

SUMMIT WALKS | CIRCULAR WALKS | NATURE WALKS

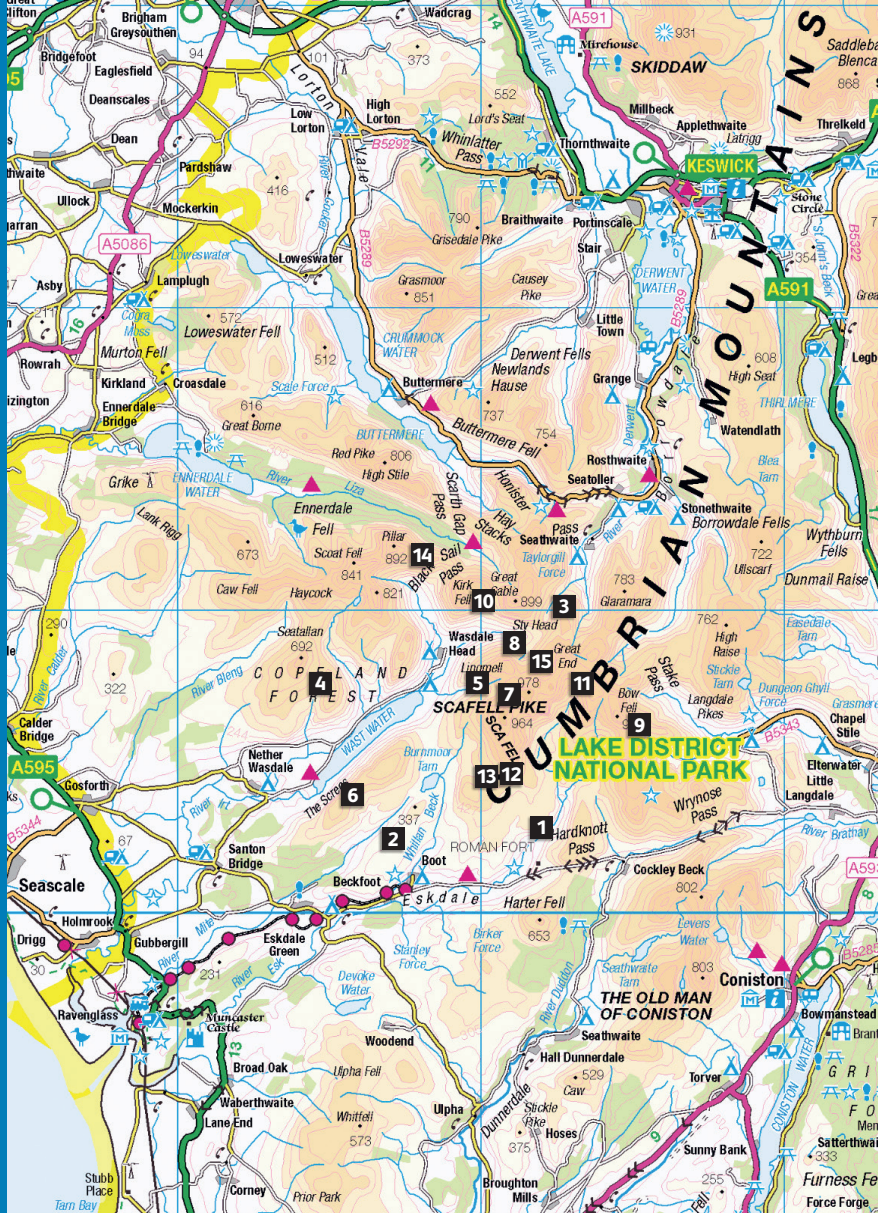
MOUNTAIN WALKS

SCAFELL PIKE

15 ROUTES TO ENJOY ON AND AROUND THE SCA FELL RANGE



GRAHAM UNEY



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THE ROUTES

01 Exploring the Esk Gorge ●○○○ 6.1km/3.8 miles	1
02 Eel Tarn & Burnmoor Tarn from Boot ●○○○ 13.7km/8.5 miles	7
03 Styhead Tarn & Seathwaite Fell ●●○○ 11.5km/7.1 miles	13
04 Middle Fell, Seatallan & Buckbarrow ●●○○ 8.6km/5.3 miles	19
05 The Traverse of Lingmell from Wasdale ●●○○ 7.1km/4.4 miles	25
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08 The Corridor Route to Scafell Pike from Borrowdale ●●●○ 14.1km/8.8 miles	41
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Download the
Mountain Walks Scafell Pike
GPX files from
www.adventurebooks.com/MWSP-GPX

