

The Lake District is home to some of the most spectacular scenery in England

Words: Mark Sutcliffe

THIS MONTH'S SITES



1. MEATHOP FELL

For the most up-to-date details, see The Club website – alternatively turn to p176 of the 2015/16 Directory. **Facilities include a playground.**



2. CONISTON PARK COPPICE

For the most up-to-date details, see The Club website – alternatively turn to p172 of the 2015/16 Directory. **Facilities include a play area.**



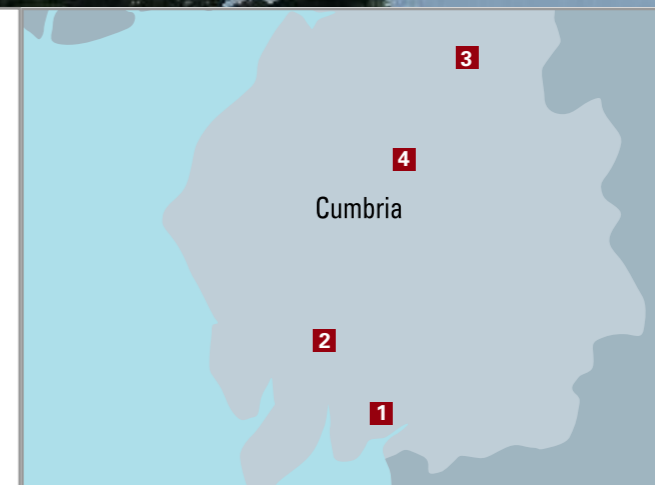
3. ENGLETHWAITE HALL

For the most up-to-date details, see The Club website – alternatively turn to p174 of the 2015/16 Directory.



4. TROUTBECK HEAD

For the most up-to-date details, see The Club website – alternatively turn to p180 of the 2015/16 Directory. **Facilities include two play areas.**



Ullswater is the second largest lake in this beautiful region of northern England

You can book your pitch online at caravanclub.co.uk/searchandbook or by calling our Advance Booking Service on **01342 327490**.

Please call Affiliated Sites directly.

FOOD + DRINK



The Royal Hotel

In Dockray, perched on a mountain pass several hundred feet above Ullswater, this pub offers a great range of real ales, while there are extensive gardens in which to enjoy an al fresco lunch.

Contact: 017684 82356, the-royal-dockray.co.uk

Nearest featured site: Troutbeck Head



J&J Graham

Situated in Penrith, J&J Graham sells a cornucopia of delicious local delicacies including Cumbrian cheeses and cooked meats, pastries, pies, fresh-cut sandwiches and many more mouthwatering treats.

Contact: 01768 862281, jjgraham.co.uk

Nearest featured site: Englethwaite Hall

Cartmel Village Shop

This pretty south Lakeland village shop is famous for its sticky toffee puddings, made to a 25-year-old recipe.

Contact: 015395 36280, cartmelvillageshop.co.uk

Nearest featured site: Meathop Fell



Black Bull Inn

Drop in to this friendly inn and hotel to sample acclaimed ales from the Coniston Brewing Company. Hearty pub grub is served from noon until 9pm – perfect after a long day out on the fells.

Contact: 015394 41335, blackbullconiston.co.uk

Nearest featured site: Coniston Park Coppice

Coniston Water



The downside of the Lake District's outstanding natural beauty in peak season is congested roads, overflowing car parks and crowded pubs.

So heading off the beaten track opens up new opportunities. You might have to drive a bit further, but isn't it worth going that extra mile to escape the madding crowds? This tour of the lesser-known lakes avoids Windermere altogether and, starting on the south-western edge of the National Park, heads up the eastern edge and ends up north of Ullswater.

ARNSIDE AND SILVERDALE

On the very outskirts of Cumbria, our first stop is at The Club's charming Meathop Fell site, near to the popular tourist destination of Grange-over-Sands.

Well-presented and equipped, it offers

116 pitches and a playground for the younger members of your touring party.

Just across the estuary from the site is the Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – a perfect Lakeland taster.

Arnside, at the mouth of the River Kent, boasts a genteel promenade. This is a coastal gem, where you can literally park on the prom and admire the views. The West Cumbria line crosses the estuary on a wonderful viaduct, and the old pier opposite the post office is a reminder of the days when most of the local trade was done by sea. You'll be pushed to find any rock or kiss-me-quick hats, but there are plenty of enticing cafés, pubs and restaurants.

Silverdale lies to the south of Arnside Knott, a rugged rocky outcrop which dominates the landscape. The Knott itself is criss-crossed with many miles of

footpaths, most of which connect with Arnside and Silverdale, and whose steep climbs reward the walker with superb views over Morecambe Bay and up to the Fells.

