

FREE Guide

# Easy Cycling

in the South & Central Lakes



**6 DO IN A DAY**  
Family friendly bike rides  
Suitable for beginners and intermediates



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DRIVE LESS  
**SEE MORE**

## Windermere West Shore Cycle Trail

Grade: **BEGINNER**



Cycling on Windermere's west shore

RIDE **1**

An easy ride to Wray Castle on traffic free brideways, with views across Lake Windermere. Easily accessible from Windermere and Bowness-on-Windermere by ferry. For a shorter option over the summer you can start from Brookhole, The Lake District Visitor Centre and catch the bike boat to Wray Castle to start the route from there.

**Beginner:** Mainly off-road cycle trails with gently undulating hills.  
**Distance:** 8 miles (13km) return  
**Nearest Town:** Ambleside (or Windermere via ferry)  
**Start Location:** Harrow Slack car park, Far Sawrey or the Windermere Car Ferry  
**Surface and Gradients:** Traffic free brideway  
**Refreshments:** Wray Castle  
**Bike Hire:** Total Adventure Bike Hire  
Tel: 01594 43151  
**Maps:** OS Explorer OL7, OS Landranger 97, Harvey's Superwalker (1:25000) Lakeland South, British Mountain Maps Lake District (1:40000).

**DIRECTIONS TO START:**  
**From Ambleside by car** – Head out of Ambleside towards Coniston. Turn left at Clappersgate and follow the B5286 to Hawkshead. At Hawkshead you will come to a T junction, turn left towards Sawrey and Windermere. After Far Sawrey the road descends steeply at 10%. Take the left turn to Harrow Slack, the lake shore and car park on the left.  
**From Windermere by bike** – For a real adventure simply take your bike across on the ferry. You can follow the marked on-road cycle way through Windermere down to Bowness, then push your bike

along the footpath behind the Tourist Information Centre by the pier to the ferry.  
**From Windermere by car** – If the ferry is operating it is the quickest and easiest option - simply take this across the lake and, as you get off, look right for the turn into the car park after approx. 100 metres. From Windermere or Bowness-on-Windermere follow the signs for the ferry from the A592.

**From Brookhole, The Lake District Visitor Centre** – Over the summer a regular Bike Boat runs between Brookhole and the Western shore. Visit [www.bikeboat.co.uk](http://www.bikeboat.co.uk) for full details.

**THE ROUTE**  
From the car ferry follow the blue cycleway signs past Claife Station towards Harrow Slack car park.

Follow the 1km tarmac section through open fields where people often come to picnic. The road changes to a track at an open gate with a cattle grid.

You enter the woods to ride for the next 2.2km on this wide trail. It undulates with steep short climbs and descents – they can easily be ridden with care and at sensible speeds but younger riders may need to walk short sections.

At Belle Grange, you come to a sign post where a bridleway turns off left, but you keep ahead and right, following the main track towards High Wray. The track from here is smooth and flat. Slow down as walkers are just around the corner.

After 500m you arrive at the tarmac road and Red Nab car park. Ride through the car park, signed to Wray Castle, and beware of the low wooden barrier as you set off from here. The track follows the lake shore and is very flat and smooth for 1.6km. Here the track turns away from the lake and heads up hill for 500m, signed to The Castle Gatehouse. At the road look right and you will see the Dower House Gatehouse. To get to Wray Castle continue on the Castle drive.

If you retrace your steps back down to the lake shore you can find some lovely spots to enjoy a picnic lunch. From here you can reverse the route (making it 8 miles in total).



**Key**  
Car & Bike Ferry  
Bike Boat  
Parking  
Bus Stop  
Café



Out and about using the 800 Bike Bus service



Wray Castle



Amazing views over Windermere



## Cycling activities for all the family in the Lake District and Cumbria.

With mountains and valleys, miles of mature forest, endless lake and coastal shores, the landscape of Cumbria makes an amazing place to go cycling.

Complete novice or seasoned cyclist, family and friends, individuals and groups, there are great routes across the county for everyone to discover and enjoy. We have pulled together a collection of these routes to help you make the most of this beautiful county and give you the inspiration to get in the saddle and pushing those pedals!