ROUTE GRADES

Easy	●○○○
Medium	●●○○
Hard	●●●○
Full-on	●●●●



INTRODUCTION

The hills at the head of Wasdale are among the most popular in the whole of England. Here, in the south-west corner of the Lake District National Park, the bare bones of our greatest mountains rise from the flatness of the valley head, forming the highest peaks in the land. Names like Scafell Pike, Great Gable, Kirk Fell and Pillar crowd the map, and it is here that walkers, rock climbers and mountaineers have flocked for hundreds of years, to experience the very best mountain terrain in the country. The early poets came here to gaze at the giddy heights. The crags of The Napes on Great Gable saw the first ever rock climbers take to its pinnacles and buttresses, and these early pioneers went on to explore the high crags of Sca Fell and Pillar, giving rise to the sport of rock climbing. Shepherds have tended their Herdwick flocks among these fells for centuries too, and today men and women make a living here, mainly from tourism but farming is still very much a part of valley life.

The Sca Fell range is the main focus of this book, but there are lots of other mountains close by that are worthwhile in their own right, and of course these all give superb viewpoints from which to enjoy Scafell Pike itself.

Wasdale tends to be the place most often talked about when people are planning walks up Scafell Pike, but it's by no means the only centre in which you might want to base yourself. Borrowdale, Great Langdale and Eskdale all offer suitable alternatives, and certainly once you've done a little exploring of the walks around Wasdale, if you've gained a few navigation skills along the way, you might enjoy the longer walks to Scafell Pike's summit from these other valleys even more.

Being the highest mountain in England, Scafell Pike is of course the centrepiece to all of this, and rightly so. While some deride it for being so popular, its popularity stems from the fact that it truly is a magnificent mountain, and it's easy to get away from the crowds on the main tourist route via Hollow Stones by seeking out the quieter paths and trods.

Graham Uney

The view down into Langdale from Bow Fell (route 09).



14.1km/8.8 miles

08 / THE CORRIDOR ROUTE TO SCAFELL PIKE FROM BORROWDALE

A long but beautiful walk to the summit of England's highest mountain via the Corridor Route from Borrowdale.

/ ESSENTIAL INFO

GRADE ●●●○

DISTANCE **14.1KM/8.8 MILES**

ASCENT **970M**

TIME **6 HRS (WALKER)/3-4 HRS (RUNNER)**

START/FINISH **ROADSIDE PARKING ALONG THE DEAD-END LANE TOWARDS SEATHWAITE FARM IN BORROWDALE**

START GRID REF **NY 235 121**

START GPS **54.4993, -3.1822**

OS MAP **OL4 THE ENGLISH LAKES:**

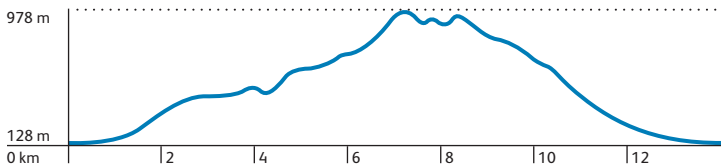
NORTH-WESTERN AREA, AND OL6 THE

ENGLISH LAKES: SOUTH-WESTERN AREA

(1:25,000)

/ OVERVIEW

The Corridor Route is often regarded as the best walk to the summit of Scafell Pike. This is subjective of course, but it certainly is a beautiful and very varied route. It's quite a long day for the circuit and is possibly not the best choice for a first-time ascent of Scafell Pike, but once you're gaining in experience as a mountain walker it's definitely one to tackle. The route takes you to Styhead Tarn, a high mountain lake, from where you pick up the Corridor Route. This is a rocky path that cuts through a wild mountain landscape, bringing you to Lingmell Col from where you join the regular route up Scafell Pike from Wasdale. The return is via Esk Hause and the path alongside Ruddy Gill and Grains Gill back to Seathwaite.



