



Bassenthwaite What you need to know

- A larger and less crowded lake that is a National Nature Reserve
- A good size to explore in a day -6km long by 1.5km wide
- Few other canoeists and no motor boats
- Magnificent scenery - of course!
- Easy and uncrowded launch site
- Free parking

Special Points

- A special permit is needed
- There is intrusive traffic noise from the busy A66 which is close to the western shore
- Wind tends to blast down the lake with no islands or other shelter
- The sailing club uses the north end for racing
- East shore is all private
- Wildlife sanctuary zones at the south end of the lake and in Bowness Bay

Access and Permits

Bassenthwaite is owned by the Lake District National park. They want to control use and so insist that you need a permit to paddle on it. In 2009 the daily charges were £4.50 a boat, £5.50 for an 'educational group', half price for OAP's, unemployed and disabled, and free for under 16's.

These are easily purchased from:

- Pheasant Inn near Peel Wyke
- Derwentwater Marina
- Information Centre, Moot Hall, Keswick
- National Park Blencathra Centre, Threlkeld
- Most angling shops
- A few other hotels and guest houses



Suggested Canoe Trail

The obvious journey on Bassenthwaite is a circumnavigation of the lake – missing out the two Wildlife Sanctuary Zones. We suggest that you set off from Peel Wyke and follow the western shore down to Blackstock Point which is an ideal place for a rest and perhaps a picnic. Then head across the lake towards Mire House and then follow and explore the north shore but stay out of Bowness Bay Wildlife Zone.

Peel Wyke ★★★

Turn off the A66, signed to the Pheasant Inn and follow the signs to the access point. Convenient and easy launching from a slipway directly under the A66 – so unpleasant traffic noise. There are no toilets but parking is free.

St Bega's Church

This beautiful little church dates back to the 9th century. It is dedicated to St Bega, a 7th century Irish princess who fled her native land to avoid an unwelcome marriage. She landed on the Cumbrian coast at St Bees, where a priory was later founded in her name and legend says that she settled here, living on the shores of Bassenthwaite Lake and was buried on the site of the church. There is sadly no public access to the church from the lake shore.

Hursthole Point ★★

Turn off the A66 at a sign for Thornthwaite and on your left is a small free car park, Woodend Brow. Steps lead up to the A66 – a busy highway that has to be crossed (much more dangerous than the canoeing part of your journey!) – across the road is a gateway and then it is 15m to the lake shore which is National Park access land. N.b. it may be possible to load or unload your boats in the gateway.

Blackstock Point ★★

A large layby with free parking however limited to 2 hours. Access through a gate at the north end of the layby with a 100m walk to the lake shore. Very pleasant National Park Access land and ideal for picnics!

White posts mark the edge of the Wildlife Zone – you can now head across the lake if you wish.

If coming down the Middle Derwent please hug the north shore and paddle quietly through the Wildlife Zone with no landing or disturbance.

Thirlmere What you need to know

- This appears to be a wild lake but is actually a reservoir
- It deserves to be more popular with canoeists
- A nice size to explore in a day - 6km long by 1km wide
- Magnificent scenery – like being in the Canadian Rockies!
- Several interesting bays and islands
- Landing is allowed in most places
- Easy launching and parking
- No permits needed
- No motor boats and very few other boats

Special Points

- This is a reservoir so levels vary - best avoided after a long period of draught because there will be a wide expanse of muddy beach
- A deep lake and the water is cold
- Wind tends to funnel down the lake
- No other boats around to rescue you
- Pay and display parking
- Please don't land on the islands which are bird reserves
- No swimming please as this is drinking water for Manchester

Parking and Access

Thirlmere and adjacent land is operated by United Utilities as a reservoir for Manchester. Armboth car park is on the west side of the lake at GR306172 - it offers convenient parking and launching and has toilets and explanatory notice boards.

Books

Whitewater Lake District, Stuart Miller, Rivers Publishing UK. £17.95. A detailed guidebook with excellent maps, 360 pages.

