

Rydal Water

The attractions of walking in the Lake District are obvious – which makes parking a problem at times. We found that the lane on the right beyond the White Moss Common car park and toilets on the A591 leads up to ample roadside parking. Satnav users will find the car park using LA22 9SE, whilst What-3-Words location **permanent.petition.minority** will find the lane, and Paper map users can use SD66576935.

From the roadside parking, head uphill along a metalled road – traffic is very light, but take care as you enjoy views to the South over Grasmere toward Silver How and Helm Crag (more usually known the “The Lion and the Lamb”).

After a short while the road turns gently right, and we follow it round, to leave the woodland behind, making the views across the lake much clearer. The road now heads North, and we continue to follow, until it turns sharp left, at which point we leave to the right on a right of way signposted for Alcock Tarn and the Coffin Route. We don’t take this track as far as the Tarn for this walk, although that could easily be added making it longer and more energetic.

We are now on a wide and clear track through pleasant woodland which we follow round as it curves to the left and heads North. Our path continues round, following the contour lines for the most part, and we soon re-enter woodland as we head North. Other paths join from our right – we ignore these and head resolutely North.

We soon arrive at a gate through a wall, where our path dips down and to the left – immediately ahead of us is a clearing with good views over the far fells, and this is a good spot for a break.

We continue along a narrow but clear path, gently heading downhill toward a wall which we then follow – keeping the wall on the left. We pass through a gate and keep heading North through a wooded area known as Forest Side, and soon arrive at the back of a large Hotel – Forest Side Hotel.

Our path goes behind the gardens and then turns sharp left and steeply downhill to pick up the access road to the Hotel. From here we walk down to the A591. On the far side of the main road, our path continues across flat fields toward the centre of Grasmere where we pick up the River Rothay before passing the Workman’s Reading room, and the school to arrive at the car park to the east of the village. Toilet facilities are available here for a charge.

From the car park, we take the B5287 back to the A591 at the Wordsworth Centre and turn right back along the main road toward Ambleside. We walk along the A 591 for a little while now – this is quite safe as there is a good pavement but it can be busy, so care is needed.

As the A591 takes a sharpish turn to the left, our path leaves on the right and enters woodland signposted for White Moss and Rydal.

We follow the path down to a small weir – which is right at the Southern Tip of Grasmere and then follow the river Rothay down through woodland and White Moss to the Millennium Bridge - the start of Rydal Water - where we cross.

We now head uphill through woodland following a path signposted to Rydal Cave, after which we head east and downhill along the edge of some woodland called Rough Intake. The views across

Rydal Water are generally good, and this is perhaps the best place to view the two islands. The larger is Heron Island, the smaller Little Isle.

The rough path needs some care as we carry on down the hill to meet a wall. Beyond here we enjoy a much gentler track, giving vehicle access to farms and dwellings. We continue with this track until we see a gate in the wall to the left leading to a path down through the woods toward Rydal Mount.

We cross the River Rothay again – taking care as access to the footbridge is somewhat difficult due to a fallen tree – and then re-join the A591 turning right and staying with the pavement on the right.

Our time on the main road is very short – almost immediately we see the gate to Dora’s Field on the far side of the road, and we go through here to access the field. From Dora’s Field, we walk through the grounds of the St Mary’s church Rydal out onto the lane at the front where we turn left and head uphill.

Just beyond Rydal Mount, we see a clear sign for the Coffin Route heading left (West). The path generally follows the contour lines and is reasonably smooth – although transporting a coffin this way may have been challenging. There are good views over Rydal water as we head back to our starting point and we see a number of paths leave the Coffin Route to head onto the Fells. Don’t be tempted by any of these.

There is soon a fork / junction in the lane: Ignore the track to the left and carry straight on before curving round to the left and then taking a sharp left along a narrower path down to the White Moss car park.

From here we pick up the lane and climb a short distance back to our starting point.

- **Total distance 12.5 km (7.7 miles)**
- **Total Ascent 756 m**
- **Moderate walk**