

LAKE DISTRICT



ROUGH STUFF IN THE LAKES - A FEW NOTES

The higher passes of the Lake District tend to be relatively hard. Though mostly quite short, they are often steep, very rocky and boulder strewn and the easier grassy stretches are often very boggy. April, May and June usually offer the best chance of good weather.

The routes are given two ratings: (1) V.A.D. (difficulty); E = Easy, M = Moderate; D = Difficult - involving some carrying, and (2) stars; based mainly on scenic value in fine weather. Times are hopefully generous in good conditions.

The 1:50,000 O.S. Landranger map No. 90 is probably the best map to use, and covers most of the routes given here. The Outdoor Leisure Maps at 1:25,000 are even better, with their extra detail, but four maps are needed: however most of the routes are on the two northern sheets. The 1" to the mile O.S. tourist sheet is also good, reduced from the Landranger maps with contours at 10m. intervals. The Barts 1" to the mile sheet has contours at 250 feet intervals; their 1:100,000 sheet has contours at 100m. intervals. Grid references cannot be used on Barts.

The initials before each route are for identification on the key map. A x on the key map indicates the highest point of each route.

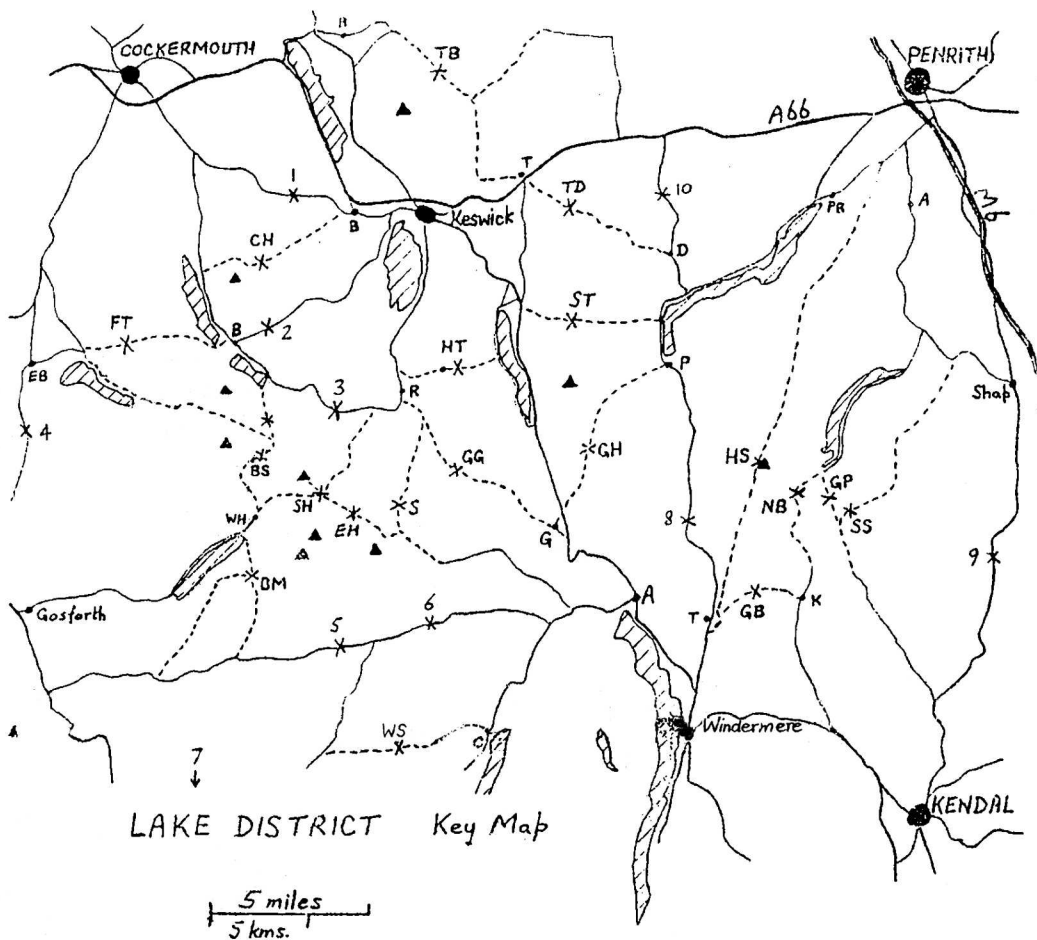
Abbreviations: R.S.J. = Rough Stuff Journal; O.L.M. = Outdoor Leisure map.