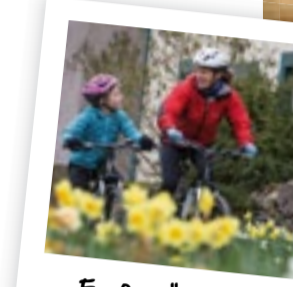
Cumbria is possibly Britain's best and most varied road cycling destination. For families who want to cycle together there is much to offer; from railway paths to quiet back roads.

There are also wonderful off-road trails such as the renowned Grizedale and Whinlatter Forest Parks, or rides that visit Lake launches, parks, great cafes and other attractions to help you combine cycling with different interests.

**Route grading**  
Route grades are expressed by route length and degree of difficulty, calculated as average height gain per kilometre plus steep gradients.

**Following the routes**  
The route for each ride is highlighted on its own map. The general rule is to keep to the road you're on unless otherwise directed. Please note all distances are approximate.

All information contained in this guide was correct at the time of going to print. Please check your route on an OS map and confirm any travel arrangements before you set off.



Fun for all the family

## The Good Cycling Code

### Obey the rules of the road

- Always follow the Highway Code
- Ride in single file to let vehicles overtake

### Be courteous

- Don't assume everyone can see or hear you
- Give way to pedestrians, wheelchair users and horse riders
- Ring your bell or call out (to horse riders) to alert of your approach
- Acknowledge people who give way to you

### Care for the environment

- Try to reach the start of your journey by bike or public transport
- Follow the Countryside Code:
  - Respect, Protect, Enjoy
  - Take any litter home
- Cycle on roads, byways, bridleways and cycle paths, not public footpaths

### Look after yourself

- Wear a properly fitting helmet and bright, weatherproof clothing
- Be alert to potential hazards and take extra care
- Carry enough food and water, and a map
- Check tyres, brakes and gears often, and be able to deal with a puncture
- Use lights in poor visibility
- Don't use any hand-held device while cycling

Look at [www.lakedistrict.gov.uk](http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk) for codes specifically for enjoying off-road riding.

Thank you for cycling!

The bike is the most efficient and environmentally friendly form of transport invented.

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## The Torver Trail

Grade: **BEGINNER**

RIDE **2**

Coniston used to have its own railway line with a terminus station in the village just up from the Sun Hotel. It was connected to the Furness Railway at Foxfield but sadly it was abandoned in 1958. The track bed has since then been unused (apart from a section near Torver which carries a new road). Recently though, some sections of track bed on the approach to Coniston have been converted into a cycle path.

The cycle path can easily be linked to a series of permissive routes through Waterpark and alongside the shores of Coniston Water. All the cycling is very easy and this route is perfectly suited to beginners and those looking for a gentle ride. However care should be taken if you plan to return on the A593. The road is narrow in places and unfortunately traffic can move quite quickly along these sections.

**Beginner:** Mainly off-road cycle trails with gently undulating hills.  
**Distance:** 6 miles (10km) return  
**Nearest Village:** Coniston  
**Start Location:** Coniston, Lake Road car park  
**Surface and Gradients:** Lanes, valley roads, old railway track bed and lake side trails.  
**Refreshments:** Coniston and Torver  
**Bike Hire:** Coniston Boating Centre, Coniston, Tel: 015394 41366  
**Maps:** OS Landranger 96 & 97, OS Explorer OL6, Harvey's Superwalker (1:25 000) Lakeland South, British Mountain Maps Lake District (1:40 000).



Cycling at Tilberthwaite



The Ruskin Museum



Brantwood - John Ruskin's Home

**DIRECTIONS TO START:**  
**From Coniston by car** – Follow signs from the Village to the Lake, when you reach the lakeshore the Lake Road car park is on the left.

**THE ROUTE**  
From the lake side car park turn right, back towards the village on Lake Road. Head over a small bridge and before the road bends back around to the right go through the gate near the Trading Estate. Follow the cycle path south for about 1km, then south west for 100m until you reach Coniston Hall campsite.

