

Lake Coniston West Side Moderate to Challenging Trail

Route Summary

Paddle along the famous Coniston Water. Coniston Water is the third largest lake in the English Lake District, and one of the quietest and most unspoilt, being surrounded by high Lakeland fells. It has various unique attractions, being the lake that Sir Malcolm Campbell set his world water speed record on of 141 mph in 1939, and also where his son, Donald Campbell, died in 1967. 'Brantwood', the home of John Ruskin, is on the east bank, and there are other literary associations, such as with Arthur Ransome, the author of 'Swallows and Amazons', based on Coniston. The lake is 9km long, and 1 km wide, has very good vehicle parking, and is ideal for canoe trips of various lengths.

Nearest Town - Ambleside/Coniston

O.S. Sheets - Landranger 96 or 97; Outdoor Leisure 6

Start and Finish

Monk Coniston pay and display car park GR SD 316977

This is the car park at the north end of the lake, with ample parking, toilets, and room for minibuses and trailers. Launching is easy, with a 30m flat walk.

The A593 runs up the west side of Coniston Water, (the approach from the M6, Junction 36, south Lakes, is via the A590 west towards Ulverston and Barrow, and then north via the A55092 and A5084 from Greenod to the A593). From Coniston village, the B5285 runs around the north end of the lake to Monk Coniston.

Waterways Travelled - Lake Coniston

Distance

A trip of 9 miles approx. to Brown Howe and back. A canoe trip of anything from 1.5 miles (crossing the lake and back again), up to a circular trip of the whole length of the lake can be undertaken.

Licence Information - Free access

Local Facilities

Parking and toilets at the start and shops and cafes nearby.

We have taken great care to ensure the currency, accuracy and reliability of this information. We cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions but where such are brought to our attention, the information will be amended accordingly. Users should be aware that environmental conditions outside of our control can change the nature of the Trail within a short space of time. It is recommended that weather and water conditions are checked beforehand, and tide timetables where applicable.

Description

The route is described out and back, along the west side of the lake. There are four stopping places described, each way, with quite a long stretch without formal places to stop in the southern half, although stopping on the banks is allowed.

At Monk Coniston, the way is to the left of the launch place, heading diagonally over to the right shore, and this stretch is more open and grassy than further down the lake.

The first place to head for is the obvious pier at Coniston village (SD 308970), the village is always busy in the summer. There is good landing on the gravel on the south side of the pier for canoes, do not obstruct the pier by lingering off it! The 'Gondolier', the steam-driven ferry, makes frequent stops at the pier for the many paying passengers. There is a café, and ice creams here.

After the village there is an obvious bay with many moored yachts, and keep off the shore here. The next place of interest is Coniston Hall campsite, (SD 304963), at an obvious point after the moorings. In front of the campsite is a shingle beach, and temporary landing here is allowed.

Proceeding down the lake, Park Coppice Caravan site follows (SD 304963), with a small beach in front of the site.

There is now a considerable amount of woodland along the shore. Hoarthwaite Farm (SD 301951) is a basic campsite, which belongs to the National Trust, and they own the next mile and a half of bank, which is Torver Beck Common. A footpath runs along the shore, and landing anywhere is fine. Opposite Peel Island, which becomes obvious, over on the opposite bank is Bass Crag, (SD 290920), a car park, but high above the lake

Our 'turning point' is Brown Howe, (SD 291910), a large pay and display car park, with toilets, space for 30 cars, and ability for vans and trailers to turn. The parking is about 80m back from the lake, and there are plenty of places for picnics, and sitting to enjoy the view.

The way back is to retrace the route back to Monk Coniston, with maybe an ice cream at Coniston village?

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Useful Information

The route is circular and can be done in either direction depending on wind, be mindful that this is an open stretch of water and the wind can have a real bearing on time and ability to paddle. It is described here clockwise. First obstacles are all the commercial craft toing and froing from jetties, with the lake steamers accessing the biggest jetty.

Please remember this, and do not block up jetties as the large steamers come in!

[Lake District Outdoors](#)
[Coniston](#)
[Lake District](#)

Coniston Boating Centre – Tel. 015394 41366

Recommended Next Trail

If you have enjoyed this trail why not try out one of the many trails available.

Safety Information

Do check the weather conditions and be mindful that there could be high winds on the lake, plus many movements of powered craft in the summer.

Spending an afternoon canoeing can be a fun way to experience nature, get a great workout and spend time with family and friends. However, it can also be a dangerous journey, if safety guidelines are overlooked. Always follow these basic rules and comply with navigation rules – keep to the right of on-coming boats. Please be careful at points along the trail where there are sharp bends on the waterway and keep a look out at these points for oncoming traffic.

Wear appropriate clothing

Always wear shoes. Rocks, rough terrain and river beds present serious hazards to boaters without the proper attire. Nearly 90per cent of all boating injuries are attributed to lack of proper footwear. Other canoe safe clothing includes hats, additional dry clothing towels, and layered items which can easily be removed.

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Be sure to

- Know the weather forecast before you set out canoeing.
 - Familiarise yourself with the local area, it's sensitive places and protected areas.
 - Leave the environment as you found it. Please read [You, Your Canoe and the environment](#)
 - Take your litter home with you.
 - Follow the navigation rules for the waterway you are on.
 - Keep noise to a minimum.
 - Do not damage bank side vegetation when launching or landing. (No Seal Launching)
 - Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points.
 - Canoe a safe distance away from wildlife.
 - Check your equipment.
 - Observe the navigation rules for this waterway.
 - Check to see if there are any events on the waterways when you wish to travel.
- Use the checklist below to make sure you have everything you need.

Checklist:

1. Boat
2. Paddle
3. Buoyancy Aid
4. Bailer/sponge
5. Small First Aid Kit
6. Penknife
7. Mobile telephone (in a waterproof bag....Please note that in some areas due to the location mobile telephone reception might be nonexistent)
8. Fresh drinking water
9. Sun cream, hat and sunglasses
10. Light waterproof jacket
11. Footwear
12. Licence

ALWAYS be certain to let others know where you're going and when you're expected to return.

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Specific Environmental Information

Please ensure you don't remove or damage any plants or animals from the waterway as they may be protected or harmful if transferred to other catchments.

Canoeists and kayakers take very seriously environmental concerns and already follow existing voluntary environmental codes of conduct, including Canoe England's own guidance notes outlined in the "You your canoe and the environment" publication.

By following the simple steps below you can ensure your presence is not detrimental to the freshwater environment, minimize and avoid accidentally disturbing wildlife and their habitats.

- Find out about the area before you go, noting its sensitive places, species and breeding seasons.
- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home with you.
- When clearing litter left by others, handle it with care.
- Leave the environment as you find it
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Do not "seal" launch or drag boats to avoid wearing away natural banks. Float your canoe for launching, lift out when landing and carry it to and from the water.
- Do not damage bank side vegetation when launching or landing.
- Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points.
- On rivers, avoid paddling over gravel banks in low water conditions – they may contain fish spawn.
- Constantly assess wildlife. If you see signs of disturbance move away quietly.

Be the eyes and ears on the water. Report pollution, wildlife problems, damage, incidents etc to the relevant authorities.

Canal & River Trust - Emergencies- Telephone 0800 47 999 47

RSPCA for wildlife and animals in distress – Telephone 0990 55 59 99 (24 hours)

Environment Agency - Telephone 0800 80 70 60 (24 hours)

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