This guide was written by E D Clements with substantial use of information from Rough Stuff Journals.

Any comments, amendments or additional useful routes will be welcomed by the RSF librarians, Jill & Chris Bolton (rsf@jillbolton.co.uk).

ROAD ROUTES

No.		Rd. No.	Ht.(m)	No.		Rd. No.	Ht.(m)
1	Whinlatter	B5292	318	6	Wrynose	u	393
2	Newlands	u	333	7	Stoneside	u	400
3	Honister	B5289	356	8	Kirkstone	A592	455
4	Burn Edge	u	293	9	Shap	Ab	426
5	Hardknott	u	393	10	(nr.) Dockray	A5091	343



ROUGH ROUTES

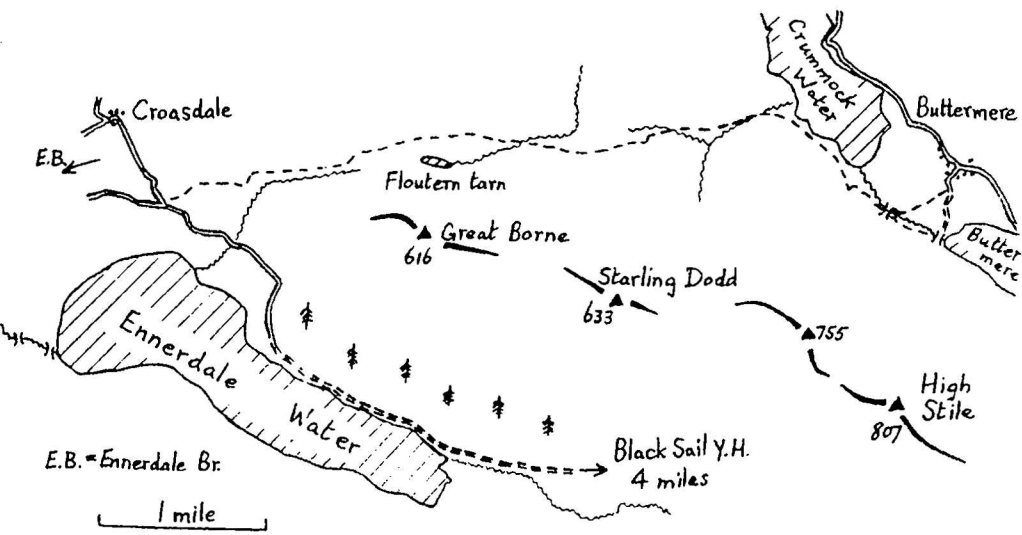
Code	VAD	*	Page	Code	VAD	*	Page
CH	Coledale	Hause	M some D	3	TB	Skiddaw	E 2 3
FT	Floutern	Tarn	M some D	2	TD	Old Coach	E 3 3
BS	Black Sail/	Scarth Gap	D	4	ST	Sticks Pass	M some D 4 3
SH	Sty	Head	D	4	GH	Grisedale	M 3 4
EH	Esk	Hause	D	4	HS	High Street	M 3 4
BM	Burnmoor		E some M	3	GB	Garburn Pass	M some E 2 4
S	Stake	Pass	D	3	NB	Nan Bield	D 2 4
GG	Greenup	Gill	D	3	GP	Gatescarth	M 1 4
WS	Walna	Scar	M	2	SS	Sadgill-Swindale	M 1 4
HT	High	Tove	M	3			

CH COLEDALE HAUSE Braithwaite to Lanthwaite 610m.
 O.S. 89 or 90 NY227238 - 159209 (also on OLM4) Barts 34 8d 5½ mls. R.S.

From B5292, a mostly rideable track goes up Coledale to an old mine, after which the path becomes very steep by Force Crag. This steep section can be avoided by taking the path through grid ref. 200213, a rough but wheelable track higher up the fellside. The final climb is up a steep eroded stony and grass slope. Bear right at the col down Gasgale Gill, a deep and wild valley with a few little waterfalls near the top. The path is faint, rather exposed and awkward in a few places, and somewhat up and down to avoid small crags and boggy bits. Near the bottom, the stream has to be forded. Starting from the West, the easier way, the path leaves B5289 opposite Lanthwaite Green farm, just North of the car park, and goes East through the obvious cleft in the hills.

