

## Local Information

Welcome to the beautiful valley of Eskdale. Often referred to as 'The Lake District's hidden gem', Eskdale stretches from Gosforth, near Seascale on the West Coast of Cumbria, through to the foot of Hardknott Pass and contains the small villages of Santon Bridge, Boot and Eskdale Green.

This area is very popular with tourists as it is home to Scafell Pike, Britain's highest mountain. Sitting at 978 metres, Scafell Pike is arguably one of the most stunning fells because of its remote location and breathtaking views. Thousands of people enjoy Scafell Pike each year but the climb to the top should not be underestimated.

### **Stuff to do**

The main activity is of course walking. There are plenty of walks from the door and a short drive away you can access the mountains surrounding Wast Water. The possibilities are endless but here are a few ideas. The Ordnance Survey maps covering the area that you will need are OL4 and OL6.

### **Muncaster Fell**

This is the fell you can see from the front of the house. We love this walk and it is a great "warm up" for tougher things to come. The route is simple and there's nothing particularly technical. The views are great at the top, stretching across the Irish Sea to the Isle of Man and further north you can see the hills of southern Scotland. If you walk a clockwise route then all the way home you have great views of the fells, including Scafell, Bowfell, Crinkle Crag and a great view of the Eskdale Valley.

To start simply turn left from the front gate, at the end of the road turn right over the cattle grid. A few yards later there is a path leading over the railway line, take that and follow until you reach a T junction. Turn left here and follow the path to and through the farm. Turn right after the farm buildings and follow the unmade road for a couple of miles until you reach Eskdale golf course.

After passing the golf HQ take the next path on the right past a modern barn. Here you have an uphill climb for a while. Follow this path all the way until you reach a T junction where there is a tarn ahead of you, turn right here.

Continue up and through a gate, you'll see the top of the hill marked with a trig point. There are a few different routes up, pick a well marked path and head for the trig point.

Enjoy the views at the top then head back down with the sea at your back and the big fells ahead of you, again pick a well marked path. There are a few deviations on the way but essentially you are walking along the ridge of the fell, after about a mile you'll find a hole in the wall to the right that you need to pass through and continue on your path down. Eventually you end up back at the Farm gate where you turn left and head back to the house.



View of the village taken from the lower slopes of Muncaster Fell. Scafell is the big one in the background.

### **Whin Rigg**

This fell is walkable from the door and is a bit more of a challenge. You will be rewarded with cracking views of Wast Water and the surrounding fells and if you are feeling up for it you can continue along the ridge to Illgill Head, ticking off two big fells in one go.

To get to Whin Rigg you turn right out of the house and right at the end of the road and ahead you will see “Giggle Alley”. Head up there and follow up and then round to the left and back down to a small road. Straight ahead you’ll see a gate and a bridge over the river Mite. Head over there and follow the path, up and up and up. It crosses the forest track a few times and eventually you will get above the forest and hit a fence. Turn right here and follow the path. It’s easy enough and you should be able to see the summit ahead of you. If you are doing a circular route then carry on to Illgill Head, again a simple enough path along the ridge, once you’ve done that one you need to head down to your right towards the tarn, Burnmoor Tarn. The path is steep so watch your footing. Once lower down you’ll see a path running parallel with the tarn back towards your starting point. A simple enough walk along made a little more interesting as you have to cross the river. All you have to do is follow the river back and you’ll be back where you started at the bottom of Giggle Alley. Total time about 5 to 6 hours so take food!

Views at the top are stunning if you get the right weather, the drop to your left down to the lake is near vertical so don’t get too close to the edge.

### **Scafell Pike**

This is England’s tallest mountain and one that you might like to tick off the list. It does get very crowded though so you won’t be on your own. Easiest way up and down is to drive to Wast Water and park at the National Trust car park at the bottom of the lake and just follow the signs and the people! It is not a technically difficult walk but it is a big mountain so you need to be reasonably fit. There are other more interesting ways up and down so we’d suggest a bit of research if you want to try a different route. All the Wainwright books are on the shelf so have a look to see what AW said about it.

