; Ben and Emily Ward and family; Robert and Olly Brooks and family; the Hartley family; Jonah Brittain. We are grateful to all the families who gave permission for photographs of their children to appear in this book. Also thanks to Dennis Mayho and the Robinson family for their route ideas. Special thanks to Stephanie Crolla for providing 'base camp' at her caravan in the Lake District.

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





















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









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Adventures	Activities
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Adventure 2	Great Langdale Bike Trail, Elterwater and Skelwith Force  
Adventure 3	Tarn Hows geocaching  
Adventure 4	Cathedral Caves    
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Adventure 8	Castle to castle at Windermere   
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Adventure 15	Ride the Esk Trail to the sea   
Adventure 16	The Fickle Steps of Dunnerdale   
Adventure 17	Meet the Old Man of Coniston   
Adventure 18	Pavey Ark and Stickle Ghyll scramble    
Adventure 19	A wild Ennerdale journey to Black Sail   
Adventure 20	Scafell Pike – An Adventurer's Way   

Start/finish	Distance	Grade	Page
Coniston area	300–800m by boat		40
Elterwater; Great Langdale	5km (3.1 miles); 14km (8.7 miles)	 	44
Coniston area	3km (1.9 miles); 5km (3.1 miles)	 	49
Skelwith Bridge area	5km (3.1 miles)		53
Longsleddale	5.6km (3.5 miles) one way		58
Grasmere	5km (3.1 miles)		62
Rydal	7.5km (4.7 miles); 7km (4.3 miles); 4.5km (2.8 miles)	  	66
Wray Castle	11.5km (6.8 miles) or shorter lengths to suit	 	71
Newby Bridge area	2km (1.2 miles) hike; as far as you like by boat		74
Grizedale	4km (2.5 miles); 11km (6.8 miles)	 	78
Cartmel	4km (2.5 miles)		81
Haverigg	5.6km (3.5 miles)		84
Dunnerdale	3km (1.9 miles); 6.5km (4 miles)		88
Eskdale area	3.2km (2 miles) for the walk in		91
Boot	14km (8.7 miles)		95
Dunnerdale.	5.6km (3.5 miles); 1km (0.6 miles)	 	100
Coniston area	8km (5 miles); 5.5km (3.4 miles); 4km (2.5 miles)	 	105
Great Langdale	6.5km (4 miles); 3km (1.9 miles)		109
Ennerdale Bridge area	19km (11.8 miles)	 	113
Seathwaite	16km (9.9 miles)	  	118

Adventures		Activities
THE NORTHERN LAKES		
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Adventure 40	Overnight at the loneliest house – Skiddaw	

Start/finish	Distance	Grade	Page
Keswick area	1km (0.6 miles) or 1.5km (0.9 miles) on the water		124
Keswick	4km (2.5 miles); 3km (1.9 miles)		127
Braithwaite area	7.5km (4.7 miles); 3.5km (2.2 miles)		131
Keswick area	6.5km (4 miles)		135
Keswick	5km (3.1 miles); 10km (6.2 miles)		139
Glenridding area	4km (2.5 miles) or shorter distances to suit on the water		143
Ullswater	2.5km (1.6 miles)		149
Borrowdale	3.5km (2.2 miles)		151
Honister	2km (1.2 miles); 3km (1.9 miles)		154
Borrowdale	5.6km (3.2 miles)		159
Borrowdale	7km (4.3 miles); 3km (1.9 miles)		163
Borrowdale	6km (3.7 miles)		167
Buttermere	7.5km (4.7 miles); 5.5km (3.4 miles)		172
Buttermere area	100m on the water 6km (3.7 miles); 5km (3.1 miles)		177
Ennerdale Bridge	26km (16.2 miles)		181
Loweswater	3km (1.9 miles); 6km (3.7 miles); 1km (0.6 miles)		186
Embleton	3.5km (2.2 miles)		190
Maryport	14km (8.7 miles) or shorter distances to suit		193
Bassenthwaite area	3.5km (2.2 miles); 6km (3.7 miles)		198
Bassenthwaite area	5.6km (3.5 miles) one way		203

Safety notice and disclaimer

This guidebook has been prepared in good faith to help parents who are taking children on adventures in the outdoors.

