



**L&DL route section:** Cockermouth to Eskdale Green

**Distance:** 33 miles (53 kilometres)

**Gradient profile:**



**Overview:** This is probably one of the most dramatic sections of the L&DL in terms of the close proximity to high Lake District fells it brings riders. Once clear of the bustle of Cockermouth you are quickly into minor lanes where you'll encounter very little traffic away from the very busiest tourist days. Lorton Vale provides the initial entry into high fell country, with the L&DL following the western bank of the River Cocker as steep slopes increasingly rise up on both sides. After a glimpse of Crummock Water ahead you'll bear north-west to skirt Loweswater before heading in a southerly direction again over the lower flanks of the Loweswater Fells. After crossing the mouth of the secretive Ennerdale valley it's upward again, this time on the unfenced road over Cold Fell, before dropping back to civilisation at Calder Bridge. Unfortunately, a section of main road (the A595) is unavoidable for the next couple of kilometres, until Gosforth heralds an opportunity to escape back into minor lanes, eastward into Eskdale.

**Terrain:** While this section of the L&DL will enable riders to really dip into, and experience the majesty of, the Lake District fells, the climbing is kept relatively contained. No high passes, but two sizeable pulls over the westerly reaches of the Loweswater and Ennerdale Fells, between their valley mouths.

#### **L&DL route description \***

From the jct of Castlegate and Market Place in Cockermouth, head east along Market Place, then second R to climb Kirkgate. At the T-jcts, R then immediately L (effectively SA), onto Lorton Road. Turn L in just under 1km, signed 'Embleton', then R at the T-jct after a further 2km signed 'Lorton'. SA at the x-roads with the B5292 (care), signed 'Eaglesfield'. Descend to cross the River Cocker at Southwaite Bridge, then take the next L, signed 'Lorton'. Continue for 3km to Lorton, which offers a pub and a café, then R just before the river bridge, signed 'Thackthwaite'. This delightful little road twists and turns as it follows the River Cocker for 5km along Lorton Vale, with views of the Derwent Fells to the L and Loweswater Fell ahead. Turn R eventually at a T-jct, signed 'Ennerdale', to pass Loweswater on the L, then L again in 4km, signed 'Lamplugh'. After 2.5km L at a T-jct, to follow the road through the hamlet of Lamplugh. Take the first L after 1km, signed 'Croasdale', taking a narrow lane with several sharp bends that clammers over the lower slopes of Murton Fell. Take the first R in around 2.5km, just after passing some now grassy spoil heaps, signed 'Kirkland'. From here you'll glimpse Ennerdale Water off to the L. Continue to Kirkland, where L at the x-roads, signed 'Ennerdale'. SA in Ennerdale Bridge (which offers a couple of pubs and a community café) crossing the River Ehen, signed 'Cleator Moor', then L after 0.5km, signed 'Calder Bridge'. The following unfenced road provides the biggest pull of this section of the L&DL, as it climbs over Cold Fell before descending into Calder Bridge after 10.5km. As you start the descent there are quite dramatic views of the nuclear reprocessing plant at Sellafield and out to the Irish Sea ahead. At Calder Bridge, L onto the A595 signed 'Gosforth'. Unfortunately, there is little option but to continue along the A595 for a little over 3km, then L into Gosforth. Follow the road through the village to turn R near the far end, signed 'Eskdale Green'. This road crosses the River Bleng twice to reach Santon Bridge, just over the River Irt, after 4.5km. SA at Santon Bridge to climb around Irton Pike, before descending to Eskdale Green.

### **Alternative return route from Lorton Vale, via Buttermere, to Cockermouth**

Around 2 km south of the hamlet of Thackthwaite, fork L by a metal gate (unsigned). In just over 0.5 km turn L at a T-jct signed 'Buttermere'. This road crosses the River Cocker, then climbs a short steep hill to a T-jct with the B5292 after around 1.5 km, where R, signed 'Buttermere'. Continue beside Crummock Water, with views of Mellbreak to your right and the Buttermere Fells to the left, reaching Buttermere in 6.5 km. This delightful spot offers a pub and cafes, plus there is a level footpath round the lake, which makes a pleasant 30 minute walk. From Buttermere, retrace the last 6.5 km to turn L off the B5289 north of Crummock Water, signed 'Loweswater'. Continue for another 6.5 km, passing between Mosser Fell on your right and Loweswater on the left, to climb steeply to a T-jct at Fangs Brow, where R, signed 'Mockerkin'. Ride over the brow of Mockerkin How, with open views of West Cumbria ahead. Descend to Mockerkin in 1.5 km, then take the first R turn in the village, signed 'Pardshaw'. Follow this pleasant undulating lane to Pardshaw, where R at the X-roads, signed 'Mosser'. Continue through Pardshaw Hall, bearing R to descend to a T-jct where L, signed 'Cockermouth'. Turn R in just under 0.5 km, signed 'Brandlingill'. Continue through Brandlingill, then on for nearly 2.5 km to a T-jct, where R (unsigned). Descend for 1.5 km to Southwaite Bridge, then retrace your outward route to return to Cockermouth in 5 km.

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

**Scenic highlights:** Skirting the Lake District's Western Fells, with views up the dramatic glaciated valleys that incise them, now occupied by some of the bodies of water that give this National Park its identity; the unfenced road over Cold Fell.

**Points of interest:** The handsome town of Cockermouth, which sports various attractions including the National Trust managed Wordsworth House and Garden; the Ravenglass & Eskdale steam railway.

**Refreshments:** Cockermouth (numerous cafes, pubs and restaurants), Lorton (pub, cafe), Lamplugh (pub), Ennerdale Bridge (two pubs and a community cafe), Calder Bridge (café, pub), Gosforth (café and pub), Santon Bridge (café, pub), Eskdale Green (several pubs and a café scattered around the vicinity).

**Accommodation:** Cockermouth (numerous B&Bs, small hotels, youth hostel), Lorton (camping), Lamplugh (camping), Calder Bridge (B&Bs), Gosforth (B&Bs), Santon Bridge (camping), Eskdale Green (B&Bs, 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