

3-6 Langwathby to Armathwaite

Map panel ??

Distance 12.7 miles (20.5 km)

Terrain farm, woodland and riverside paths; some potentially muddy tracks; a few short sections of road

Grade gently undulating

Food and drink Langwathby (pub and café), Little Salkeld (café), Kirkoswald (pubs), Armathwaite (pubs)

Summary a delightful and interesting walk through rolling farmland and woods beside the River Eden



- From the Carlisle-bound platform of Langwathby Station, walk down the access road. Turn left along the main road.
- Take the next road on the right (Back Lane) and turn right again, passing under the railway, and going straight through the Carrs Billington works.
- The road now bends sharp right, but the Way turns left, following a broad track for about 70 m. Take the next track on the right (signed for Winskill).
- After about 350 m look for another fingerpost and stile on the left and enter the field, now heading almost north.
- Walk down the field with the wall on your left and then cross Briggie Beck via the footbridge. Make your way along the muddy trail to the woodland edge.

The North Pennines from near Langwathby





Himalayan balsam: an invasive, non-native plant

- After the large gate, walk straight up the field towards the middle telegraph pole, from which you will see a timber kissing-gate ahead (near the water treatment works). Go through it, ignoring the waymarked gate on the right, and keep straight ahead to the houses.
- Turn right and walk along the road through Winskill for 200 m. As you approach a fingerpost and bench on the right, turn left along the lane opposite for Hunsonby.
- Go through the small gate at the end of the lane. Continue with the field boundary on your left, passing through several gates to reach a road. Turn right to follow it for 180 m, then turn left at the T-junction.
- The road through Hunsonby passes the village green: keep left of the small triangle of grass, then turn left through a large wooden gate on to a farm track.
- The track can be extremely muddy on occasion. If you can get past a section near the start, things soon improve. (If the mud is so deep that you need to backtrack, return to the road to leave Hunsonby northward, soon bearing left along a quiet lane for 1.5 km, to rejoin the main route just before Long Meg.)
- Follow the track for 1.2 km to its end, then keep straight on along an overgrown path between encroaching hedges. When this ends, descend to a footbridge.
- Bear left up the next slope, to and through the metal gate. To your right there's a waymarker post: the main route via Long Meg goes straight on here, but for the riverside alternative with Lacy's Caves, follow directions on page 52.



Bronze panel on waymarker near Little Salkeld

- To reach the famous stone circle, keep straight on beside the hedgerow. Where this swings further right, head for the metal gate in front of the farm buildings at Birks.
- Go through the gate, turn left and walk along the track for 40 m before turning right through a metal gate. Cross the narrow field to the stile in its far right-hand corner.
- Cross the next field and go through the large gate. Climb the stile next to a second gate. Avoid walking on the driveway, which is private; instead, keep left to follow the right-of-way alongside the timber fence.
- After a small bridge, climb the overgrown steps to reach a step-stile through the wall beside the road. Turn right along the tarmac for about 200 m, then turn left along a rough track. Follow this round to the right all the way to Long Meg and her Daughters.
- After visiting the stone circle, continue on the lane that runs through it, soon passing farm buildings. Continue for a further 250 m, then bear right through a small gate along a shady path.



Long Meg and her Daughters

This huge circle consists of 59 stones. The largest is Long Meg herself – a standing stone nearly four metres tall, bearing faint traces of mysterious cup and ring markings as well as concentric circles thought to be 4500 years old. Constructed of red sandstone quarried from the banks of the River Eden, she is positioned just outside the circle. Seen from the centre of the circle, she is aligned with sunset at the midwinter solstice. Local legend has it that the circle is the petrified remains of a coven of witches who were turned to stone for profanities on the Sabbath.



Long Meg, with her Daughters in background



Alternative route

- At the waymarker (page 50 final bullet), bear off left, diagonally across the field. Go through the large gate in the field corner and bear left along the track.
- Turn left at the road. When it bends sharp left, turn right. (For a detour to the working corn mill and café, open daily, continue down the road for 200 m.)
- Ignore the turning on the left. After the last building on the right, turn right along a solid track.
- Nearly 1.3 km along this track, soon after passing two ruined buildings on the right, turn left along a concrete track. At its bottom, turn left again – this time along a fenced path to the right of the electricity sub-station. Having kinked right, this then passes close to the disused gypsum mine workings.
- Eventually, you lose the fences on either side as the path progresses through pretty woodland beside the River Eden. To visit Lacy's Caves, constructed by a local squire in the 19th century, take the path to the left just before heading up a set of steps.
- Having left the woods, continue along the river bank. After climbing to a higher section of embankment, cross the stile in the fence and drop to the road, rejoining the main route at Daleraven Bridge.



