
WALKING THE LAKE DISTRICT FELS

BUTTERMERE

HIGH STILE, GRASMOOR,
GRISEDALE PIKE AND HAYSTACKS

MARK RICHARDS

CICERONE

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Updates to this Guide

While every effort is made by our authors to ensure the accuracy of guidebooks as they go to print, changes can occur during the lifetime of an edition. Any updates that we know of for this guide will be on the Cicerone website (www.cicerone.co.uk/1036/updates), so please check before planning your trip. We also advise that you check information about such things as transport, accommodation and shops locally. Even rights of way can be altered over time. We are always grateful for information about any discrepancies between a guidebook and the facts on the ground, sent by email to updates@cicerone.co.uk or by post to Cicerone, Juniper House, Murley Moss, Oxenholme Road, Kendal, LA9 7RL.

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Front cover: Haystacks from High Wax Knott
Title page: Goat Crag on Robinson seen across Buttermere

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A fellranger's glossary

Alphabetical list of fells in the Fellranger series

Key to route maps and topos



Route on a defined path

12 Starting point



Route on an intermittent or undefined path

4 Route number (on topos)



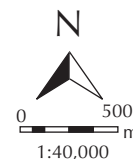
Fell summit featured in this guide (on maps)



Fell summit featured in this guide (on maps)



Route number (on maps)



Harvey map legend



Lake, small tarn, pond



River, footbridge



Wide stream



Narrow stream



Peat hags



Marshy ground

Contours change from brown to grey where the ground is predominantly rocky outcrops, small crags and other bare rock.



Improved pasture



Rough pasture



Fell or moorland



Open forest or woodland



Dense forest or woodland



Felled or new plantation



Forest ride or firebreak



Settlement



Boundary, maintained



Boundary, remains

On moorland, walls, ruined walls and fences are shown. For farmland, only the outer boundary wall or fence is shown.



Contour (15m interval)

Index contour (75m interval)

Auxiliary contour

Scree, spoil heap

Boulder field

Scattered rock and boulders

Predominantly rocky ground

Major crag, large boulder

O.S. trig pillar, large cairn

Spot height (from air survey)



Dual carriageway



Main road (fenced)



Minor road (unfenced)



Track or forest road



Footpath or old track



Intermittent path



Long distance path

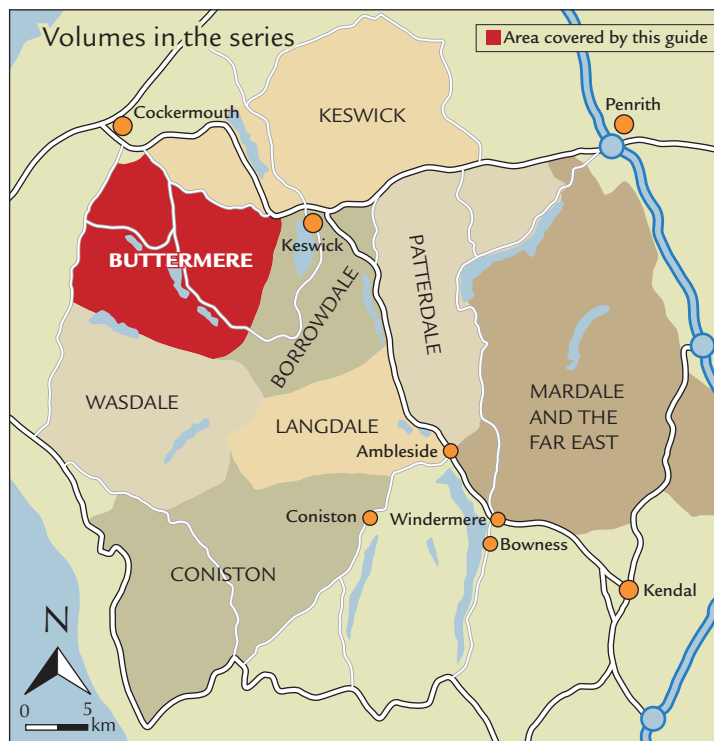


Powerline, pipeline



Building, ruin or sheepfold, shaft

The representation of a road, track or footpath is no evidence of the existence of a right of way.



AUTHOR PREFACE

This land of living dreams we call the Lake District is a cherished blessing to know, love and share. As we go about our daily routines, we may take a fleeting moment to reflect that someone, somewhere, will be tramping up a lonely gill or along an airy ridge, peering from a lofty summit or gazing across a wind-blown tarn and taking lingering solace from its timeless beauty. The trappings of modern life thrust carpet and concrete under our feet, and it is always wonderful to walk the region's sheep trods and rough trails, and to imprint our soles upon the fells. This series sets out to give you the impetus and inspiration to make space in your schedule to explore them time and again, in myriad different ways.