Follow the access track through Coniston Hall near the side of the lake, skirting another campsite. Ignore the track and path on the left and instead head away from Coniston Water and past Hoathwaite Farm. After crossing the cattle grid turn right over the old railway bridge and follow the wooden direction signs for "Torver" or "Torver Trail".

Follow the surfaced trail down under the railway bridge through a steep sided cutting. From here the route is obvious, it crosses over the new bridge at Torver Beck then goes through fields to bring you out at the back of the Church House Inn in Torver. Be sure to stop for some refreshments or pop into the Torver Deli across the road.

**Return leg**  
You can retrace your steps back to the Lake Road car park or experienced riders can follow the A593 back to Coniston. Be careful as the road is busy and visibility is poor in places.



Cycling with all of the family



**Key**  
Coniston Launch  
Parking  
Bus Stop  
Public House  
Café

## Useful Information

Most routes are accessible from public transport and now with our new 800 Bike Bus and the Windermere Bike Boat you can take your bike with you on the bus, boat or ferry. Find out more at [www.visitlakedistrict.com/travel](http://www.visitlakedistrict.com/travel) Visit [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk) or call 0871 200 22 53 to check public transport information before you travel.

**Accommodation and tourist information**  
The website [www.visitlakedistrict.com/stay](http://www.visitlakedistrict.com/stay) shows a range of serviced and self-catering accommodation.

**Weather**  
Weather can dramatically alter the difficulty of a route so please consider this before setting off. Be prepared for your day out by visiting [www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/weatherline](http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/weatherline) or calling 0844 846 2444.

**Clothing & Equipment**  
As well as the essential helmet, it's a good idea to wear bright clothing if you are riding on roads, and to always carry a spare layer and a waterproof jacket. Take plenty of food and drink and have regular breaks to refuel, rather than one long lunch break. Carry a pump, spare inner tube and puncture repair kit and practice changing a tube at home if you've never tried it before.

**Where to ride**  
Most bikes can travel on roads and bridleways but not on footpaths. Not every bridleway is suitable. Riding off-road takes a lot longer than travelling on road, so aim to enjoy shorter rides that get you into some great locations.

**Staying safe**  
Bikes can cover all kinds of terrain but you need to ride at speeds that you can control, with the ability to stop and give way to walkers or horse riders.

Cycling is a great way to explore and stay fit with little impact on the environment, but there are risks involved and you must be aware of, and take full responsibility for these risks. Mobile phone reception isn't always good in the Lake District. Always give someone you trust your route information and an expected finish time, and then be sure to check in with them when you return. If there is an emergency call 999. Ask for Cumbria Police and give your location; an accurate grid reference is ideal.

This leaflet offers advice for cycling in Cumbria but the publishers cannot be held responsible for any injury or accident that occurs whilst undertaking this sport.



## RIDE 3 Elterwater to Skelwith Bridge on the Langdale Trail

Leave the traffic and crowds behind to discover the glaciated valley of Langdale, tarns and waterfalls following riverside cycle paths and brideways. There are two recommended rides: a beginner's ride starting in Elterwater which is entirely free of traffic and ideal for young families, and a longer intermediate ride with some climbs and descents which starts at Stickle Ghyll National Trust car park in Great Langdale.

**Beginner:** easygoing, suitable for young families on any type of bike

**Distance:** 3.2 miles (5km) return

**Nearest Town:** Ambleside

**Start Location:** Elterwater National Trust car park (pay and display).

**Surface and gradients:** graded stone surface and no hills

**Refreshments:** in Elterwater and at Skelwith Bridge

**Bike Hire:** Family bike hire available from Ghyllside Cycles, Ambleside, Tel: 015394 33592

**Maps:** OS Explorer OL7, Harvey's Superwalker (1:25000) Lakeland South, British Mountain Maps Lake District (1:40000).

### DIRECTIONS TO START:

**From Ambleside by car** – Follow signs for A593 Coniston then B5343 Elterwater. There is also free parking (signed) from the B5343 on the edge of the village.

