



Come on...

Let's Go!

THE CUMBRIA DOG WALKING GUIDE



BROUGHT TO YOU BY

paragon
VETERINARY GROUP



Contents

Here are six of the most beautiful and interesting dog walks in Cumbria hand-picked and approved for you by award-winning outdoor writer and photographer Vivienne Crow (and her dog Jess), and local vet Graham Lewis (and his dogs Clova and Skye). They range from easy to adventurous and from famous to hidden gems. Just call up your four-legged best friend – and go!

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Cover picture

Banjo and Johnny enjoying the river path at Wetheral (see p11)

Main cover and Walk 1 photography by Jenny Woolgar
Walks 2, 3, 4, 6 photography by Vivienne Crow

Dalston Green and Millstream, near Carlisle

BY PARAGON VET GRAHAM LEWIS

Distance: 1 mile

Time: 30 mins

Dalston is a beautiful village, and this is a regular dog walk for me before or after work.

Most days you will find me hard at work with the team at Paragon Veterinary Group's centre a few minutes away on Townhead Road.

There is good parking at the heart of the village opposite the Co-Op.

Clova, Skye and I like to do a loop, walking along the promenade to the White Bridge, from the car park, with Dalston Green on the right-hand side.

The White Bridge was finished in time for the Millennium celebrations in the village and spans the River Caldew.

If you are after a longer walk it is possible to add in a loop of Dalston Green at this point. There are often cattle on the green, but these are well used to dogs.

After the White Bridge we take a right at the millstream and walk through Dalston mill to Bridge End.



VET GRAHAM,
SKYE AND CLOVA
AT DALSTON GREEN

Dalston mill is still a working mill and provides Paragon Vets with cotton wool used in bandages etc. The company was founded in 1821!

At the end of the path/road beyond the mill take another right and follow the road over two bridges back to the main road which runs alongside Dalston Green.

It is possible to go back onto the green from this road or use the pavement back to the centre of the village and the car park.

The section of the walk from the car park to the mill follows part of the Cumbria Way which links Carlisle in the north and Ulverston in the south, 73 miles through the heart of the Lake District!

Castle Crag, Borrowdale

BY VIVIENNE CROW

START/FINISH: Seatoller National Trust car park (grid ref NY245138)

DISTANCE: 4.9 miles/7.9km

TIME: 2½–3 hours

HEIGHT GAIN: 780ft/238m

TERRAIN: woodland and riverside paths; good bridleway across lower fellside

STILES: 0

MAP: Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer map OL4, Lake District (NW)

Who could ever tire of walking in Borrowdale? It's one of the most beautiful valleys in England. This circuit of Castle Crag starts with a meditative stroll through the woods beside the River Derwent and around the eastern base of the fell. After a short climb on a stony path, another peaceful saunter follows across the lower slopes of the open fellside, providing a slightly higher and more dramatic perspective on this beautiful dale.

As always in the Lake District, there's a chance of encountering livestock at any point on this walk. Cattle are sometimes present just before the route enters the woods at the base of Castle Crag, and there will almost definitely be sheep on the higher section of the walk.



LOOKING OVER
CASTLE CRAG

1. Walk to the far end of the car park where you'll find a rough track. Follow this uphill and through a gate. At an early fork, stay on the lower path as it weaves in and out of tranquil oak woods. Red squirrels, roe deer and even otters are among the wildlife that frequent the valley, providing good sniffs for canine companions.

2. Later reaching the edge of the River Derwent, the route turns sharp left and negotiates some gently inclined but bare rock beside the river. A short length of wire provides some security on the middle section. Beyond the next gate, things get easier again as you pass in front of YHA Borrowdale.

3. Just before the hostel's access lane crosses the river, turn left – signed Grange. In a few more yards, instead of following this track round to the left, keep straight ahead on a narrow riverside path.

This later crosses a wooden footbridge over Tongue Gill. Soon after passing a humpback pedestrian bridge over the Derwent, you come to a pair of gates. Go through the one on the right to continue downstream on the riverside path, although this soon swings away from the water.

