

Ullswater - Lowther - Haweswater drive

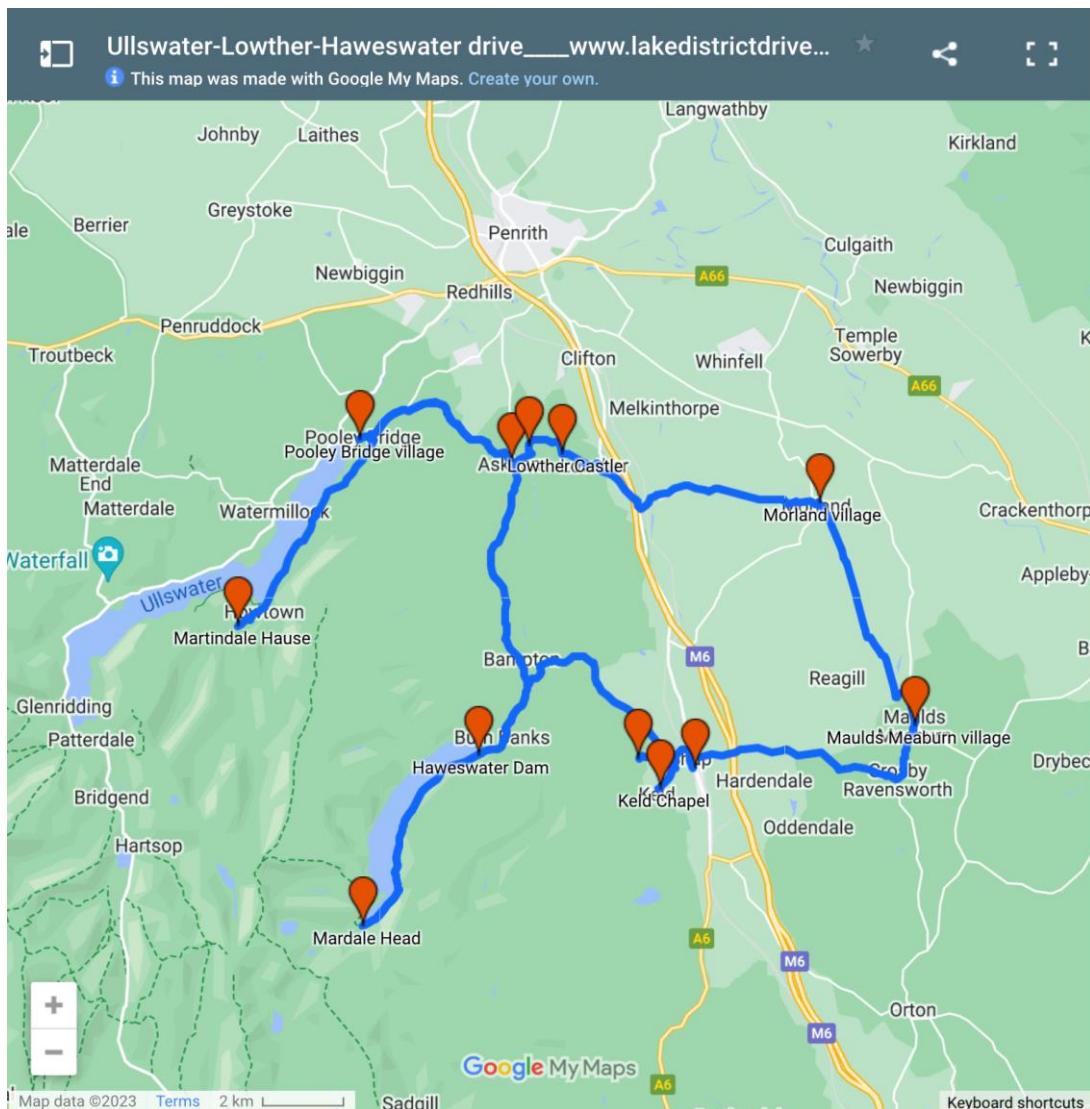


A drive around the north eastern Lake District, including some remote and beautiful parts of Ullswater and Haweswater lakes. Also featured are the attractive Lowther and Lyvennet valleys, some picturesque villages and historic places.