Developing your child's abilities, knowledge and experience is something that should not be forced or rushed. The aim is to give you ideas to help your child discover and develop a love of the outdoors, which will last a lifetime, and to ensure that your child has a great time, safely.

As a parent you are responsible for judging the capabilities of your child. The notes under the How to use this guide and grading section give information about the capabilities your child will need to be able to manage each activity. This can only be indicative – every child and every situation is different, so it is important to make continuous judgments, even after you have started out, and to be prepared to turn back if the situation changes.

Make sure you understand the route or activity you are doing before setting off. Read the guide carefully. Always have a map and other navigational aids (compass or GPS) with you and know how use them. Check weather and hill conditions before you start and be prepared to turn back if conditions change.


Always have ample warm clothing, for your child and yourself, as well as good quality waterproofs. Strenuous activities burn a lot of energy, so be sure to take sufficient food and drinks for all the party. Children will often run out of energy very quickly unless they eat regularly.

Be aware of the safety issues for the activity you are doing. This book gives general guidance, but you are expected to understand the risks and safety issues around water, cycling, hillwalking and scrambling and take the appropriate gear and safety equipment in each case.

As well as knowing your child's capabilities, it is important to know your own. Do not undertake activities outside – or anywhere approaching the limits of – your own comfort zone. If in doubt, do something easier, or develop your skills before venturing into the outdoors with your children. **Please read the Introduction for important safety information and tips.**









The author and publisher have made every effort to ensure that the information contained in this guide was correct when it went to press, but, except for any liability that cannot be excluded by law, they cannot accept responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained by any person using this book.

