

The Rawnsley Trail

A guide to places in Keswick associated with Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley, Vicar of Crosthwaite and co-founder of the National Trust.

The Rawnsley Trail is about two and a half miles in length and on level ground, apart from Vicarage Hill. The trail may be followed as written, or in two stages, station 1 to 5 and 6 to 12. The word station was first used to refer to the viewing points recommended by Father Thomas West, Catholic priest and antiquary, who wrote the popular 'Guide to the Lakes' (1878).

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Rawnsley's accomplishments were many: minor poet, disciple of Ruskin, patron of arts and handicrafts, conservationist, fighter for public access to the countryside, biographer, and local historian, placer of monuments and inscriptions, indefatigable lecturer, joint founder of the National Trust, a generous, devout and socially concerned clergyman who seems to have enjoyed every moment of his incredibly full life, he must often have seemed absurd or irritating but he pioneered values - social, aesthetic and ecological - which most of us now take for granted.

Early Years

Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley was born in 1851 at Shiplake-on Thames, Oxfordshire, a twin in a family of nine. His uncle was Sir John Franklin, the Arctic explorer and his god father was the Poet Laureate Alfred, Lord Tennyson. At ten years of age the family moved to Lincolnshire where Hardwicke Rawnsley developed an intense interest in natural things, spending long summer holidays at the then quiet fishing village of Skegness where they shared a holiday cottage with the Tennyson family. At eleven years Hardwicke Rawnsley entered Uppingham School in Rutland, then a small country grammar school. With Edward Thring as Headmaster, Uppingham became a progressive public school with an emphasis on gymnastics and games. Rawnsley spent summer holidays in Grasmere, establishing a love of the Lake District that was to influence his whole life. In 1870 Rawnsley went up to Balliol College, Oxford where he studied classics and then natural sciences. Hardwicke was not an academic student, but he had a great zest for life. He graduated with 'a respectable third'.

THE RAWNSLEY TRAIL

Begin at the National Trust Kiosk at Keswick Boat Landings by waking towards Friar's Crag.

STATION 1: THE COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE

(On the left of the path set into the wall)

The plaque, erected in 1922, records the dedication of Friar's Crag, Lord's Island and part of Great Wood to the memory of Hardwicke Rawnsley. **Continue walking along the path.**



STATION 2: THE RUSKIN MONUMENT

(On the left of the path). John Ruskin was an art critic, artist, geologist, teacher, writer, philosopher and the Slade Professor of Fine Arts at Oxford. In his writings and lectures he predicted the coming of the National Health Service, the minimum wage, old age pensions, education for women, global warming and erosion of the countryside. Ruskin College at Oxford, 'the working man's college' was founded in his name. He greatly influenced Rawnsley in his life's work. Ruskin visited Keswick many times, the first as a five year old. He believed that 'mountains are the beginning and end of all natural scenery'. He

retired to Brantwood, Coniston and died there in 1900. he is buried in Coniston churchyard. The monument was the first of many erected by Rawnsley in the Lake District.



STATION 3: FRIAR'S CRAG

It is thought that this was named 'Friar's Crag' since it was the place where clergy embarked to visit a recluse, St Herbert, on what is now known as St Herbert's Island. Ruskin described the view from Friar's Crag as one of the best three or four views in the whole of Europe. When Rawnsley was Vicar of Wray, on the shores of Windermere, he befriended Beatrix Potter. Hardwicke Rawnsley was the first published author Beatrix had met, and he

helped her to have her first book, *Peter Rabbit*, published in 1902. St Herbert's Island, on the right down the lake, is Owl Island in Beatrix Potter's book *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*. To the right of St Herbert's Island is Brandelhow Park, the first National Trust property in the Lake District, opened by HRH Princess Louise, Queen Victoria's daughter on 16th October 1902. On the immediate right is Derwent Island, with Lord's Island on the left. Rampsholme ('The Island of Wild Garlic') is further down the lake.

Return along the path to the gate immediately opposite Theatre by the Lake and enter Crow Park.