Mardale Head, Haweswater

Route Map



Summary of main attractions on route (click on name for detail)

Distance	Attraction	Car Park Coordinates
0 miles	Pooley Bridge Village	N 54.61172, W 2.82135
4.6 miles	Martindale Hause	N 54.56494, W 2.87413
12.3 miles	Askham Village	N 54.60642, W 2.75579
13.0 miles	Lowther Park	N 54.61013, W 2.74821
14.1 miles	Lowther Castle	N 54.60844, W 2.73380
19.7 miles	Morland Village	N 54.59583, W 2.62176
24.3 miles	Maulds Meaburn Village	N 54.53967, W 2.58074
29.5 miles	Shap Village	N 54.52902, W 2.67619
30.8 miles	Keld Chapel	N 54.52395, W 2.69115
32.3 miles	Shap Abbey	N 54.53148, W 2.70071
38.2 miles	Haweswater Dam	N 54.53231, W 2.76997
42.3 miles	Mardale Head	N 54.48924, W 2.82018
55.8 miles	Pooley Bridge Village	N 54.61172, W 2.82135

The Drive

Distance: 0 miles

Location: [Pooley Bridge Village](#)

Coordinates: N 54.61172, W 2.82135

Pooley Bridge is a busy tourist village located at the northern end of Ullswater lake. There are a few shops, pubs and cafes although there isn't much else to see in the village itself. The area is popular with campers and caravanners who come from the many nearby sites. There are some good walks in the area but the main attraction are the [Ullswater Steamers](#) which can be caught from the nearby pier. Regular boats travel up the magnificent lake with various stops along the way. The historic road bridge over the River Eamont was famously destroyed in December 2015 by storm Desmond, the new bridge was opened in 2020.

A short [walk](#) leads to the shores of Ullswater lake at the outflow of the River Eamont. There are lovely views up the lake and you can hire a boat at [Lakeland Boat Hire](#). The footpath also continues along the lake shore where there are some attractive shingle beaches. Pay and display car parks either side of the road bridge, public toilets in the village.



Pooley Bridge village

Travelling:

From the road bridge, travel through the village on the main road. At the end of the village is a mini-roundabout where you take the second exit towards Howtown and Martindale. In a short distance meet a T junction and turn right. This is the dead end Martindale road which follows the shores of Ullswater with some wonderful scenery along the way. The road soon passes a number of camp sites which are

very popular in season. Beyond these the road narrows and descends to Sharrow Bay where it follows the lake shore although views of the lake are somewhat hidden by trees and there isn't much opportunity for stopping.

Eventually reach the hamlet of Howtown where [Ullswater Steamers](#) regularly pour walkers on to the adjacent pier. Again there isn't really anywhere to park. Pass [Howtown Hotel](#) on the left and soon cross a cattle grid to begin a tricky, short but sharp ascent with some impressive corners that needs some care, especially if something is coming the other way. The summit area is Martindale House and parking is on the right or next to the church on the left.



Ullswater & Howtown from Martindale House

Distance: 4.6 miles

Location: Martindale House

Coordinates: N 54.56494, W 2.87413

The car park at Martindale House gives access to some wonderful viewpoints and the adjacent St Peter's Church. The lumpy grassy area between the church and the top of the steep road section is known as 'The Coombs' and there are great views from here back towards Howtown and the northern end of Ullswater. Hallin Fell rises above the car park and the popular but fairly strenuous half hour walk to the summit is worthwhile for the superb views over

Ullswater and surrounding hills. Views up the remote and beautiful Martindale valley can be achieved by climbing only a short distance from the car park. Free roadside parking which can get busy. No facilities.

The new Martindale church of [St Peter's](#) was built around 1880 and has some impressive stained glass. The old church of [St Martin](#) is only 0.5 miles away and is also worth a visit. Follow the road beyond the House, taking the first left turn. St Martin's dates from the 16th century and is in a very picturesque setting overlooking Martindale valley. The attractive church is small and basic but has some lovely features including a yew tree in the churchyard estimated to be 1300 years old.