Route symbols on OS map extracts

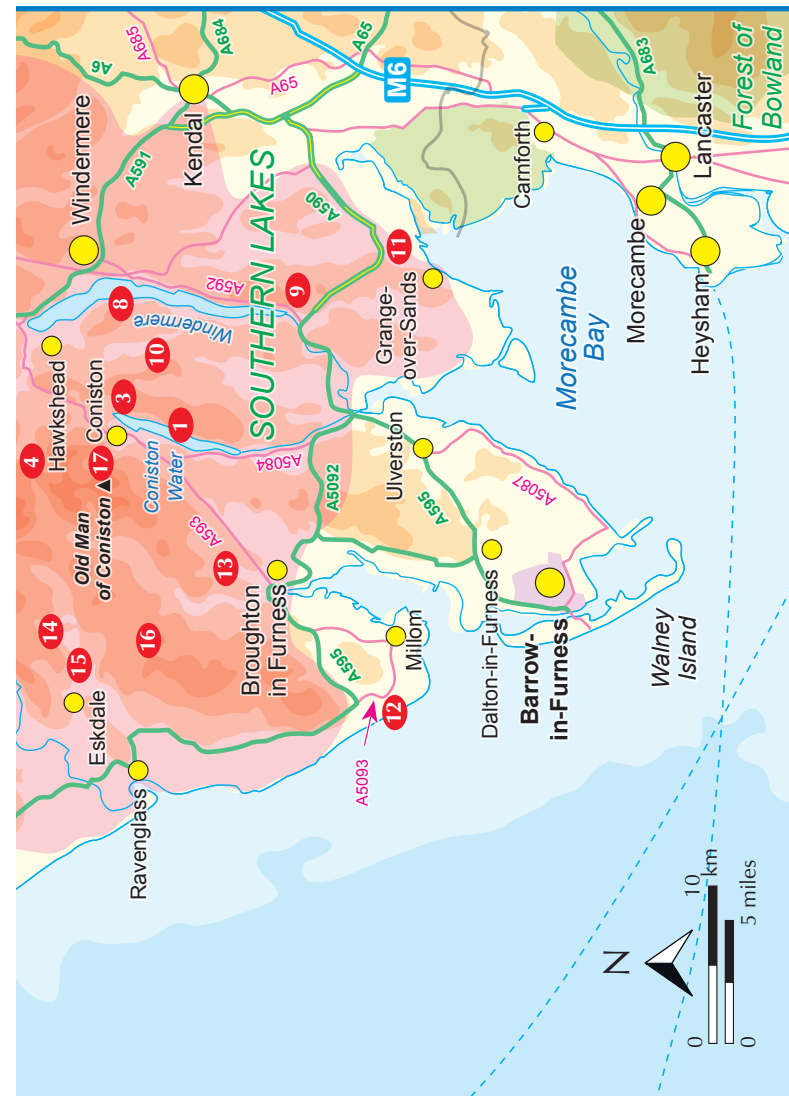
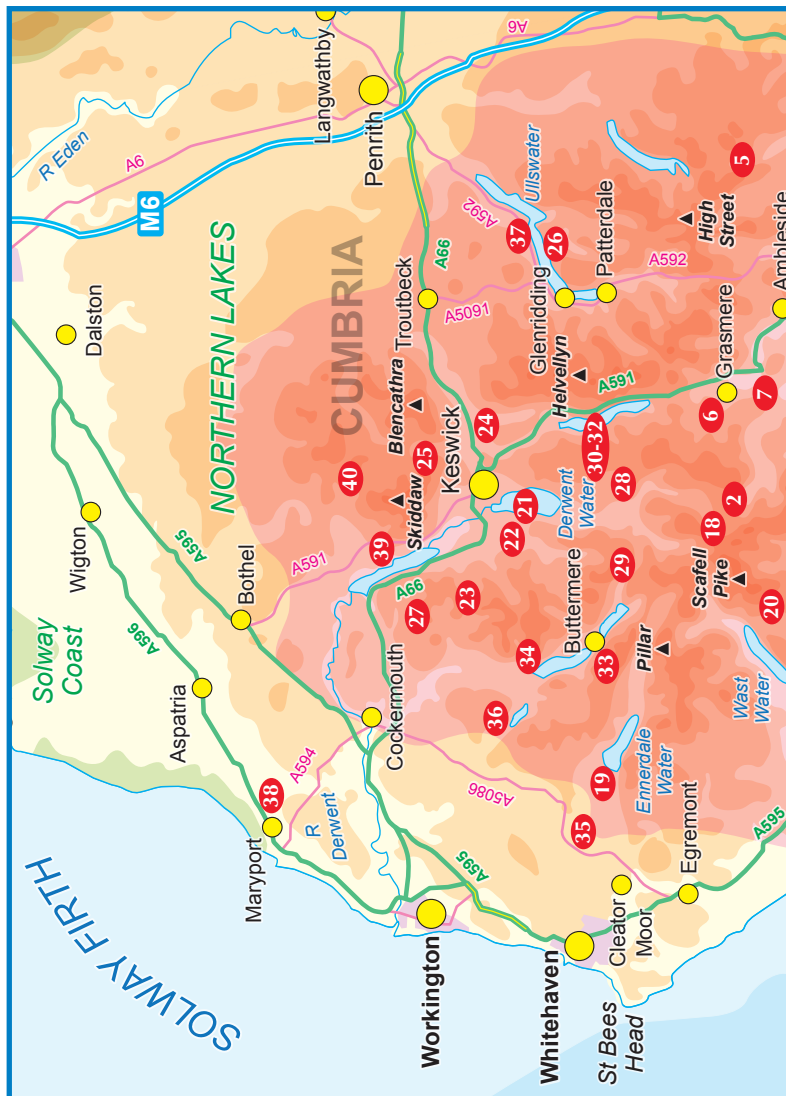
	green route		green alternative route/extension
	blue route		blue alternative route/extension
	red route		red alternative route/extension
	black route		black alternative route/extension
	start/finish point		finish point
	start point		alternative start/finish point
	route direction		

for OS legend see printed OS maps

Activity symbol key

	Hiking		Boating
	Cycling		Scrambling
	On the water		Mountain Climb
	Exploring		Overnight Stay





Making this guide

After years of having outdoor adventures on our own terms, when we became parents our focus shifted to include our children and pass on a love of wild places to them. Like most aspects of parenting, this is a learning process not without its occasional ups and downs. Yet in spite of a few lost mittens and soggy picnics, our children have genuinely loved their outings and inspired us to see the outdoors with fresh eyes.