Both these pretty little towns make an ideal base from which to explore the foothills to the south of Lakeland proper – an enchanting landscape of low-lying hills and sheltered valleys.

CONISTON WATER

Less than an hour from Grange lies The Club's recently-refurbished Coniston Park Coppice site on the edge of beautiful Coniston Water. This is where Donald Campbell tragically died while trying to set a new world water-speed record in *Bluebird*, and where author Arthur Ransome drew inspiration for his classic book, *Swallows and Amazons*. John Ruskin, the 19th-century philosopher, also made

his home at Brantwood on the eastern shore, and filled it with a priceless collection of antiquities and artworks.

The village of Coniston itself is a bustling little place with excellent pubs. A number of pleasure craft ply their trade up and down the water. You can take a tour with Coniston Launch or step aboard the National Trust-operated steam yacht, *Gondola*, an elegant Victorian cruiser that was recovered from the lakebed and restored to its former glory.

A walk up 'Coniston Old Man' is a very popular half-day hike for the energetic. But be warned: it involves more than 2,000ft of continuous climbing and gets very steep towards the summit. For the slightly less ambitious, the quieter eastern shoreline is ideal for exploring on foot; hitch a lift on the *Gondola* and wander back along the numerous lakeside paths. >>

FOR THE FAMILY

The Rheged Centre

Built inside a derelict lime kiln at Penrith, this is an eclectic mixture of artisan boutiques, eateries and information points. You can also buy a map or some walking gear, pick up brochures on local walks and visitor attractions and plan your tour of the area.



Contact: 01768 868000, rheged.com
Nearest featured site: Troutbeck Head

Steam Yacht *Gondola*

Operated by the National Trust, this elegant steam-powered pleasure yacht was recovered from the depths of Coniston Water and restored to its Victorian glory. It operates until 31 October.

Contact: 01539 441288, nationaltrust.org.uk/gondola
Nearest featured site: Coniston Park Coppice

Ullswater Steamers

Take a trip aboard a classic steamer and watch the scenery drift gently by. There's always the option of hopping off at Howtown and walking a stretch of the lakeshore path before rejoining your vessel at either Glenridding or Pooley Bridge.



Contact: 017684 82229, ullswater-steamers.co.uk
Nearest featured site: Troutbeck Head



Settle-Carlisle Railway

This scenic railway line weaves its way through two National Parks following the path of the beautiful Eden Valley. You can see occasional trains during the summer.

Contact: settle-carlisle.co.uk
Nearest featured site: Englethwaite Hall



The pretty village of Coniston

“One of Ullswater’s most endearing qualities is that you *can’t* circumnavigate it by car”

THE EDEN VALLEY

The verdant valley which follows the course of the River Eden is all too often overlooked. The river rises in the Pennines and flows northwards, gradually descending until it passes the market town of Kirkby Stephen, then flowing north-west before finally emptying into the Solway Firth at the border town of Carlisle.

One of the most celebrated of the market towns on the river is Appleby-in-Westmorland. Here, a broad, tree-lined main street links a striking castle (tours are available) with a Grade I-listed church.

Meanwhile, the famous Settle and Carlisle Railway runs through the heart of the valley, with stations at Armathwaite, Lazonby, Langwathby, Appleby and Kirkby Stephen. Steam trains occasionally travel along this route and, although you can’t hop on for a ride, you can see them from the bottom of Englethwaite Hall Club site.



Walking on Arnside Knott

Easily accessed from the M6 or A66, this enchanting valley and its delights can be discovered over the course of a long weekend, or a couple of days tacked onto a longer tour of The Lakes or Dales.

Englethwaite Hall lies towards the northern end of the valley – just over 3½ miles from the village of Armathwaite and within easy walking distance of the river and the railway. This limited-facility site is set against the backdrop of High Stand Forest and is perfect for a relaxing break, even during school holiday periods.

ULLSWATER

A 40-minute trip southwards brings you to the spectacular location of The Club’s Troutbeck Head site, just a few miles north of Ullswater. What Ullswater concedes in size to Windermere, it more than makes up for in the breathtaking beauty of its surroundings. It’s an altogether wilder >>



Ullswater

CULTURE



Brantwood House

The former home of John Ruskin, Brantwood is an idyllic spot overlooking Coniston Water’s eastern shore. It is both a treasure house of historical importance and a lively centre of contemporary arts and the environment.