However, the regular paths of long tradition deserve our care. Progressively many of the main paths are being re-set with cobbles and pitching by organisations such as Fix the Fells, to whose work you have contributed by buying this guide. But in many instances, the best consideration we can give these pathways is rest. The modern fellwanderer should show a new 'green' awareness by choosing to tread lightly on the land and to find new ways around the hills. One of the underlying impulses of this guide is to protect these beloved fells by presenting a diversity of route options for each and every fell – and also, in this new edition, recommending 'fell-friendly' routes to each summit which are less susceptible to erosion.

Another feature of this latest incarnation of Fellranger, apart from the smaller size to slip in your pocket or pack, is the addition of a selection of inspiring ridge routes at the end of each volume for those of you who like to spend a little longer with your head and feet in the heavenly realms, relishing the summit views and the connections between the felltops, as well as some accompanying online resources for readers with a digital bent.

Mark Richards

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STARTING POINTS

Location			GR [NY...]	Access	Ascents described from here
1	Grange	Two small verge spaces along Hollows Farm access lane	252 173	FP, B	Dale Head
2	Rosthwaite	Large car park with adjacent Borrowdale Institute parking	257 148	PP, B	Dale Head
3	Seatoller	Large car park by bus turning place	245 137	FP, B	Dale Head
4	Honister Pass	Large visitor centre parking area on the pass (plus NT car park beside YHA hostel)	225 135	PP, NT, B	Dale Head, Fleetwith Pike
5	Gatesgarthdale	Layby below bridge	210 148	FP, B	Hindscarth
6	Gatesgarth	Farmer-owned car park with overflow in yard behind buildings	195 150	PP, B	Fleetwith Pike, Haystacks, High Crag, High Stile
7	Black Sail Hut	Walk/bike-in youth hostel at the head of Ennerdale	195 124	F	Haystacks, High Crag
8	Bowness Knott	Large car park	109 153	FP	Great Borne, High Crag, Red Pike, Starling Dodd
9	Whins	Modest facing laybys	101 165	FP	Gavel Fell, Great Borne, Hen Comb
10	Cross Rigg	Modest verge on N and S side of junction – avoid blocking access	087 182	FP	Blake Fell, Gavel Fell, Knock Murton
11	Felldyke	Compact car park	085 198	FP	Blake Fell, Knock Murton
12	Fangs Brow	Modest verge	105 226	FP	Blake Fell
13	Waterend	Two generous laybys	117 224	FP	Blake Fell, Fellbarrow, Low Fell
14	Mosser	Tiny verge in hamlet	115 250	FP	Fellbarrow
15	Maggie's Bridge	Modest car park	135 210	FP	Blake Fell, Gavel Fell, Hen Comb

Location			GR [NY...]	Access	Ascents described from here
16	Church Bridge	Small verge over bridge below the pub garden	141 209	FP	Hen Comb, Low Fell, Mellbreak
17	Lanthwaite Wood	Large car park	149 215	NT	Mellbreak, Whiteside
18	Thackthwaite	Limited grass verge	148 237	FP	Fellbarrow, Low Fell
19	Hopebeck	Small roadside recess	169 242	FP	Hopegill Head, Whiteside
20	Swinside	Grass verge parking	176 253	FP	Hopegill Head
21	Hobcarton	Substantial parking area	192 245	FP, B	Grisedale Pike, Hopegill Head
22	Revelin Moss	Large parking area	209 242	FP, B	Grisedale Pike
23	Noble Knott	Generous parking area	223 244	FP, B	Grisedale Pike
24	Braithwaite	Elevated car park with room for a dozen cars	227 236	FP, B	Barrow, Causey Pike, Crag Hill, Grisedale Pike, Hopegill Head, Outerside, Sail
25	Uzzicar	Open space on common	233 217	FP	Barrow, Causey Pike, Outerside
26	Rigg Beck	Small quarry on a hairpin bend just across from new Rigg Beck house	229 202	FP	Ard Crag
27	Chapel Bridge	Small layby	232 194	FP	Dale Head, Hindscarth, Robinson,
28	Keskadale	Small off-road area beside the little bridge and narrow verge parking on S side of road N to the farm	207 188	FP	Knott Rigg, Robinson
29	Newlands Hause	Facing laybys on the pass	193 176	FP	Knott Rigg, Robinson