An Atlas of the English Lakes, John Wilson Parker. Cicerone. £16.95. A delightful full colour book with detailed pictorial charts.

Websites

- www.lakedistrictoutdoors.co.uk Really good website produced by Cumbria Tourism.
- www.keswick.org Keswick Tourist information
- www.lake-district.gov.uk National Park information.
- www.rainchasers.com A site for white water paddlers that focuses on Lake District rivers. Has useful information on river levels.

- www.canoe-england.org.uk Canoe England have local volunteer river advisers for all main rivers.
- www.cumbriacanoists.org.uk Website for Canoe England Cumbria region.

- www.ukriversguidebook.co.uk This is a popular UK resource for paddlesports.
- www.songofthepaddle.co.uk A popular website for those who paddle canoes as opposed to kayaks.

Lake User's Guides

The Lake District National Park publish free leaflets for most of the lakes. These are more informative on things like footpaths and wildlife and complement this more specialist guide.

Phone Numbers

In Emergency - Dial 999 and ask for Coastguard.
Keswick Information Centre 017687 72645
Environment Agency 0800 807060 (24 hour hotline)
National Park Centre 017687 79633



Local Rivers What you need to know

Rivers are graded 1 to 6. Grade 1 easy, grade 6 extreme



Upper Derwent

The upper Derwent is a very beautiful river however it rarely has sufficient water in the summer months. It requires several hours of heavy rain to bring it up and then it drops again in a few hours. There is no access agreement but canoeing is tolerated, so enjoy this river provided there is sufficient water to paddle responsibly.

Section 1

From Seathwaite Bridge GR253127 to Longthwaite youth hostel. 2.5km of very narrow grade 2 water with one section of grade 3 (just before the hostel) - not advised without reasonable experience.

Section 2

From Longthwaite Youth hostel GR256143 to Grange. 3.5km of grade 2 through the beautiful 'Jaws of Borrowdale'.

There are small rapids with shingle banks. The water is usually a crystal clear, pale green and this is usually a friendly and delightful run.

This can be recommended for those with some experience and suitably equipped. Again it needs reasonable water levels but as this valley is one of the wettest in the Lakes you may be lucky. If it has been raining heavily overnight and is still raining, then it is worth a drive up the valley (However, first check out the Borrowdale school rain

gauge to see how much it has been raining www.keswickweather.co.uk) If you can paddle down the shingle rapids at Grange without scraping then the river is passable.

Access and unloading is possible just downstream of the Youth Hostel bridge. Access is also possible in the Jaws of Borrowdale near GR256159. Parking is possible at Grange or at Kettlewell car park on Derwentwater.

Section 3

From Grange to Derwentwater Lake. 2.5km of grade 1. An easy and attractive part of the river, that leads down into the lake and is ideal for beginners. This is a sensitive area for wildlife so please enjoy it from the boat and try to avoid landing and wading. For this reason, you are asked not to attempt paddling back upstream.

The Middle Derwent

Between Derwentwater and Bassenthwaite Lake. Grade 1-2. From Derwentwater Marina, 5km to Low Stock Bridge or 7km to Hursthole point on Bassenthwaite.

This is a fairly easy paddle with some small challenging rapids, pleasant scenery and something of the feel of a minor expedition. If you continue into Bassenthwaite Lake National Nature Reserve you may see some rare birds and wildlife.

Derwentwater acts as a natural reservoir so the river holds its level quite well and is normally paddleable all year. However if the river is exceptionally low then we suggest that you do not persevere below the suspension footbridge in Portinscale (exit river right before the foot bridge).

During the months of November and December there is a voluntary access restriction and you are asked not to paddle this section when the water is below the marker located under the footbridge at Portinscale, so please check this if you are planning a trip in these months – a 'White line' can just be seen, when leaning over the right hand side of the bridge when looking downstream.

You have the choice of taking out at Low Stock Bridge or continuing into Bassenthwaite for which you will need a permit – see Bassenthwaite Lake notes. Be aware that this commits you to a windy and exposed crossing of the lake. Note well and heed the guidelines for passing through the Wildlife Zone.