### THE ROUTE

Take the riverside cycle path directly from the car park, signed "Ambleside, route 37". The path goes through a gate onto a wide path with the crystal clear waters of Great Langdale Beck flowing alongside. You will be sharing this track with walkers so be sure to warn them of your approach and give them a wide berth.

The route leaves the river for a while as it goes through Rob Rash Wood. The route is easy to follow but "37" waymarkers help to mark the way. As you emerge from the wood Elter Water (the tarn as opposed to the village of the same name) comes into view on your right. Here is a good place to have a picnic and take in the dramatic view of the Langdale Pikes. But, a word of caution: watch out for the swans as they are rather partial to sandwiches!

The way opens out now across wide open meadows until you approach a gate and woodland. Go through the gate and you come to a beautiful wrought iron bridge known as the Trevor Woodburn Bridge. Cycle Route 37 crosses the bridge through the wood, with a view of the dramatic Skelwith Force on your left and continues to a short section of the busy A593. This gives access to Chesters by the River café and shop at Skelwith Bridge. For a safer, traffic-free option do not cross the iron bridge but dismount and push your bike ahead on the delightful riverside footpath. This also gives views of Skelwith Force before reaching Chesters by the River. Indulge yourself here – you've earned it!

### Return leg

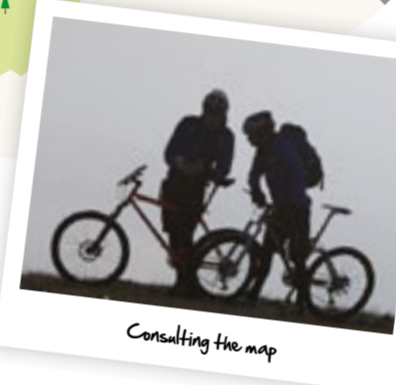
Just retrace your outward route, going upstream this time. Be sure to have some stops to take in the stunning views.



Skelwith Force



Elter Water



Consulting the map

## Great Langdale to Skelwith Bridge

**Intermediate:** steady ride appropriate for reasonably fit people on mountain or hybrid bikes

**Distance:** 8 miles (12km) return

**Nearest Town:** Ambleside

**Start Location:** Stickle Ghyll National Trust car park (pay and display), Great Langdale.

**Surface and Gradients:** graded stone surface, undulating with some significant climbs and descents

**Refreshments:** at the start/finish, Chapel Stile, Elterwater and Skelwith Bridge

**Bike Hire:** Family bike hire available from Ghyllside Cycles, Ambleside, Tel: 015394 33592

**Maps:** OS Explorer OL7, Harvey's Superwalker (1:25000) Lakeland South, British Mountain Maps Lake District (1:40000).

## RIDE 4

### DIRECTIONS TO START:

**From Ambleside by car** – Follow signs for A593 Coniston then B5343 Langdale. Main car park is on the right with a smaller one on the left.

### THE ROUTE

Exit the main car park and turn left along the B5343 for about 200m before forking right through the smaller car park, following white-on-blue cycle route signs for Ambleside and Elterwater. Follow this wide byway down the valley, but be prepared to share the track with other users including farm vehicles. Eventually the byway turns left and starts to climb to the road but our route turns right along a brideway/cycle path signed Elterwater. Turn right again at the junction of paths and follow the brideway/cycle path direction signs across the river and through Oak Howe Farm, climbing gradually to Baysbrown Farm. Keep straight on, on a wider track until a cycle path sign directs you left down a brideway which

leads through a working quarry (beware of large vehicles) to a bridge over the river to Chapel Stile.

Here the main route turns right alongside Great Langdale Beck but if you fancy a break there is a café, food shop and the Wainwright's Inn in Chapel Stile. Feeling refreshed, rejoin the riverside path (which climbs a little to join a quarry access road. Keep following the cycle direction signs down this road but do take care and expect to meet large quarry vehicles. At the T junction in Elterwater follow the cycle route signs left over the bridge then right into the car park to the riverside cycle path. Now continue by following the directions for the Elterwater to Skelwith Bridge Ride 3 (opposite).