STATION 4: CROW PARK

The National Trust now has 291 properties open to the public including Crow Park and is responsible for 615,000 acres of land, including a quarter of the Lake District National Park, and 600 miles of coastline. Crow Park (in geological terms, a 'drumlin') was once dense oak woodland, de-forested for commercial purposes - before Hardwicke Rawnsley was there to save it. **Follow the path around the lake shore.** To the north are Skiddaw and Latrigg. In 1887 the landowners closed the footpaths up Latrigg and at Fawe Park. Hardwicke Rawnsley was instrumental in the organisation of peaceful demonstrations against the closures, leading to a court hearing at Carlisle. The footpaths were declared lawful, with each side paying their own costs. Hardwicke Rawnsley organised several large bonfires and firework displays on Skiddaw to celebrate royal anniversaries and other occasions. He also had a memorial stone erected by the footpath up Skiddaw from Latrigg, famous for breeding Herdwick sheep. Another of Rawnsley's concerns was the improvement in the living conditions of the farm workers and the threat of imports of Danish butter. He helped to promote 'migratory dairies', in horse drawn caravans, which toured the villages of Cumberland and Westmorland giving instruction in butter and cheese making and farm hygiene. To the east of Skiddaw is Blencathra. On its south facing slope Rawnsley helped to establish the first sanatorium in Cumberland for tuberculosis patients.

Leave Crow Park by the kissing gate and walk towards the town centre. After Booth's supermarket, turn left and cross the road at the mini roundabout.

The old building on the right is the Crosthwaite Parish Room. This was used by Hardwicke Rawnsley and his wife Edith to establish the Keswick School of Industrial Arts, initially on an 'evening class' basis. Unemployed boatmen and guides were able to learn metal and

woodworking skills in the winter months. In establishing the School the Rawnsleys were following Ruskin's philosophy of counteracting the pernicious effect of turning men into machines, without the possibility of love for the work they were doing. The classes were so successful that a purpose built school was erected a short distance along High Hill in 1884, a venture that was to last for 100 years.

Continue along Main Street to:

STATION 5: THE RAWNSLEY CENTRE

Rawnsley Hall is now owned by Keswick Ministries, a Christian organisation which holds a convention in Keswick for three weeks each summer. The Convention was set up in 1859 by Canon Battersby of St John's Church and 'a few friends'. This building was formerly Keswick School, a state secondary school with boarders, opened in 1898 with an endowment from the Hewitson brothers and with Hardwicke Rawnsley's support. He was elected Chairman of the School Governors and remained in that post until his death. Keswick School was one of the first co-educational grammar schools in the country. The main building facing the road replaced an earlier hall, classrooms and offices and was named The Rawnsley Hall in 1912 in his memory. For many years the girl boarders lived in Greta Hall, at the top of the hill on the left of the Rawnsley Hall. Greta Hall was the home of Robert Southey, Poet Laureate and ST Coleridge. Southey wrote 'The Story of the Three Bears' but the miscreant in his story was a 'nasty old woman'. Goldilocks came later. The original manuscript is in the Keswick Museum, a veritable treasure house of manuscripts by famous authors and other Victorian exhibits.

Continue along the road and stand on the bridge over the River Greta.



SCHOOL 6: THE FORMER KESWICK SCHOOL OF INDUSTRIAL ARTS

This building, now Luca's Italian restaurant, was built to house the Keswick School of Industrial Arts in 1884. The teaching in the School was based firmly on Ruskin's philosophy and produced items in copper, silver, pewter and brass. In later years stainless steel replaced the other metals and in 1984 the School was forced to close through competition from abroad. The earlier pieces of work are now very collectable. The motto which runs below the balcony reads 'The loving eye and skilful hand shall work with joy and bless the land'. On the left of the bridge is a mill building which formerly was used in the manufacture of pencils. The name of Greta comes from the Norse and means a 'stony or noisy stream'. Behind you is the 1930's building that is the sole remnant of a once flourishing pencil making industry in Keswick and now houses the Cumberland Pencil Museum.

STATION 7: THE KESWICK LINEN INDUSTRY

Further along the road the 17thC Porch Cottage and the adjoining Ruskin Cottage were the home of the Keswick Linen Industry. Miss Marin Twelves, a teacher of spinning, was brought from Langdale soon after the establishment of the new Keswick School of Industrial Arts. Miss Twelves later formed her own company. The flax was retted, to remove the cellulose, on the steps by the river. The steps further along the road are a modern replacement.

Continue along High Hill.



Immediately before the St Herbert's Social Centre (a former girls' and infant school) is a water fountain, in recent years restored by the Keswick Civic Society, one of several erected by the Keswick philanthropist Samuel Lady.