Children find joy and adventure in every stick, pebble and creepy crawlly they discover along the way. This enthusiasm is infectious. Yes, we've had to slow down on our family adventures, but that has led us to do things we may well have otherwise ignored: skimming stones on pebbly beaches, climbing trees, flying kites and finding geocaches. Watching our children grow from tottering toddlers into young people who appreciate the beauty of nature and understand the importance of looking after it, we have shared their pride in pushing themselves to climb mountains, learn to ride bikes and brave the chilly Lakeland waters.

Time and again our children have surprised us with what they can achieve with support and encouragement (and perhaps the occasional bit of good old-fashioned 'get to the top of this bit and there'll be a sweet stop' bribery!).

As all parents know, children are full of surprises. Our eldest set off on a walk around Buttermere when she was nearly three. After 200m she wanted to be carried. We distracted her from this request. Thereafter she ambled happily around the whole of the lake without a single moan – exceeding all our expectations. Three years later, and at a similar age, our youngest gave us the same sort of surprise by managing the hikes to Skiddaw House and to Mosedale Bothy with relative ease. Likewise we have been impressed by the determination of friends' children to manage things that are fairly tough adventures for reasonably fit adults, and yet do so while having a great deal of fun – an 8-year-old zipping round the Quercus Trail, 9 and 11-year-old brothers being full of beans on Scafell Pike, 4-year-old friends clambering their way up Catbells while looking for 'cats' and 'Mrs Tiggy-Winkle's house' – these are just a few of the many examples we could give.

Overall, making this guide has emphasised the value of a break from the relentless digital world and the pressures of modern living, and made us feel that a back-to-basics outdoor adventure cannot be beaten!

Rachel and Carl

Adventure 1

Swallows and Amazons Island, Coniston



Boating to the island that inspired the famous children's adventure story, exploring and swimming

Start/finish	Coniston area. Roadside parking along the eastern shore of Coniston Water between (SD 295 914) and (SD 300 928) or Brown Howe car park (fee) on the western shore of the lake at (SD 290 910).
Distance	300m to 800m from the shore depending on launching spot
Suitable for	● Green. In calm weather it is feasible for most well-equipped families with enough adult paddlers. Landing with young children is easy at the island's harbour.
Amenities	Public toilets at Brown Howe parking
Considerations	Refer to the On the water section in the introduction. The island does have cliffs and drops, so children must be closely supervised, particularly around the island's perimeter. Camping, barbecues and fires are not permissible on the island.
Caution	You are bound to spot at least one person doing the popular 3m water jump from the craggy spur on the south of the island – the jump is hazardous, it has rocks directly beneath it that are harder to clear than might be expected.

'Better drowned than duffers, if not duffers, won't drown'
– Arthur Ransome, 1932

Peel Island on Lake Coniston was the primary inspiration for Arthur Ransome's Wild Cat Island in the classic children's novel *Swallows and Amazons*. Today it belongs to us all through the stewardship of the National Trust. It can be a very popular kayaking and canoeing destination on summer weekends – but this is part of its appeal as children running wild among its various nooks and crannies pretending to be Nancy Blackett-style pirates and other such terrors of the seas bring it to life. This is also a good place for children to befriend other 'scurvy dogs' to play with. A perfect sheltered 'hidden harbour' allows for the easy mooring of boats and is



shallow enough to disembark youngsters without trouble. The island has ample room and there is just the right amount to explore – although do not expect peace and tranquillity among the calls of ‘sea snake’ and ‘blackguard’ from scoundrels threatening to make you walk the plank!

Simply paddle to the island. The ‘hidden harbour’ is on the southwest side of the island and can be reached steadily enough from either the east or west side. The harbour is ideal and should not be difficult to locate. There are trees to climb, slabs to scramble up, channels to swim and paths to be explored – enjoy.

Bad weather alternative

Not suitable for bad weather. Visit Tarn Hows or Wray Castle instead.

Note: Kayaks, canoes and rowing boats can be hired at Coniston Boating Centre – SD 307 970. Unfortunately, Peel Island is more than 5km to the south of the centre and, unless you are of a very high paddling or rowing standard, it is far too far to realistically reach from the centre, explore the island and still have energy for the return – it might be an impossible excursion if there is any wind about. Those hiring boats can still have an adventure exploring the bays to the south of Coniston village.



A greeting party at the secret harbour on Wild Cat Island



Spying other pirates on Wild Cat Island