

## Ullswater Lake

**Moderate Trail:** Please be aware that the grading of this trail was set according to normal water levels and conditions. Weather and water level/conditions can change the nature of trail within a short space of time so please ensure you check both of these before heading out.



**Distance:** 3 miles (can be extended, by paddling further north)

**Approximate Time:** 1-2 Hours

*The time has been estimated based on you travelling 3 – 5mph (a leisurely pace using a recreational type of boat).*

**Type of Trail:** Circular

**Waterways Travelled:** Ullswater Lake

**Type of Water:** Large lake with care required if windy

**Portages and Locks:** None

**Nearest Town:** Ambleside or Penrith

**Start and finish:** Glenridding, south end of Ullswater  
NY 390169 CA11 0PB

**O.S. Sheets:** Landranger No. 90 – Penrith, Keswick and Ambleside

**Licence Information:** A licence is not required to paddle this waterway

**Local Facilities:** In Glenridding, (cafes, hotels and public toilets), Ambleside and Penrith

### Route Summary

Enjoy great scenery on this fantastic and lovely trip, starting from almost the heart of the Lake District, with the peak of Helvellyn rearing up on the west side.

Mountains are on both sides, together with high hills and the Kirkstone Pass to the south.

Penrith, just off the M6, is only 5 miles away from the north end of the lake; Keswick, a major centre for the north Lakes lies to the north-west, and Ambleside is 10 miles to the south.

The lake is subject to the effect of winds, usually from the south or south-west. As with all large lakes, the wind on Ullswater can whip up waves very quickly. The prevailing wind is from the south-west, and usually (but not always) blows up the lake from Glenridding. This means that the 'fetch', i.e. the length of waves, and therefore their height, can be quite awe-inspiring when the northern end of the lake is reached. The paddler, if the wind gets up unexpectedly, can at least creep back hugging the shore, and especially if keeping to the west bank, avoid the worst of waves head-on.

## Description

On leaving the steamer pier area (the steamers, well worth using, take passengers up and down the whole lake all day in the summer), one has to take care to avoid any steamers on the water, and the dinghies from the sailing club on the spit just after the steamer pier. This area is always busy, for obvious reasons – everyone wants to use a boat here!

It is worth taking time to work out what the weather is doing – even in high summer, squalls come down from the hills very quickly, and if the day is windy, the paddler does not want to be blown too far out into the lake.

On leaving Glenridding, the small island of Wall Holm is just ahead (300 yds), and Norfolk Island is visible in the distance, about 1,000 yds away. A good trip is to round Norfolk Island, and maybe land on it, as it feels like a real destination!

If more energetic, a parking area on the road on the left-hand side could be reached, or even Aira Point, an obvious pit of land on the left side. On following a track up to the road, and crossing it, the car park and café are reached at Aira Force, a famous waterfall.



It is possible in a day to paddle to Howtown on the right bank, and back, landing on a beach to the right side of the steamer pier. Please note that there is no car parking at Howtown if wishing to leave a vehicle there. Further north, there is much sailing at weekends around Ullswater Yacht Club, and the water can become very congested.

## Useful Information

The waterways on this trail don't require you to have a licence to paddle on them. However if you paddle regularly you should consider becoming a member of British Canoeing. A British Canoeing membership gives you a whole range of benefits including a licence to paddle on 4500km of Britain's waterways and Civil Liability Insurance, worth up to £10 Million. Not only

will membership help save you money, it will give you peace of mind when out on the waterways. For more information on British Canoeing membership please [click here](#).

The route is circular and can be done in either direction depending on wind, be mindful that this is an open stretch of water and the wind can have a real bearing on time and ability to paddle.

Ullswater is the main attraction in the north-east Lakes, near to Penrith, and not far from Keswick and Derwentwater. The drive to Ambleside and Windermere to the south is over the Kirkstone Pass, with spectacular views. Many mountains are nearby for walking, Helvellyn being the most obvious. Visitor centre is at Glenridding.

