

HIGH RIGG & St JOHNS in the VALE

An interesting fell and valley circular walk, away from the crowds. This can be a car free day.

Distance – about 7 miles/ 11 kms, taking around 4 hours at a leisurely pace, plus stops, for the whole route.

Grade – generally easy but with several short steep hill sections. Some paths uneven and rough with wet patches.

Access – By car from Keswick on the A591 to Grasmere. Car park at Legburthwaite. By bus 555 from Keswick (10 mins – Bridge End stop). Walk starts on the main road, over a stile opposite the bus shelter.

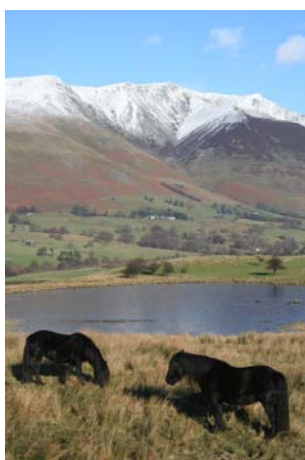
Map – O S- The English Lakes – North Western Area. 1: 25000.

From the stile an obvious path climbs left with two steepish sections before reaching the main ridge. Rest a moment to look back southwards over Thirlmere Reservoir and Dunmail Raise, the route to the South Lakes.

Looking ahead, the long craggy ridge stretches away north towards Skiddaw and Blencathra. St Johns in the Vale and the steep flanks of the Helvellyn range are on the right(E) with the A591 and Bleaberry and Castlerigg Fells to the left. Cross a steep hollow, then an easy stroll among the outcrops.

At 30 mins or so, arrive at a fence and stile. Cross. The obvious path is straight on to circle the fell ahead. An alternative is to follow the fence a short way uphill to an attractive small tarn, then down the outflow to rejoin the other path just before a wall and stile. (Exit route – follow the wall down to reach a minor road).

Cross stile and follow broad grass path up wallside. Dogleg on descent to avoid bog. Rejoin diagonal path to the wall. At the wall corner stay on the wide grassy track leading directly to the summit. (About one hour from the start). Enjoy the tremendous panorama.



Carefully leave the summit to the right (E), then in the direction of Tewet Tarn, descend steeply to the Diocesan Youth Centre and Church.

The shorter walk turns here, about 50m down the road, just below the Churchyard. Pick up the route notes further on. The full walk adds on another hour from here.

Main walk continues through the narrow wall stile opposite the Church gate, crossing open grassland with boggy patches. In 5 mins cross another wall stile to a small col and the path continues down to the tarn.

Fell ponies amiable but by pass! Tewet Tarn has resident coots and waterhens – used to be a favourite local skating rink in the long ago time of

severe winters! In the same direction cross the next wall stile to a fingerpost and then down to the road. Turn right.

Follow the road round to the right for c 200m. Just before Shundraw follow the sign to St Johns Church through a pair of gates and past a large barn. 100m along the wallside come to a small gate. Cut across a wet reedy field to the white Row End, through the gate and yard, with two more gates to reach the road. Bear right uphill and in 5 mins or so reach the gate and stile just below the Churchyard where the short walk continued.



Through the gate and downhill along the wallside to follow the return path along the base of High Rigg. Look across the flat pastoral farmland of the valley bottom and St John's Beck towards the towering wall of the Helvellyn range.

After about 25mins on this path, come to a gate signed Low Bridge Farm and the welcome fact of a (the only) refreshment stop in a further 10 mins or so.

With about 15 mins walking left, the path reaches the bank of the beck, then climbs up and alongside it through woodland before curving round past the start point and the stile. The nearest inn is but half a mile along the main road!!



