

Lake Coniston Circuit

Route Summary

Coniston Water is the third largest lake in the English Lake District, and one of the quietest and most unspoilt, being surrounded by high Lakeland fells. It has various unique attractions, being the lake that Sir Malcolm Campbell set his world water speed record on of 141 mph in 1939, and also where his son, Donald Campbell, died in 1967. 'Brantwood', the home of John Ruskin, is on the east bank, and there are other literary associations, such as with Arthur Ransome, the author of 'Swallows and Amazons' based on Coniston. The lake is 9km long, and 1 km wide, has very good vehicle parking, and is ideal for canoe trips of various lengths

Nearest Town- Ambleside/Coniston

O.S. Sheets - Landranger 96 or 97; Outdoor Leisure 6

Start and Finish

Monk Coniston pay and display car park - GR SD 316977

South Lakeland

Coniston

Cumbria

LA21 8HH

This is the car park at the north end of the lake, with ample parking, toilets, and room for minibuses and trailers. Launching is easy, with a 30m flat walk.

The A593 runs up the west side of Coniston Water, (the approach from the M6, Junction 36, south Lakes, is via the A590 west towards Ulverston and Barrow, and then north via the A55092 and A5084 from Greenod to the A593). From Coniston village, the B5285 runs around the north end of the lake to Monk Coniston.

There is also parking in Coniston village at the Boating centre, but canoes will be charged a launching fee.

Waterways Travelled - Coniston Lake

Type of Water - Lake

Distance - Circular trip of 10 miles max. A canoe trip of anything from 1.5 miles (crossing the lake and back again), up to a circular trip of the whole length of the lake can be undertaken.

Licence Information - Free access

Local Facilities – Parking and toilets at the start and shops and cafes nearby.

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Description

The route is described in a clockwise direction for ease of explanation, with the many access/egress points, and other parking places. Please note that apart from these spots, landing is not usually allowed along the shore.

At Monk Coniston, the way is to the left of the launch place. The shores are mainly wooded all the way down, and attention should be paid to the prevailing wind if crossing the lake.

After about a mile, Brantwood House (SD 311958) appears high on the left bank, an obvious white building, with a small harbour and shingle bank to land on. The tea shop up at the house is great, and in Spring, you will wind amongst many azaleas on the way up the steep hill. The left bank then has a succession of landing places, each with some gravel parking, usually amongst trees, and offering picnic places.

In under half a mile is Machell Coppice, parking for 30 cars, with a 40m walk. Fir Island follows, (SD 305939), a nice landing place, and shelter from the wind, usually joined to the mainland. Bailiff Wood is soon after (SD 303934), parking for 16 cars, and a rough track down to the lake. This middle part of the lake is the quietest part. After another half a mile is the small Dodgson Wood car park (SD 299927), and a campsite 100m from the lake. Parkamoor campsite follows soon after (SD 298910), 20 car capacity, but a walk of 30m, and a carry through a wall.

Ahead is the obvious Peel Island, a lovely place to land on, with rocks, trees, some clearings, and a sandy beach, a great 'Pirate Island' for children's imagination. The lake then narrows, with the small Low Peel Nav car park, and then a large peninsula coming out from the left bank, on which is an outdoor centre (private land). The small pool after, before the River Crake leaves the end of the lake, has High Nibthwaite Quay (SD 292899), a private quay, at which copper ore was brought to down the lake for cart transport to the coast.

Soon after the lake narrows, there is the pool of Allan Tarn ('Octopus Lagoon' in Swallows and Amazons), and care is required not to be swept down the Crake, which is a whitewater river. Returning up the west side, opposite the centre is Blawith Common, (SD 288904), some small parking places, and a walk. At Brown Howe, (SD 291910), about halfway up to Peel Island, is a large pay and display car park, with toilets, space for 30 cars, and ability for vans and trailers to turn.

Opposite Peel Island is Bass Crag, (SD 290920), a car park, but high above the lake. There is then a long stretch of a mile and a half with on formal stopping places, but this is Torver Beck Common, with a public footpath along the whole shore, a popular walk. Hoarthwaite Farm (SD 301951) is a basic campsite (National Trust). Coniston Old Man, and surrounding mountains now fill the western vista.

