Lake Coniston East Side

**Moderate Trail:** Please be aware that the grading of this trail was set according to normal water levels and conditions. Weather and water level/conditions can change the nature of trail within a short space of time so please ensure you check both of these before heading out.

**Route Summary**

Coniston Water is the third largest lake in the English Lake District, and one of the quietest and most unspoilt, being surrounded by high Lakeland fells. It has various unique attractions, being the lake that Sir Malcolm Campbell set his world water speed record on of 141 mph in 1939, and also where his son, Donald Campbell who died in 1967. Brantwood, the home of John Ruskin, is on the east bank, and there are other literary associations, such as with Arthur Ransome, the author of ‘Swallows and Amazons’, based on Coniston. The lake is 9km long, and 1 km wide, has very good vehicle parking, and is ideal for canoe trips of various lengths.

**Start Directions**

Monk Coniston car park is at the north end of the lake, with ample parking, toilets, and room for minibuses and trailers. Launching is easy, with a 30m flat walk.

The A593 runs up the west side of Coniston Water, (the approach from the M6, Junction 36, south Lakes, is via the A590 west towards Ulverston and Barrow, and then north via the A55092 and A5084 from Greenod to the A593). From Coniston village, the B5285 runs around the north end of the lake to Monk Coniston.

There is also parking in Coniston village at the Boating centre, but canoes will be charged a launching fee.

**Portages and Locks:** None  
**Nearest Town:** Ambleside/Coniston  
**Start and finish:** Monk Coniston pay and display car park - GR SD 316977 South Lakeland, Coniston, Cumbria, LA21 8HH  
**O.S. Sheets:** Landranger 96 or 97; Outdoor Leisure 6  
**Licence Information:** A licence is not required to paddle this waterway  
**Local Facilities:** Parking and toilets at the start and shops and cafes nearby

**Distance:** 8 miles approx. trail to Peel Island. A canoe trip of anything from 1.5 miles (crossing the lake and back again), up to a circular trip of the whole length of the lake can be undertaken.  
**Approximate Time:** 1-3 Hours  
The time has been estimated based on you travelling 3–5mph (a leisurely pace using a recreational type of boat).  
**Type of Trail:** Out and Back  
**Waterways Travelled:** Lake Coniston  
**Type of Water:** Lake  
**Licence Information:** A licence is not required to paddle this waterway  
**Local Facilities:** Parking and toilets at the start and shops and cafes nearby
Description

The route is described down the lake and back again, keeping near to the east bank. There are quite a few access/egress points, and other parking places. Please note that apart from these spots, landing is not usually allowed along the shore.

At Monk Coniston, the way is to the left of the launch place. The shores are mainly wooded all the way down, and attention should be paid to the prevailing wind if crossing the lake.

After about a mile, Brantwood House (SD 311958) appears high on the left bank, an obvious white building, with a small harbour and shingle bank to land on. The tea shop up at the house is great, and in Spring, you will wind amongst many azaleas on the way up the steep hill. The left bank then has a succession of landing places, each with some gravel parking, usually amongst trees, and offering picnic places. The prevailing wind is usually from the west or south-west on Coniston, and keeping a little offshore might be prudent, as waves will break on to the rocky parts of the shore.

In under half a mile is Machell Coppice, parking for 30 cars, with a 40m walk. Fir Island follows, (SD 305939), a nice landing place, and shelter from the wind, usually joined to the mainland. Bailiff Wood is soon after (SD 303934), parking for 16 cars, and a rough track down to the lake. This middle part of the lake is the quietest part. After another half a mile is the small Dodgson Wood car park (SD 299927), and a campsite 100m from the lake. Parkamoor campsite follows soon after (SD 298910), 20 car capacity, but a walk of 30m, and a carry through a wall.

Ahead, Peel Island, made famous by it featuring in ‘Swallows and Amazons’, obviously sticks out into the lake. The way around the back of it is easy, but shallow in places. The island is a lovely place to stop for a break, with a sandy beach, rocky coves, pine trees, and grassy places to sit.

When finished, it is matter of retracing your way, and the trip back will be different – you will obtain a better view of the mountains above the west side of the lake.

Useful Information

The waterways on this trail don’t require you to have a licence to paddle on them. However if you paddle regularly you should consider becoming a member of British Canoeing. A British Canoeing membership gives you a whole range of benefits including a licence to paddle on 4500km of Britain’s waterways and Civil Liability Insurance, worth up to £10 Million. Not only will membership help save you money, it will give you peace of mind when out on the waterways. For more information on British Canoeing membership please click here.