## **Pub Walk**

You might like to take in a couple of local hostelries during your stay. Head to Boot for The Boot Inn and the Brook House Inn. Just around the corner is the King George IV.

You can take in a nice walk over Eskdale Common and drop into Boot for a couple of pints then wander back along the river Esk. You can extend onto the Woolpack at the far end of the valley for the full pub crawl of the 4 pubs along the valley.

Turn left out of the door and left at the end of the road and head for “The Green” station, come out onto the road by the station and a little further up you will see a public footpath sign, take that path. Just before the house the path turns left through a gate. Then just follow that path all the way up and up, over the valley and eventually you will get to Blea Tarn.



“The Green” station



Blea Tarn

Walk around the tarn, keeping the tarn on your left and you’ll see a path (see picture below) between two little outcrops, follow that and then the path opens out onto the main bit of Eskdale Common. You need to head right at some point and you should see little old shepherds’ huts, head for those. From there the path is nice and easy down into Boot, just head for the pub. On the way back follow signs for the river and enjoy an easy stroll back to Eskdale Green.



With all the walks we recommend, or any you do yourself, please have a map with you and don’t rely on these directions solely. We also recommend the OS App for your phone, if you download the map you can use it without needing a signal. It is very handy.

### **Red Squirrels**

The Lake District is one of the few places in the UK where Red Squirrels can be found and in Eskdale Green we are lucky to have some living very close by. If you are lucky you might get one on the bird feeder at the back, our neighbours certainly get visited quite regularly. The best chance you have of seeing one though is to head to Forest How Guest House. First thing in the morning or later in the evening are the best times. We have seen them playing in the garden on the way back from the Bower House a few times. To get to Forest How turn left out of the gate and head for Muncaster Fell. However after you cross the railway and the stream turn right at the T junction and through the gate. Keep quiet as this is where you may get your opportunity. If you are coming back from the pub you can take a detour this way by walking up the road to Irton Road station and follow the lane until you get to Forest How.



Here's one we spotted earlier!

### **Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway**

The Ravenglass and Eskdale railway, or the “La’al Ratty” as it’s affectionately known, passes through Eskdale on it’s route from Ravenglass on the coast, to Dalegarth, near the village of Boot. The train journey travels through the stunning countryside and is a fantastic day out for groups and families of all ages.

You will hear the toot of the train from the house. Nearest station is The Green, just turn left out of the gate and left at the end of the road! Details here: <https://ravenglass-railway.co.uk/>

### **Muncaster Castle**

Ravenglass is also home to a historic and haunted castle. Muncaster Castle offers a full day out – or more – with something for everyone. From families with children looking for a range of activities to keep everyone entertained to groups looking for an excellent value venue for a day excursion or to visit one of our range of evening events for arts and culture, Muncaster Castle and Gardens and its Hawk & Owl Centre earn their place as a top attraction in Cumbria. Further details here:

<https://www.muncaster.co.uk/>

### **Hard Knott Pass and Fort**

If you drive along the valley you eventually come to England’s steepest mountain pass, Hard Knott. It is not for the faint hearted either by car or bike. Don’t take it on if you are not a confident driver. Park at the bottom and walk up to the remains of a Roman fort. It is well signposted so you can’t miss it. Of course you can take in a couple of fells here if you desire and for the extremely fit and able you could tackle Scafell Pike from this end, however that is a long way and a tough challenge.

There are also Roman remains to be found in Ravenglass if you venture over there.

### **The Coast**

If you fancy a trip to see the Cumbrian Coastline then there are plenty of options for you. The sandy beaches of St Bees are just up the coast towards Whitehaven or Haverigg Beach is down the coast, past Bootle. This beach is popular with dog walkers and also a great place for a spot of kite flying or windsurfing.

