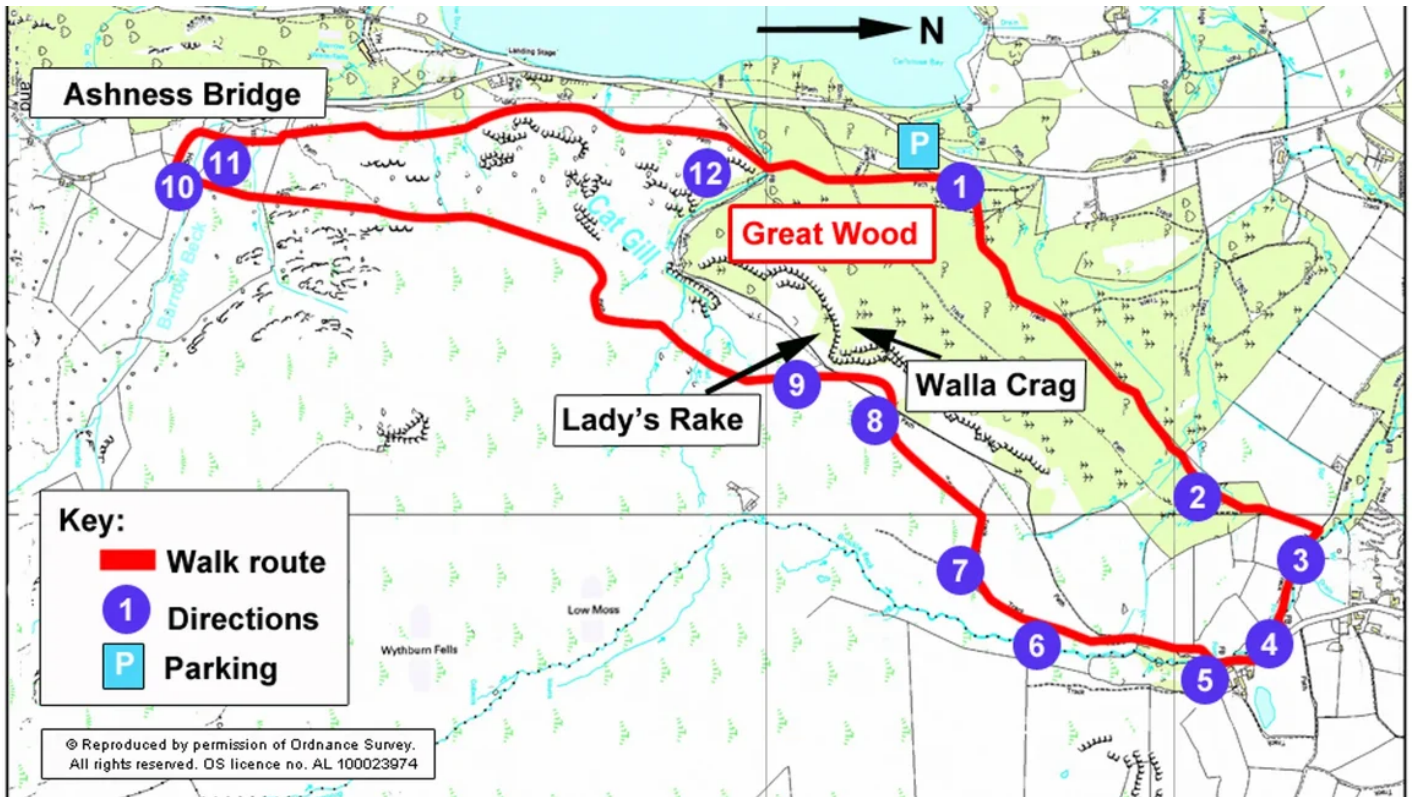


LAKE DISTRICT

Walla Crag to Ashness Bridge walk

Through valleys, over streams and up to spectacular viewpoints, the landscape here near Derwent Water, the 'Jewel of the Lake District' is magnificent in every season. Enjoy the timeless beauty of Ashness Bridge, with the lake and the mass of Skiddaw as a backdrop.



Information

Address: Great Wood, Lake District, Cumbria

OS map: Landranger 89, 90; Explorer OL4

Activity: Walking

Moderate

Dog friendly: Please keep dogs on leads at all times, as there are sheep on the open fells and birds nesting on the ground.

Full trail: Miles: 4.5 (km: 7.2)

Duration: 2 hours

Terrain

Some parts may be quite wet and muddy and others are rocky, so good footwear is essential. Gradients are generally moderate.

Total steps: 12

Start point: Car park at Great Wood, grid ref: NY271214

- From Great Wood car park, with the main road behind you and the cliff of Walla Crag rising up in front of you, take the small path that passes the picnic table out of the top-left corner of the parking area. Continue in this direction for about half a mile (800m), rising steadily through the woods. (Note: the car park location, correctly detailed on the map featured, differs from the location indicated on the OS map, which is incorrect.)
- After crossing a couple of small streams, the woods give way to fields on your left and views over Keswick to Bassenthwaite Lake and Skiddaw.
- The paths cross to form a T-junction. At this point, turn right (signposted Castlerigg and Walla Crag), following the path with the deep valley of Brockle Beck to your left.
- Crossing the beck at the wooden footbridge, follow the track up to the gate and turn right along the tarmac lane. At the fork below Rakefoot Farm, bear right towards another footbridge, re-crossing the beck.
- After crossing the beck, the route becomes a stony track rising through a gate and on towards more open ground, with a wall to your right.
- At the end of the wall, take the greener track straight ahead, still along the side of Brockle Beck, rather than the eroded path that goes off alongside the wall to the right.
- Follow this green track (wet in places) towards an isolated tree on the skyline, then bear left towards the summit of Walla Crag as it comes into view.
- Cross the wall at the stile and bear left towards the pile of stones and the summit. A rocky platform ahead opens up stunning views. When leaving, with the lake behind you, head downhill to your right into the top of Lady's Rake, where another stile re-crosses the wall. Lady's Rake is a narrow cleft in the face of Walla Crag. This was the perilous route said to have been taken by the Countess of Derwent Water from Lord's Island (one of seven islands on Derwent Water) directly below, to evade pursuers after the capture of her husband for his part in the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745.

9. At a pile of stones just below the stile, take the track to the left that arcs across the moorland, rather than the one that heads downhill to your right. Bear right across the heads of the streams of Cat Gill, and eventually you will see the track heading straight for the white buildings of Ashness Farm in the distance. High on the approach to Ashness, there are views into the Jaws of Borrowdale. The marshlands, where the head of the lake is being filled in by the River Derwent, show a fine example of a bird's-foot delta; like the Mississippi, but on a smaller scale.
10. Cross Barrow Beck at the wooden footbridge, then turn right downhill to the famous viewpoint of Ashness Bridge.
11. After taking your photos, head down the road a little way to a signpost on your right, indicating the route back to Great Wood. After the first gate, keep to the lower path rather than the one to your right rising up the hill. (Continuing down the road will bring you to the main road, a bus stop and the landing stage for boat launches back to Keswick.)
12. As you approach Great Wood, the path rises at a wall to cross a footbridge over Cat Gill. Continue ahead and down to the car park. A path across the road from the car park leads to Calf Close Bay and the lakeshore path to Keswick, a further 1.5 miles (2.5km) away.

End point: Car park at Great Wood, grid ref: NY271214