4. A kissing-gate leads into the woods at the base of Castle Crag. The gentle path wends its way through the trees, passing beneath small crags and piles of moss-covered boulders. There are caves here too – the legacy of old quarrying operations. Soon after one such quarrying area, the path splits. Bear right here and keep right again at a fingerpost a few strides further on – still following signs for Grange.

5. The woodland path later drops back to the river's edge. Beyond the next gate, descend to a junction of paths close to where Broadslack Gill enters the River Derwent.

6. Head uphill on the bridleway to the left – signed Seatoller and Honister. Climbing steadily, leave the woods via a gate and enter a shattered landscape of quarry waste and

boulders thrown down from the crags of Low Scawdel up to your right. The slopes on your left belong to Castle Crag. It's not a particularly difficult ascent at this stage, but it's worth stopping occasionally to turn around and enjoy the fantastic views of Derwentwater and Skiddaw behind.

7. Soon after passing the highest point on the bridleway – as the ground to the left opens out slightly – bear left at a fork marked by a waymarker post. As this excellent route contours the fellside high above Borrowdale, several gills provide water for thirsty dogs.

8. About 0.8 miles (1.3km) after crossing Tongue Gill, you reach two gates next to each other. Choose the left-hand one and descend the grassy path through the bracken. Turn left on reaching a broad track. This drops through one gate. At a second gate, ignore the route to the left; instead, go through the gate. The way ahead is less clear now; bear slightly right, aiming for a squat fingerpost. Now turn right to follow a grassy track downhill to the edge of Seatoller. On reaching the road, turn left. The car park where the walk started is on the far side of the hamlet – on the left.

Quarry Beck and The Ridgewood, Brampton

BY VIVIENNE CROW

START/FINISH: Parking and picnic area on north side of Lanercost Bridge (grid reference NY553633) Approaching from the south, watch for a gap in the hedges on your left soon after the bridge. This is the entrance to the parking area

DISTANCE: 4 miles/6.4km

TIME: 2–2¼ hours

HEIGHT GAIN: 375ft/114m

TERRAIN: woodland paths, potentially muddy in places; tracks; short stretches of road walking

STILES: 0

MAP: Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer map 315, Carlisle



BESIDE QUARRY BECK

With some of Britain's most spectacular hill scenery on our doorsteps, we tend to underestimate the beauty of Cumbria's low-lying ground, particularly its woods. This walk explores two of the loveliest stretches of woodland in north-east Cumbria – full of intriguing sniffs for our canine chums.

It first visits Quarry Beck, hidden away in a peaceful valley just to the south of Lanercost, near Brampton. The second half of the walk heads on to the slightly higher ground of the Ridgewood, cloaked in beech trees. From here, on a clear day, the views are tremendous, reaching some way into southern Scotland.

There are occasional short stretches of road walking on this route, where you will need to keep in to the side of the road with dogs under tight control.

1. Cross the old humpback bridge at the southern end of the parking and picnic area beside the River Irthing at Lanercost. This was built in 1724 to replace earlier bridges (both at this site and further upstream) that were destroyed by floods. Traffic stopped using the bridge in 1962 when the less attractive road bridge was built next to it. When you reach Abbey Bridge House, continue in the same direction along the road.

2. About 150yds (approx. 140m) beyond the house, walk between the wooden barriers on the left to access a path through the woods. Dropping into the peaceful valley of Quarry Beck, you follow the beck upstream, past waterfalls, small meadows and occasional outcrops of red sandstone. In spring, the woodland floor is covered with bluebells; come the autumn, you're walking on a kaleidoscopic carpet of leaves. Always keep to the lowest path, ignoring anything heading up to the right.

3. The peace is temporarily broken as you cross the road leading into the stoneworks, but the sound of drills and sawing is quickly replaced by more soothing birdsong and the gentle bubbling of the beck. As you draw level with some properties on the other side of the water – where you might be greeted by barking dogs – the path parts company with the beck.