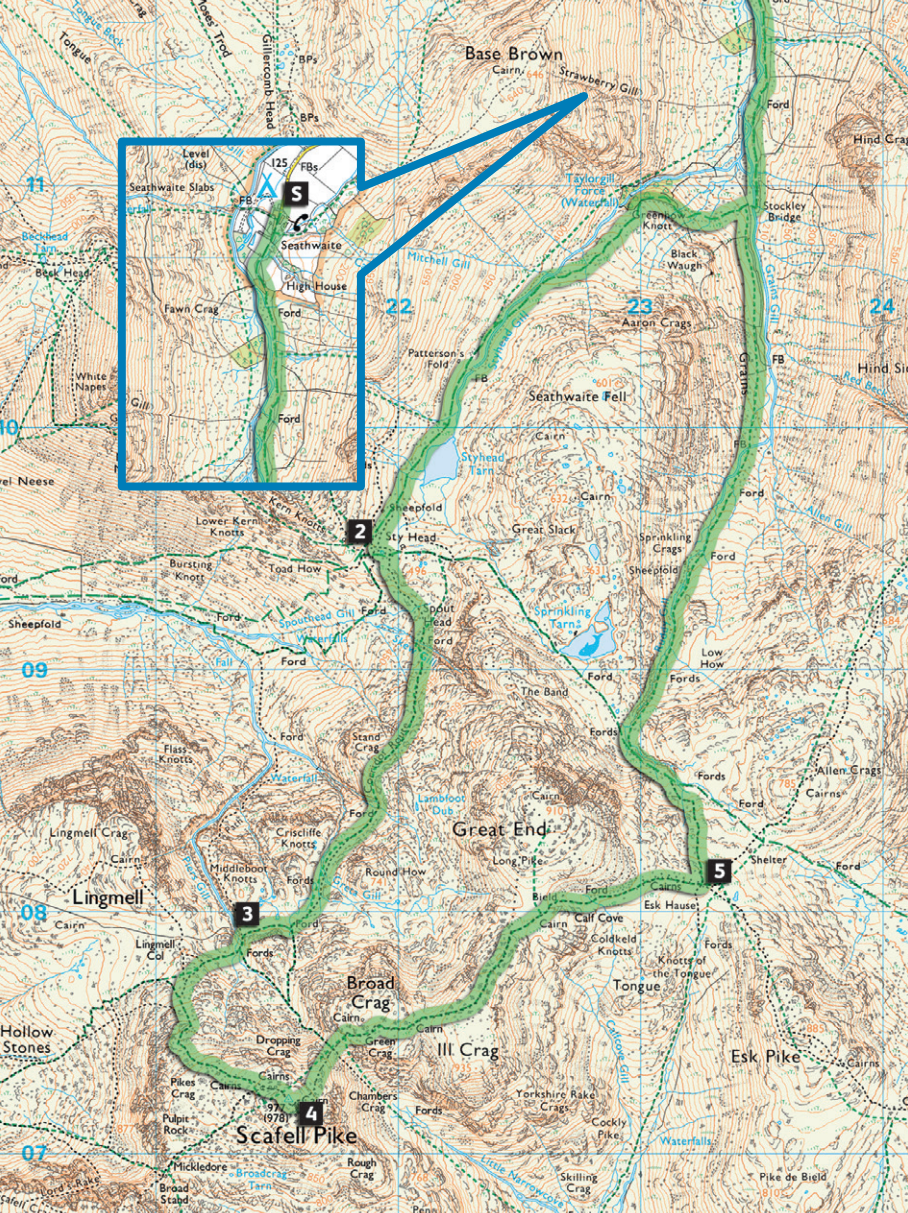
The top of Piers Gill, the scene of many accidents – there is no path down here.

/ DIRECTIONS

S From the roadside parking before the farm at Seathwaite walk along the road to the farmyard where the public road ends. Go **straight ahead** between the farmhouse on your left and a fine long barn on your right. Keep going **straight ahead** through the farmyard, through a gate at the far end and continue on a wide track with the river down on your right. You'll soon reach Stockley Bridge. Follow the track over the bridge to a gate. Once through the gate there is a junction: **continue ahead, westwards**, uphill on the track. This goes over a couple of slabby rock steps, crosses a couple of little streams, then brings you to another gate beside a wood. Go through the gate and keep on the track, with the wood and the waterfall of Taylorgill Force down to your right. The track continues uphill and soon brings you to the eastern side of the stream of Styhead Gill. On the map the bridleway appears to cross this stream early on, but actually the track continues on the eastern side further than this and brings you to a wooden footbridge. **Cross the stream here and turn left**, now with Styhead Gill to your left. Continue gradually uphill to Styhead Pass. This is an important through route between Borrowdale and Wasdale, and sits between the Scafell Pike range and Great Gable. There's a metal mountain rescue stretcher box at the pass.

2 There are lots of paths that leave the junction by the stretcher box, so care is needed to follow the correct one. Go **east** on a flat path for less than 100m and look for a path on the **right** that cuts downhill slightly to the south, then across a bowl in the hillside at Spout Head. Cross the head of Spouthead Gill, then climb up a short way to the **south-east** to meet a more discernible path just before Skew Gill. **Turn right** on this better path, cross the deep cleft of Skew Gill and climb out the other side. You're now on the Corridor Route. The path climbs diagonally across the hillside, soon crossing a stream above Stand Crag just beyond an awkward little rock step down – the 'bad step'. This requires a little hands-on scrambling for a few metres but is the only place where this is necessary on the entire route. Walk around the western shoulder of Round How and cross a couple of branches of Greta Gill. A short uphill section leads to a flatter part of the walk that begins at a path junction. Ignore the path going steeply uphill on the left, and keep on the flat path to the right, coming to the stream at the head of Piers Gill.

