

L&DL route section: Cartmel to Kirkby Lonsdale

Distance: 25 miles (40 kilometres)

Gradient profile:



Overview: This is, almost certainly, the 'busiest' section of the L&DL in terms of the number of little settlements and refreshment opportunities you will pass en route. Traversing one of the most accessible corners of Cumbria and criss-crossing several key transport arteries, including the M6, West Coast Main (railway) Line as well as two trunk roads into the Lake District, you are also likely to encounter more other human activity here than on other route sections. However, the generally fine network of minor roads in South Cumbria, most well kept secrets from the majority of motorists, will ensure a peaceful day's journey in the saddle, discovering some of the hidden gems of this part of the world.

Terrain: This section of the L&DL starts with a bit of a jolt, climbing over the southern flank of Hampsfell above Grange-over-Sands. However, the remainder of the western half of this section is largely flat, as it romps across the 'Witherslack Mosses' (raised bogs) that border the Kent Estuary. East of the half-way point at Sizergh, the terrain gets a little more undulating, particularly where it skirts to the north of the fascinating limestone landscape of Farleton Knott.

L&DL route description *

From the Pig & Whistle pub in Cartmel head east, along a minor road signed 'Grange'. This climbs steadily for a couple of kilometres to a x-roads by Grange Fell Cemetery. SA to enjoy the descent with some stunning views over Morecambe Bay. L at the T-jct onto Allithwaite Road. L at a fork after about 750m, by a little public garden, into Kents Bank Road. SA at the x-roads by the library in the centre of Grange, into Pig Lane. R at the next T-jct, signed 'Lindale'. Pass the striking Grange clock tower on the L, then bear L at the mini-roundabout, signed 'Lindale', to descend the main shopping street in Grange-over-Sands. Bear R at the mini-roundabout near Grange railway station, again signed 'Lindale'. Where this rather busy B-road bears L after around 750m, turn R into the much quieter Meathop Road. This passes Grange golf course and, likely to be of much more interest to cyclists during the warmer months, Holme Farm Ice Cream Parlour. The road bears L to cross the River Winster. Keep R at the fork, then R at a minor T-jct shortly after, to pass through an historic collection of buildings comprising the hamlet of Meathop. Take the next L turn to follow a minor road heading east, then north, across the flatlands of Meathop Moss. Just before you meet the A590, turn R to pass below the dual-carriageway via an underpass for local traffic. L at the far side, by Beech Hill House, then first R at the x-roads by The Derby Arms pub. Here, the Witherslack Community Shop, run largely by volunteers and stocking 'cycle-friendly items', is well worth a visit. Follow this flat road, once the main route across South Lakeland but, since construction of the adjacent A590, now only really used for local access, for approximately 4 km. Just before it finally meets the main road, turn L to join a shared-use cycling and walking route which crosses a waterway then emerges by the Gilpin Bridge Inn. L here, then keep R to cross the River Gilpen and first L after the Jaguar car showroom. R at the T-jct below Levens village, then L at the next, after a short climb, opposite the Hare & Hounds pub. SA at the x-roads in the centre of Levens, signed 'Kendal', keep R where the road forks at the northern end of the village, to climb over the southern shoulder of Sizergh Fell, following signs for 'Kendal'. Once over the climb, first L at the bottom of the descent, just before the road swings R to join the A590.



At the staggered x-roads go SA, following signs for 'Sizergh Tea Room'. Turn R at the T-jct opposite the River Kent and L at the next T-jct. The road soon bears left to cross the Kent, from which good views of falls in the river can be seen. Turn R immediately over the bridge, signed 'Hincaster' and follow this road for around 3km to minor x-roads in Woodhouse soon after a left-hand bend in the road. SA into White Lane, signed 'Crooklands', then left at the next T-jct to descend a twisty hill and pass under a railway bridge. Keep left at the fork and SA at the x-roads with the B6385. After a couple of km this minor road crosses the M6 via an over-bridge. Turn R at the T-jct with the A65, then shortly L into a little used road with grass growing up the middle. This crosses the Lancaster canal, affording a good view of an adjacent 'winding hole' in the waterway. Keep R where the road forks, then R at the three-way jct to cross Lupton Beck, signed 'Farleton'. After some 500m, turn sharp L up hill, signed 'Aikbank'. This minor road contours below Farleton Fell, part of one of the most impressive limestone landscapes in Britain. Passing through Newbiggin, turn R at the minor x-roads, signed 'Hutton Roof'. L in Hutton Roof, signed 'Kirkby Lonsdale'. After about 3.5km turn sharp R, signed 'Biggins'. Left at the T-jct, signed 'Kirkby Lonsdale Old Town'. SA at the jct with the A65, into a road closed to motor traffic by bollards, but where access for cyclists has been maintained. R at the T-junc to descend into Kirkby Lonsdale town centre, which offers a number of cafes, shops and pubs.