STARTING POINTS *continued*

Location			GR [NY...]	Access	Ascents described from here
30	Buttermere	Generous car park in village (plus an NT one just N of village at 173 173 and verge parking above the church)	173 169	PP, NT, FP, B	Crag Hill, Great Borne, Hen Comb, High Crag, High Stile, Knott Rigg, Mellbreak, Rannerdale Knotts, Red Pike, Robinson, Sail, Starling Dodd, Wandope, Whiteless Pike
31	Hause Point	Small parking area	163 183	FP, B	Rannerdale Knotts
32	Cinderdale Common	Generous open verge	162 193	FP, B	Grasmoor, Rannerdale Knotts
33	Lanthwaite Green	Large roadside parking area	159 208	FP, B	Crag Hill, Grasmoor, Hopegill Head, Whiteside
34	High Liza Bridge	Tiny layby (avoid blocking the field-gate)	156 224	FP, B	Whiteside

FP – free parking

PP – pay parking

NT – National Trust (free to members)

B – on a bus route (in season)

F – only accessible by foot or bike

Great Gable over Seat, from Gamlin End on High Crag



Cairn on Dodd with Red Pike rising behind (photo: Maggie Allan)



INTRODUCTION

Valley bases

A perennial favourite with valley-bound tourists and mountaineers alike, the Buttermere valley somehow manages to combine soaring grandeur with serene sylvan beauty at the dale-floor level. The fells included here include all those that make up the skyline of the Crummock Water and Buttermere valley, along with the Loweswater fells and much of the fine fell territory approached from the Newlands and Coledale valleys. Everyone who loves mountains will relish climbing any number of these rugged heights, from Fleetwith Pike, Haystacks, High Stile, Hindscarth and Robinson to that dominant cluster of ridges packed about Grasmoor. This is fellwalking of the highest order. Find here fells that beckon from afar such as Grisedale Pike and Causey Pike, Mellbreak and Whiteless Pike. Your adventures will be memorable.

You can reach the fells of Buttermere, Loweswater and Crummock Water from west Cumbria from the A66 at Cockermouth via Lorton, or from the A5086 via Mockerkin, and a little more remotely from Keswick over Whinlatter Pass or Newlands Hause or over the spectacular Honister Pass at the southern end of Borrowdale.



Whiteless Pike and Wandope from Newlands Hause

Facilities

Being right in the thick of the accessible scenic action has its upside. It is no surprise that there is an abundance of luxury hotels, cosy B&Bs and self-catering cottages, as well as hostels and camp sites, all in close proximity to these fells. (The Visit Cumbria website (www.visitcumbria.com, click Accommodation) seems to have the best database or you could just use a search engine.)

There are also excellent village shops in High Lorton and Braithwaite, as well as cafés and/or pubs all around the area, but no supermarkets or petrol stations. Head to Keswick or Cockermouth for these.

Getting around

Buses are limited to the seasonal (April to September) Honister Rambler 77 service. This service circles four times a day from Keswick (beside Booths), via Braithwaite, Whinlatter, Lorton, Lanthwaite Green, Buttermere, Honister Pass, Seatoller, Rosthwaite, Grange-in-Borrowdale and the west side of Derwentwater via Portinscale, while the 77A service runs the same route in reverse. The more regular Borrowdale Rambler 78 service, which plies between Keswick and Seatoller, is far less useful for walks in this guide.

Parking is not to be taken for granted anywhere in this popular park. Always allow time to find an alternative parking place, if not to switch to a different plan for your day or just set out directly from your door – perfectly possible if you find accommodation within any of the main valleys. Always take care to park safely and only in laybys and car parks, not on the side of the narrow country roads. Consult the Starting points table to find out where the best parking places (and bus stops) are to be found. Note that although, in general, one preferred starting point is specified for each route, there may be alternative starting points nearby (for example in Buttermere) should you arrive and find your chosen spot taken.

Fix the Fells

The Fellranger series has always highlighted the hugely important work of the Fix the Fells project in repairing the most seriously damaged fell paths. The mighty challenge has been a great learning curve and the more recent work, including complex guttering, is quite superb. It ensures a flat foot-fall where possible, is easy to use in ascent and descent, and excess water escapes efficiently, minimising future damage.