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The next obvious hive of activity is Park Coppice Caravan site (Caravan Club SD 304963), with launching for customers, and then the larger Coniston Hall campsite (SD 304963), popular with canoeists.

We are nearly back up at Coniston village now, which has all facilities, and the Boating Centre is on the jetty at SD 308970, and has canoe hire. Lastly is Pier Cottage caravan park (SD 310972). It is half a mile paddle back to the start point from here.

Useful Information

The route is circular and can be done in either direction depending on wind, be mindful that this is an open stretch of water and the wind can have a real bearing on time and ability to paddle. It is described here clockwise. First obstacles are all the commercial craft toing and froing from jetties, with the lake steamers accessing the biggest jetty.

Please remember this, and do not block up jetties as the large steamers come in!

Coniston Boating Centre – Tel. 015394 41366

www.lakedistrictoutdoors.co.uk

www.coniston-net.com

www.lake-district.gov.uk

Recommended Next Trail

If you have enjoyed this trail why not try out one of the many trails available.

Safety Information

Spending an afternoon canoeing can be a fun way to experience nature, get a great workout and spend time with family and friends.. However, it can also be a dangerous journey, if safety guidelines are overlooked. Always follow these basic rules and comply with navigation rules- keep to the right of on-coming boats. Please be careful at points along the trail where there are sharp bends on the waterway and keep a look out at these points for oncoming traffic.

Do check the weather conditions and be mindful that there could be high winds on the lake, plus many movements of powered craft in the summer.

Wear appropriate clothing

Always wear shoes. Rocks, rough terrain and river beds present serious hazards to boaters without the proper attire. Nearly 90per cent of all boating injuries are attributed to lack of proper footwear. Other canoe safe clothing includes hats, additional dry clothing towels, and layered items which can easily be removed.

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Be sure to

- Know the weather forecast before you set out canoeing.
- Familiarise yourself with the local area, it's sensitive places and protected areas.
- Leave the environment as you found it. Please read [You, Your Canoe and the environment](#)
- Take your litter home with you.
- Follow the navigation rules for the waterway you are on.
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Do not damage bank side vegetation when launching or landing. (No Seal Launching)
- Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points.
- Canoe a safe distance away from wildlife.
- Check your equipment.
- Observe the navigation rules for this waterway.
- Check to see if there are any events on the waterways when you wish to travel.

Use the checklist below to make sure you have everything you need.

Checklist:

1. Boat
2. Paddle
3. Buoyancy Aid
4. Bailer/sponge
5. Small First Aid Kit
6. Penknife
7. Mobile telephone (in a waterproof bag....Please note that in some areas due to the location mobile telephone reception might be nonexistent)
8. Fresh drinking water
9. Sun cream, hat and sunglasses
10. Light waterproof jacket
11. Footwear
12. Licence

ALWAYS be certain to let other know where you're going and when you're expected to return.

Specific Environmental Information:

Please ensure you don't remove or damage any plants or animals from the waterway as they may be protected or harmful if transferred to other catchments.

Canoeists and kayakers take very seriously environmental concerns and already follow existing voluntary environmental codes of conduct, including Canoe England's own guidance notes outlined in the "You your canoe and the environment" publication.

By following the simple steps below you can ensure your presence is not detrimental to the freshwater environment, minimize and avoid accidentally disturbing wildlife and their habitats.

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- Find out about the area before you go, noting its sensitive places, species and breeding seasons.
- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home with you.
- When clearing litter left by others, handle it with care.
- Leave the environment as you find it
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Do not "seal" launch or drag boats to avoid wearing away natural banks. Float your canoe for launching, lift out when landing and carry it to and from the water.
- Do not damage bank side vegetation when launching or landing.
- Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points.
- On rivers, avoid paddling over gravel banks in low water conditions – they may contain fish spawn.
- Constantly assess wildlife. If you see signs of disturbance move away quietly.

Be the eyes and ears on the water. Report pollution, wildlife problems, damage, incidents etc to the relevant authorities.

Canal & River Trust - Emergencies- Telephone 0800 47 999 47

RSPCA for wildlife and animals in distress – Telephone 0990 55 59 99 (24 hours)

Environment Agency - Telephone 0800 80 70 60 (24 hours)

(May 2013)

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