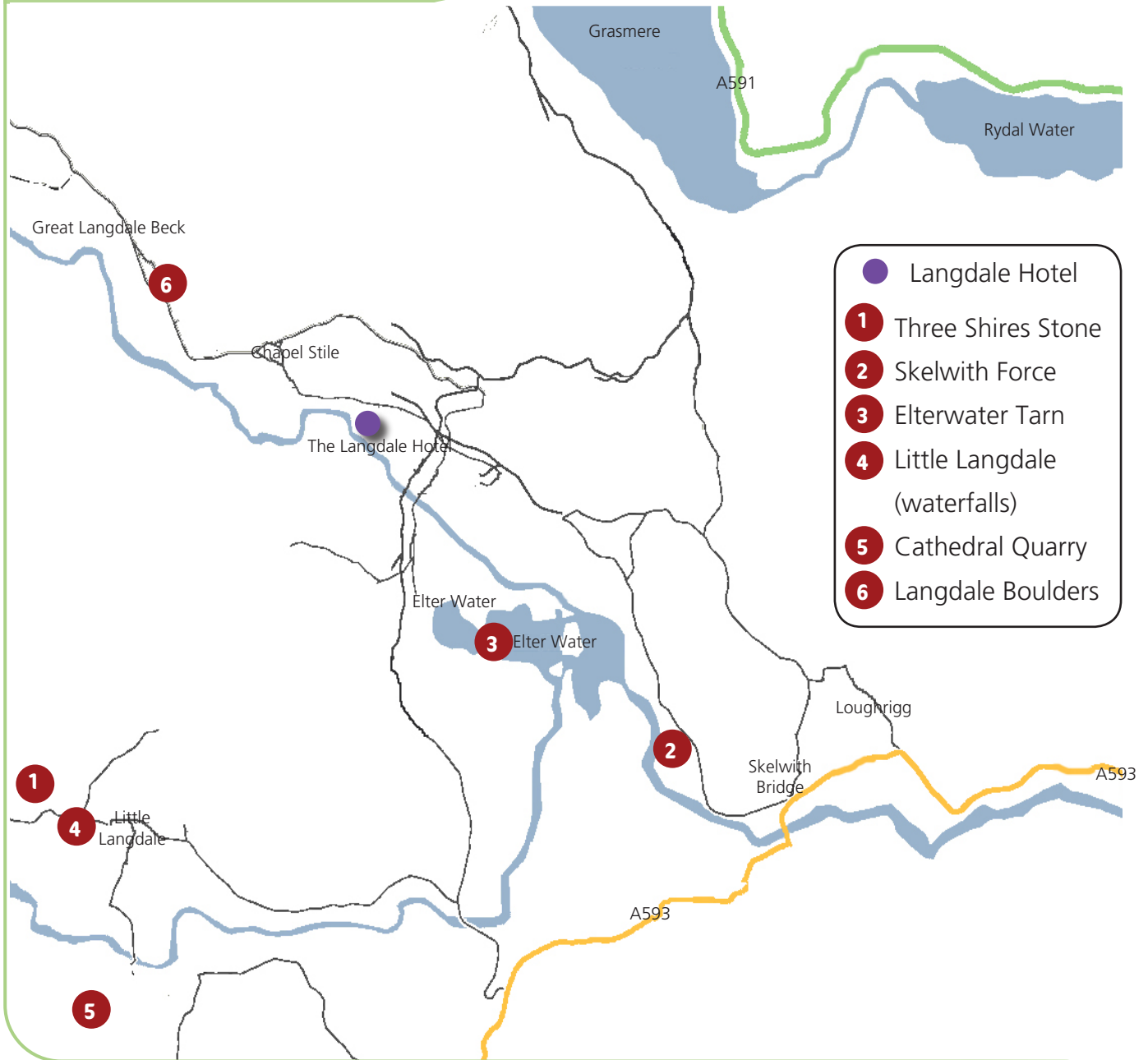


Fresh Air is Free in the Langdales



1

Three Shires Stone

Three Shires Stone is on the summit of Wrynose Pass, linking Langdale with Dunnerdale in Cumbria.

It was used to mark where the old counties of Lancashire, Westmorland and Cumberland came together.

Around the stone are three smaller flat stones, the Three Shire Stones, with C, W and L carved on them, representing where Cumberland to the north west, Westmorland to East and Lancashire to the south, were.