The route is circular and can be done in either direction depending on wind, be mindful that this is an open stretch of water and the wind can have a real bearing on time and ability to paddle.. It is described here clockwise. First obstacles are all the commercial craft toing and froing from jetties with the lake steamers accessing the biggest jetty. Please remember this, and do not block up jetties as the large steamers come in!

Coniston Boating Centre – Tel. 015394 41366

Further useful information can be found on the following websites:
CANOEING SAFETY ADVICE

Spending an afternoon or day canoeing on a Canoe Trail can be a fun way to experience nature, help you to stay fit and healthy and enjoy spending time with friends and family. It can also be a dangerous journey, if appropriate safety guidelines are overlooked. To help make sure you remain safe at all times, read on to see our canoeing safety advice guidelines.

Wear appropriate clothing
Always wear shoes. Rocks, rough terrain and river beds present serious hazards to boaters without the proper attire. Nearly 90% of all boating injuries are attributed to lack of proper footwear. Other canoe safe clothing includes hats, gloves, additional dry clothing, and layered items which can easily be removed. Take or wear a windproof top and course always wear a buoyancy aid - for children make sure the crotch straps are used.

Be sure to:
- Know the weather forecast and check the water conditions before you set out canoeing. There is an Environment Agency website where information concerning river levels can be found. We recommend checking this before heading out as the river levels can rise and fall quite quickly in wet or dry conditions.
- Observe navigation rules for this waterway.
- Check to see if there are any events on the waterways when you wish to travel.
- Check that your equipment is well maintained and ready for the water.
- Check that your boat has the required buoyancy to keep it afloat in the event of a capsize

ALWAYS be certain to let others know where you’re going and when you’re expected to return.
MAKE SURE that the journey you plan is within your capabilities.
MAKE SURE you never paddle alone.

Equipment Checklist

Use the canoeing safety advice checklist below to make sure you have everything you need:

- Boat
- Paddle
- Buoyancy Aid
- Bailer/sponge
- Small First Aid Kit
- Phone (in a waterproof bag)
- Drinking water and snacks
- Suitable clothing for the weather

Do check the weather conditions and be mindful that there could be high winds on the lake, plus many movements of powered craft in the summer.
Environmental Good Practice

One of the great things about paddling a canoe trail is enjoying the journey and different environments that you paddle through. So when you are out on the water please consider the following things to help keep the wonderful waterways and environment as you found them and to avoid accidently disturbing wildlife and their habitats.

- Take your litter home with you
- Keep noise to a minimum
- Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points.
- **Do not “seal” launch** or drag boats to avoid wearing away natural banks. Float your canoe for launching, lift out when landing and carry it to and from the water.
- Canoe a safe distance away from wildlife. If you see signs of disturbance move away quietly.
- Familiarise yourself with the local area, its sensitive places and protected areas
- On rivers, avoid paddling over gravel banks in low water conditions – they may contain fish spawn.
- Ensure you don’t remove or damage any plants or animals from the waterway as they may be protected or harmful if transferred to other catchments
- When clearing litter left by others, **handle it with care**.
- **Be the eyes and ears on the water.** Report pollution, wildlife problems, damage, incidents etc to the relevant authorities: Canal & River Trust, Emergencies: 0800 47 999 47
  RSPCA for wildlife and animals in distress: 0300 1234 999 (24 hours)
  Environment Agency: 0800 80 70 60 (24 hours)

**CHECK, CLEAN, DRY**

Help minimise the spread of invasive aquatic species and disease by following the campaign advice before putting your canoe and equipment in and out of the water (some invasive species can survive in damp or wet conditions for five or six days on water recreation clothing and equipment).

- **CHECK** all your equipment and clothing for living organisms and plants fragments. Pay particular attention to areas that are damp and hard to inspect.
- **CLEAN** and wash all equipment, clothing and footwear thoroughly away from water source. If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them. When practical, completely dry out all equipment and clothing before going to a new site.
- **DRY** all equipment and clothing - some species can live for many days in moist conditions. Dry your kit with towels. Make sure you don’t transfer water elsewhere.

Canoists and kayakers take environmental concerns very seriously and already follow existing voluntary environmental codes of conduct. You can find more information about canoeing and the environment in British Canoeing’s two publications covering inland and coastal paddling ‘You and Your Canoe’. Both are available on the British Canoeing website.

We have taken great care to ensure the currency, accuracy and reliability of this information. We cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions but where such are brought to our attention the information will be amended accordingly. Users should be aware that environmental conditions outside of our control can change the nature of the Trail within a short space of time. It is recommended that weather and water conditions are checked beforehand, and tide timetables where applicable. **This trail was last reviewed in April 2013**

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