

Fell, Lake and Woodland walk – 3 miles

Buttermere to Rannerdale

This exhilarating Lakeland ridge walk climbs from the Buttermere Valley up to the summit of Rannerdale Knotts. Though it's one of the smaller and more rounded Cumbrian fells, it gives stunning views over three lakes and many high peaks. Our route returns via the shoreline of Crummock Water and Nether How woodland to the pretty little village of Buttermere.

Start: NT car park at Buttermere, Landranger 90 & Explorer O14 NY172172

Getting here:

Buses: Regular buses from Keswick (77/77a) and Cockermouth (263) to Buttermere village, which is a very short walk along a quiet road to the start of the walk. You can ask the driver to drop you at the NT car park.

Cycling: On-road National Route 71 is 3 miles from Buttermere village via the B5289

Road: From Keswick by either Newlands pass or Honister pass, from Cockermouth by B5289 via Lorton

Facilities:

National Trust car park at start of walk in Buttermere, non-NT car park in Buttermere village. WCs in village car park. Cafés, hotels and bars in village – treat yourself to local food and drink at the end of your walk! Camping available below non-NT car park.

Look out for...

Rannerdale

Sometimes known as the 'Secret Valley', this area is said to be the site of a battle at which native Cumbrians and Norsemen ambushed and defeated Norman armies in the century after they came to Britain in 1066. Rannerdale offers a popular bluebell walk in spring, when the woodland floor becomes an indigo carpet. Local folklore suggests that the bluebells have sprung up from the blood of slain Norman warriors!

Wainwright's memorial

Alfred Wainwright (1907-1991) the well-known author of the 'Pictorial Guides to the Lakeland Fells' made this area famous with his hand written and hand drawn guides to the lakes. There is a memorial to him at the church in Buttermere village and his ashes were scattered on Haystacks, his favourite mountain in the Lake District.

Crummock Water

Flanked by the steep fellsides of Grasmoor to the east and Melbreak to the west, Crummock is fed by lots of streams, including the beck leading from Scale Force, the highest waterfall in the Lake District, which is 2.5 miles from Buttermere and a circular 2 hour walk. It is home to lots of wildlife, including the rare Arctic char, a fish closely related to both salmon and trout.



Here is the view from the Rannerdale Knotts looking down the ridge into the "Secret Valley". Crummock Water and Loweswater can be seen in the distance. Loweswater is one of the smallest lakes in the Lake District and has a more gentle and rolling landscape than its neighbours.

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Beatrix Potter's beloved Herdwick sheep, for which she won many breeding prizes, can be seen grazing on the fells all year round, with the exception of lambing time when they are moved to the lowlands. Their lambs are born with wool which is almost black; it gradually turns lighter with age.

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Crummock Water is located between the two lakes of Buttermere and Loweswater. All three are owned by the National Trust. "Crummock" literally means crooked, and refers to the lake's shape. The lake is deep, up to 144ft, making it cold and clear. National Trust rowing boats are available to hire from Wood House, Buttermere.

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Route directions

1. From the starting point at the NT car park in Buttermere walk straight across the road to a stile. Cross the stile and follow a narrow grassy track until the path begins to steepen.
2. As the path steepens take the left hand track leading towards the ridge of Rannerdale Knotts. This is a good point to pause and enjoy the view over to Buttermere lake and the surrounding hills, such as High Snockrigg in the east.
3. Follow a gentle incline along the ridge to the summit, offering another superb panorama of both Rannerdale (or the 'secret valley') and Crummock Water.

Soon you reach the highest point cairn (we'd appreciate it if you didn't add stones to the cairn, paths need stones much more than cairns do!).