Lacy's Caves

Swing seat overlooking River Eden



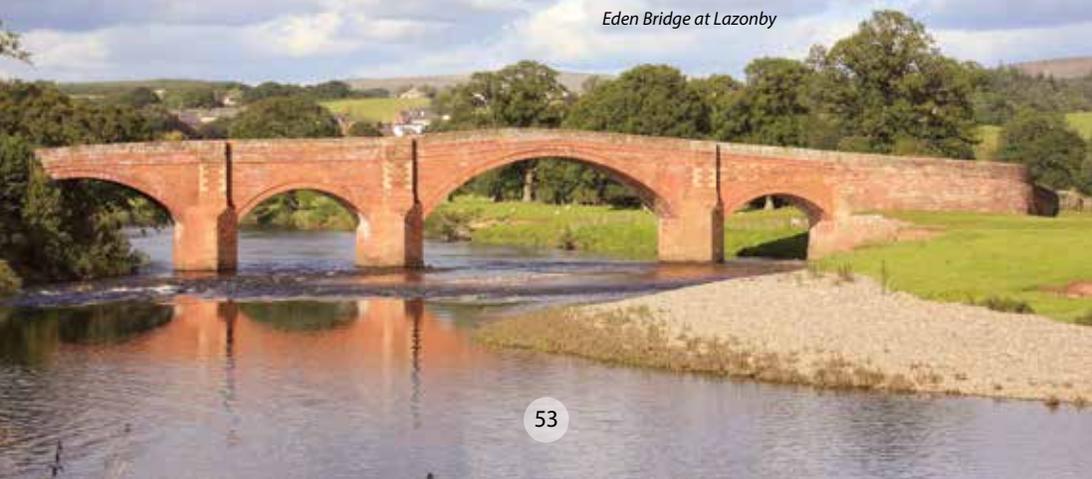
- On reaching a rough track, cross over and follow a narrow path between fences. At its foot, descend a few metres and turn right to pick up the public road. Turn left along it for 1 km, passing Daleraven Bridge (where the alternative route rejoins the main).
- About 250 m after the bridge, turn left into a field through a wooden gate. (Its fingerpost mentions Eden Bridge but is partly hidden by hedgerow.)
- Keep to the top of the embankment, with the River Eden soon visible below. After the next stile, go ahead slightly uphill, keeping closer to the field boundary on your right. At the next set of gates, cross the stile to the left and continue beside the fence on the right, now further from the river.
- As the meadow narrows, go through the gate and walk with the fence on your left. Cross the next stile on your left beside a gate, then follow the fence/hedge on your right around to meet the road.
- To detour to the railway station at Lazonby, turn left and walk along the road for 1 km. The pedestrian access for Settle-bound trains is on the right just before the railway bridge. For Carlisle-bound trains, continue under the bridge and take the next road on the right.
- To continue the Way, turn right along the road and into Kirkoswald. Just after the church entrance, follow the road around to the left and up into the village with its friendly shop and two pubs. At the top of the rise, as the B6413 bends right, bear left along the lesser road signed for Armathwaite and Carlisle.
- After 450 m, at the foot of the hollow, turn off left through the gate with a fingerpost for Staffield. There is no path on the ground here: walk parallel with the tiny beck on your left at first, but soon swing right (north-west) towards a wire fence.



Kirkoswald

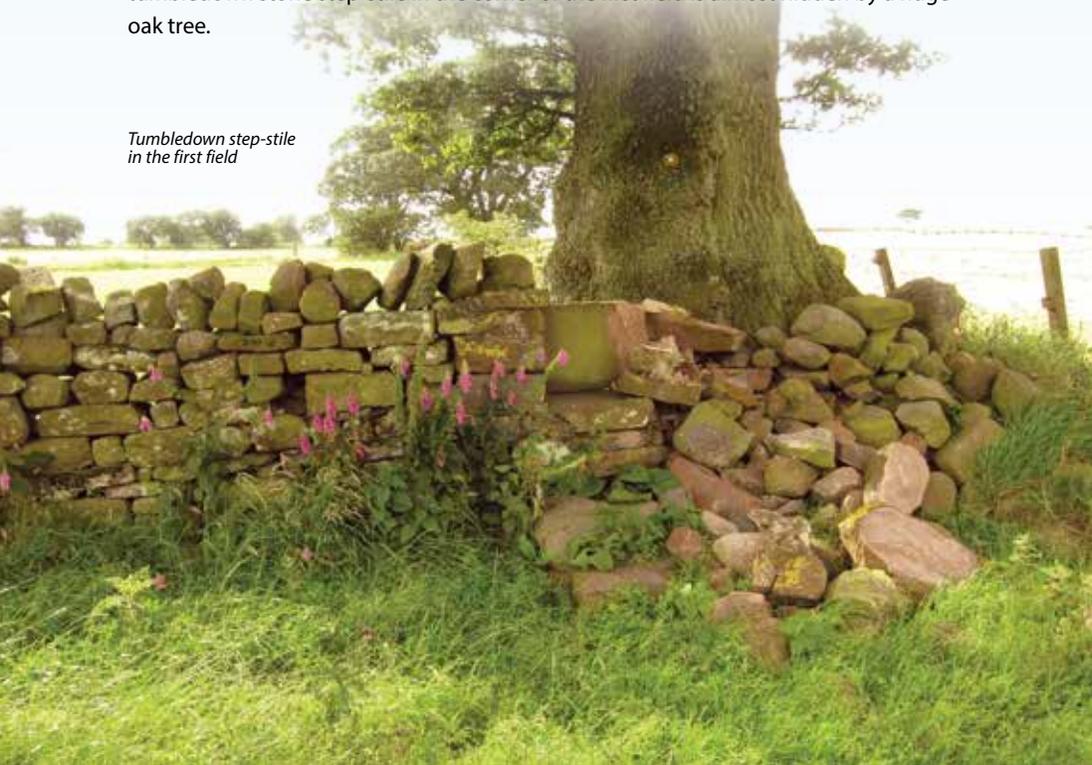
The once thriving market town of Kirkoswald gets its name from the church of St Oswald, the seventh-century king of Northumbria. Oswald travelled around the north of England with St Aidan, trying to convert local pagans to Christianity. St Aidan is said to have seen local people worshipping at a well here and decided to build a Christian church on top of it. The current church dates from 1897, but there is a well under the nave. Visitors can't fail to notice St Oswald's most unusual feature: its bell tower, perched on top of a hill, is about 150 metres from the church itself.