4. The route now heads up through the trees to reach the road, along which you turn left. There is a grass verge to the left of the asphalt at first, after which you'll pick up a roadside path on the opposite side of the asphalt. This leads all the way into Brampton.

5. Less than 150yds (approx. 140m) after passing a turning to the left at the edge of the green on the outskirts of the town, turn right up a broad but rough track – signed 'Ridgewalk'. At the top of the rise, bear right to pass in front of Moat Cottage. Go through an old metal kissing-gate next to a larger gate and then follow a line of beautiful beech trees along the crest of the low ridge. You're only 410ft (125m) above sea level here and yet the views are wonderful. You have the Pennines over to the right, but it's the

VIEW NORTH
TO SCOTLAND



panorama to the left, backed by the Scottish hills, that really catches the eye.

6. After walking with the fence on your right for a short while, go through a pedestrian gate to continue with it on your left. Keep straight ahead until you reach a fence corner at the woodland edge.

7. Walk with the fence on your right for just a few more strides and then bear left, on a narrow path that weaves its way down through the trees. At the bottom of this path, bear right through the metal kissing-gate. Pass through another gate and you'll soon find yourself beside a minor road.

8. Turn left here and then right. Later, bear left on rejoining the main road. It's now an easy stroll back to Abbey Bridge and the parking area. Be careful though: there is no path and the road is winding with high hedges. Drivers are unlikely to see you and your dog until they are just a few feet away.

Crummock Water and Rannerdale Knotts

BY VIVIENNE CROW

START/FINISH: Lake District National Park pay-and-display car park behind Bridge Hotel in Buttermere (grid reference NY173169)

DISTANCE: 3.1 miles/5km

TIME: 2-2½ hours

HEIGHT GAIN: 960ft/293m

TERRAIN: field paths; lake shore; fell paths, steep and stony in places; one short rocky section; woodland trail

STILES: 0

MAP: Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer map OL4, Lake District (NW)

This walk combines the best of both Lakeland worlds: a stroll beside a lake and a hike on to a fell top. Starting from Buttermere, it heads to the shores of Crummock Water and then climbs Rannerdale Knotts (1,164ft/355m). An initially steady ascent soon becomes more challenging, but the difficulties are short-lived – walkers and their dogs are quickly resting on the summit rocks, enjoying the spectacular surroundings. A ridge walk follows before the route drops back to Buttermere via an area of atmospheric oak woodland.

Dog owners should be aware that, as well as free-roaming sheep on the fell, there may be cattle beside the path down to the lake.



HERDWICK ON RANNERDALE



MISTY CRUMMOCK WATER

- 1.** Head to the far end of the car park, away from the vehicle entrance, and go through the small gate over to the right. Ignore the bridge leading into the campsite; instead, keep the beck on your right. When the fenced path ends, go through the pedestrian gate and continue beside the beck. There are often cattle grazing in this area, so keep a watchful eye on your dog and the cows, particularly if they have calves at foot.
- 2.** Ignoring the next bridge, continue following the line of the fenced beck downstream. As you enter a small patch of woodland, a trail goes up and over the shoulder of a knoll. Coming down the other side, you reach a shingle beach beside Crummock Water. (The next section is on permissive paths and is sometimes closed to the public in spring while sandpipers nest on the shore.)

- 3.** Turn right, through the kissing-gate, and immediately bear half-right across a grassy area to find the footbridge over the beck. Head back to the shore and continue north. Go through a gate and over a small bridge. Bear left to keep to the shore path through the trees.
- 4.** Leaving the woods via another gate, head back to the water's edge. (This section of lake shore is the last guaranteed chance for Pooch to get a drink until you descend to Mill Beck at the end of the walk.) Cross one final beck via a little bridge and make your way towards the pine trees near the base of the fell. Among the trees, there's a gate in the wall. Go through this, cross the bridge and bear right. →





JESS ENJOYING THE VIEW

5. Cross straight over the B5289 to find a narrow path slanting up to the left through the bracken. This quickly joins a wider path, along which you bear left. The gently rising route cuts a green swathe across the southern flanks of the hill, running almost parallel with the eastern shore of Crummock Water. Sheep, mainly Herdwicks, graze these slopes throughout the year.

