

12km/7.5 miles

Stone Arthur

This fine walk from Grasmere is partly set within the better known Fairfield Horseshoe. It takes you first to one of the Lake District's favourite tarns and then you join the crowd heading for the Horseshoe. After an optional extension, the route turns off along an idyllic high plateau and then makes a fairly easy descent back to village. The views in all directions are riveting.

The walk

1 Turn R out of car park to walk to A591. Cross, and continue ahead, keeping R of Swan Hotel. Carry on uphill, ignore R turn, then take Tarmac track, R, which looks like entrance to a house. Go through farm gate, turn sharp R to cross footbridge over Greenhead Gill. Walk L, ascend steeply beside plantation wall, R. Way is partly stepped, partly pitched, often grassy, sometimes naturally rock-stepped, and has some footholes in the turf. Wind round, R, wall at end of conifers, and follow distinct way. Leave wall where it turns R again and follow path up towards prominent Butter Crag and then wind R, below it, to gate in wall. Beyond, on grassy shelf, lies charming Alcock Tarn.

2 Continue along R side (west) of tarn. Wind round L, walking along tarn's small dam. Go through railed gap in wall ahead, climbing grassy path through bracken. Carry on half-R to join Fairfield Horseshoe path, coming in on your R, from Rydal. Turn L, follow pebbly path to climb through rocky outcrops to Heron Pike, a pleasing grassy mound.

hard

4.5 hours

Enjoy a fine retrospective view of Coniston and Langdale fells, with Scafell Pike towering above them. Stroll on towards Great Rigg, which does have a fine peak. As you progress, view of Fairfield's wall-like southern face is formidable, its summit overtopping other heights. A short way up slopes of Great Rigg, you arrive at a cairn. (Before continuing this walk you might wish to climb Great Rigg, if you are into collecting Wainwright's! This adds on an extra 1km.)

3 At cairn, turn sharp L and follow a grassy trod, along almost level top of a spur of Great Rigg, heading towards first outcrops of Stone Arthur. Head on, passing through series of large rock outcrops until you stand on abrupt edge of steep drop of last outcrop. Return along path for short distance until you reach cairned path going off R (it was on your L when you continued to edge of last outcrop). Follow this as it keeps below crags and then descends wide grassy path through bracken, soon coming close to derelict wall, R. Continue down.

4 At widening of path, where derelict walls meet, turn R to descend narrow, rougher way to solitary sycamore. Beyond, traverse slopes to step across a stream. Follow path as it winds L and goes down side of walled conifer plantation, R. Head on down until you wind L and path becomes a wide rough track. At farm gate turn R through it and descend to Grasmere.

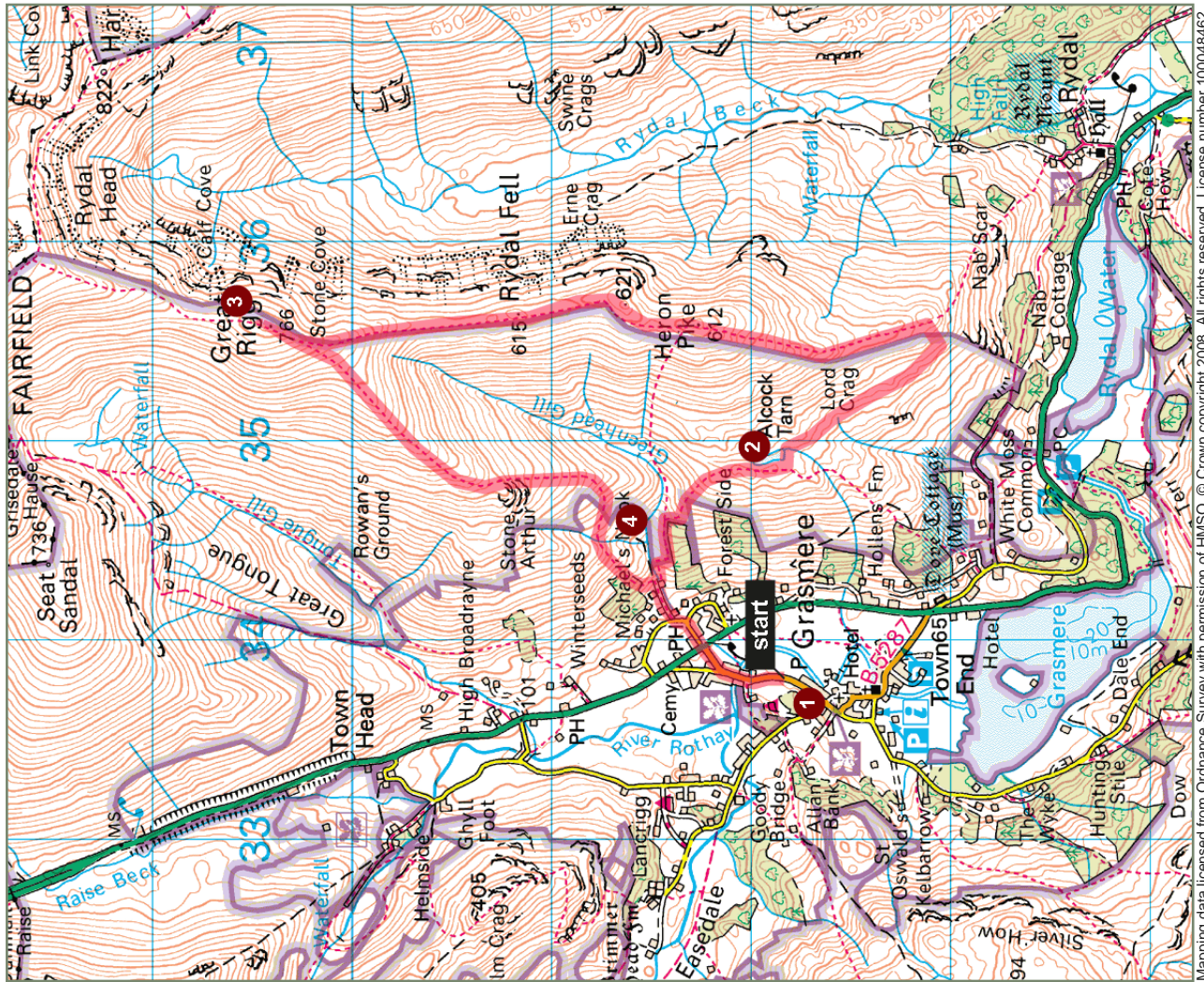
DETAILS

Country Walking ID
3046
Mag Route 23,
February 2008
Region North
Area Cumbria
Length of walk
12km/7.5 miles
Time needed 4.5
hours
Difficulty Hard

IS THIS WALK FOR YOU?
Terrain Distinct paths, some steep but pitched; heavy bracken in summer
Stiles 1
Parking
Pay-and-display car park at north end of Grasmere, grid ref NY338077
Start grid ref
NY338078
Nearest town Keswick
Refreshments Plenty of choice in Grasmere
Public toilets Centre of Grasmere, off village green, left from car park
Public transport
Return along path Stagecoach Cumbria buses, 555, 599

MAPS
Ordnance Survey Explorer OL7; Landranger 90

MARY WELSH



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