Continue across the road junction to the beginning of Church Lane.

STATION 8: KESWICK SCHOOL

Keswick School was formed from the amalgamation of Keswick School and Lairthwaite Secondary Modern School retaining the boarding facilities previously enjoyed by both schools. Keswick School is a 'Beacon School' with a high reputation and attracting students from outside the catchment area. Note the four symbols of St Kentigern on the school nameplate. Kentigern was once the Bishop of Glasgow and Glaswegians will recognise the symbols on their City Coat of Arms. Crosthwaite and seven other churches are dedicated to this Scottish saint. **Continue down Church Lane.** You are following the original turnpike road which linked London and Whitehaven, once a major port associated with the spice, rum and slave trade. On your right, beyond Keswick School is Skiddaw, the third highest peak in the Lake District.



STATION 9: CROSTHWAITE OLD SCHOOL

At the roundabout, the building on your left stands on the site of the original Elizabethan foundation Free Grammar School. When Keswick School was established this school became an elementary school for boys and later a junior school for both boys and girls. It has now developed as a Conference Centre for Keswick School. Rawnsley was the Chairman of the Managers of Crosthwaite Old School, as it was renamed. He often brought visitors to talk to the boys and introduced what was thought to be the first school garden in the country, complete with simple weather recording instruments and a beehive.

Turn to face:



STATION 10: CROSTHWAITE CHURCH

Notice the four symbols of St Kentigern on the gate, designed by Edith, Rawnsley's wife. He came here as Vicar in 1883 and stayed for 33 years. St Kentigern's Church, reputedly founded in 533AD is the oldest building in Keswick and was formerly the parish church for the area extending from Threlkeld in the east to Bassenthwaite in the west and Dunmail Raise in the south, and including the Borrowdale valley. On the exterior are a one handed clock and twenty one consecration crosses. The Moot Hall in Keswick has another one handed clock.

STATION 11: CROSTHWAITE CHURCHYARD

The churchyard contains the graves of several notable 'locals' including Jonathan Otley, 'the father of English geology', Robert Southey and Elizabeth Linton, daughter of a Vicar of Crosthwaite and the country's first professional woman journalist. On the Church walk on your right after leaving the Church is a beautiful slate memorial to Joseph Dover, wool manufacturer of Millbeck - a reminder of a past staple industry of the area. On your left are the graves of past bell ringers of the Church, with a viewfinder celebrating their work. You are facing the Newlands Valley, one of the Cumbrian valleys without a lake. It is said that there was a lake at one time, 'Husaker Tarn' but it was drained by the monks of Furness to make new lands. The name of the tarn survives in the name of Uzzicar Farm near Stair. The Newlands Valley was the scene for another of Hardwicke Rawnsley's campaigns. In 1883 a railway was proposed to carry slate from the Honister quarries down the valley to meet the main line at Braithwaite. Rawnsley was able through court action to prevent the railway being built.

Some ten metres on your right is the simple runic cross, decorated with the Norse endless knot, which marks the last resting place of Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley, Edith his first and Eleanor, his second wife.

STATION 11: CROSTHWAITE OLD VICARAGE

The final part of this trail is to view Crosthwaite Vicarage. Now in private ownership and re-named 'The Old Vicarage' this beautiful building with a Queen Anne frontage and regency

Drawing room may only be seen over the white painted gate at the top of Vicarage Hill, on your left as you reach the end of Church Lane. Please do not enter the grounds. Famous visitors to the Vicarage included Robert Southey, the Wordsworths, ST Coleridge and in later years William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, Beatrix Potter, president Woodrow Wilson of the USA, Octavia Hill and Sir Robert Hunter (co-founders of the National Trust) and many other famous people. At the May Day celebrations held in Lower Fitz Park hundreds of best dressed school children would walk in procession with Temperance and Band of Hope Bands and the May Queen at the head on a white pony led by Hardwicke Rawnsley himself. During the morning the various school choirs would have competed for trophies and after the procession arrived at the Park there would be games and sports.

Hardwicke Rawnsley was most concerned to teach the children of his parish to respect and love wildlife and was the author of what was the first Country Code which he wrote for the May Queen to give to her 'subjects.' HD Rawnsley was a vicar who cared not only for the well being of the children but for all living things.