6. Bear right at a grassy fork to climb more steeply. The gradient eases slightly (and briefly) as you pass to the right of a small rock outcrop on a grassy knoll. Climbing again, you come to an area of slate. Ignoring the tempting grassy path straight ahead, keep to the right of the slate, following a narrow, stony trail. This soon becomes a pitched path that hugs the rocky ground on the right.

7. After the next section on grass, you reach the foot of two crags. It is possible to continue straight up through the gap between them – clambering uphill on loose, stony ground – but it can be tricky with dogs in tow. The easier option is to head right. The path then curves left, reaching a saddle, before it swings right again for the final pull on to the highest point of Rannerdale Knotts.

8. Emerging from the rocks, puffed and sweating, there's a sense of exhilaration as you perform a 360-degree turn, taking in the vista of valley and fells. Your enjoyment of the views is far from over though: a path now heads

roughly south-east, out along the apex of the high ground, extending the pleasure for a little longer. Known as Low Bank, this great little ridge is surprisingly narrow for such a small fell, but never intimidating. There is one short, rocky section that might require hands and could be tricky for older dogs, but otherwise it's almost entirely on grass.

9. Ignoring a broad path to the right and a narrow trail to the left, keep to the true ridge until you reach a grassy crossing of paths. Turn right here. On the descent, keep left at any obvious forks and junctions. You head south-west at first, but quickly swing south-south-west.

10. About 380yds (approx. 350m) after leaving the ridge, a crossing of grassy paths is reached just above an oak woodland. Turn left here. Enter the woods via a gate and set of steps. The path swings right to head downstream with Mill Beck. There are steep drops down into the gill in places, so watch your footing.

11. Turn left at the road and immediately right, beside the Bridge Hotel. Bear right just before the Buttermere Court Hotel (formerly the Fish Inn) to re-enter the car park.

Wetheral Woods and River, near Carlisle

BY PARAGON VET GRAHAM LEWIS

Distance: 2 miles

Time: 50 minutes

An easy walk with lots of interest. There is woodland, wildlife, a beautiful stretch of the River Eden, intriguing history and dramatic architecture. Paragon's surgery on the site of Oak Tree Animals Charity is nearby.

Parts of the first half of the route have steep drops beside the path so be ready to put your dog on the lead.

Start from the village green in the centre of Wetheral close to Fantails Restaurant. Leave the green at the south-east corner by the cross and take the lane going right towards the Priory Gatehouse (which is signed).

Pass the Priory Gatehouse on your left, considered the finest medieval gatehouse in Cumbria.

Soon after, go through the metal kissing-gate on your left. Follow the short path down and through a second kissing-gate into Wetheral Woods.

Follow the path through oak and beech with the river below on your left, and ignoring an early branch off to the left down some shallow steps.

After about a quarter of a mile you come to a second path branching off to the left, and sharply back, which will be your route.

At this point you can make a short detour to see the mysterious St Constantine's caves, cut into the rock and thought to have been used by monks as far back as the 14th century. To visit them go straight ahead and then take a left which is signposted. The path to the caves is narrow with a steep drop and can be slippery in wet weather.



PUPPY CLOVA NEAR PRIORY GATEHOUSE

Back on the main path at the sharp left, take that path which heads down the side of the gorge towards the river. You will leave the woods through a kissing-gate and continue along the riverbank.

Down some stone steps the path reaches a sandy bay which is ideal for a bit of canine (or human) paddling. On the opposite bank you can see Corby Castle and its classical façade and ornate cascades.

Continue along the riverbank path to a grassy area with a stone bench sculpture. Turn left uphill a short way to join the lane's end. Go right along the narrow lane with the river on your right, approaching the immense arches of Wetheral Viaduct.

