

LAKE BREAK

Andy Stothert finds a divine Club site beside beautiful Coniston Water in Cumbria



Ordnance Survey Landranger Map 96

Tranquil scenes on Coniston Water

IF THE location of a site was the only really important consideration when choosing a caravanning destination, Park Coppice would be packed to the rafters with delirious caravanners and motorhomers from the moment the gates were unlocked until the daylight dwindled and it reluctantly shut up shop for winter.

This location, next to the beautiful, unspoilt western shore of Coniston Water, and lying in the lee of that famous Lakeland fell, The Old Man of Coniston, will provide endless entertainment for folk who like to mess about on the water (there is direct access from the site for

launching small boats) or wandering amid inspirational scenery. This is probably about as good as it gets for cyclists, too – there are some very wild and indeed tough mountain biking routes beckoning riders to get well and truly mucky nearby.

People with less strenuous needs are also very well catered for in this lovely, less chaotic corner of the Lake District. Quiet days are available cruising the lake on the ancient, but now electric-powered, boats run by Coniston Launch – or you could enjoy more sumptuous sailing on the steam-powered *Gondola*.

All manner of sail-out and walk-back possibilities are enticingly available. Why not take a boat across the lake to the stately home-ette of Brantwood, former home of John Ruskin, the poet, artist and philanthropist? After lunch at the excellent but expensive Jumping Jenny café, the launch can then carry you effortlessly around Coniston Water, providing a very different perspective of the rugged mountains which savage the sky hereabouts.

We've enjoyed this perfectly idle day several times, but earlier this year varied it by strolling down to the boat centre,

hiring an open canoe and paddling across to Brantwood for lunch, before slowly exploring more of the lake's sylvan shores under our own steam.

The walking potential from Park Coppice is the equal of any caravan site in the land. A vast selection of routes is on offer to suit all tastes and abilities – everything from the excitement of the high hills to the famous Coniston pub-crawl and its wonderful real ales.

So as far as location is concerned, Park Coppice has it all (after many visits over the years I have heard the odd whinge from visitors about the

arboreal cover here, but this is a small price to pay for a caravan site on National Trust land in a National Park, in a scenically sensitive area).

Apparently, though, there are other criteria which discerning travellers find relevant in site selection procedures, and one of these is the standard of the amenities provided. Well, last year the facilities at Park Coppice were completely rebuilt to the highest standards, making this site indubitably one of the most desirable in the land.

So can you all form an orderly queue at Coniston, please... ■

DID YOU KNOW?
At its extremities, Coniston Water is 5.5 miles long by 0.49 miles wide

INFORMATION



SITE

Full details can be found on p88 of the *Sites Directory & Handbook 2011/12*. To book, call 01342 327490 or see caravanclub.co.uk/searchhandbook.

TOURISM

■ **Coniston TIC** – call 015394 41533 or see conistontic.org

CYCLING

The nearest National Cycle Network route to this site is number 6, Preston to Keswick. There is a lakeside path that leads up to the town of Coniston and on to local route number 37. See sustrans.org.uk for more information.

ATTRACTIONS

■ **Brantwood** – home of John Ruskin. Open all year, but restricted in winter. Call 01539 441396 or see brantwood.org.uk

■ **Coniston Launch** – sailings all year. Call 017687 75753 or see conistonlaunch.co.uk

■ **Jumping Jenny Coffee House & Restaurant, Brantwood** – open all year. Call 015394 41715 or see jumpingjenny.com

■ **The Bluebird Café, Coniston** – open all year. Call 015394 41649 or see thebluebirdcafe.co.uk

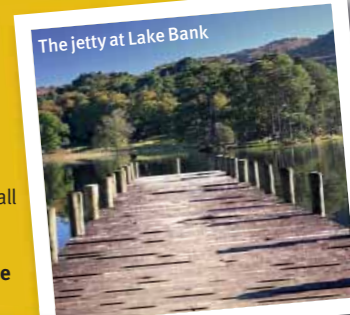
■ **Ruskin Museum** – celebrates area's heritage; includes exhibits related to Donald Campbell. Open all year. Call 015394 41164 or see ruskinmuseum.com

■ **Steam yacht Gondola** – sailings April to October. Call 015394 32733 or see nationaltrust.org.uk

■ **Go Ape! Grizedale Forest Park** – aerial fun. Open all year. Call 0845 643 9215 or see goape.co.uk

■ **North Face Trail, Grizedale Forest** – mountain biking. Open all year. Tel 01229 860373 or see forestry.gov.uk/thenorthfacetrail

■ **South Lakes Wild Animal Park, Dalton in Furness** – open all year. Call 01229 466086 or see wildanimalpark.co.uk



The jetty at Lake Bank



The Bluebird Café