### Return leg

Just retrace your outward route, going upstream this time. You will be facing the best views so you can take them in whilst you ride.



Lunch in Elterwater

**Grade:** INTERMEDIATE

## RIDE 5 Claife Heights Mountain Bike Route

**Intermediate/Advanced:** Mainly off-road, with some steep climbs and descents

**Distance:** 9 miles (14km)

**Nearest Town:** Windermere or Hawkshead

**Start Location:** Harrow Slack car park, Far Sawrey

**Surface and Gradients:** Roads, hilly forest trails and stony tracks

**Refreshments:** Wray Castle

**Bike Hire:** Bike hire available from County Lanes Cycle Hire, Windermere, Tel: 015394 44544 and Total Adventure Bike Hire Tel: 01594 43151

**Maps:** OS Explorer OL7, OS Landranger 97, Harvey's Superwalker (1:25000) Lakeland South, British Mountain Maps Lake District (1:40000).

Mountain biking on hilly forest trails, stony tracks on open ground and back roads around the stunning Claife Heights. Call in at Wray Castle for a cake stop!

**From Windermere by bike** – For a real adventure simply take your bike across on the ferry. You can follow the marked on-road cycle way through Windermere down to Bowness, then push your bike along the footpath behind the Tourist Information Centre by the pier to the ferry.

**From Windermere by car** – If the ferry is operating it is the quickest and easiest option – simply take this across the lake and, as you get off, look right for the turn into the car park after approx. 100 metres. From Windermere or Bowness-on-Windermere follow the signs for the ferry from the A592

### THE ROUTE

From Harrow Slack car park follow the road you came in on along the side of Lake Windermere, keeping the lake to your right.

After 1km of tarmac the road stops at an open gate with a cattle grid, and you continue ahead on the re-surfaced track. For the next 2.2km the track is wide, with some steep but short climbs and descents.

You come to a sign post on the right hand side of the track – continue straight on the main track towards High Wray, which is now smooth and almost flat.

After 500m you arrive at the tarmac road and Red Nab car park. Ride through the car park on the lakeshore track signed to Wray Castle. After 1.6km the track turns away from the lake and heads uphill for 500m, signed to The Castle Gatehouse.

Once at the road, turn left to High Wray and look out for the gravel track signed to "Base Camp" on the left. Follow this track uphill and when the track splits take the right fork to the gate with lots of padlocks. Follow the permitted brideway (forest track) up hill. After 800m the track splits again and you go right again, going uphill then level, then straight over a crossroads.

400m from the crossroads is another junction where you turn right up a hard stony climb (very short). It's not long until the track flattens out and starts descending, first in the trees and then opening out across large grassy areas



**Grade:** INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED

with small tarns and amazing views.

Shortly after passing Moss Eccles Tarn you go through a gate and onto a walled track.

At a fork junction follow the track to the left for an exciting stony descent, or right for an easier descent. Either route brings you to the B5285, where you turn left to return to the car park.

Be very careful with your speed on the steeper 10% road downhill gradients as many corners are tight and when the ferry is operating there can be a lot of traffic coming up.

## RIDE 6 Kentmere Valley

Ride through the quiet valley of the River Kent and experience stunning views of classic Lakeland scenery. The ride starts in Staveley with its shops, art and craft galleries, vibrant Mill Yard with brewery and cafés, and takes you to Kentmere village with picturesque church, farms and cottages nestling in a curve of the valley.



Family Cycling

**Intermediate:** easy to moderate route on quiet country back lanes. Some short steep sections approaching Kentmere.

**Distance:** 8.1 miles (13k)

**Nearest Town:** Kendal or Staveley

**Start Location:** Staveley Mill Yard

**Surface and Gradients:** on road

**Refreshments:** Staveley

**Bike Hire:** Bike Hire available from Wheelbase, Staveley, Tel: 01539 821443.

**Maps:** OS Explorer OL7, Harvey's Superwalker (1:25000) Lakeland South, British Mountain Maps Lake District (1:40000).

### DIRECTIONS TO START:

**From Kendal by car** – Head out of Kendal and join the A591 towards Windermere. Turn left off the A590 following signs for Staveley. Continue through to the village centre until you see signs for the Mill Yard. Follow signs into the Mill Yard car park.

