

A circular loop from Cartmel to the Rusland Valley, making use of the L&DL

Leave the little square in the centre of Cartmel via the north-west corner, passing the Sticky Toffee Pudding shop on your L. Out of the village past the Racecourse, keep L where the road forks, signed 'Haverthwaite'. Continue on this road for approximately 7 km. For the majority of this distance you will be climbing steadily up Bigland Barrow, to a highpoint adjacent to the access to Bigland Hall. Your efforts will, however, be richly rewarded by spectacular panoramic views across the southern Lake District and a swooping descent to the River Leven at Low Wood. Turn R at the T-jct to cross the River Leven on the B5278, signed 'Ulverston'. Follow the B-road as it winds through the village of Haverthwaite and up to its T-jct with the A590. SO here, into the minor road opposite, signed 'Grizedale'. After a short distance L at the next T-jct, signed 'Bouth', to cross the causeway, then the tidal Rusland Pool, before ascending a little hill into Bouth. R just before the White Hart pub in the village, signed 'Longmire', and follow this minor road for around 3 km as it leave the settlement, climbs through woods, then becomes a gated road as it passes the farmsteads of Longmire. Turn R at a T-just at the bottom of a fairly steep descent, signed 'Grizedale', then take the next R turn after about 1.5 km (unsigned). Keep R at several minor junctions, as this road re-crosses the Rusland Pool beck then passes below the isolated Rusland Church perked above on the left (where Swallows and Amazons author, Arther Ransome, is buried in the churchyard). Eventually, you'll emerge at a T-jct in the hamlet of Rusland Cross, where R, signed 'Newby Bridge'. Descend to follow the minor road that skirts along the eastern side of the delightful Rusland Valley, with the 'mosses' of Hay Bridge Nature Reserve extending to the west, where red deer are not infrequently seen. A little over 2 km from Rusland Cross take an unsigned L fork in the road to climb rather steeply away from the valley to a T-jct at Hill Top (where Arthur Ransome lived for some time). Turn L here, signed 'Finsthwaite', to descend gradually for a little under a km to an oblique x-roads, where SA then immediately R at an unsigned T-jct. The road descends to cross a bridge over the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway, where you may see (or hear) steam trains during the tourist season. R at the T-jct opposite the Swan Hotel, then bear R to cross the River Leven at Newby Bridge. Join the off-road cycle track to the L just beyond the bridge, signed 'Windermere', then use the central refuge to cross the A590 after a short distance, turning L at the far side then first R up a minor road, following cycle route signs to 'Kendal'. Keep R where the road forks near the top of the climb. Follow this little road for some 3 km, taking care at the virtual U-turn where it crosses Black Beck. L at the minor T-jct near Seatle, then R at the next more significant one. SA for around 5 km, past the striking church at Field Broughton, to return to Cartmel village.