Travelling:

Retrace your steps back towards Pooley Bridge village. Stay on the road to bypass the village and meet the B5320 at a T junction where you turn right towards Penrith. In approx 0.6 miles take the first right turn, signposted to Celleron. The quiet narrow road climbs to give views towards Penrith and the Pennine mountains in the distance. As the road descends towards Askham you can see the top of Lowther Castle ahead, above the trees. Eventually meet a T junction and turn right to enter the village of Askham. The village car park is a short distance on the left, adjacent to The Queens Head pub car park.

Distance: 12.3 miles

Location: Askham Village

Coordinates: N 54.60642, W 2.75579

The attractive village of Askham is situated in a relatively quiet corner of the Lake District, within the Lowther valley. The village is based around two separate village greens and has a number of attractions for visitors. At the village centre, around the free village car park, you will find Askham Stores village shop, [The Queens Head pub](#) and an open air [swimming pool](#) which is open to the public over the summer months. A small village green is up the hill nearby



Askham village green

but the main green and further attractions are down the hill. The large main green surrounds the road, overlooked by charming old houses. Further down the hill on the right is [The Punchbowl Inn](#) and opposite the pub is [Askham Hall](#), an historic manor house which was until recently home to the Lowther family who previously lived at Lowther Castle. The Hall is now a stylish hotel. Further down the hill again is [St Peter's Church](#) and beyond that is the River Lowther.

Travelling:

Turn left out of the village car park and beyond Askham Stores turn left again towards Lowther. The road descends through the attractive village and soon crosses the River Lowther, bearing left to follow the river. Cross a cattle grid to enter Lowther Park and on the left is Low Sawmill car park.



St Michael's Church, Lowther Park

Distance: 13.0 miles

Location: Lowther Park, Low Sawmill car park

Coordinates: N 54.61013, W 2.74821

Lowther Park is part of the huge Lowther Estate and a delightful place to explore with its historic buildings and landscaped parkland. This car park gives access to various local walks which follow the River Lowther and also historic tree lined avenues towards nearby Lowther Castle. An information board in the car park shows the routes of signposted [walking and cycling trails](#).

Up on the hill above the car park is the impressive looking [St Michael's Church](#) and churchyard with lovely views across the valley and parkland. The main attraction inside the ancient church are various magnificent memorials to members of the Lowther family who are buried here. In the churchyard is an impressive mausoleum to William 'Earl of Lonsdale' which houses a statue of the man locked in eerie isolation. There is a charge for parking. Facilities at nearby Lowther Castle.

Travelling:

Turn left out of the car park, away from the river and up the small hill to pass St Michael's Church on the left. Continue across a cattle grid and through attractive open parkland. Don't miss the impressive facade of Lowther Castle nearby on the right, with its tree-lined approaches. The road ascends a short distance to cross another cattle grid where you take the right turn towards Lowther. Soon meet a minor T junction where you continue straight ahead, passing the small village of Lowther Newtown on the left. This replaced the old Lowther village which was pulled down in the 17th century to improve the view from Lowther Hall, the site of the present Lowther Castle. Ahead, where the road bears left, the entrance to Lowther Castle is on the right.

Distance: 14.1 miles

Location: Lowther Castle

Coordinates: N 54.60844, W 2.73380

[Lowther Castle and Gardens](#) are the centrepiece of the Lowther Estate and a site occupied by the Lowther family for over 800 years. The castle is now a shell but the impressive facades remain and are testament to the magnificent home that was built in the early 19th century. The castle and gardens were left in ruins in the mid 20th century but an ongoing restoration project has saved the castle and is bringing the gardens back to life.



Lowther Castle

You can wander within the castle ruin and around the numerous attractive themed gardens. There are fabulous views of the castle from the huge gently sloping lawn and also of the Lowther valley from the limestone escarpment walk. Beyond this is an impressive adventure playground. The stable courtyard has been sympathetically renovated to provide a cafe, gift shop and toilet facilities. There is also [cycle hire](#) adjacent if you fancy a bike ride around Lowther Park. Entrance fee applies to the castle and gardens which are open daily all year. Free parking.

Travelling:

Leaving the castle car park, turn right on the minor road towards Hackthorpe. The road soon enters woodland on a straight section before bearing left and passing the village of Lowther on the left. These small and neat groups of houses were built in the 18th century to house Lowther estate workers. Just beyond, meet a T junction and turn right. Continue a short distance to meet the main A6 road at another T junction where you turn right. Pass through the village of Hackthorpe and the [Lowther Castle Inn](#) on the right.

