

Pooley Bridge to Aira Force

Distance: 6.5 miles / 10.7km

Terrain: Undulating walking through woodland and fields. From Pooley Bridge the Ullswater Way takes you on paths through woodland and fields to Maiden Castle. Once a defended settlement, it is now hidden by grass, but from this raised vantage point you have spectacular views down the Ullswater Valley, and also to the Pennines to the east and Blencathra to the north.

The Way continues on to Bennethead and then on quiet roads towards the beautifully situated Watermillock Church, before leaving the road to join a track through the quiet woods of Swinburn Park (once one of five medieval deer parks surrounding Ullswater).

Option: Leaving the woods there is a choice of paths: walk round and over the summit of Gowbarrow to enter the upper reaches of Aira Force, or continue along the path shouldering Gowbarrow, where the views open to the whole of Ullswater and the rising mountains ahead.

Take a rest on Memorial Seat and enjoy the panorama from this grand balcony. In the distance you will see Lyulph's Tower – a sixteenth century castellated tower, before reaching the spectacular waterfalls of Aira Force.

Aira Force to Glenridding

Distance: 3 miles / 4.6km

Terrain: Easy well-surfaced path between Aira and Glencoyne. Narrow and uneven paths by lake shore from Glencoyne to Glenridding. Please take care: there is a 100m section along the side of the A592.

This section includes the magnificent waterfalls at Aira. Allow time to explore the paths through the old woodlands and landscaped glades before reaching the spectacular stone arch bridge spanning the 65 foot waterfall.

The Way now passes through the ancient woodland of Glencoyne Deer Park. Most famously, Glencoyne Wood was the place where, in 1802, William and Dorothy Wordsworth saw daffodils by the lakeshore. The encounter is described in detail in a celebrated entry in Dorothy's Grasmere Journal and inspired William Wordsworth to write his most famous poem "I wandered lonely as a cloud, That floats on high o'er vales and hills, When all at once I saw a crowd, A host of golden daffodils; Beside the lake, beneath the trees, Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."

At Glencoyne, cross the road to join a web of paths meandering beside Ullswater, where you can stop and admire the view down the lake before arriving in Glenridding.

Glenridding to Howtown

Distance: 6.5 miles / 10.5km

Terrain: Undulating path with up and down hill stretches and some rocky sections. Please note this is a long, remote section.

The Ullswater Way now weaves its way with the road, but on good paths and clear crossings. The route passes King George V playing fields – named "the prettiest field in England" by William Wordsworth, before crossing the open valley to Side Farm and heading back northwards along and above the shores of Ullswater.

This section of path, described by Wainwright as "the most beautiful and rewarding walk in Lakeland" undulates through woodland and open fell giving stunning views over Ullswater and its islands. The Way passes through the little hamlet of Sandwick to reach Howtown and the Steamer pier.

Howtown to Pooley Bridge

Distance: 5 miles / 8km

Terrain: Undulating walk through farm land and open fell. Please take care: there is a 500m section on the road from Cross Dormont to Waterside House.

Just beyond Howtown, the Way takes you up onto the moorland edge with extensive views over Ullswater.

Option: At Swarthbeck, choose to continue on the open moorland to reach the Cockpit – an impressive large stone circle, before descending on a wide track to join a road leading into Pooley Bridge. Or, alternatively you can take a lower path which takes you through farm land and past farmhouses to reach the Howtown road at Cross Dormont.

The path then takes you through a working sheep farm and campsite following the water's edge round to Pooley Bridge.

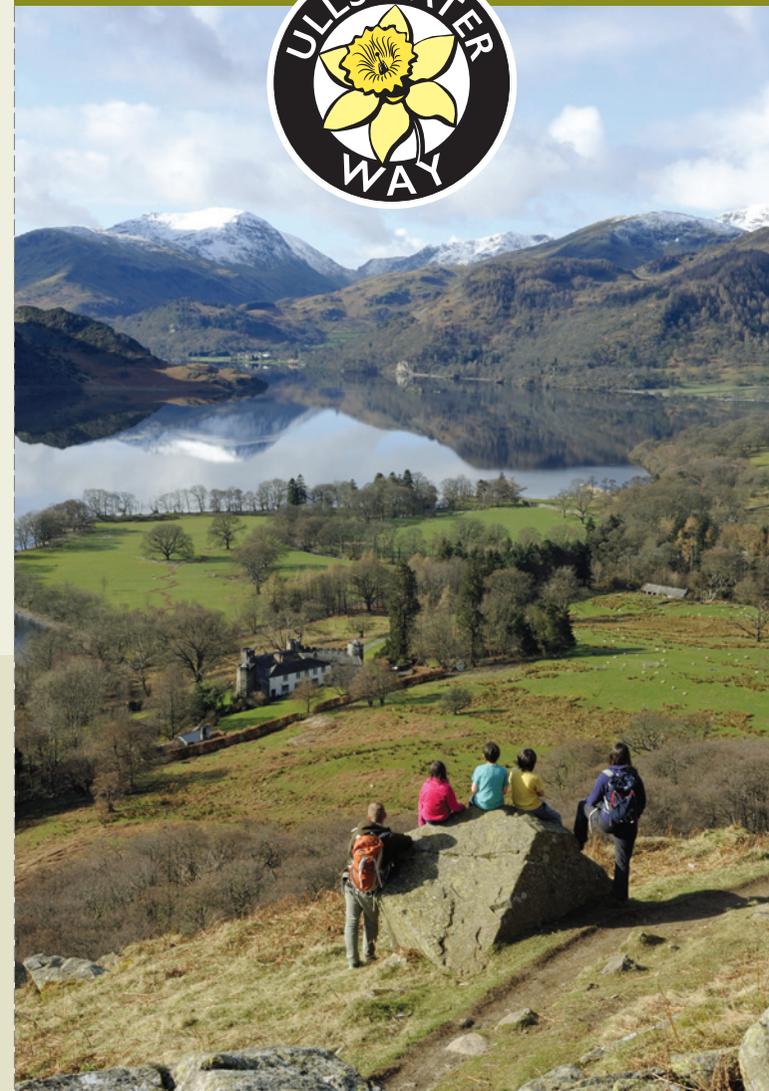
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