**From Kendal by bike** – Staveley can be accessed from Kendal by bike by following the national route 6. Visit [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) for details.

### THE ROUTE

Turn right out of the Mill Yard onto Back Lane. Go straight ahead at the angled T junction, passing the church on the left.

Continue straight ahead immediately before the bridge onto a minor road signed for Kentmere and HV Factory (cul-de-sac). After 1km, turn right over the next bridge. Continue along the east side of the River Kent for 4km (2.5 miles).

On the approach to Kentmere take a right at the fork in the road, signed Hallow Bank and Green Quarter.

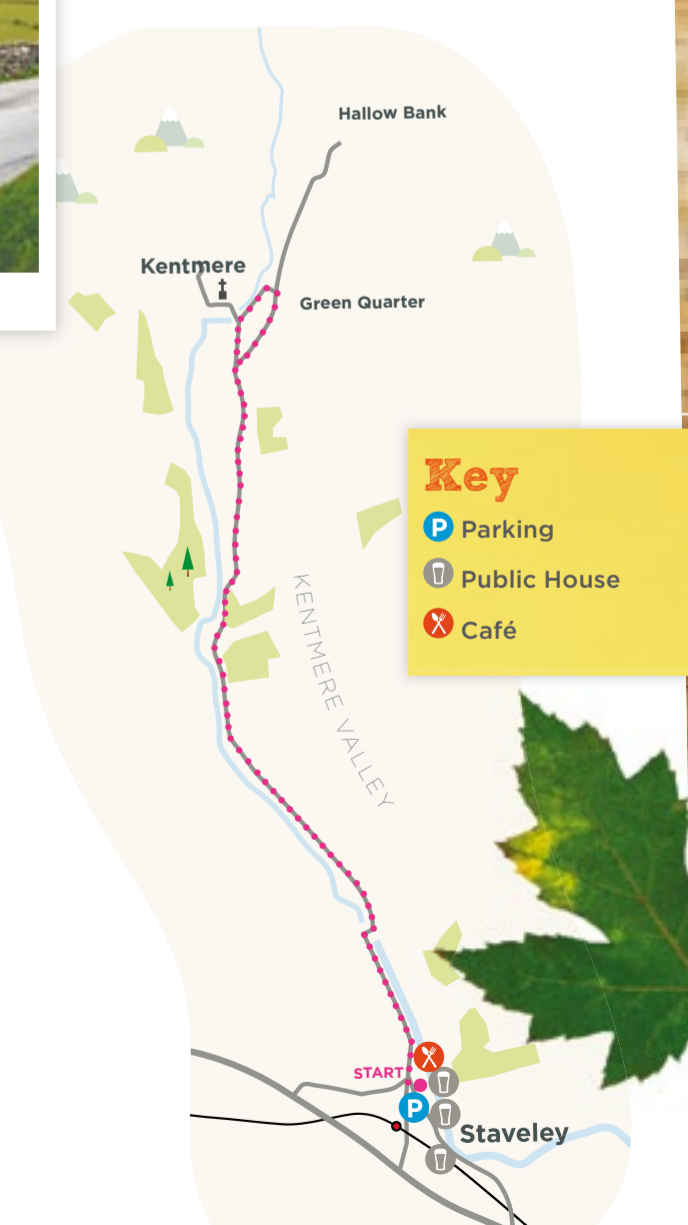
Turn right at the triangle in the road to visit Maggs Howe (electric bike charging point), otherwise turn left at the triangle in the road, taking care on the steep descent.

Descend to the bridge over the River Kent, taking a left turn immediately before the bridge to return on the outward route.

**Grade:** INTERMEDIATE



Electric Bike in the Kentmere Valley



### Key

P Parking

T Public House

X Café

Visit Lake District, Cumbria  
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