Beyond the village, cross the M6 motorway and almost immediately take the left turn towards Morland. The road descends under the main west coast railway and over the River Leith to enter the pleasant village of Great Strickland where you will find the popular [Strickland Arms pub](#) and St Barnabas Church. Beyond the village, the narrow road continues through pleasant countryside and woodland with some views over the Eden valley towards the Pennine mountains. Eventually descend to enter the village of Morland. At the T junction in the village, opposite St Lawrence's Church, turn right and continue a short distance to another T junction where you turn left. The road descends towards the river and The Square where there is some roadside parking adjacent to Mill Yard cafe on the left. Further roadside parking along Water Street opposite.

Distance: 19.7 miles

Location: Morland Village

Coordinates: N 54.59583, W 2.62176

Morland village is a hidden gem, located in a peaceful valley and with a number of visitor attractions. The centrepiece of the picturesque village is the Saxon church of [St Lawrence](#), with its fascinating tower which has stood since the 11th century and is apparently the oldest structure in Cumbria still in daily use. The church also has some interesting features inside. Around The Square are various historic buildings, including the popular [Mill Yard cafe](#), which used to be a Sawmill, and the Crown Inn. Pretty Morland Beck cascades through the village with an impressive fall under the road bridge and you can follow it upstream along Water Street behind the Crown Inn which makes a pleasant stroll. There is also an old mill race alongside the road which once powered the old Sawmill. Behind the cafe are the attractive [Morland House gardens](#) which include the beck downstream of the bridge and are worth exploring. There is a charge for visiting which can be paid online or there are cash boxes at the gardens. Free roadside parking but no shop or public toilets.



Morland Beck, Morland village

Travelling:

Leave The Square on Water Street, adjacent to the Crown Inn. The road passes alongside the pretty Morland Beck and old mill race before leaving the village. Continue through pleasant countryside on the generally straight minor road, again with distant views across the Eden valley. After approx 3 miles, pass through an impressive tree lined section before a couple of sharp bends bring you to the village of Maulds Meaburn. Roadside parking through the village with a wider section at the far end of the village, opposite the modern Village Institute.



Lyvennet Beck, Maulds Meaburn

Distance: 24.3 miles

Location: Maulds Meaburn Village

Coordinates: N 54.53967, W 2.58074

Maulds Meaburn is another peaceful picturesque village in the Lyvennet valley. The main feature is the huge village green which surrounds pretty Lyvennet Beck as it meanders through the centre of the linear village. Apparently, it is one of only three village greens in England still grazed by sheep but there is certainly plenty of space for them. There are footpaths across the open grassy areas and a few benches to sit and admire the surroundings. Various bridges over the

beck allow access from one side to the other. The well dispersed houses are set further back, overlooking the grass and beck, which all helps to enhance the attractive open character of the village. Since 1st August 2016 the village is now just within the Yorkshire Dales National Park following significant boundary extensions. Free roadside parking but no shop or public toilets.

Travelling:

Continue on the minor road which ascends out of the village and shortly enters the village of Crosby Ravensworth. Another pretty village with a pleasant stream, the impressive [St Lawrence's Church](#) and [The Butchers Arms](#) pub. Beyond the church, take the first right turn towards Shap and climb steeply away from the village. This area is steeped in history and the surrounding countryside contains countless prehistoric remains and monuments. As the gradient eases there are good views over the Eden valley towards the Pennine mountains. You may be able to see a tiny white ball on top of the Pennines, especially if the sun is reflecting off it. This is a radar station for Air Traffic Control and sits on top of Great Dun Fell which at 848m is the second highest mountain in the Pennines. The highest is Cross Fell (893m), just to the north of Great Dun Fell.

Continue along the elevated road and you soon get good views ahead towards the eastern Lake District mountains. Cross the M6 motorway and descend to enter Shap village. Cross the main west coast railway and pass [St Michael's Church](#) on the left. Continue a short distance to a T junction with the main A6 road. Turn left and Shap village car park is a short distance on the left, just beyond a zebra crossing.