The original National Trust and National Park Authority partnership came into being in 2001 and expanded with the arrival of Natural England, with additional financial support from the Friends of the Lake District and now the Lake District Foundation (www.lakedistrictfoundation.org). But, and it's a big but, the whole endeavour needs to raise £500,000 a year to function. This enormous figure is needed to keep pace with the challenges caused by the joint tyranny of boots and brutal weather. The dedicated and highly skilled team, including volunteers, deserve our sincerest gratitude for making our hill paths secure and sympathetic to their setting. It is a task without end, including pre-emptive repair to stop paths from washing out in the first place.

Bearing in mind that a metre of path costs upwards of £200 there is every good reason to cultivate the involvement of fellwalkers in a cause that must be dear to our hearts... indeed our soles! Please make a beeline for www.fixthefells.co.uk to make a donation, however modest. Your commitment will, to quote John Muir, 'make the mountains glad'.

fells, as well as explanations of some of the most intriguing place names you might come across in this area. The 'Alphabetical list of fells in the Fellranger series' is a comprehensive list of all the fells included in this 8-volume series, to help you decide which volume you need to buy next!

Safety and access

Always take a map and compass with you – make a habit of regularly looking at your map and take pride in learning how to take bearings from it. In mist this will be a time-saver, and potentially a life-saver. The map can enhance your day by showing additional landscape features and setting your walk in its wider context. That said, beware of the green dashed lines on Ordnance Survey maps. They are public rights of way but no guarantee of an actual route on the ground. For example, a straight-as-a-die bridleway appears to lead straight up from Near Ruddy Beck into Ling Comb, in the shadow of mighty Red Pike, but there is no path here and nothing but erosion to greet the hapless fellwanderer. A mist-blinded bearing based on such a line would indeed be dangerous. Take care to study the maps and diagrams provided carefully and plan your route according to your own capabilities and the prevailing conditions.

Please do not rely solely on your mobile phone or other electronic device for navigation. Local mountain rescue teams report that this is increasingly the main factor in many of the incidents they attend.

The author has taken care to follow time-honoured routes and keep within bounds of access, yet access and rights of way can change and are not guaranteed. Any updates that we know of to the routes in this guide will be made available on the Cicerone website, www.cicerone.co.uk/1036, and we are always grateful for information about discrepancies between a guidebook and the facts on the ground, sent by email to updates@cicerone.co.uk or by post to Cicerone Press, Juniper House, Murley Moss, Oxenholme Road, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 7RL.

Additional online resources

Summit panoramas for all of the fells in this volume can be downloaded for free from the guide page on the Cicerone website (www.cicerone.co.uk/1036). You will also find a ticklist of the summits in the Walking the Lake District Fells series at www.cicerone.co.uk/fellranger, should you wish to keep a log of your ascents, along with further information about the series.

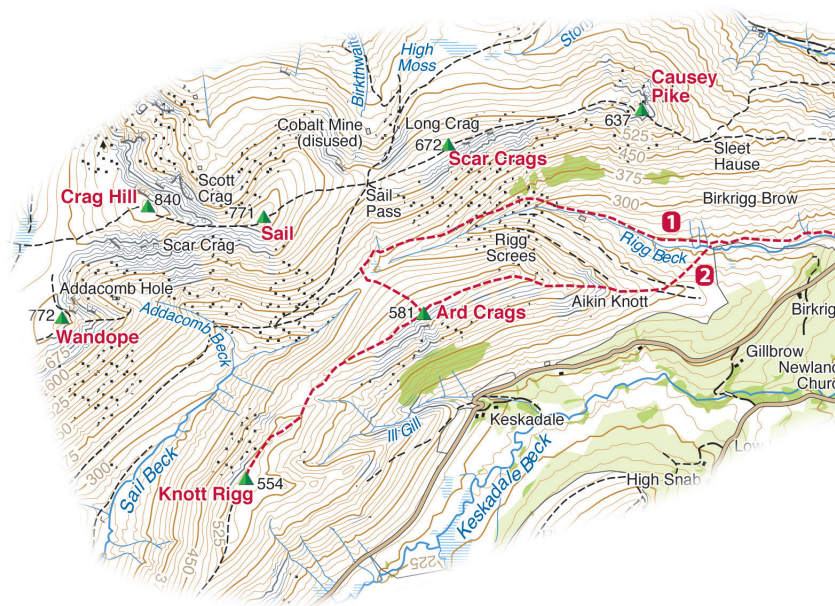


1 ARD CRAGS 581M/1906FT

Climb it from	Rigg Beck 26
Character	Narrow lofty ridge above Keskadale
Fell-friendly route	1
Summit grid ref	NY 207 198
Link it with	Knott Rigg
Part of	The Newlands Round

Travellers wending up the Newlands Valley come upon the impressive little ridge crowned by Ard Craggs as they take the sharp bend on Rigg Beck. Newcomers might spy the sudden upthrusting ridge of Aikin Knott and wonder what mighty fell soars above them. Although in fact of comparatively modest height, this characterful little fell and its companion Knott Rigg form an elegant, sickle-shaped ridge well befitting the first-time fellwalker.