[Sizergh Castle, with Low Sizergh Barn Tea Room, represents the halfway point of the Cartmel to Kirkby Lonsdale leg of the Lakes & Dales Loop. To enable this section to be enjoyed for day-rides, below alternative return routes are described from Kirkby Lonsdale to Sizergh, and Sizergh to Cartmel. These create two loops, or a figure of eight, centred on Sizergh. The western Cartmel to Sizergh loop is 29 miles (47 km), the eastern Sizergh to Kirkby Lonsdale is 28 miles (45 km).]

Alternative return route from Sizergh to Cartmel

From the minor x-roads by the Strickland Arms, by the entrance to Sizergh Castle grounds, head uphill on the minor road that runs behind the pub. R at the T-jct to climb back over the southern shoulder of Sizergh Fell. R at the fork just before Levens village, signed 'Brigsteer'. R at the minor x-roads after a short distance, again signed 'Brigsteer'. Continue to Brigsteer and straight on through the village, to a T-jct, where L by the Wheatsheaf pub, signed 'Underbarrow'. L after 2 km, on the outskirts of Underbarrow, signed 'Crosthwaite'. Then L at a T-jct in 500m, again signed 'Crosthwaite'. Continue uphill, then SA through Crosthwaite village, to a T-jct with A5074 after 3.5km. R here, effectively SA, signed 'Winster', then L after 400m, signed 'Bowland Bridge'. Continue to Bowland Bridge and through the village, which offers a shop-cum-little café and a pub. The road starts to climb beyond the bridge over the River Winster. Turn first L, partway up the hill, signed 'High Newton'. R at the T-jct after 2 km, again signed 'High Newton'. This road then climbs steadily for a further 3 km, affording grand views across the Winster valley to Whitbarrow Scar to the left, and of the Kent estuary and Morecambe Bay ahead. Descend into the village of High Newton, where straight ahead at the x-roads, then between some pretty cottages to a minor T-jct. L to ascend and cross the A590, via an over-bridge. L at the T-jct just to the south of the main road crossing, then immediately R, both signed 'Cartmel'. Enjoy the ensuing gradual descent over several kilometres, turning L at the oblique T-jct, to continue south into Cartmel village.

Alternative return route from Kirkby Lonsdale to Sizergh

Head north from the centre of Kirkby Lonsdale along the B6254, in the direction of 'Old Town'. Turn R in Kearnstwick, signed 'Rigmaden'. After about 2.5km turn L, uphill, at Nether Hall. Following various twists and turns in this minor road, turn R at the T-jct with the B6254 in Old Town, then R off it after a short distance, signed 'Killington'. This lovely road wanders across open moorland for some 3.5km, then turn L at the T-jct, signed 'Old Hutton'. L at the next T-jct, after a wood, again signed 'Old Hutton'. After crossing the M6 via an over-bridge, SA at the x-roads with the B6254, signed 'Gatebeck'. This minor road swoops downhill for several kms then, just after Gatebeck village, turn R at a staggered x-roads, signed 'Kendal'. After a 1km drag uphill turn R, signed 'Low Park', into a twisty little road that eventually passes through the delightfully named hamlet of 'Halfpenny'. R at the T-jct with the A65, then first L after a short distance, signed 'Crosscrake'. After passing under the railway bridge turn L at the T-jct in Sedgwick, signed 'Hincaster'. Soon



after this road doubles back after crossing the River Kent turn R, following signs to 'Sizergh Tea Room'. First L, after a short distance to climb gently. The tea rooms at Low Sizergh Barn are signed off to the R just before the road passes under the A591, while the National Trust café at Sizergh Castle can be accessed to the R at the next T-jct.

[Note that the summaries below relate to the L&DL and do not include the alternative loops.]

Scenic highlights: The expansive views across Morecambe Bay from Grange-over-Sands.

Points of interest: Both Cartmel and Kirkby Lonsdale are attractive and interesting settlements to explore; Sizergh Castle; Levens Hall (just off the route); Devils Bridge in Kirkby Lonsdale.

Refreshments: Cartmel (several cafes, pubs and restaurants), Grange over Sands (several cafes and pubs), Witherslack (pub and community shop), Levens (pub), Sizergh (pub, café), Kirkby Lonsdale (several cafes, pubs and restaurants).

Accommodation: Cartmel (B&Bs, boutique hotels, camping), Grange-over-Sands (several B&Bs, hotels, camping), Kirkby Lonsdale (numerous B&Bs, small hotels, camping).

*** Key to route descriptions**

R	=	right
L	=	left
SA	=	straight ahead / across
T-jct / jct	=	T-junction / junction
x-roads	=	crossroads
m	=	metres
km	=	kilometres