



# TONIC WATER

It's destination Northumberland this month as Jody Vaughan leads you on a refreshing stroll along the banks of the biggest man-made lake in the UK

**N**o wonder the Affiliated Site overlooking Kielder Water is so popular. The pitches and facilities are spotless, it is quiet and the location is second-to-none. What's more, the excellent Leaplish Waterside Park is right on your doorstep. Here, you'll find an indoor pool and sauna, restaurant, bicycle hire and the Birds of Prey Centre. You can also try your hand at trout fishing, archery, fencing, snorkelling, sea scootering and disc golf. There's even an adventure play area for the kids.

Alternatively, you could just sit back and relax on the banks of Kielder Water – at 4.2 square miles, it is the largest artificial lake in the UK by capacity (incidentally, Kielder Forest is the biggest man-made woodland in England). Pleasure boats await to take you on a scenic cruise.

For the purposes of this feature, though, we are travelling on foot. Our walk follows the waterside for the most part, along good gravel tracks which are accessible for all-terrain wheelchairs. I urge you to pack a pair of binoculars as there's lots of wildlife to spot.

## DIRECTIONS

**1** From site reception, walk past the toilet block then turn right at the



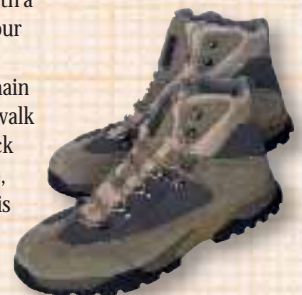
T-junction to pass through a wooden gate to exit the site. Continue towards the road and then turn right to walk in the direction of Leaplish Waterside Park's main facility buildings.

**2** Just before you reach the first brown building, veer right – keeping to the same road. Walk along the side of the building, over a small speed hump and then turn left just before the zebra crossing beside a children's play area. Follow a gravel track marked 'Lakeside Way', immediately passing a rock with a picture on it (called 'Shadow') on your right. Continue along the track.

**3** At a path crossroads, leave the main track to turn left, continuing to walk around the lake. The now grassy track takes you along the banks of the lake, which should (for the first half of this walk) always be on your left. Follow this path until you pass through the



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Landranger Map 87



**INFORMATION**



**Club site:** Kielder Water Caravan Park (AS), Leaplsh Waterside Park, Falstone, Hexham, Northumberland NE48 1AX. See p190 of the *Sites Directory & Handbook 2013/14* for full details.

To book, call the site direct on 01434 251000 or see [nwl.co.uk/kielder](http://nwl.co.uk/kielder). Open: 25 March to 3 November.

**Distance:** 7.1 miles

**Terrain/level of difficulty:** good, easy paths, mostly suitable for off-road pushchairs

**Number of stiles:** 0

**Essential equipment:** Ordnance Survey Explorer Map OL42 – Kielder Water & Forest

**Refreshments:** Leaplsh Waterside Park

**Toilets:** Leaplsh Waterside Park



slightly uphill. Soon you pass a way post marked 'Lakeside Way, Tower Knowe 5½ miles'. Continue on, watching out for the little patterned marker rocks as you go.

**5** Eventually you'll come to a broken fence – follow the orange arrow ahead, walking along the same path. The next marker is 'Tower Knowe – 4½ miles'. When you come to a staggered junction, turn left to still follow the Lakeside Way, heading downhill, passing another marker 'Tower Knowe – 3½ miles'.

**6** At the next path junction (where there's a fork in the path, a wooden signpost and a bench), keep right to follow the 'Alternative route – Leaplsh Waterside Park 1¼ miles' sign. At the

T-junction, turn right, away from the main road on your left. Then, where the track soon forks, keep left following the 'Lakeside Way' sign before passing another sign marked 'Forestry Vehicles Only'.

**7** This track bends to the right and then, after a while, bends to the left before passing Freya's Cabin as you approach the waterside. Having returned to the shoreline, turn left following the 'Leaplsh Waterside Park ¾ mile' sign. You are now retracing your steps, keeping the water to your right. Where the path branches, as you near the Waterski Centre, keep right to continue along the shoreline. At the Centre, continue straight ahead through the car park but, where the path forks (beside the red life buoy), turn left along the more major track – immediately ignoring the sign to the squirrel hide on your right. Alternatively, you can walk along the waterline all the way back to the Waterside Park if you choose.

**8** Look out for the interesting woodland shelter and benches on your right as you walk along the path. At the path's crossroads, turn left. Then, opposite the children's play area, turn right to return to the Waterside Park's buildings. Turn left along the main entrance road, past the 'No Entry for Vehicles' sign. Go over the first speed hump and then take the next turning left, which soon takes you through the wooden gate and back into the site.

car park for the Waterski Club. Continue straight ahead, joining the footpath to the right of the white Calor propane tank.

**4** At the wooden sign, go straight ahead (signposted 'Lakeside Way – South Shore, Tower Knowe Visitor Centre 7 Miles'). Continue as the path turns into a road. As this tarmac section comes to an end, veer slightly right to continue along the more major track once again, heading

The Caravan Club Magazine recommends the use of Ordnance Survey maps – your ideal passport to navigating Britain