FT FLOUTERN TARN Ennerdale Bridge to Buttermere 415m.
 O.S. 89 NY 099167 - 174169 (also on OLM4) Barts 34 6e 5½ miles R.S.

From the lane, it is fairly easy going to the top with some boggy bits; very boggy then at most times of the year, and not much sign of a path after the first steep drop. Make for the gap in the hills to the East; the path gradually becomes more obvious, but very rocky and boulder strewn down past Scale Force. Some carrying may be needed here. Allow 3 or 4 hours. See R.S.J. Vol.32 No.6 p.57.



BS BLACK SAIL / SCARTH GAP Wasdale Head to Buttermere 545m.
OS 90 or 89 NY 187089-194150 (also on OLM4) Barts. 34 8g/f 6m/s. R.S.

The path from Wasdale Head gets rougher and steeper as it climbs to Black Sail, becoming even more boulder strewn past the hostel and over Scarth Gap, and very rocky on the final descent to Buttermere. The route requires a lot of hard work, but the path is in fairly good condition, not much erosion. One report suggests carrying may be necessary on the steeper climbs, particularly in the reverse direction. There is a superb rideable track down Ennerdale from the hostel; however the path on the South side of the lake is not recommended with a bike. The short walk up Looking Stead from Black Sail pass is worth while for views of Pillar Rock etc., whilst Hay Stacks above Scarth Gap (very rough walking) is one of the best viewpoints in Lakeland. Allow 4 or 5 hours. See R.S.J. Vol. 32 No. 6 p. 151.

SH STY HEAD Seathwaite to Wasdale Head 485m.
O.S. 90 or 89 NY 235121-187085 (also on OLM6) Barts. 34 9g 5 miles R.S.

An easy but fairly boulder strewn path goes up to Stockley Bridge, after which there is a steep, rocky and boulder strewn climb; the path on N.W. side of Sty Head gill is very awkward near Taylor Gill Force. The path becomes grassier and a bit boggy in places past Sty Head Tarn (footbridge) to the 'cross roads' of paths just before the col (left for Esk Hause, right for Great Gable). The descent is rocky and awkward to start with before becoming very rough and stony below the screes of Great Gable; easier on reaching the valley bottom. Erosion and path improvements have resulted in several rocky steps, awkward with a bike, on both ascent and descent. A hard but rewarding crossing. Allow 4 hours. See R.S.J. Vol. 33 No. 1 p. 6, and Vol. 33 No. 4 p. 96.

EH ESK HAUSE Langdale to Sty Head for Seathwaite or Wasdale 725m.
O.S. 90 NY 285060-235121 or 187085 (also on OLM6) B. 34 9g 8 miles R.S.

The old eroded track up Rossett Gill has been fenced off (late 1980's) and a new track made part way with large boulders. Very steep! Higher up the going is worse, a broken rocky slope. There are one or two boggy bits and steep slopes between Angle Tarn and the top, then easier by Sprinkling Tarn to either Sty Head or its Tarn. See the previous route for continuations, and see R.S.J. Vol. 33 No. 1 p. 6. Allow 6 hours.

BM BURNMOOR Wasdale Head to Boot 297m.
OS. 90 or 89 NY 180076 - 176012 (also on OLM 6) Barts. 34 8h 4½ miles R.S.

A steep and rocky track through several gates climbs to the low col. Bear left at the top on a good grassy track with some boulders past the N.E. end of Burnmoor Tarn (boggy hereabouts). The descent is on a rough track through bracken, with several more gates. The route is cairned. If one bears right at the col, a faint and rather boggy path later becomes a good track down Miterdale to Eskdale Green. Allow 2 or 3 hrs. resp.

S STAKE PASS Borrowdale to Langdale 480m.
OS. 90 NY 263132 - 285060 (or OLM's 4+6) Barts. 34 10h 7 miles R.S.

