

## Ullswater Way (Linear)

Any walk in the Lake district requires some thought about parking. This one has a good solution though: We start in Pooley Bridge, by taking the M6 North to junction 40 then following signs on the A592 to Rheged and then Pooley Bridge.

Once at Pooley Bridge we cross the new bridge over the River Eamont and then look out for the Sun Inn on the left. Just after that, we see a carpark on the left where for a modest fee we can leave the cars all day. Satnav users can enter the postcode for the pub: CA10 2NN, whilst the What-3-words tag **caskets.frog.sharpness** adds some precision. Paper map users will find NY47162446 finds the carpark.

Leaving the carpark, we turn right along the B5320, taking a moment to notice the rather attractive church of St Pauls, and then walk through the town centre and back to the bridge.

After crossing the bridge, the road veers left – as do we, but walking on a clearly separated path which is well protected from the road. This brings us around the edge of Dunmallard hill to the junction between the A592 and the B5320. Here we cross the A road to pick up a well signed path on the opposite side.

This initially follows the road, but branches almost immediately: The path to the left follows the road around the lakeside, but we take right, marked **Ullswater Way** and head up toward the rather fine house at Waterfoot. The path routes around the right hand side of the house and then round the back to head out in a generally South easterly direction. At all times the path remains clear and well signposted, so navigation should not be difficult.

We soon arrive at the corner of a field where we see the mound of Maiden Castle looming over us. The climb up to the castle is quite steep, but the views make the effort worthwhile.

From the Castle, we head continue along the Ullswater Way – the path remains clear, and initially heads West - crossing a number of field boundaries before we arrive at a minor road at Bennethead Banks. We turn left along the road and head into Wreay and then Bennethead.

Just as we enter Bennethead, another minor road joins from the left – ignore this and notice a short while later that the road forks. The branch to the left is the one we take – but again signage is good, and so navigation should be easy.

We pass the last building in Bennethead, and then the road veers slightly to the right. As it does we take the signposted route on the left, heading downhill, and now in a South-westerly direction. After crossing the second field boundary, the path forks, with the Ullswater Way path the more obvious and better used option on the right.

The path takes us down to another minor road – which we cross with the signed route continuing opposite. As we follow the path round to the left, the ground becomes steeper and we need to take care as we track around the contours of Priest's Crag. Take a moment though to look back and notice the pretty church of All Saints Watermillock which is some way out of the village, seemingly in the middle of nowhere, with just the rectory for company.

We continue along the contours of Priests Crag, and then into woodland at Swinburn's Park. The path heads South-west through the woods, before emerging at Gowbarrow Fell.

Our path continues, tracking around the contours of Gowbarrow Fell, getting ever closer to the lake, until we arrive at the memorial seat where we get an excellent view of the full length of Ullswater for the first time.

From the memorial seat we track west along the contours and then gently downhill toward Aira Force. As we do so, it is worth noting that the path here is often narrow, and with a steep fall on the left – so take care please.

The path continues to track around the contours, and as it does so, we veer right to approach Aira force on a North-westerly heading.

The waterfall is on land owned now by the National Trust, but access is free, because we are on a public footpath; If you arrive by car, a parking fee is payable. Until recently, excellent views of the waterfall could be enjoyed from viewing platforms, but a treefall means that this facility is currently closed. Despite this the waterfall is still worth seeing, and the whole site is pleasant with toilets and a café available.

The bus to Pooley Bridge stops at Aira Force, so this is a good place to end the shorter version of the walk. Those who feel more energetic turn should right at the road and walk along the roadside for a short while before taking a path (still signed as Ullswater Way) onto a pedestrian track which follows the road on the inland side whilst remaining safely segregated, until we get to Glencoyne bridge where a short section of road walking along the side of the A592 needs particular care.

This is soon over though, and we leave the road, now on the lake side to walk through woodland with good views across the water from time to time.

As we come round to Glenridding, the path comes up to the road again, and we cross to see Greenside road where the bus can be caught back to Pooley Bridge.

- **Total distance 17.6 km (11 miles)**
- **Total Ascent 786 m**
- **Challenging walk**