There is also a stone information tablet, which reads:

"Three stones have traditionally marked the adjoining boundaries of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire on this site.

The Limestone monolith, carved in 1816, for the Furness roadmaster, William Field of Cartmel (D.1860), was set up by friends, after his death.

Repaired and re-erected by the National Trust in 1998, with local support."

The views from this point are far-reaching and dramatic. Southward is Coniston Old Man, while to the north are the Langdale Pikes.

Three Shires Stone, a carved slab of limestone, sits on the summit of Wrynose Pass, a narrow, winding road that twists and winds, climbing to 393m and forming one of the steepest roads in Cumbria.

The name of Wrynose, comes from 'pass of the stallion' and referred to the fact that the steep gradients at Wrynose needed a well-muscled horse to scale the path and reach the top of the pass.

Wrynose is part of the old Roman road and served troops stationed at Hardknott Fort. Bits of the old road remain running alongside the present one.

Both the River Brathay and the River Duddon also have their origin at Wrynose.

At the bottom of Wrynose is Fell Foot Farm, a 17th century, Grade II listed National Trust property with a fascinating history and a tradition for hospitality that dates back centuries.

The farmhouse was formerly a coaching inn (the country road was diverted past the front of the farm to assist travellers) and was reputedly used as a smugglers' den for contraband ferried secretly over the high fells to the west.

Beatrix Potter was instrumental in the farm welcoming guests. During the 1930s, when farming was going through a depression, she worked for the National Trust as a land agent, encouraging Lake District farms to take in visitors to supplement their income.

It's an arduous trip to the summit and to the stone but the spectacular views and far reaching vistas more than make up for the effort of reaching this historic site.



Directions - getting there...

"Leave Langdale Estate by the Elterwater exit and walk into Elterwater Village. In the centre of the hamlet is the Britannia Inn, with the pub on your right and the National Trust car park on your left follow the quiet country lane ahead over the stream and past the youth hostel. On your right will be a rough track uphill towards Little Langdale, follow this track and bear right across the field. The path will lead you down besides the Three Shires Inn in the cute village of Little Langdale. Pass by the Three Shire Inn and eventually you'll see picturesque Little Langdale Tarn on your left. After crossing a cattle grid keep to the road on the left signposted to Wrynose and ignore the road to the right to Langdale. The road ascends a steep gradient and eventually reaches the summit where the Three Shires Stone can be found."



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2

Skelwith Force Waterfall

It may be one of the smaller Lake District waterfalls but Skelwith Force packs a punch. The good news is that it is one of the easiest sites to reach and yet remains relatively unknown, and lightly visited.

The drop of the fall is not great, but the volume of water creating the fall can be impressive after heavy rainfall.

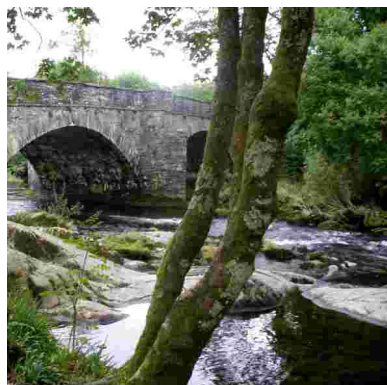
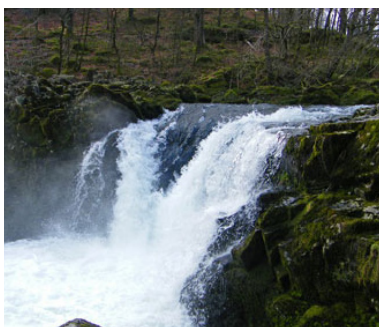
If you want to see the Force at its most spectacular, head out to the site after a heavy downpour.

The River Brathay feeds the Force and carries large quantities of water down from the Langdales to Elterwater.

It's fifteen feet of falling water is created from the combined flows of the River Brathay and Langdale Beck which thrust a dramatic passage through the rocks.

The spectacular falls are situated just up the river from the small hamlet of Skelwith Bridge.

It's a small village on the road from Ambleside to Coniston and boasts its own impressive landmark. An impressive stone river crossing is well worth a look.



There's a spacious pedestrian viewing area beside the crossing and a road leads to the car park of Kirkstone Slate Galleries shop and restaurant, Chesters.