Directly under the viaduct turn left up a steep flight of stone steps called '99 Steps' although there are really 93.

At the top by the railway station, carry on to the left passing the Crown Hotel. Soon you are back in the centre of Wetheral village with the green to your left.



BANNERDALE CRAGS SEEN FROM SOUTHER FELL



Souther Fell, Mungrisdale

BY VIVIENNE CROW

START/FINISH: parking area, with honesty box, opposite Mungrisdale Village Hall (grid reference NY364302)

DISTANCE: 5.3 miles/8.5km

TIME: 2¾–3¼ hours

HEIGHT GAIN: 1,300ft/396m

TERRAIN: quiet lane; fell paths, wet in places; one short rocky section

STILES: 0

MAP: Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer map OL5, Lake District (NE)

Souther Fell may only be a tiddler when compared with other Lakeland peaks, but it's full of character and it's big on vistas. The steep climb to this 1,712ft/522m summit on the eastern edge of the Northern Fells is rewarded with excellent and far-reaching views. After you and your dog have sauntered across the grassy summit and visited the cairn on the fell's western rim, you follow a winding path that descends to a gated road. Now, all that's left is a leisurely stroll back to Mungrisdale where the Mill Inn welcomes dogs – and their well-behaved owners, of course.

As always in the countryside, there's no such thing as an entirely dog-friendly walk; on this one, there's a high chance of meeting livestock, so you'll need to bear this in mind at all times.

1. Walk to the bottom end of the parking area and cross the bridge over the River Glenderamackin. Having climbed the slope on the other side – and with the pub on your right – turn left along the quiet road. Walk the asphalt for 600yds (approx. 550m) and go through a gate across the lane. From this point onwards, you will almost definitely encounter sheep.

2. Immediately after the gate, walk up the grassy slope on the right, keeping close to the field boundary. Stay with the field boundary when it bends right, but only for about 80yds (approx. 75m). After this, follow the faint trail heading up the slope. (In summer, when it's swamped by bracken, this is easy to miss, so you'll need to watch carefully for it.)

3. At the top of this initial, short rise, Souther Fell's north-east ridge appears straight ahead. Cutting across the grassy hillside and dipping into a damp gully along the way, the narrow trail makes its way towards the lower end of the ridge.

4. Before long, you're looking straight across the River Glenderamackin to the eastern slopes of Bowscale Fell. The Tongue sits up to the left, in the mouth of the valley. The path swings left here to climb more steeply. There is some bare rock on the next section, where older dogs might struggle. After that though, the ascent – still steep at times – is almost entirely on grass.

The welcoming committee at the top of the ridge includes Bowscale Fell, Bannerdale Crags and Blencathra seen across the dark gulf of Bannerdale. Progress along the grassy summit reveals an unfurling panorama: the North Pennines to the east are quickly joined by the long ridgelines of the eastern Lake District fells and then Helvellyn's northern outliers.

From Souther Fell's unmarked summit, a long line of high fells fills the south-west horizon, including Bow Fell, the Scafells and Great Gable.

5. About 350yds (approx. 320m) beyond the summit, just after the main path starts climbing out of a shallow, boggy dip, take a narrower path to the right. This leads to an old cairn well positioned on the western edge of the fell, looking across to Bannerdale Crags and Blencathra.

6. From the cairn, a faint, damp path heads south-south-east, quickly rejoining the main summit path. This drops south-west towards the col between Souther Fell and Scales Fell. →

SOUTHER FELL NORTH-EAST RIDGE





LOOKING ACROSS THE SHOULDER OF BANNERDALE
CRAGS TO SHARP EDGE ON MIGHTY BLENCATHRA

7. As soon as you hit the damp ground at the base of the slope, turn left (south). The path isn't obvious at first, but it quickly becomes clearer. Almost as soon as it does, it splits in two. Keep left here (south-east). If you find yourself dropping into Mouthwaite Comb, you've gone wrong; you should be on a narrow trail hugging the eastern slopes of this large hollow with the ground on your right dropping away steeply.