The path up Langstrath now goes up the West side of the valley; it is very rough and stony, and very boggy in places too. After 2½ miles of almost level going, the path zig-zags steeply up the hillside where the main valley bends to SW. Very boggy near the top, then a very steep and rough path descends to Mickleden, which is also very wet or stony, with several small side streams to cross. There are several awkward rocky steps where 'improvements' have been carried out in recent years. Allow 5 hrs. Virtually none is rideable. See R.S.J. Vol. 34 No. 1 p. 11.

GG GREENUP GILL Borrowdale to Grasmere 610m.
OS. 90 NY 263132 - 333081 (also on OLM 4) Barts. 34 11g 6½ miles R.S.

A very wet and stony path climbs up Greenup Gill, becoming very steep and rough, past lining Crag, and very wet and swampy around the top. Keep going S. of W., past the head of a very boggy valley (which leads to Wythburn, Care if misty) and up a slight climb again to a fence with stile. The path down Far Easedale is again wet and rough and a bit faint in places, but is cairned. It improves after Skuthwaite steps (grid ref 319094), a fine end to a very wet route. Allow 4 or 5 hours. See R.S.J. Vol. 33 No. 4 p. 96.

WS WALNA SCAR ROAD Coniston to Seathwaite (Duddon valley) 605m.
OS 96 SD 300975 - 232968 (also on OLM 6) Barts. 34 10l 5 miles R.S.

A packhorse track, with an awkward rock band near the top; in good condition, but mostly too steep to ride, and rough. Allow 3 hours. See R.S.J. Vol. 33 No. 4 p. 96.

HT HIGH TOVE Rosthwaite to Watendlath to Thirlmere 515m.
O.S.90 NY 256158 - 305172 (or OLM4) Barts.34 11f 4 or 5 miles R.S.

The direct climb from Rosthwaite is very steep and stony; it is better to take the good track leaving B5289 1km. N. of the village, over to Watendlath. By contrast the path over High Tove is nearly always very boggy, but there is a spectacular descent by Fisher Gill to Armboth on Thirlmere. The longer track via Long Moss to Wythburn is also very boggy for much of its length, until the forestry tracks are reached. This climbs to about 530m. East of Blea Tarn. Allow 2½ to 3 hours. See R.S.J.'s Vol.34 No.1 p.15 and Vol.33 No.1 p.10.

TB SKIDDAW HOUSE Threlkeld to Bassenthwaite 490m.
OS 90 NY 302257 - 249324 (part on OLM4) Barts.34 10b 6 miles R.S.

A fairly good jeep track, much of it rideable, but rough and stony in places especially on the steep descent past Dash Falls. From Skiddaw House, another path very boggy for a while, eventually improves after the old mines and becomes rideable down the valley to Grainsgill, where a road is joined at 327327. See RSJ. Vol.32 No.6 p.156.

TD OLD COACH ROAD Threlkeld to Dockray 437m.
OS 90 NY 316231 - 380219 (also on OLM5) Barts.34 12c 5 miles R.S.

A rough and rather stony climb up W. side becomes a mostly rideable track down to Dockray. Reported in good condition, 1991. Allow 2 hours. See R.S.J. Vol.35 No.4 p.100.

ST STICKS PASS Glenridding or Glencoyne to Legburthwaite 745m.
O.S.90 NY 387170 or 387185 - 318190 (also on OLM5) Barts.34 12e 5 miles R.S.

A tarmac lane starts opposite the Ullswater Hotel, leading to the disused lead mines. Here a zig-zag path, very steep and stony at first, climbs N.W. wards, gradually becoming easier on grassy moorland where it meets a much nicer path past 'Seldom Seen' cottages, with a stile on leaving the woodland. A steady grassy climb from the join of paths leads to the top of the pass, with a fine view. The descent, particularly lower down, is very steep and very eroded, but mostly grassy. From the top it is also easy grassy going over the hills in either direction, an easy way up Helvellyn.

GH GRISEDAL HAUSE Patterdale to Grasmere 590m.
OS.90 NY390161-337088 or 336092 (also on OLM5) Barts 34 12g 6 mls. R.S.

The track is rideable for about 2 miles up Grisedale, but becomes steeper and rougher, especially after Ruthwaite Lodge. The south side is very steep and boulder strewn. Apparently the path down Tongue Gill is a bit easier than the bridle track, except for a short section near the bottom where it had fallen away. Fine view of Dollywaggon Pike, etc. at the top. Allow 3 or 4 hours. See R.S.J. Vol.33 No.1 p.6.

