

Cycle Route: Coniston
Tour of Yewdale and Tilberthwaite

The little side valley of Tilberthwaite was once a thriving centre for slate quarrying. Numerous clean-cut walls and deep-water filled hollows bear testament to this. They have been idle for many decades and nature has pretty much reclaimed them blanketing them in wonderful deciduous woodland and softening them with undergrowth. They are mostly of interest to rock climbers and divers. One of their legacies is a network of tracks and bridleway that interlink them and connect with the main valleys of Yewdale and little Langdale. These tracks vary from rough stony single track to smooth vehicle width access tracks and make ideal mountain biking routes.

Coniston is a good start point to take advantage of these tracks. It's a great base with lots of facilities and its lead-in valley Yewdale, has a nice section of lakeside road to enjoy and a pleasant old bridleway. The leg along Yewdale is an out and back section whilst the loop around Tilberthwaite is anti-clock wise. You could do it clock-wise but this way takes best advantage of the descents.

Grade: Strenuousness 2, Navigation 3, Technicality 3

Start/Finish: Coniston (NY303975)

Distance: 9.6 miles (15km)

Time: 1.5-2.5 hours

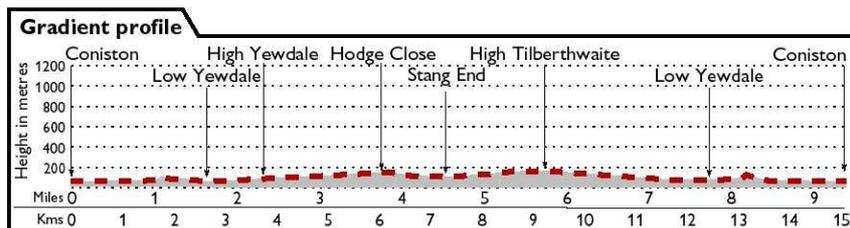
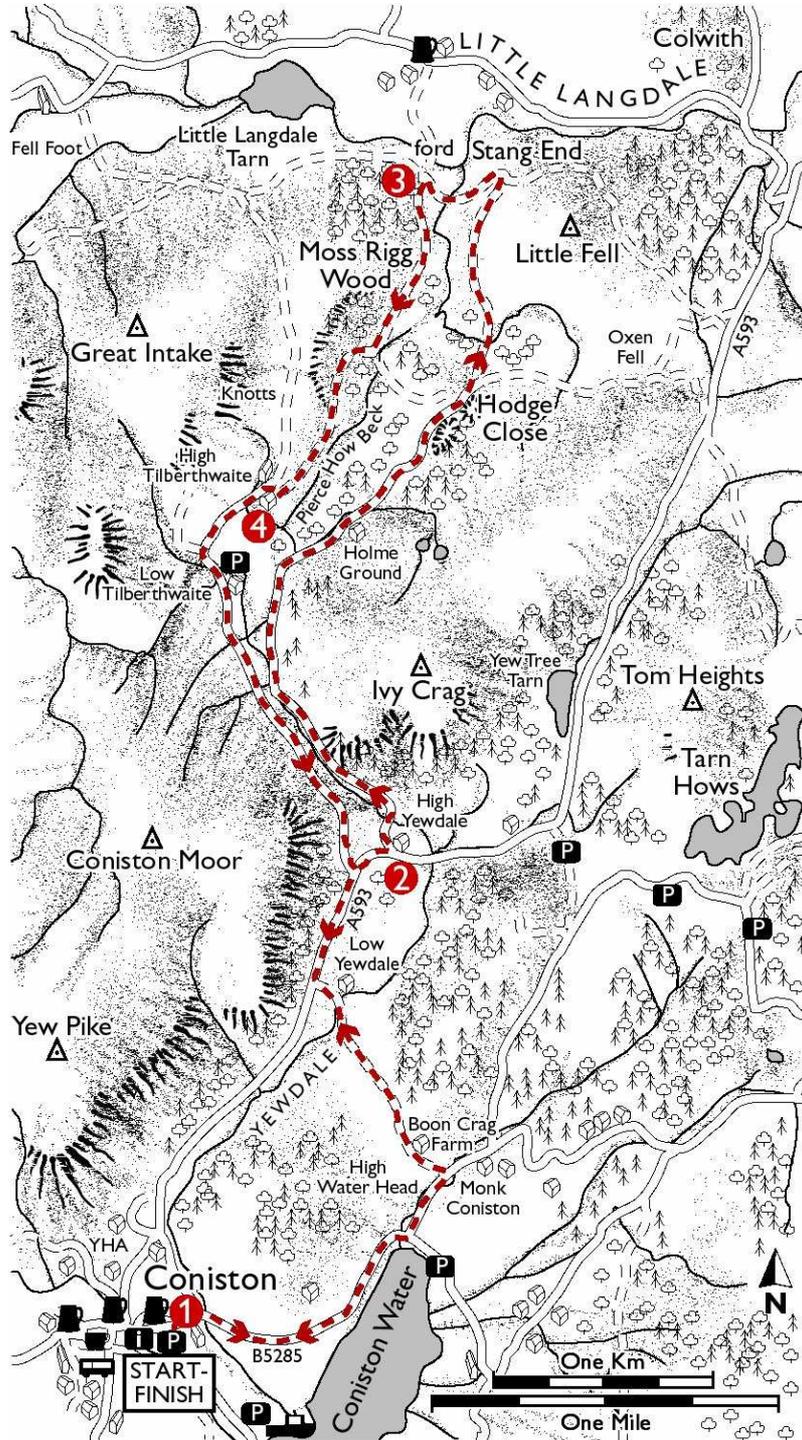
Height gain: 385m

Terrain: Valley roads, narrow lanes, steep sided valley, woodland, and rocky bridleways

Maps: OS Landranger 90 & 98, OS Explorer OL6 & OL7, Harveys' Superwalker (1:25 000) Southern Lakeland, British Mountain Maps Lake District (1:40 000)

1. From the main car park in Coniston take the Hawkshead (B5285) road out of the village. Follow it around the head of Coniston Water to a junction. Turn left (for Hawkshead) and follow it for 300m. Turn left again onto the lane/bridleway past Boon Crag Farm. It climbs slightly then gives a nice little decent down to Low Yewdale. Past Low Yewdale turn right onto the A593 and follow it North towards Ambleside. Ignore the first turning on the left to Tilberthwaite, instead carry on around the bend and turn left on to the second turning to Hodge Close.
2. The road climbs steadily up into Tilberthwaite on the East side of the beck. Follow it first past the buildings at Holme Ground then on round to the huge holes of Hodge Close Quarry. Take a peek into the quarries but don't get too close to the edge! Just past the quarries the track forks. Take the left branch and follow it down the pleasant bridleway to the narrow road at Stang End. Turn left and follow it down to the ford on the River Brathy.
3. Now the fun begins. The leg back from the ford over to High Tilberthwaite is the best bit. It is real mountain biking with a challenging climb then a swooping descent. To start it you take the bridleway that climbs South away from the ford. There is a fork after about 1km, you take the right branch and then continue to climb generally South West to the farm at High Tilberthwaite.
4. From the farm join the road and follow it South West then South East down through Tilberthwaite on the West side of the beck to join the A593 after a steep descent. Turn right on to the A593 and retrace your outward route back to Coniston.

Map



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