Distance: 29.5 miles

Location: Shap Village

Coordinates: N 54.52902, W 2.67619

Once a village of some prominence due to its location on the main A6 road, Shap offered comfort to those travelling over the notorious Shap summit before the M6 motorway was completed around 1970. Much quieter nowadays and not much to see but the long linear village does offer a few facilities for visitors, including a small supermarket, post office, cafe, [Shap chippy](#) and a few different pubs. There is also an open air [swimming pool](#) which claims to be the highest heated outdoor pool in England. Behind the Fire Station, a 10 minute walk across fields takes you to the [Goggleby Stone](#), one of the many prehistoric monuments in the area. Free parking and public toilets at the village car park.



Goggleby Stone, Shap

Travelling:

Turn right out of the car park on the A6 north. After approx 0.3 miles, just before the end of the village, take the left turn signposted to Bampton. Beyond the village the road is lined with limestone walls, a feature of this area. In a short distance take the first left turn signposted to Keld. Continue approx 0.7 miles along the narrow lane to enter the village of Keld. Keld Chapel is the first building on the left. There is some roadside parking in the centre of the small village, or beyond the village next to the river.



Keld Chapel

Distance: 30.8 miles

Location: Keld Chapel

Coordinates: N 54.52395, W 2.69115

[Keld Chapel](#) is believed to date from the 16th century when it was associated with nearby Shap Abbey. The attractive but simple chapel has a long and interesting history, including its use as a private dwelling for over two centuries. Now a National Trust property, the key hangs outside the house opposite and it can be visited at any reasonable time. The historic and hidden village of Keld also had associations with Shap Abbey and retains a great deal of character. At

the far end of the village there is an attractive open grassy area next to the River Lowther. Free roadside parking in the village, no facilities.

Travelling:

Retrace your steps to the Bampton road and turn left. Ahead are some great views towards the Lakeland mountains. Shortly, take the first left turn signposted to Shap Abbey. The single track road continues a short distance to a cattle grid then descends steeply towards Shap Abbey. The car park is at the bottom of the hill on the right.

Distance: 32.3 miles

Location: Shap Abbey

Coordinates: N 54.53148, W 2.70071

The ruins of [Shap Abbey](#) are set in a picturesque secluded valley next to the River Lowther. It was the only Abbey within the Lake District boundary and is now in the care of English Heritage. The Abbey was founded around 1200 and was one of the last to be dissolved by Henry VIII in 1540. Much of the stonework was later taken for local construction, including Lowther Castle, but you can still see the lower walls of the buildings and the impressive tower which remains largely complete. Various information boards around the site tell you more about the Abbey and monastic life. The site is not manned and is open at any reasonable time with free entry. Small parking charge if you're not English Heritage members. No facilities on site, nearest in Shap village.

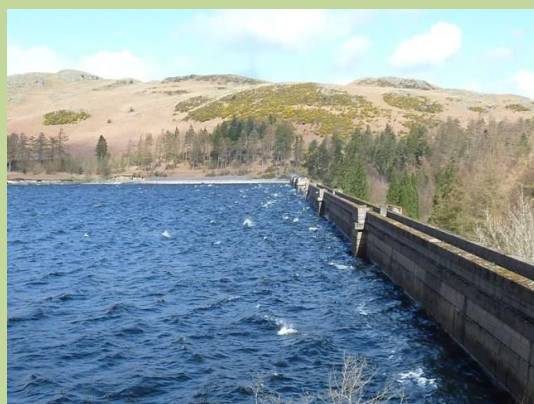


Shap Abbey

Travelling:

Retrace your steps to the Bampton road and turn left. The road, narrow in places, is again lined with limestone walls, as are all the surrounding fields. Continue through pleasant countryside following the Lowther valley. Across the valley you can glimpse Haweswater Reservoir and its surrounding hills. Eventually the road descends and enters the small and pleasant village of Bampton Grange. Pass [St Patrick's Church](#) on the left, cross the River Lowther and immediately take the first left turn towards

Haweswater. Very shortly take the next right turn, a narrow road which soon crosses Haweswater Beck. Just beyond is a small parking area on the left where you can access the beck. Continue a short distance to a T junction and turn left towards Haweswater. After approx 1 mile the village of Burnbanks is on the right, built to house the workers who built Haweswater dam. Cross Haweswater Beck again and approx 0.6 miles beyond is a lay-by on the left overlooking Haweswater dam.