HS HIGH STREET Troutbeck to Penrith a 810m.
OS.90 NY414030-496250 (also on OLM's 7x5) Barts.34 15g 16 miles R.S.

The start from Town Head (gr. 414038) is probably easier than from Limefitt Park. There is a good track to Troutbeck Park Farm, where turn right on a tractor track. rideable up Hagg Gill until the steeper section. Bear right of, (ie. avoid) the tower on Thornthwaite Beacon, then left (West) of the summit of High Street, through a gap in the wall east of Haycswater reservoir. The path is rather indistinct after High Raise (802m.), but the moorland grass is rideable at times. Keep West around Loadpot Hill; there are traces of the Roman road hereabouts. Aim then N.E. for Heughscar Hill, recognizable by the trees on top. There is a stone circle by the path, where it crosses another path from Howtown to Askham, (alternative finish). Keep North from the circle around W. side of Heughscar Hill to Winder Hall farm and the Pooley Bridge - Askham road. From the gap in the wall at grid ref. 440121, a good path leads down to Hartsop, for Patterdale. The ridge route is becoming very popular with mountain bikes. See R.S.J. Vol. 38 p. 16.

GB GARBURN PASS Troutbeck to Kentmere 450m.
OS.90 NY414013 - 455044 (also on OLM7) Barts. 34 15h 4 miles R.S.

A rough and stony old road, boggy in places, and mostly too steep to ride. Some is rideable in reverse direction down to Troutbeck. Reported in good condition, 1991; allow 2 to 2½ hours. See R.S.J.'s Vol.35 No. 4 p. 101 or Vol.32 No.5 p. 125.

NB NAN BIELD Hawes Water to Kentmere 630m.
O.S. 90 NY469107 - 465052 (also on OLM7) Barts. 34 15g 4½ miles R.S.

The path up to Small Water is fairly easy going, but very boggy in places; boggy too near the lake, but then becomes very tough, steep and stony with one or two bouldery steps. The top of the pass is very narrow, and the descent very steep at first, but not as stony as the North side. After a few zig-zags the surface improves slightly, fairly easy wheeling; lower down the slopes become bracken covered; several small streams are crossed before Overend. Soon after reaching the tarmac at grid ref. 465052 an easy track leads over the low pass to Long Sleddale, a delightful little pass.

Allow 3 or 4 hours. See R.S.J. Vol. 32 No. 5 p. 126.

GP GATESCARTH PASS Long Sleddale to Mardale 590m.
O.S. 90 NY 483057 - 469107 (also on OLM7) Barts. 34 16g 4 miles R.S.
See R.S.J. Vol. 38 No. 5 p. 130.

From the end of the road at Sadgill, it is possible to ride for a further mile but then the track becomes steeper and rougher. Half way up the climb is a flatter area where the track splits, to the right for Mosedale, and to the left for the narrow boggy path to the pass. The descent too is stony and steep, again with a short flatter section about half way down. Boggy near the top of this side too. There is a good path along the West side of Haweswater, but with stiles? Not one of the more picturesque of Lakeland passes.

Allow 2½ hours; and see R.S.J.'s. Vol. 34 No. 6 p. 148 and Vol. 30 No. 6 p. 160.

SS SADGILL TO SWINDALE HEAD 510m.
O.S. 90 NY 483057 - 505125 (also on OLM's. 7 & 5) Barts. 34 16g 6 miles R.S.

Take the track as for Gatescarth Pass to a signpost at grid ref. 479084. The right hand fork for Mosedale points to a non-existent path. It is best to go on a little and bear right to the gap in the hills; it is a bit drier this way. There is a gate in the boundary fence at the top. Very boggy again after Mosedale cottage. The path to Swindale is poor and very indistinct both above and on the final descent to the valley, where a rideable cart track leads to Swindale Head.

Allow 3 or 4 hours. See R.S.J. Vol. 30 No. 1 p. 9. & Vol. 38 No. 2 p. 35.

Sadgill to Kentmere, the little pass (350m) mentioned under Nan Bield, is a rough track on the climb out of Long Sleddale, and mostly rideable down the Kentmere side.