



The Old Coach Road (Mountain Bike Ride)

ROUTE 3

East of Ullswater the massive Helvellyn range presents a formidable wall of high peaks. The first feasible breach in its defences is on the flanks of Clough Head and Matterdale Common at the northern end. At this point an old coaching road links Dockray with St John's in the Vale and provides an exciting high-level mountain bike route. The riding is a combination of moderate technical challenges with some fantastic descents and a pleasant return via minor roads and cycle tracks giving wide ranging views of both Skiddaw and Blencathra.

Start/finish: Aira Force Car Park GR NY400199

Distance: 19.5 miles (31.4km)

Grade: Medium - Challenge

Refreshments

Cafés: Aira Force

Pubs: Dockray, Threlkeld, Scales, Troutbeck

1 Turn R out of the car park onto the A592 then turn R onto the A5091 and follow it steeply up hill to Dockray.

2 Turn L past The Royal Hotel and follow the road as it climbs through Green How and Bank Farm to a jct and car park at Red Moss.

3 This is the start of the Old Coach Road - go through the gate and follow it alongside the trees for 7.2km. Generally the going is easy but there are some boggy sections and a couple of climbs. The last 3.2km section down to the B5322 at Wanthwaite gives a fairly speedy descent.

4 Turn R onto the B5322 and follow it to a junction with the A66. Carefully cross the A66 and join the lane on the opposite side. This section is busy and the traffic is fast so great care needs to be exercised whilst crossing.

5 Follow the lane up to a T jct and turn R and follow this to another T jct in the centre of Threlkeld. At this junction turn R again and continue past the pub then turn L on Fell Side Road which is followed to the cycle track by the side of the A66. Follow this to Scales.

6 Continue on the A66 for 200m until opposite the Wallthwaite turning. Cross the A66 (with care - extremely busy) and turn R onto it, follow the lane for 1km to a junction (second turning). Turn R and head into Wallthwaite. The road turns a corner in Wallthwaite and is then followed for 3.5km to the A5091. Turn R and follow the A5091 through Matterdale End to Dockray.

7 From Dockray retrace the route back down the A5091 to the start at Aira Force car park.

