



Walking with Polartec Keswick route: Coledale Round

From Keswick the peaks that surround Coledale are an intriguing sight. They are close enough to draw the eye yet far enough away that only their silhouettes show. From this angle each of the main peaks show angular and clean cut lines that look particularly challenging, so much so, that on first glimpse, you feel they would demand individual ascents to walk them comfortably. However whilst it is true that there are big drops between some of the peaks, others are linked at high level with little height loss, and the going between all of them is such that a good easy pace can be set. This makes the Coledale peaks an ideal candidate for a skyline walk that gains all the summits in one round.

Coledale itself is a classic U shaped valley that is typical of many in the Lake District, but unlike others it has no habitation. In fact the only obvious sign of human presence is the remains of the old barytes mine at the valley head and the rough track that serviced it. This lack of human presence gives the surrounding peaks and ridges a pleasant wild feel. There are a number of variants to the walk around the peaks as there are a number of 'out rigger' peaks. If you stick to the true skyline then you need to take in Kinn, Sleet How, Sand Hill, Crag Hill, Sail, Outerside, Stile End and Barrow. In addition you can almost not avoid Hopegill Head as it is just a couple of hundred metres off track and if you have enough energy you really should pop up Grasmoor. Grasmoor is such an important view point that any chance to get on to its summit should be taken without hesitation.

Grade: Strenuousness 5, Navigation 3, Technicality 4

Start/Finish: Braithwaite (NY231236)

Distance: 11 miles (17.5km)

Time: 7 - 8 hours

Height gain: 1500m

Terrain: village roads, steep fellside, high mountain ridges, narrow cols, broad cols, shapely summits.

Maps: OS Landranger 89 or 90, OS Explorer OL4, British Mountain Maps Lake District (1:40 000).

Public transport: The X5 and the X4 connect with Braithwaite from Keswick for timetables and fare details visit - www.stagecoachbus.com

1. From Braithwaite follow the B5292 towards Whinlatter, after 300m there is a path on the left. Join it and follow it as it climbs steeply through a bend then heads West to gain the first summit, Kinn. Kinn establishes you on the crest of the main ridge, this is followed South West first to Grisedale Pike then to Sand Hill and Hopegill Head.
2. From Sand Hill descend South South East down to the deep col of Coledale Hause. From here Crag Hill can be climbed direct by heading South South East. If you want to also visit Grasmoor head instead in a South South West direction alongside the beck and gain the broad higher col between Crag Hill and Grasmoor. From here a path climbs easily West across Grasmoor's summit plateau to the summit cairn. The best views lie a further few hundred metres further West. Take care not to go too far because the slopes fall away to steep crags.
3. From Grasmoor return East to the col and continue over it to gain Crag Hill. The descent to the southern ridge of the Coledale Round is the most precipitous part of the walk. It is down a narrow arête with steep slopes on both sides. It is not scrambling as such as the path is pretty good but care should be exercised particularly in strong winds. This section is short lived and you soon arrive at a narrow col. From here continue East up the short climb to Sail.
4. From Sail descend to the next col in a East North East direction. The col is a junction of paths. Take the one that descends North East and skirts the steep fellside to gain the broad col / moss on the South West side of



Outerside. Ignore the path that branches off right, instead continue North East and climb to the top of Outerside. Cross the summit then descend East North East to yet another col at Low Moss. Cross this and climb the little summit of Stile End.

5. You can descend back to the valley from Stile End but this misses out the fine whale backed summit of Barrow. To climb Barrow descend South South East to the col at Barrow Door then turn East then East North East for Barrow. This final summit makes a fitting end to the walk because it offers fine retrospective views of key parts of the days walk and it also offers a high level peek at Keswick and Derwent Water. From its summit the descent is a simple task of dropping North East down the main ridge then following the path through Braithwaite Lodge then back to the village.

Map

