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Kentmere Pike and Harter Fell From Longsleddale

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Rough car parking where the tarmac ends at Sadgill in Longsleddale (NY 484057)
Ordnance Survey map	OL7 The English Lakes – South Eastern Area
Distance	7.4 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: Kentmere Pike is usually approached from the hamlet of Kentmere as part of the popular Kentmere Horseshoe. However, parking at Kentmere is very limited and that walk is more arduous. Longsleddale is almost a forgotten valley, quiet, tranquil and picturesque. Kentmere Pike and Harter Fell provide a respectable walk in its own right. There are great views of virtually all the main Lake District peaks from the summit of Kentmere Pike. Cross Fell and even Ingleborough in the Yorkshire Dales can also be seen.

This walk is very easy to navigate and is ideally suited to anyone who is a little unsure of their navigational skills, wants to practise them or is perhaps going for a first taste of the higher Lakeland fells. It would be tempting fate to say it is impossible to get lost but there are plenty of useful navigational features en route which make it less likely.

The footpath ascending Kentmere Pike itself to Harter Fell is not shown clearly on the 1:25000 OS map as a green dashed line but as a black dotted “path”. As this coincides with a wall line and a parish boundary, you need a magnifying glass to differentiate. However, the well trodden route is clear on the ground.

The walk starts from the point where the tarmac road along Longsleddale ends by the bridge over the river at Sadgill. There is probably parking for a dozen cars or so if parked sensibly. Longsleddale is accessed by turning west off the A6 between Kendal and Shap (signposted).

Start: Cross the bridge over the River Sprint and after about 100 yards, turn left to follow the public byway fingerpost “Stile End 1½ miles”. At the farm at Low Sadgill, turn right, following the fingerpost for Kentmere along the broad stony track.

Remain on this track passing another fingerpost for the public byway for High Lane and Kentmere. Ignore two paths off to the left just after the fingerpost. The track now crosses land which is a bit more open and follows the course of the wall to your right.

As you reach the top of a rise, the view opens out before you and the wall curves away to the right of the track. About 100 yards ahead, there is a gate across the track. Go through this and then turn right on the obvious track which climbs the hill (NY 476050).

The path begins to follow the course of the wall on your right which guides you up the steepest part of the ascent. The path meanders a little, to find easier ground but you should never be far from that wall.

At a small rocky outcrop, there are good views of the Kentmere valley, Lake Windermere and Morecambe Bay.

The hill widens out to broader plateau and the path swings away left from the wall to a ladder stile over a wall ahead. Cross this and follow the clear path to the summit. There is a summit cairn and the trig point (NY 466078) is just over the wall, with a stone step stile to access it. The altitude is 730 metres (2,397 ft).

The walk continues straight ahead, keeping the wall on your right. The wall guides you along the summit. It then changes to a fence. You continue to follow this fence passing a stone cairn on Harter Fell marking the junction with the path from Nan Beild Pass (NY 460094). Harter Fell is slightly higher than Kentmere Pike at 778 metres (2,552 ft). The cairn is a jumble of rocks and old ironwork and indicates where you return to green marked footpaths on the OS map. Turn right on to this, continuing to follow the fence line. Ignore any small stiles across the fence.

Pass a second similar cairn (almost a double cairn). There are good views from here over Haweswater, which supplies water to Manchester and in the distance, straight ahead from your direction of approach, is Cross Fell and you might catch a glimpse of the Civil Aviation Authority's air traffic control radar dome on Great Dunn Fell.

Continue to follow the fence as it bends right. You are now on a very clear stony track running parallel with the valley below. After 5/600 yards, the track and the fence part company. Just stick with the track which is unmistakable.

The track descends to join a broader one at Gatesgarth Pass (NY 474093) where you turn right. Simply follow this track all the way back to Sadgill. After passing some old sheep folds, there is a two way fingerpost but neither arm relates to your direction. Just stay on the main track. The River Sprint provides company from this point onwards with some attractive waterfalls.

You will pass a large rocky crag on the left. This is Buckbarrow Crag, popular with climbers and in spring you may see ravens that nest there (when climbers are banned!).

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