Eden Bridge at Lazonby



- Cross the stile in the corner and continue with the field boundary on your left. After two more stiles, you lose the guiding fence: maintain the same line (north-north-west) across private parkland. Cross a stile in a fence about 150 m to the right of the woodland hiding Staffield Hall.
- Walk parallel with the fence up to the left, maintaining enough height to avoid the damp ground in the hollow. Eventually you pick up a faint track that rises to a gate. Go through this and turn left along the road past the Nunnery retreat.
- Within about 300 m you cross Croglin Water. After a further 350 m, just before the road swings left, go through the large gate on the right to a double fingerpost. Ignore the blade pointing towards Dale, but follow the one ('Public footpath') which points steeply uphill (north-north-west).
- Within 150 m you reach a quiet road where you turn right, with excellent views west to Blencathra and the Lake District's Northern Fells. The summit of Skiddaw, England's fourth highest mountain, can also be seen.
- After 1.1 km, keep ahead (bearing slightly left) at the road junction at Ruckcroft. About 200 m after the junction, go through a wooden gate on the left at a fingerpost. With no path to guide you, head west down this large field, eventually walking beside a fenced area of woodland on the right, with a gate at its foot.
- Go through the gate and swing right down a faint, grassy track and then towards a fence. Continue with this boundary line on your right as you cross several fields: the tumbledown stone step-stile in the corner of the first field is almost hidden by a huge oak tree.

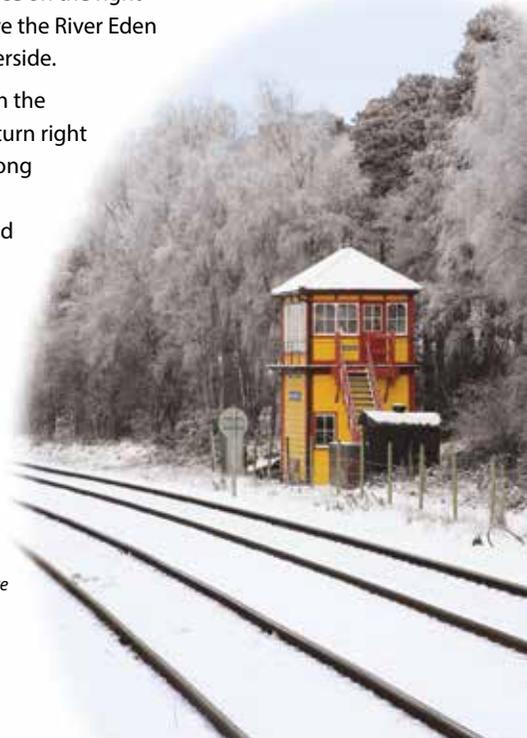
*Tumbledown step-stile
in the first field*





Path above the River Eden near Armathwaite

- After passing a waterfowl sanctuary, you reach a track. Follow this through the quiet hamlet of Longdales where it becomes a narrow road. At a T-junction, turn left.
- After a further 200 m, turn right through the large gate set back from the road. Follow the wide forestry track down into Coombs Wood, keeping right at two clear forks. Pass Vista, an Eden Benchmark sculpture, and descend towards a stile.
- Immediately before it, turn left. When the fence on the right ends, turn right along a path which runs above the River Eden through the trees, later descending to the riverside.
- After nearly 1 km of riverside path, go through the kissing-gate under the road bridge and then turn right to climb the steps in the bridge. Turn right along the road, crossing the River Eden. Follow this road round to the left, passing the Duke's Head Inn as you enter Armathwaite proper.
- Turn left at the T-junction and then take the next road on the right. The pedestrian ramp leading up to Armathwaite Station's Settle-bound platform is on the right before the railway bridge. For Carlisle-bound trains, continue under the bridge and then turn right into the tiny station car park.



Restored signal box, Armathwaite