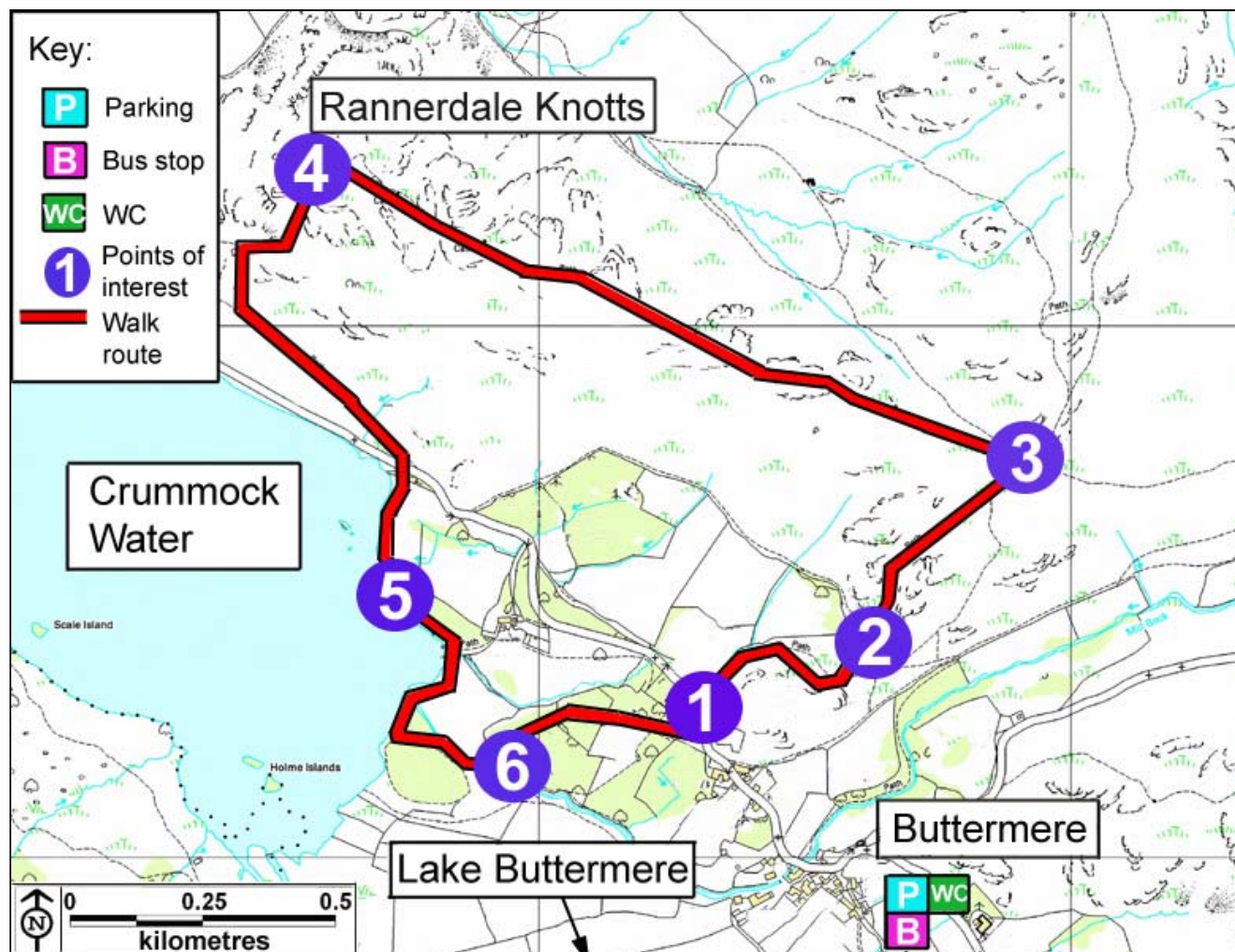
4. From the summit, follow the narrow, winding, grassy track to your left downhill towards Crummock Water. The track leads you to a very steep stone-pitched section. This area can become slippery during wet weather, so take care. When you leave the pitched section follow the track further downhill until it branches left and gently descends towards a road.

Cross the road and go through a gate leading to the lakeshore. Walk alongside the lakeshore until you see a gate to your left leading into Nether How woods.

5. Go through the gate and follow the path through the wood. The path briefly leads to the lakeshore again before re-entering the wood. Take a path to your left leading through Nether How wood to a footbridge.
6. Cross the bridge and follow the path to the right through the woods until you return to your start point.

Walk terrain & accessibility

3 miles circular walk; ascent of 296m. Fairly strenuous route in all weathers. Sturdy boots and clothing are essential. Mostly on grassy paths. Steep stone-pitched descent of Rannerdale Knotts,



National Trust places to visit nearby

Borrowdale valley, Buttermere valley, Scale Force, Wordsworth House and Loweswater



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