3 Piers Gill is worth a mention, as it is a real **accident black spot**. People often are drawn into the cleft of the gill on descent, mistakenly thinking it's the path down. The rocky bed of the stream can look a bit like a path when it's dry, but



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it soon leads to numerous big drops and there is no way down. There have been a number of fatalities here. **Do not enter Piers Gill.**

Cross the head of Piers Gill and go **south-westwards** uphill to a path junction on the shoulder above Lingmell Col. From Lingmell Col your route **turns left** uphill. It's very stony on this section, and it takes you steeply to a **sharp right turn**. Keep on the path here as it skims the top of a small crag along a smooth sloping rake of rock. The path again **turns left** and takes you in short broken rock steps to a flattening. Keep going on the path and you'll soon be on the summit of Scafell Pike at 978m, the highest point in the land.

- 4** Step down from the raised summit cairn on its **east** side and pick up a very vague path going **north-east** through the rocky ground that crowns the summit plateau. Within just a few metres this path starts to descend, and will lead you down to a narrow rocky col. The green dotted public footpath on the OS map is further to the left, but as is often the case with these, there is no path actually on the ground over there, so stick to the black dotted line instead. Climb up the other side of the col to a flat area just **east** of the summit of Broad Crag. The path is visible but can be difficult to follow because of the bouldery nature of the ground underfoot. You'll drop into another little col, between Broad Crag and Ill Crag, then go over the broad northern slope of Ill Crag itself, all on extremely bouldery ground. North of Ill Crag you'll follow a broad stony ridge down into another col with Great End riding beyond. Here you'll see a gully down on the **right** of the col, with your path heading down it. This is Calf Cove, and you should follow the path down, then over easier ground to the upper part of Esk Hause. Esk Hause is a confusing place, especially in mist. It is a kind of double pass, one higher than the other, with paths leading off in a number of different directions.
- 5** From the higher path junction at Esk Hause **turn left** and descend northwards to a bridgeway at the head of a stream. This is the headwaters of Ruddy Gill. **Turn left** and you'll soon come to a path junction, with one path continuing north-westwards over flattish ground and the other going **right/north** downhill to cross the stream. **Turn right and cross the stream** and follow the eastern side of it down delightful little steps. The way now is obvious, with Ruddy Gill close by to your left. **Continue northwards** downhill, crossing the stream at a footbridge. Keep on the path, northwards down the western side of Grains Gill. Eventually you'll reach the path junction you were at earlier in the day. **Turn right** through the gate back over Stockley Bridge and follow the track back to Seathwaite Farm.

/ GOOD TO KNOW

PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

There is no public transport to the start of this walk, but regular buses run from Keswick through to Borrowdale (bus numbers 77 and 78). You can get off at Seatoller and walk along the road to Seathwaite, but this does add a further 4 kilometres for the round trip. Parking at Seathwaite is sensitive, as the farmer often has to move vehicles that have been double-parked on the narrow lane or that are blocking access to fields or barns. Park sensibly along the roadside. Occasionally there is a field opened up for parking at the farm for a small fee.

WHEN TO WALK IT

This walk can be done at any time of year but is best on clear days as you will need very good navigation skills in poor visibility.

TERRAIN AND NAVIGATION

The navigation on the main paths is easy, but care is needed at Styhead Pass, on Scafell Pike itself, on the section around Broad Crag and Ill Crag, and at Esk Hause, especially in poor visibility. You do need good navigation skills to



Sunset over Great Gable from the Corridor Route.

attempt this walk. The ground throughout is rough and rocky, and as such this is not a suitable route for wheelchairs, or pram/pushchair users.

FACILITIES AND REFRESHMENTS

There are public toilets and coffee/snack vending machines in Seathwaite at the farm (which also offers camping), but no other facilities on the route. In Seatoller there is a cafe, the 400-year-old Yew Tree pub and a public bar at Glaramara Hotel.

DOGS AND KIDS

This is a long rough walk, only suitable for dogs and children who have some experience of mountain walking.

POINTS OF INTEREST

This is one of the best ways to gain the summit of Scafell Pike. The Corridor Route is an out-and-out classic, taking you through some amazing mountain scenery, and leading you in an exciting circuit through the mountains. It can feel quite remote, being on the summit of Scafell Pike knowing that the majority of the other walkers up there have a short descent into Wasdale to finish their walks, while you have a long way to go northwards to get back to Borrowdale, but that is a great feeling if you have the fitness and skills to cope with this kind of walking.

Back in Borrowdale, why not visit the Borrowdale Yews, or go for an adrenaline rush at the Honister Slate Mine via ferrata?