A short walk of approximately one mile along the river will bring you to another impressive cascade, Colwith Force.

When you arrive at Colwith Force the high viewpoint will allow you to see the water passing over multiple levels before being split into two falls.

Colwith Force on the River Brathay drops in several stages down a total height of about 40 feet and again, is most impressive after heavy rainfall.

The footpath that follows the river through to Elterwater makes an interesting half hour low level walk providing excellent views of Elterwater with the Langdale Pikes forming a dramatic backdrop.

Directions - getting there...

"Leave Langdale Estate by the Elterwater exit and walk into Elterwater Village. In the centre of the hamlet is the Britannia Inn, opposite the pub is a National Trust car park. From the car park is a clearly marked path through a gate which takes you along Great Langdale beck. Follow this path across open countryside and beside Elterwater Tarn. Through the gate the path forks, take the path to the left along the stone wall to reach the viewpoint besides the bridge over Skelwith Force waterfalls."

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Elterwater Tarn

Elterwater is a small lake lying half a mile south-east of the village of the same name and both are situated in the stunning valley of Great Langdale.

It is the smallest of the sixteen lakes in the National Park but it is perfectly formed.

It occupies a picturesque spot at the entrance to Great Langdale Valley and is flanked by the iconic and dramatic backdrop of the Langdale Pikes.

Situated at the heart of Lakeland, where the Langdale Beck joins the River Brathay, it sits 187 feet above sea level, measuring only around half a mile long.

It is fed by water from both the Great and Little Langdale Valleys and provides an important habitat for local wildlife which takes advantage of its quiet reed fringed shoreline.

The habitat it provides for wildlife has also led to its name.

Elterwater is derived from the old Norse for 'Lake of the Swans' and the lake is still visited today by whooper swans from Scandinavia and Siberia; the birds migrating to the tranquil waters during the winter months.

It's a privately owned lake but the National Trust hold land on the eastern and northern banks to allow the public access to the superbly panoramic views over the lake.

Elterwater can be reached, amongst other routes, via a pleasant half mile walk from Skelwith Bridge which follows the wending, rock strewn course of the River Brathay.

The River flows quietly and sedately out of Elterwater through magnificent scenery before continuing on its journey to Lake Windermere.

The name 'Brathay' is derived from the Old Norse word meaning broad river.

Close by is the lovely village of Elterwater through which the Langdale Beck flows to the lake.

The village is situated at the head of the Great and Little Langdale valleys and a mile from Elterwater Lake itself. It is flanked by bracken covered heathland and framed by the magnificent backdrop of the rugged Langdale Pikes.

A village green at it's heart is surrounded by a handful of shops and the white washed Britannia Inn with views across the green.

The village was once a centre for charcoal burning. Charcoal made from juniper was used locally in the production of gunpowder. The gunpowder works in the village operated as late as the 1920's.



Directions - getting there...

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Little Langdale

Little Langdale is a small hamlet consisting of a few stone houses, a post office and a village pub (pictured: Three Shires Inn) and is separated from Great Langdale by Lingmoor Fell in the lakes.

It is set at the head of Little Langdale, adjacent to Fell Foot farm, at the foot of the Wrynose Pass and can be reached via the narrow road that passes Blea Tarn.

It is approximately two miles away from where the old boundaries of the counties of Cumberland, Lancashire and Westmorland once met.

It is a quiet spot today but boasts a rich and colourful history.

The area contains rare remains of a Viking settlement, 'Ting Moot', where Viking open-air parliament was held and new laws proclaimed.

The Three Shires Inn, built from traditional slate in 1872 was named because of its location. Just two miles away, the old boundaries of the counties of Cumberland, Lancashire and Westmorland once met.

A nearby farmhouse once served as a haven for smugglers. There is a car park within walking distance at Low Tilberthwaite.

Wordsworth was a greater lover of the valley and describes it eloquently in one of his works. He appreciated the beauty and remoteness of this valley.

In his poem *The Excursion: Book Second: The Solitary*, he wrote:

... Beneath our feet, a little lowly vale, a lowly vale, and yet uplifted high among the mountains; even as if the spot had been from the eldest time by wish of theirs so placed, to be shut out from all the World!

Today the valley is a quiet and tranquil spot but it has not always enjoyed such a quiet outlook.

