



Walking with Polartec

Keswick route: High Spy, Maiden Moor and Cat Bells from Borrowdale

The western side of Borrowdale is a long undulating ridge occupied by three attractive little peaks, High Spy, Maiden Moor and Cat Bells. Each one of them has its own distinct profile and individual character; surprisingly as the drop between each one is not particularly great and only just sufficient to warrant individual peak status. The whole heights and gaps business falls by the wayside when you actually get on the ridge though, for the walk along its crest is magnificent. On either side of the ridge there is interest all the way. You get glimpses down into the hanging corries and crags on either side, secretive places that people very rarely bother getting into, all of which is set against the back drop of Borrowdale, the Newlands Valley, the central fells and Skiddaw.

From Keswick this walk is best accessed by making use of the regular water bus service which plies its trade around the numerous jetties on the lake shore. The trip is very enjoyable in its own right and you can catch it in either a clockwise and anti-clockwise circuit.

Grade: Strenuousness 3, Navigation 2, Technicality 2

Start/Finish: High Brandelhow Landing Stage (GR NY251197)

Distance: 9 miles (14.6km)

Time: 5 - 6 hours

Height gain: 800m

Maps: OS Landranger 90, OS Explorer OL4, Harvey's Superwalker (1:25 000) Lakeland West, British Mountain Maps Lake District (1:40 000).

1. From High Brandelhow Landing Stage walk south on the footpath/track through Manesty Park (ignore the Allerdale Ramble that heads southwest past Abbots Bay) to join the minor road and follow it to Grange. Head south out of Grange by the bridleway to the campsite at Hollows Farm. Pass through the campsite, sticking to the bridleway, and follow it through the woods to the col beside Castle Crag. Cross the col south and continue along the bridleway for about 500m until a path branches off right. This path enters Tongue Gill and is followed as it climbs steeply up the bed of the gill.
2. At the top of Tongue Gill the path arrives at a col on a broad ridge just south off High Spy. The route follows this ridge north. High Spy is quickly gained by a gentle pull north up the ridge. This is the highest summit of the walk and is a great place to stop for lunch. The views all around are stunning; particularly west over the crags towards Dale Head and Hindscarth.
3. A pleasant wander north down the main ridge leads first to Maiden Moor then to a narrow col at Hause Gate. The return route to Grange is down the bridleway from this col, but first an out and back ascent of Cat Bells lies just a bit further along the ridge. This fine little summit is easily reached and should not be missed as the views north from it over Derwentwater to Skiddaw are breathtaking.
4. Return to the col and then drop east then southeast down the steep bridleway to reach the minor road at Manesty. From here retrace your steps north up the road and through the woods to High Brandelhow Landing Stage.



Map