The routes described here start from the valley floor, maximising the climb and the interest and offering ample opportunity to admire the old oak copse set high on the heather slopes of Causey Pike. Alternatively, a 'there-and-back' outing from Newlands Hause, keeping to the ridge as far as Aikin Knott, will give novices and experienced fellwanderers alike a taste of the magic of fell country, with no doubting their direction.



Looking towards Robinson from the spine of the ridge



Ascent from Rigg Beck 26

Via Rigg Beck → 2.8km/1¾ miles ↑410m/1345ft ⌚1hr 20min

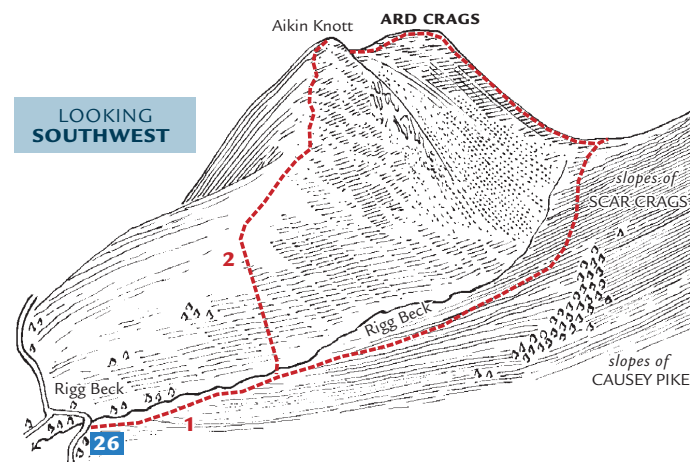
The more circumspect line

1 Set out along the peaceful path leading naturally up the **Rigg Beck** valley which seems to have coped well with the wear and tear of time. Follow it along, roughly west, to the natural level pass. Here curve left to find a tangible if sketchy path slanting half-left up the grassy slope direct to the summit.

Via Aiken Knott → 2.4km/1½ miles ↑410m/1345ft ⌚1hr 10min

The head-on climb

2 Leave the road to follow the path up the valley. Where the wall enclosure ends bear off left, ford the beck and take the long diagonal line to the gently rising ridge. There is a clear path through the bracken. The path comes onto the pasture ridge and moves onto the real meat of the matter – a stiffer, narrower ridge winding through the heather onto **Aikin Knott**. After mounting



through the heather, reach the best part of the climb as the path runs along the narrow ridge-top to the summit cairn.

The summit

A simple cairn sits on the ridge immediately east of an obvious notch which marks a lovely bird's-eye viewpoint down onto Keskadale Farm. The near bulk of Causey Pike, Scar Craggs and Sail contrasts with the balanced perspective on Robinson due south.

Safe descents

Both ascents are reliable in reverse, although the continuing ridge to the NE via Aikin Knott (2) is steep and would be uncomfortable in a biting easterly wind.

Ridge route

Knott Rigg → 1.6km/1 mile ↓75m/245ft ↑50m/165ft ☉30min

Follow the clear but grassy path SW without complication – a perfect introduction for a novice ridge walker.



Summit ridge



2 BARROW 456M/1496FT

Climb it from	Braithwaite 24 or Uzzicar 25
Character	A stand-alone ridge rising elegantly from Braithwaite
Fell-friendly route	2 or 3
Summit grid ref	NY 227 218
Link it with	Outerside
Part of	The Coledale Horseshoe

As you travel west along the A66 beyond Keswick, the Northwestern Fells jostle for attention, with the bulk of Barrow coming boldly into view dead ahead. Forming a strong division between the Newlands valley and Coledale, the clean lines of this elegant wedge-shaped ridge rise purposefully and invitingly from Braithwaite at the foot of the Whinlatter Pass. Once a mining community, this charming village is now every inch a tourist haven catering for most pockets, with no fewer than three pubs, hotels, a lively shop, a popular café and the ever-popular Scotgate camp site.

Most approaches (1–6) rise up from the village, with views to the higher fells at the head of Coledale to draw you on, but a couple of back-door southern ascents from Uzzicar are included here, providing the option of a good little round trip (7 for ascent, 8 for descent).