200 years ago, Langdale Village sat at the heart of a major intersection of all of the pack horse routes carrying goods around the area.

Roads coming from Ravenglass to the west, Whitehaven to the north west, Keswick to the north, Penrith and Carlisle to the north east, Ambleside to the east, Hawkshead to the south east and Coniston, Ulverston, Broughton and Barrow in Furness to the south all crossed here.



A picturesque cobbled bridge built between 1650 and 1750, Slaters Bridge was used to carry packhorses over the River Brathay as it flows out of Little Langdale Tarn. Undoubtedly one of the finest packhorse bridges to be found anywhere in the world, thought to have probably replaced the original wooden bridge.

Directions - getting there...

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Cathedral Quarry

The Cathedral quarries are a small network of inter-linked quarries above Little Langdale.

The National Trust managed The quarry is open to the public and managed by the National Trust who warn visitors that they enter at their own risk!

Make sure you read the signs at the entrance to the quarry, they will give you more information on the site and advice on safety when entering the site.

The quarry is frequented by rock climbers and whilst the quarry and tunnels are accessible by the public you should be aware that there are risks of rock falls.

The ground inside the quarry is rock strewn and often quite wet underfoot. If you're planning a visit to the quarry make sure that you take a torch along to get the most out of your visit to the site.

The Cathedral quarry cave system is best known for its main chamber, which stands at forty feet in height and illuminated by two windows off the main quarry itself.

If you fancy a change from the views of Langdale and are looking for something a little different then a trip below ground could be the answer.

Cathedral quarry can be accessed via several entrances but the entrance that is arguably the most fun is located on the Eastern hillside. You will see a sign at the entrance denoting that this is 'assembly point 2 in case of emergency.'

Entering here will take you along a long section of dark tunnel. It's big enough to negotiate with ease and although a torch is not strictly necessary here, it is advisable as there will often be a couple of inches of water and rocks and scree to negotiate underfoot. You will be able

to see glimpses of light at the end of the tunnel, but be warned that there is total darkness around the middle section.

The main entrance into Cathedral quarry will lead you to the dramatic 40 foot high chamber known as the cathedral which gives the site its name.

If you want more of a challenge you could try entering via a second entrance that leads in through a very short section of tunnel fairly well illuminated by daylight.



This entrance is located on the northern slope of the hill, above the ford and footbridge. A sign informs us this is Assembly Point 1.

In addition to the 'cathedral' you will find numerous tunnels to explore. Most will require a torch with one extending 400 feet into the hillside.

The disused slate quarry provides visitors with a fascinating experience and delivers

views which are as impressive as those of natural caves systems.

It will also giving you a glimpse into the industrial past of the area and a view of how nature has reclaimed the site since its closure.



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6

Langdale Boulders

The Langdale Boulders at Copt Howe, Chapel Stile have recently been designated by English Heritage as an ancient monument of national importance, following the discovery of prehistoric markings.



The site includes one of the most intricate and impressive examples of prehistoric rock art in Cumbria.

The designs on the rocks, which were only discovered in 1999, are thought to date from the Neolithic or Bronze Age and consist of concentric circles, spirals and geometric designs arranged around a series of natural depressions in the rock.



The exact meaning of the designs remain hotly debated, although some archaeologists believe they were created by people to help develop a sense of tenure, familiarity and belonging to the surrounding landscape.

The boulders are now cared for by the National Trust who undertake regular monitoring of the rock art to ensure the conservation of this important site.



The two panels of rock art were designated as Scheduled Monuments in 2000 by English Heritage in recognition of their importance and the carvings themselves are thought to be around 4,000 to 5,000 years old.

The Prehistoric carvings and boulders are close to the highly significant Neolithic axe factory at Langdale and are protected by the same laws.

Despite partial quarrying of one of the boulders, The Langdale Boulders prehistoric rock art sites in Great Langdale survive well despite a growing reputation amongst rock climbers who travel to the site from across the UK.



The Langdale Boulders, or perhaps more accurately, the Copt Howe erratics, have been helping to sharpen the technique and climbing strengths of generations of Lakes climbers.

Directions - getting there...

"From Langdale Estates main exit, turn left towards the centre of the small village of Chapel Stile. Take care following the lane through the village. You will see the boulders in the field to the right of the road."