

Helvellyn from Thirlmere

At first glance the western side of the Helvellyn range may seem a little dull. They display slopes of a fairly uniform nature which when compared with the likes of Striding Edge and Swirral Edge on the other, eastern side, certainly lack that immediate, 'in your face' drama. Helvellyn though is a big mountain and the two sides of it are an integral part of why it is such a popular mountain. If you are into a total scrambling experience then there is nothing wrong with doing the edges. If on the other hand you want to savour the fantastic view down on to the edges from the summit, and if you just want to walk to get it rather than scramble then there is no finer way of doing it than approaching up the well-graded paths from the Thirlmere side.

The three highest peaks of the main ridge can quite comfortably be done by climbing the zig-zags of the Helvellyn Gill Path to Helvellyn's summit. Then descending to Grisedale Tarn taking in Nethermost Pike and Dollywaggon Pike along the way. The best way back is down by Raise Beck, which is a little confined but soon leads down to Dunmail Raise from where you can make use of the permissive path to get back to the start.

Grade: Intermediate

Start/Finish: Thirlmere (NY316169)

Distance: 9.3 miles (15km)

Time: 5 hours

Height gain: 819m

Terrain: Steep stony fellside, summit ridge, scree, tarn, steep narrow gill and forest.

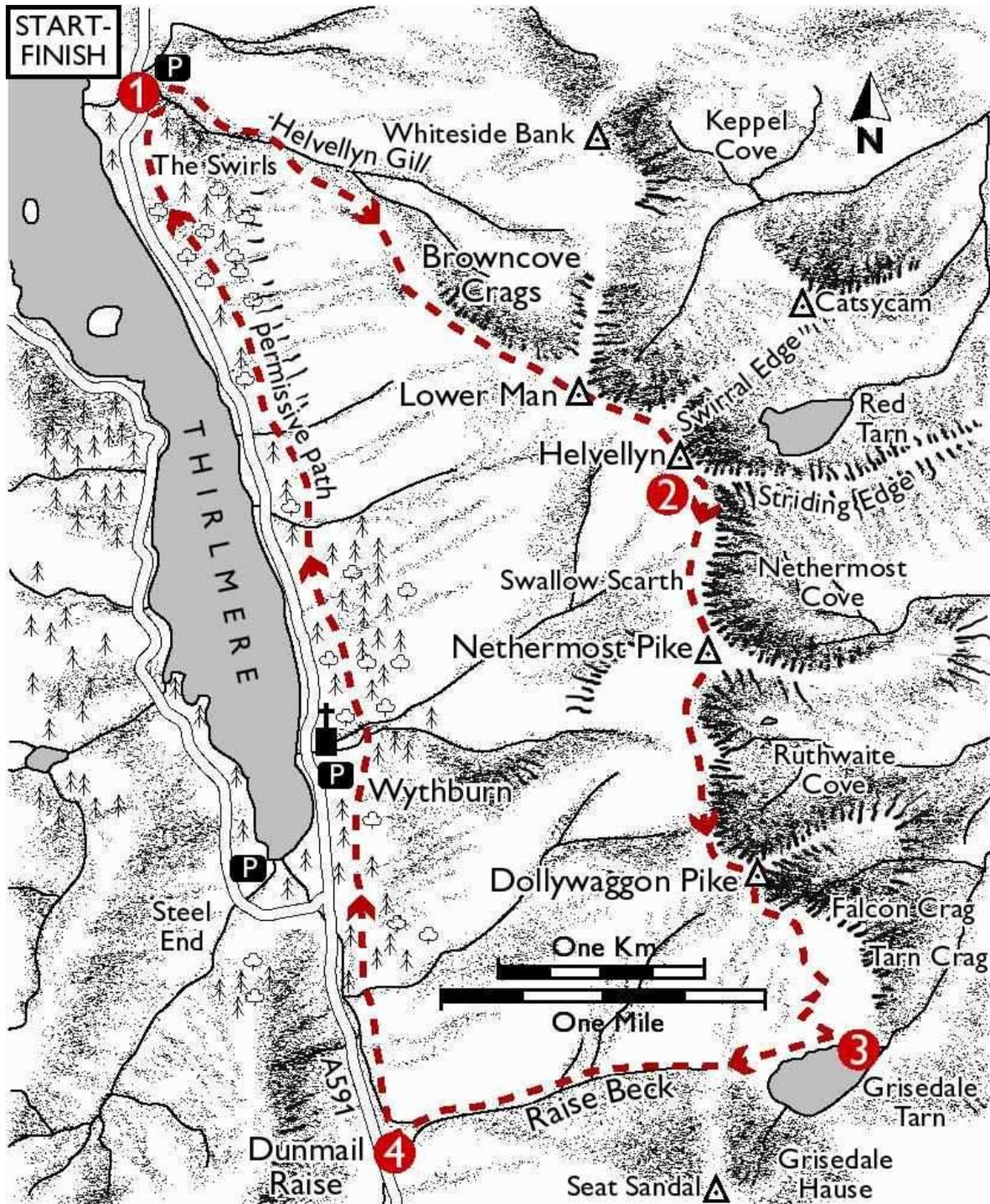
Maps: British Mountain Maps, Lake District (1:40 000; OS Explorer OL5, Harveys' Superwalker (1:25 000) Lakeland East.

1. Cross the footbridge over Helvellyn Gill at the back of the car park then follow the path South East alongside the gill to another footbridge. Cross the footbridge, then climb the steep zig-zags to a wall. Through the gate continue climbing to the remains of another wall. From here the path ascends the steep scree-covered shoulder South East directly to Helvellyn's summit.
2. From the summit of Helvellyn follow the main ridge path South until it forks at Swallow Scarth, take the left branch and follow it South to Dollywaggon Pike. From Dollywaggon Pike the path turns South East. Continue along it and descend the steep zig-zags to Grisedale Tarn.
3. At the tarn turn West and follow the path across the low col to the head of Raise Beck. Join the path on the South side of Raise Beck and follow it down towards Dunmail Raise.
4. Just before the road turn right and follow the Permissive Path North to the footbridge over Birkside Beck. Cross the bridge and continue North along the path as it traverses the



mountainside into the forestry plantations. The path is followed North for just over 4km back to the car park

Map



Walking route: Helvellyn from Thirlmere
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