There are one or two slightly difficult rapids early on. Trees are an ever present hazard and there are several rapids on bends where the current sets strongly into fallen trees – this is why we do not recommend this river for the beginner.

Lower Derwent

below Bassenthwaite

This is another beautiful, and more mature section of the river. It is regarded as especially important and valuable for fishing so there is an access agreement in place. Please do not paddle this river outside of this agreement. Full details at www.cumbriacanoists.org.uk.

River Greta

From Threlkeld Bridge GR 315247 to Keswick. 8km of Grade 3 water. Again there is rarely sufficient water in summer months. This is a popular, classic, paddling trip for experienced paddlers. It is a serious piece of water and should not be attempted without previous experience.

Paddling is only possible when there is plenty of water in the river. At Threlkeld bridge on the middle pier there is a white marker - if the water is 6 inch's below this marker then the river is just passable. A voluntary access agreement allows for 365 days a year paddling, however for the two months of November and December paddling is only allowed when the river is at or above this marker.

Please see the guidebook 'White Water Lake District' for detailed river information.

Canoeing guide Derwentwater Bassenthwaite, Thirlmere and catchment rivers



A map and guide to the lakes and rivers of one of England's most beautiful areas - for canoes, kayaks and sit on tops.

Disclaimer: Information in this leaflet is intended for guidance only – rivers and natural features change and information may be out of date or misleading. If you choose to paddle a river or a lake then this is your decision and yours alone. Canoeing and Kayaking are 'assumed risk sports' where you have to accept responsibility for your own decisions and actions. Any mention of lakes and rivers in this leaflet does not give you a right to paddle.

Responsible Paddling

- Don't scrape down the rivers especially during the main fish spawning months of November to January
- Try to avoid landing in reed beds or wetland areas
- Please, no camping or fires on the islands
- Follow the Country and Canoeist's codes

Safety

- On the Lakes the wind is the main hazard - take note of it's direction and strength
- Wear a buoyancy aid
- Lakes are deep and the cold even in summer
- Less than 3 there should never be



Derwentwater

A guide for canoes, kayaks and sit on tops

Middle Derwent

Another popular river trip – see notes on the reverse.

Derwentwater Marina ★★★

Canoe hire, tuition, showers, changing, shop, parking and easy launching. Fees apply. Please pre-book on busy days. Tel: 017687 72912. www.derwentwatermarina.co.uk.

Nichol End Marine ★★

Café, canoe hire, tuition, showers, changing and shop. Easy launching, but limited parking. Fees apply. Please pre-book on busy days. Tel: 017687 73082. www.nicholend.co.uk.

Fawe Park

You may recognise the boathouse here as one of the settings for the film 'Miss Potter'.

The Lingholm Islands

Small and rocky – the main one is known locally as 'One Tree Island', no longer quite as meaningful since several other trees have become established.

Derwent Isle

Owned by the National Trust, the house is rented to private tenants but open to the public 5 times per year. No landing please.

Copperheap Bay

Where ore from the Newlands mines was shipped across to Keswick.

Lord's Island

Used to have a manor house on it and was connected to the land by a causeway, however, it was destroyed by the 'Puritans' many centuries ago.

St Herbert's Island

Well known by readers of Beatrix Potter though they will know it as Owl island to which the squirrels Nutkin, Twinkleberry and cousins voyaged for nuts using their tails as sails. It was originally the home of the hermit St Herbert who lived and prayed here for most of his life. He died in 687AD. This is a wonderful island for picnics and exploring, but please no fires or overnight camping.

The 'Hands' sculpture

Another popular sculpture commissioned by the National Trust to celebrate the saving of Brundelhow Park by public subscription to the N.T. in 1902.

Otter Island

You may be lucky and see an otter on Derwentwater - usually at quiet times - early in the morning or at dusk.

