



Swinside Circuit

Route details overleaf

The Borrowdale Bash

Some of Britain's most famous landscapes lie to the south of Keswick. It is around Derwentwater and the Borrowdale Valley that various Lakeland visitors including Wordsworth, Byron and Coleridge spent much of their time trying to capture what they saw in poetry and paint. Others such as the outdoor Victorian eccentric Millican were based here to escape 'the rat race' and find a challenge in a new sport called rock climbing!

A combination of ancient woodland, quiet lakeside bays, steep mountain crags and a wild natural atmosphere makes for beautiful views and challenging mountain biking. The route never takes in especially remote places and always has a practical escape option, but don't be fooled; the sheer combination of steep climbing, technical descending and the breathtaking scenery around every corner will leave a lasting memory. This route is best completed in a clockwise direction.

ROUTE 3

Start at the Tourist Information Centre in the Market Square (enquire about prevailing weather conditions before you set off) (GR NY266234).

1 Take the exit from Market Square signed 'to the Lake' and walk along the street for 100m. Begin the ride as you pass George Fisher Outdoor Shop and continue for another 100m to a roundabout.

2 Continue S on the B5289 Borrowdale road for 3km (2m).

3 Turn L onto a road signed Watendlath and cross a cattle grid (GR NY269203).

4 A steep climb now demands low gears, cross Ashness Bridge, a classic Lake District photo stop. A short while later Surprise View (GR NY268188), offers an amazing viewpoint over the whole valley. Take care here as there is a sheer crag.

5 After 3.5km (2m) reach the tiny farming settlement of Watendlath. Look for a small stone pack horse bridge crossing the beck and turn L towards the small tarn. Take the steeper track through a gate and up on the rocky steps. After a little pushing the track flattens out to offer beautiful views. A challenging descent for 2km (1.2m) crosses a stream, deep water channels, rock steps, and loose boulders with no time to relax and enjoy the view without stopping!

6 Turn L through village of Rosthwaite and follow the road for distance of 2.5km (2m) to Seatoller, and then continue for 100m. Look for a wooden gate and track (GR NY244139) which is

Start/Finish: Keswick Tourist Information Centre (GR NY266234)

Distance: 17 miles (28km)

Grade: Hard - Challenge.
Suitable for mountain bikes only

Refreshments: Keswick, Watendlath, Rosthwaite, Grange, Portinscale

Parking: Car parking available in Keswick at Otley Road and Bell Close car parks.

opposite a 'steep road' warning sign at the start of Honister Road Pass. Climb for 100m to another gate then bear L up a stonier track heading up hill. After another wooden gate continue for another 0.5km along rutted track, originally used by the slate miners of Honister. Another bridleway meets this (GR NY238139) and turns R heading N towards Grange.

7 Singletrack now leads to the infamous stone section under Castle Crag dropping down through a boulder track to the River Derwent where the route emerges at Hollows Farm (GR NY249170). Carry on for a short distance to the village of Grange.

8 Take the road on the western side of Derwentwater passing Manesty Woods and climb on the road until the trees open up onto a fine view of Derwentwater and the Skiddaw/Blencathra mountains. Look for a track on the L heading above the road, contouring along the side of Cat Bells.

9 The bridleway returns to the road which you should follow for 3km (1.8m) still heading N towards Portinscale.

10 R turn in Portinscale (GR NY252235), pass the Derwent Hotel and cross a foot bridge over the River Derwent. Turn R a little later and after 400m you will return to Keswick.

