

Walk 6: Hawkshead to Wray

A peaceful hike over the fell and down to the lake.

Difficulty: moderate

7.5 miles

1127 ft altitude gain

3 - 4 hrs

This walk links up the ancient parish of Hawkshead with a sister church in Wray which is no longer in use.

You will leave Hawkshead through the fields and climb up and over the fell to the right of Latterbarrow. The route takes you all the way down the other side to the shores of Windermere.

After a wander along the shore to Wray Castle, you will return through farmland and forest, lakes and lanes.

There are refreshments and toilets at Wray Castle and several pubs and cafés in Hawkshead.

The route over the fell can be muddy and wet and the path to the shore is loose and uneven, so boots are advisable to protect your ankles.

As always, we recommend you take an Ordnance Survey map and a compass so that you can keep a track of where you are.



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Hawkshead to Wray

Meditation 1: At Hawkshead Church

It is certainly worth spending a little time in the ancient church of St Michael and All Angels in Hawkshead. Countless visitors come in, pause for a while, perhaps sit down, listen to the silence (a silence which is somehow amplified by the ticking of the clock), and feel connected with something beyond their lives and times, something that many of us call God.

Outside the building at the East end of the church, overlooking the village, there is a place you can sit with your back against the wall. You may be able to pick out parts of the day's walk. When he was at [school in Hawkshead](#), William Wordsworth used to sit in this exact position, looking over a landscape which was to inspire him throughout his life to write poetry which has shaped how subsequent generations think of the Lake District.

How will the landscape inspire you today?



The Walk:

1. When you are ready, leave [Hawkshead Church](#) and cross the square in front of the [Kings Arms](#). Go through the arch to the right and turn right past the Co-op. Walk down the passage to the right of the [Red Lion](#), and continue through the gate, across the road and straight on down the path in front of you. The finger post directs you to Ambleside and Wray Castle.



2. The path will take you over a bridge and into the fields. Follow the edge of the field for 50 yards and then turn right, still following the finger post to Wray Castle and Ambleside. After the second gate turn right towards Colthouse, and right again after the next gate.

3. When you reach the road, turn left through Colthouse village and on up the hill that bends round to the left. When

you see the black gates of Gillbank in front of you, turn sharp right through a large deer gate with a finger post directing you to Belle Grange.

4. This track takes you up the hill and reaches more even ground before you reach a crossroads. Go straight across, continuing to follow signs to Belle Grange. And the same at the second crossroads: straight across towards Belle Grange. Continue straight down the path, ignoring paths to the right and left until you reach the lakeshore.

5. At the lake, turn left towards Red Nab. Keep to the shore through the Red Nab car park following the finger post to [Wray Castle](#) and Ambleside. When the path moves away from the shore, follow it up to Wray Church. (If you want a detour to Wray Castle where there is a café and loos, take the path to the right before leaving the lakeshore.) Sadly, Wray Church is no longer used so it is locked, but you can spend a little time in the churchyard and do Meditation 2. (*see P.4*)

6. Exit the churchyard and turn right to reach the road. Turn right again and walk along the road for about 200 yards before turning left to follow the cycle track signposted to Hawkshead. The track runs along the road for a short while, but you should turn left at the first fork through the gate. The path runs to the west of a small tarn through woodland. Avoid a turning to Outgate and stay on the cycle track towards Hawkshead. The cycle track is well signposted through fields and woodland until you reach Low Loanthwaite Farm when you hit the road.



Meditation 2: At Wray Church

Wray Church no longer operates as a parish church- there just isn't a big enough local population to support it. But it was a functioning church for a while, and one of its vicars was to become a minor celebrity. [Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley](#) is remembered today as one of the founders of the National Trust. Living at a time of rapid industrialisation, Rawnsley who had previously worked in slums, was wholly committed to allowing as many people as possible to enjoy the beauty of this landscape.

Ever since, countless people have committed much of their lives to a great balancing act: on the one hand preserving the beauty of this area, and on the other making that beauty accessible to a wide range of people.

Think about all the people who visit this area, from all kinds of different backgrounds and walks of life, all of them loved by God.

7. Turn right and descend for about 300 yards before turning left on Scar House Lane. Soon, go through a gate on the right, and cross the field to another gate. Half way through the next field you should turn right and retrace your steps to Hawkshead the same way that you left.