Further useful information can be found on the following websites:

[www.ullswater.com/](http://www.ullswater.com/)  
[www.ullswater.co.uk/](http://www.ullswater.co.uk/)  
[www.ullswater-steamers.co.uk/](http://www.ullswater-steamers.co.uk/)

## CANOEING SAFETY ADVICE

Spending an afternoon or day canoeing on a Canoe Trail can be a fun way to experience nature, help you to stay fit and healthy and enjoy spending time with friends and family. It can also be a dangerous journey, if appropriate safety guidelines are overlooked. To help make sure you remain safe at all times, read on to see our canoeing safety advice guidelines.

### Wear appropriate clothing

Always wear shoes. Rocks, rough terrain and river beds present serious hazards to boaters without the proper attire. Nearly 90% of all boating injuries are attributed to lack of proper footwear. Other canoe safe clothing includes hats, gloves, additional dry clothing, and layered items which can easily be removed. Take or wear a windproof top and course always wear a buoyancy aid - for children make sure the crotch straps are used.

### Be sure to:

- Know the weather forecast and check the water conditions before you set out canoeing. There is an [Environment Agency](#) website where information concerning river levels can be found. We recommend checking this before heading out as the river levels can rise and fall quite quickly in wet or dry conditions.
- Observe navigation rules for this waterway.
- Check to see if there are any events on the waterways when you wish to travel.
- Check that your equipment is well maintained and ready for the water.
- Check that your boat has the required buoyancy to keep it afloat in the event of a capsize

**ALWAYS** be certain to let others know where you're going and when you're expected to return.

**MAKE SURE** that the journey you plan is within your capabilities.

**MAKE SURE** you never paddle alone.

### Equipment Checklist

Use the canoeing safety advice checklist below to make sure you have everything you need:

- Boat
- Paddle
- Buoyancy Aid
- Bailer/sponge
- Small First Aid Kit
- Phone (in a waterproof bag)
- Drinking water and snacks
- Suitable clothing for the weather



Photo by James Carnegie

## Environmental Good Practice

One of the great things about paddling a canoe trail is enjoying the journey and different environments that you paddle through. So when you are out on the water please consider the following things to help keep the wonderful waterways and environment as you found them and to avoid accidentally disturbing wildlife and their habitats.

- Take your **litter** home with you
- Keep **noise** to a minimum
- Where possible keep to any **designated paths or launching points**.
- **Do not "seal" launch** or drag boats to avoid wearing away natural banks. Float your canoe for launching, lift out when landing and carry it to and from the water.
- Canoe a **safe distance away from wildlife**. If you see signs of disturbance move away quietly.
- Familiarise yourself with the local area, its **sensitive places and protected areas**
- On rivers, **avoid paddling over gravel banks** in low water conditions – they may contain fish spawn.
- Ensure you **don't remove or damage any plants or animals** from the waterway as they may be protected or harmful if transferred to other catchments
- When clearing litter left by others, **handle it with care**.
- **Be the eyes and ears on the water**. Report pollution, wildlife problems, damage, incidents etc to the relevant authorities: **Canal & River Trust**, Emergencies: 0800 47 999 47  
**RSPCA for wildlife and animals in distress**: 0300 1234 999 (24 hours)  
**Environment Agency**: 0800 80 70 60 (24 hours)



### CHECK, CLEAN, DRY

Help minimise the spread of invasive aquatic species and disease by following the campaign advice before putting your canoe and equipment in and out of the water (some invasive species can survive in damp or wet conditions for five or six days on water recreation clothing and equipment).

- **CHECK** all your equipment and clothing for living organisms and plants fragments. Pay particular attention to areas that are damp and hard to inspect.
- **CLEAN** and wash all equipment, clothing and footwear thoroughly away from water source. If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them. When practical, completely dry out all equipment and clothing before going to a new site.
- **DRY** all equipment and clothing - some species can live for many days in moist conditions. Dry your kit with towels. Make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

Canoeists and kayakers take environmental concerns very seriously and already follow existing voluntary environmental codes of conduct. You can find more information about canoeing and the environment in British Canoeing's two publications covering inland and coastal paddling '**You and Your Canoe**'. Both are available on the [British Canoeing website](#).

*We have taken great care to ensure the currency, accuracy and reliability of this information. We cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions but where such are brought to our attention, the information will be amended accordingly. Users should be aware that environmental conditions outside of our control can change the nature of the Trail within a short space of time. It is recommended that weather and water conditions are checked beforehand, and tide timetables where applicable. **This trail was last reviewed in January 2013***

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