8. As the trail later swings east-south-east, it briefly becomes less easy to spot on the ground. Don't give up on it though – it soon broadens and becomes more obvious again as it weaves an easy route down between rock outcrops. Dropping to a faint junction of trails, bear right (south). With one more smooth curve to the left, the path drops to a minor road above the farm buildings at Lowside. Turn left here.

9. Passing through several gates along the way, this lane leads all the way back to Mungrisdale. It's slightly more than two miles (approx. 3.3km), but it's no great hardship. Once the roar of the A66 has been lost, the stroll along the eastern base of Souther Fell is a peaceful one in the company of birds flitting in and out of the trees and hedgerows. You're unlikely to encounter much, if any, traffic.

10. Eventually, you'll see the Mill Inn ahead again. (The pub is dog-friendly and there are a few tables in the car park if you don't want to take your pet inside.) Drop to the right just before the pub to recross the bridge over the River Glenderamackin and return to the parking area.

Tips and Guidance for Dog Walkers

BY PARAGON VET GRAHAM LEWIS

Don't forget!

Plenty of poo bags

Water and a collapsible bowl.

Unwanted guests

Ticks, which can transmit Lyme disease, are common except in the coldest weather, especially in vegetation and woodland.

After your walk check your dog over and remove any ticks. If you're not sure, a vet can help you.

Keep tick and flea treatments up to date.

Hot days

Heatstroke in dogs can be fatal. Any dog can develop heatstroke but overweight, young, elderly, flat-faced, giant breed and heavy-coated breeds are especially vulnerable.

Signs of heatstroke include panting, drooling, bright red gums, shaking, weakness and collapse, confusion, vomiting, diarrhoea and seizures.

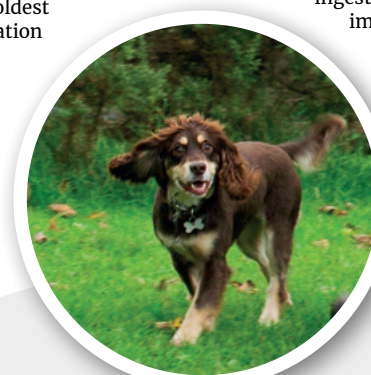
If your dog develops heatstroke act quickly; cool your dog with cool but not icy water and get them to a vet ASAP. Using icy water can cause shock.

Algae alert

Blue green algae is toxic to dogs and humans. It can be found in lakes, rivers, streams, ponds, estuaries and in the sea, often in the summer especially after a heatwave.

Dogs can be poisoned by swimming, playing in, or drinking contaminated water, or by licking it off their fur. The algae may look blue green, brown, red or black and can appear as a large bloom or in small areas of the water. If in doubt stay out!

If you suspect your dog could have ingested blue green algae see a vet immediately as rapid treatment increases their chances of survival.



Take care around livestock and wildlife

- Please bin your litter or take it home, including poo bags.

- Leave gates as you find them.

- Don't climb over walls, fences or gates, you can damage them.

- It is essential your dog is not a nuisance to livestock, horses and wildlife. Keep your dog on a lead when they are around.

- Farmers can shoot dogs which are attacking or chasing livestock.

- Cows with calves can be aggressive especially towards walkers with dogs. It's best to stay well away from them.

- Dogs must be on a lead between March to July on 'open access land' such as fells, forests and around lakes, to protect ground nesting birds, and also during lambing on farmland.



You can see The Countryside Code online: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code

The Cumbria Dog Walking Guide is brought to you
by the team at **Paragon Veterinary Group**.

We hope it helps you and your dog to enjoy the
beautiful countryside of our home county of Cumbria.



We are a proudly independent veterinary practice with a
reputation for excellence, integrity, top-class facilities and for
our dedication to animals and client care.

We have three centres, at **Dalston** and **Wetheral** near **Carlisle** and at
Newbiggin near **Penrith**, and we are available 24/7 365 days a year.

**If you require care for your pet, including emergency care, please
call us on 01228 710208 or 017684 83789.**

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