### **Activities**

For the activity seekers amongst you, get in touch with West Lakes Adventure, providing a wide range of outdoor activities including ghyll scrambling, canoeing, rock climbing and raft building. They also hire out mountain bikes so you can explore everything the valley has to offer on two wheels!

<https://www.westlakesadventure.co.uk/>

We can also recommend Craggs Adventures for all your extreme sport needs!

<https://www.craggsadventures.com/>

### **Shopping**

There is a local convenience store at the end of the road, however it is not all that well stocked and pretty expensive. Tesco, Asda and Morrisons will deliver so we suggest arranging a delivery for the day/day after you arrive so you will have all the essentials for your stay. The nearest supermarket is in Workington which is about 45 minutes in the car. There is a village store in Gosforth – Sainsburys Local. Also there is a SPAR at the garage on the coast road that is about a 10 minute drive (postcode CA19 1YG).

### **Local Pubs**

The valley has a few pubs, all of which are nice and you will get a warm Cumbrian welcome. Furthest away is the Woolpack, this can be found along the Hard Knott Road a mile or so from the foot of the pass. Stayed here a couple of years ago, good food and a decent pint.

Back towards Eskdale Green you'll find the lovely little hamlet of Boot, home to two pubs. The Boot Inn and the Brook House Inn. Both traditional country pubs with hearty grub and good beer. The Boot does possibly the best Sunday roast I've ever had – book in advance!

Nearest pub is the George IV. Great proper Cumbrian pub. Good value food and good beer. Needs our support as it has been a tough few years for that pub.

Finally the Bower House is a 10 minute walk away, either via the squirrel walk or right out of the door and left at the end of the road. This has to be our favourite pub. Great value food and a great pint (if you like an ale). You will be fed well here and if you've been on a long walk then you'll have earned it! The Landlord, Marshy, is a lively and friendly character.

### **Finally**

We really hope you enjoy your stay here, we do welcome constructive feedback. Have a great time.

Jen & Richard Bousfield

## **Pubs**

### **Bower House Inn, Eskdale**

*"Good hearty pub grub, perfect after a day out on the fells"*

019467 23244

### **King George IV, Eskdale**

*"Historic countryside coaching Inn with hearty food and a good selection of real ales"*

01946 723 407

### **The Brook House Inn and Restaurant, Boot**

*"Dining in our restaurant, bar or snug is always a pleasure"*

019467 23288

### **The Boot Inn, Boot**

*"The Lake District's best inn and restaurant"*

01946 723711

### **The Woolpack Inn, Boot**

*"Filled with great ales, hearty food, lots of laughter and a few surprises"*

019467 23230

### **Wasdale Head Inn, Wasdale**

*"If you are seeking the superlative this is where you will find it"*

019467 26229

### **The Ratty Arms, Ravenglass**

*"The Ratty Arms is a family-run pub in Ravenglass, serving hearty pub grub and real ales"*

01229 717676

## Restaurant & Cafes

### **Woodlands Tea Rooms & Gift Shop**

*"Homemade bistro style food"*

019467 26260

### **The Wild Olive, Gosforth**

*"The Wild Olive has a cosy ambience and traditional wood fired pizza oven"*

019467 25999

### **Irton Hall, Holmrook**

*"Warm and inviting Lounge Bar also serves delicious home-cooked meals"*

019467 26025

### **The Kellbank, Gosforth**

*"The Kellbank is perfect for work, rest and play"*

019467 25254

### **The Blacksmiths Arms, Broughton Mills**

*"Nestled in the peaceful Lickle Valley, surrounded by farmland and fells"*

01229 716824

### **Gosforth Hall Inn, Gosforth**

*"Gosforth Hall has a reputation for cooking up a perfect blend of pub classics you know and love"*

019467 25322

### **Saw Mill Café, Nether Wasdale**

*"Excellent coffee and cakes in a lovely setting"*

019467 26716

### **The Crosby Snack Shed, Birker Fell**

*"Amazing cakes and wonderful scenery"*

07967 880294