Contact: 01539 441396, brantwood.org.uk
Nearest featured site: Coniston Park Coppice



The Ruskin Museum

The Ruskin Museum has a room dedicated to the life of one of the area’s literary figures, author Arthur Ransome. There’s also an extensive collection of memorabilia associated with Donald Campbell’s ill-fated *Bluebird* water-speed record bid.

Contact: 01539 441164, ruskinmuseum.com
Nearest featured site: Coniston Park Coppice

Wordsworth Point

Visit the site in Glencoyne Park on Ullswater, which inspired William Wordsworth’s famous *Daffodils* poem. The species of daffodil that grows here in the wild is said to be the same uncultivated variety of narcissi that would have thrived here in the 19th century. Park in the National Trust car park at Glencoyne on the A592 lake shore road.

Nearest featured site: Troutbeck Head



Leighton Hall

The family home of the Gillow family for 200 years, this stately pile perches high above the Kent Estuary in Carnforth. The owners built their fortune in furniture making and the interior of the hall features a priceless collection of period pieces. Open May to end of September.

Contact: 01524 734474, leightonhall.co.uk
Nearest featured site: Meathop Fell



OUTDOOR FUN



Glenridding Sailing Centre

Have fun on Ullswater by hiring anything from a kayak to a small yacht – the sailing centre staff will even show you how to sail it. Absolute beginners to experienced sailors welcome.

Contact: 01768 482541,
glenriddingsailingcentre.co.uk
Nearest featured site: Troutbeck Head

environment, which is more in keeping with the true spirit of Lakeland.

One of Ullswater's most endearing qualities is that you *can't* circumnavigate it by road. While the northern shore is well-served, the main A592 sheers off southwards at the western end of the lake, making the south-western corner a car-free recreational playground.

The A592 runs through the towns of Glenridding and Patterdale which are surrounded by the vertiginous buttresses of some of England's highest mountains: Fairfield, Place Fell and Helvellyn.

A popular option is to take the steamer from Glenridding to Howtown and then walk back along the car-free lakeside path.

At the north-eastern tip of Ullswater, Pooley Bridge is the closest Ullswater gets

to 'commercial'. This is where the steamers dock and there is plenty of parking, with pubs, cafés and restaurants catering for a wide variety of tastes.

The town takes its name from the attractive stone bridge over the River Eamont which gives access to the altogether quieter, southern side of the lake. After a while, the road gets progressively narrower on this side and parking is severely restricted.

Finally, a word about the weather – it's famously wet, but this area's ever-changing climate is part of its appeal. It's as vital a component of the landscape as the lakes and fells, painting a constantly shifting canvas, veils of cloud and mist often lifting to reveal a surprising new vista.

MEMBERS' VIEWS

Coniston Old Man

A climb up 'Old Man' is a popular half-day hike for the energetic (it gets very steep towards the summit). If you want to take it easier, there are great views of Old Man from the National Trust-managed Tarn Hows.

Nearest featured site:
Coniston Park Coppice



Neil and Helen Sykes, twins Lewis and George (4), and Emily (1), were visiting Meathop Fell from Liversedge in Yorkshire. "It's a lovely part of the country and this site is nice and quiet and safe for the children. There's a nice little play area and it's not too regimented, so the boys can ride their bikes around. There's plenty to keep the kids entertained just a short drive away."

Cycling

Cycling in the Lake District is challenging, but the views more than make up for the effort. For National Cycle Network routes, try the popular Sea to Sea (C2C) Route which skirts the northern edge of the Lake District, or the Walney to Wear (and Whitby) Route in the south.

Contact: sustrans.org.uk



Aira Force

The best known of the Lake District waterfalls, Aira Force is more than 60ft high and is hidden away in the depths of some dense, rather mysterious woodland.

Contact: 01768 482067,
nationaltrust.org.uk
Nearest featured site:
Troutbeck Head



Mark Wardell from Louth in Lincolnshire was at Englethwaite Hall with wife Emma and son James. "We've been coming here for years – either en route to Scotland or for a short break. We even stopped here when I cycled from Land's End to John O'Groats. It's a lovely, peaceful site with some great walking straight from the gate and the pitches are really roomy and well spaced out. It's a great place from which to explore Hadrian's Wall or the Lake District. It's well off the tourist track, so it's a bit of a tranquil oasis."

Steve Gill from Chester was staying at Troutbeck Head. "We've been members for over 20 years but this is only the second time we've stayed here. It's a big site and we love the wide-open views, which is lovely in autumn because there's lots of natural light.

There's a nice walk right from the site and some great hills to climb in the area. We're going to come back with the grandchildren in the summer."



Club Together

The online community that just keeps growing

To read even more member views, see our fantastic online forum at caravanclub.co.uk/together