Upper Derwent, 2.5km of class I

An easy and lovely part of the river that leads down into the lake so is ideal for beginners. This is a sensitive area for wildlife so please enjoy it from the boat and try to avoid landing and wading. For this reason, you are asked not to attempt paddling back upstream. There are no access restrictions so enjoy this stretch of river provided there is enough water to paddle responsibly.

Grange Bridge ★★★

Parking for 6 cars by the church. Easy access 10m down a grass bank.



Derwentwater - what you need to know

- Just a friendly size to explore in a day - 5km long by 1.5km wide
- Lots of beautiful bays and islands
- Magnificent mountain scenery
- Good choice of friendly canoe hire companies
- Easy launching and parking
- Clean water
- No permits needed
- Speed limit of 10 m.p.h and only a few motor boats

Special Points

- Busy launch service. Keep well clear, especially close to the landing stages
- There are limited places for parking and launching and these can get crowded on busy days
- Danger of sudden gusts of wind off the mountains
- Small Wildlife sanctuary zone at south end of the lake

For paddling the Upper Derwent above Grange see notes on reverse



Camping and Caravan Club site ★★★

Easy launching if you are camping here. Safe, shallow bay. Tel: 017687 72392. www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk

Keswick Lakeside ★★

Free permissive launching on the lake foreshore at the discretion of Keswick Launch Company. Suitable for minibus and trailers. Vehicles can unload close to the water's edge - then move your vehicle to the large theatre car park (pay and display + toilets) 200m away. Note that the lakeside is a prime tourist area, always busy and public, so popular with thespian paddlers.

Centennial Stone

This split rock sculpture is the work of Peter Randell-Page and celebrates one hundred years of the National Trust.

Calfclose Bay ★★

Unload at the exit of Great Wood car park (NT). Cross the busy road then it's a 100m level walk to a quiet bay - then remove your vehicle and park it in the main car park 400m away (pay and display).

Falcon Crag lay-by ★

Free roadside parking. A busy road to unload in and cross, then a difficult 15m climb down to the lakeshore. Rope recommended - expedition boaters will love this challenge!

Ashness Gate ★★

Small free car park for 15 cars, 100m up the minor road. Portage and cross the busy road, then it is a slightly awkward carry through a narrow squeeze stile and 5m down stone steps to a pleasant beach next to the launch jetty.

Barrow House Youth Hostel ★★

Convenient launching if you are staying here. Tel: 017687 77246.

Kettlewell car park ★★★

A National Trust 'pay and display' site. (free for members) that provides good parking and easy access to a quiet bay. This car park only takes about 30 vehicles so soon fills up on fine summer days.

Platty+

Canoe hire, tuition and changing. No private launching. Please pre-book on busy days. Tel: 017687 72912. www.plattyplus.co.uk.

Grange Crag ★★

Small car park for 8 cars. 50m walk across road and down the bank.

- Canoe access & launch point
- Private shore - no landing
- Fenced off shoreline
- National Trust accessible shore
- Keswick Launch
- Permitted footpaths
- Wildfowl area (please avoid)
- 1 metre depth or less
- No boating zone
- Our subjective rating of access points

Recommended Canoe Trails

There are lots to explore on Derwentwater and many possible trips. Try to plan these so that you stay out of the launch tracks and where you have to cross these, try to do so at right angles.

1. One of the best trips is a circular one from Kettlewell car park.

It takes about 30 minutes to paddle north following the shore to the split rock sculpture - the National Trust Centennial Stone.

From here head across the lake to St Herbert's Island which will take you perhaps another 30 minutes. Large and small kids will love exploring this wonderful island which has a real 'Swallows

and Amazons' feel to it and is a great place for a picnic.

Next head to Otterfield Island and then follow the shore southwards to the National Trust 'Hands' sculpture, perhaps 20 minutes.

Finally head back across the lake towards Barrow House Youth Hostel and then south along the shore back to Kettlewell - about 45 minutes.

2. The other popular trip from Kettlewell is across to St Herbert's island and then via the Lingholme Islands to the café at Nichol End to sample their huge home made scones. This is about a one hour trip each way.