Haweswater Dam

Distance: 38.2 miles
Location: Haweswater Dam
Coordinates: N 54.53231, W 2.76997

[Haweswater](#) is a large man-made reservoir belonging to United Utilities that supplies drinking water to a quarter of the North West of England. The dam was built in the 1930's, a controversial scheme at the time as the 4 mile long reservoir flooded the picturesque valley and the village of Mardale with local residents evicted from their homes. The massive concrete dam used 44 separate concrete buttresses to form the final structure which is around 36m high and

470m long. Apparently it is the second biggest dam structure in the country, behind Kielder.

Near the dam, you can see two streams entering the reservoir, one on each shore. These are aqueducts which collect water from a number of nearby catchments and Ullswater, thereby massively increasing the effective catchment area and ensuring enough water is available. Free parking but no facilities.

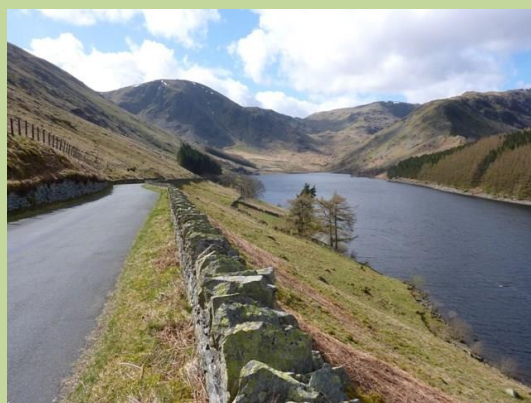
Travelling:

The picturesque road along the eastern shore of the reservoir was built to access the head of the valley when the original road was flooded. It is worth driving the 4 mile dead end road to admire the remote valley and wonderful scenery. Approx 1.7 miles beyond the dam is the [Haweswater Hotel](#) which was built to replace the original Mardale pub and provides refreshments overlooking the reservoir. A short distance beyond the hotel there is a small tower in the reservoir. This is where most of the water is abstracted before travelling by gravity along an underground aqueduct to a treatment works near Kendal. As the road continues towards the head of the valley, the views of the reservoir and surrounding mountains become even more impressive. At the end of the tarmac road is Mardale Head car park.

Distance: 42.3 miles
Location: Mardale Head, Haweswater
Coordinates: N 54.48924, W 2.82018

Mardale Head car park and its approaches provide some fabulous views of Mardale valley and it is a popular starting point for some wonderful walks. Nearby, and normally under water, is the old village of Mardale Green which was demolished before the valley was flooded. During very dry periods the reservoir level drops enough to see the remains of the village which included a pub and church. One eerie aspect was the exhumation of bodies from the church graveyard, to be reburied nearby at Shap.

Haweswater is also a large [RSPB bird reserve](#) with variety of bird species in the area including Buzzards and Peregrines. The [Wild Haweswater](#) initiative offers a number of seasonal wildlife experiences along with its various conservation and restoration projects. Free car park but it can fill early in season and at weekends. No facilities.



Towards Mardale Head, Haweswater

Travelling:

Retrace your steps all the way back down the valley, past the dam and Burnbanks. Ignore the turn to Bampton Grange, continue straight ahead and shortly enter the village of Bampton. [The Mardale Inn](#) community pub is on the left and soon meet a T junction with [Bampton shop & tea room](#) opposite. Turn left on the Lowther valley road towards Askham. There are lovely views across the Lowther valley as you travel along the road, passing the hamlet of Butterwick and on to the small village of Helton. The road bypasses the village, maintaining good views across the valley and you can see the limestone escarpment walkway bordering Lowther Castle. Beyond Helton, enter Askham village again. Continue straight through the village and just beyond take the left turn signposted to Celleron. The lofty lane provides some good views towards Penrith, over the River Eamont valley and eventually towards the Lake District mountains. Continue to a T junction and turn left on the B5320. Soon enter the village of Pooley Bridge, the car parks are at the far end of the village, either side of the road bridge.



Pooley Bridge lakeside

Distance: 55.8 miles

Location: Pooley Bridge Village

Coordinates: N 54.61172, W 2.82135

Return to start point.



Martin Wilson

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