

Route Details

Start: Old Church of St Martin, Martindale

Grid ref: NY 434 184

Distance: 5.8 miles/9.4km

Terrain: Tarmac, grassy track, fell paths

Ascent: 984ft/300m

Difficulty and duration: A challenging walk with a long but steady ascent and a descent which is very steep in places. The paths are clear throughout but the usual care and preparation should be taken for a fell top walk.

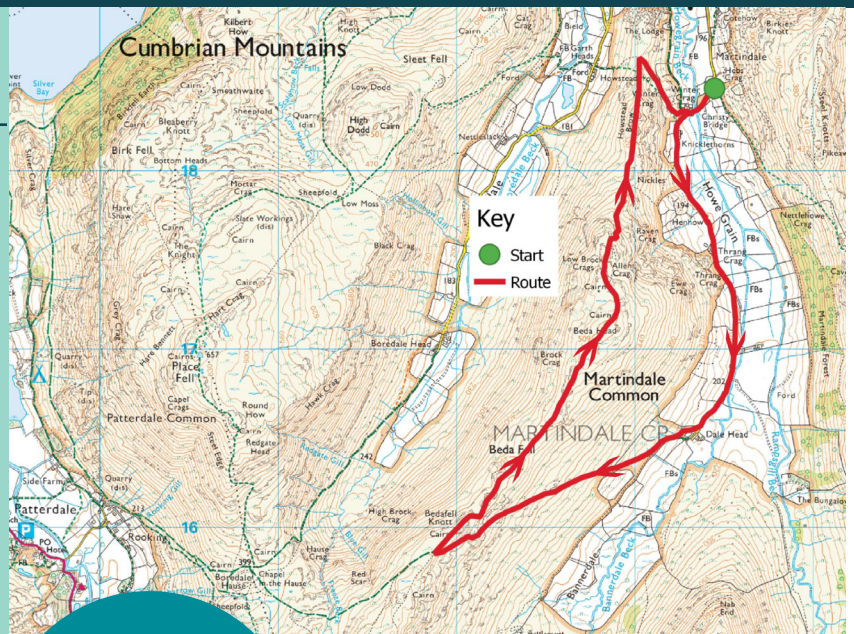
Parking: Limited free parking available adjacent to Martindale Church and the Old Church of St Martin.

Public transport: The Ullswater Steamer will drop you at Howtown, a short distance from the start of the walk.

Directions: From Penrith take the B5320 towards Pooley Bridge – just before the village fork left and follow the road to Howtown, then through Howton to Martindale. Bear left in Martindale and pass Martindale church to locate the Old Church of St Martin.

Facilities: No facilities along route.

OS map: Explorer OL5 – The English Lakes, North Eastern Area.



One of the best valleys in Cumbria to see red deer



Looking down Ullswater towards Pooley Bridge

Felltop walk in Martindale

- ❖ **This ridge route offers an excellent opportunity to spot red deer during the rutting season**
- ❖ **From the top of Beda Fell there are superb views of Ullswater**
- ❖ **On the fell tops there's a good chance of spotting buzzards and kestrels as they hunt around the valleys**

With the church on your left follow the tarmac road towards the head of the valley. At the end of the road continue on, passing in front of the white farmhouse then turn right and pass through a wooden gate.

Follow the path uphill alongside a walled field boundary and take the right fork, near a large boulder, after 30m. Remain on this path as it climbs steadily along the hillside.

Towards the top the path bends around an old building – remain on the main track until it brings you out onto Bedafell Knott.

Bear right at the cairn and follow the footpath right the way along the top of the ridge and across the top of Beda Head. (Note: This is a long stretch but the path is clear throughout.)

Remain on the ridge top and continue along the path for three-quarters of a mile. As the path descends to a distinct crossroads with a black metal bench, turn right and return back down to the tarmac road, then turn left to return to the church.

Alternate route/starting point: It is possible to start this route from Patterdale.

Park in the village and follow the road that leads over the bridge to Rooking. Remain on the road to the end then bear right to follow the signed route up to Boredale Hause. At Boredale Hause continue on then bear slight right to remain on the track to Bedafell Knott and then continue the route as above.

Note: this will add two miles (3km) and an additional ascent to the route.

Felltop walk in Martindale continued



Early mornings and dusk are the best times to see red deer

Before you set off

The weather in Cumbria can change quickly, particularly on the fells, so please be prepared as changes in weather can alter the difficulty of a route. Appropriate clothing can make all the difference – it is important to be warm, comfortable and dry when out exploring.

We suggest an Ordnance Survey map of the area, a compass and the knowledge to use them is invaluable.

Please observe the country code when out walking and, where possible, stick to public footpaths and bridleways. Stock is frequently grazing in these areas so dogs must be kept under control.

Wildlife highlights

This is one of the best valleys in Cumbria to visit if you're in search of **red deer**. Herds have roamed here for at least 300 years and the ridge route offers an excellent opportunity to spot them in the valleys below.

There are usually plenty to be seen down in Martindale Common, but on occasion they wander up onto the top of the fell to cross down into Boredale. If you're too noisy they'll hear you coming, but if you're a bit quieter you might just be lucky enough to get a closer look. Early mornings or dusk are the best time but don't risk getting caught out on the fell in the dark.

From the top of Beda Fell the views are superb – to the north is Ullswater, stretching away into the distance while to the east runs the ridge of the old

Roman road leading from High Street. The old road connected Ambleside to Penrith and fairs were held on the fell tops throughout the 19th century. Immediately to the west is Place Fell and away to the south west are the ridges and corries of the Helvellyn range – gorgeous at any time of year but particularly dramatic when they have a dusting of snow.

On the fell tops there's a good chance of spotting **buzzards** and **kestrels** as they hunt around the valleys and, as with many of the fell tops in the Lake District, during the spring and autumn Beda Fell is an excellent place to spot migrating geese as they come and go from the lakes below.

There's one wonderful piece of interesting history associated with the valley. At the start of the walk, as you



View up Martindale Valley



View of Hallin Fell to the right



Autumn bracken on the fell

make your way towards the head of the valley, look to your left and in the distance you'll spot a distinctive red roofed lodge. This was the home of the Earl of Lonsdale whose favourite colour (despite the roof of the lodge suggesting otherwise) was yellow – it appeared on all his carriages and throughout his house. The Earl went on to become the first president of the AA and when they were looking for colours for their livery, naturally he suggested yellow, the colour they still use to this day.



Buzzard



Kestrel



Cumbria
Wildlife Trust

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