

Wordsworth Summer Conference 2026

3 - 13 August 2026 at Rydal Hall



Inês Rosa - the Low Pike/High Pike Climb, 15 August 2023.

The Trustees of the Wordsworth Conference Foundation gratefully acknowledge a generous endowment towards bursaries from the late Ena Wordsworth and Richard Grivil. Other bursaries are funded by anonymous donors or by the Charity itself. The Trustees also wish to thank the staff at both The Wordsworth Trust and Rydal Hall for their hospitality to Conference participants throughout the event.

Regular Events

Early Morning walks: 07.15
Breakfast: 08.15 (earlier on changeover day)
 Coffee: 10.30 – 11.00
Dinner: 19.00 (later on changeover day)

The Wordsworth Conference Foundation

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Assistant Director

Jake Phipps

Walks Leaders

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Wordsworth Summer Conference Programme 3-13 August 2026

Notices **Keynote** **Lectures** **Special Events** **Leisure Events** **Tea/Meals** **Foundation Events**

(Names in **red** are bursary holders)

Leisure events, timings and destinations may subject to change to ensure the successful running of the Conference

Part One: 3-8 August

****Please see the notes on Lecture and Paper Presentations on page 10****

Monday 3 August

Travel 2025: All trains require a change at Oxenholme for Windermere connection.	Euston to Oxenholme 11.30–14.09 [direct] Manchester Airport to Oxenholme 11.04 –12.32, 12.04 –13.29, 13.04 –14.34 [direct] Glasgow Central to Oxenholme 12.40 – 14.24 [direct] Oxenholme to Windermere 14.39–14.56; 15.37–15.56; 16.33–16.53 [all direct] Bus 555 to Rydal Church bus stop leaves Windermere Station at 9 and 39 minutes past the hour (bus stop adjacent to station and Booths supermarket); bus 599 to Rydal Church bus stop leaves Windermere station every twenty minutes. Taxis are also available at the station. Web links for train and bus times and tickets are on page 8 of this programme.
1600	Tea [1600 – 1700]
1800	Welcome and Reception
1900	Dinner
2045	Reception & visit to Dove Cottage by Candlelight

Tuesday 4 August

0715	Early Morning Walk
0815	Breakfast
0915	Lecture 1: Madeleine Callaghan—John Keats: Risking the Self in Lyric
1030	Coffee
1115	Paper 1: Brian Bates : ‘Expostulation and Reply’ & ‘The Tables Turned’(1800) Once Again
1150	Paper 2: Joseph Albernaz : ‘Nameless Festivals’
1300	(Qualifying ‘A’ walk) – Nab Scar
1300	Walk from the door: The Rydal Cave and Loughrigg Terrace to Grasmere to see Allan Bank, St. Oswald's church, and the Wordsworth family graves. Return by the Coffin Path or 555 / 599 bus
1415	C option: An afternoon in Grasmere via 555 or 599 buses.
1730	Paper 3: Shuyu Guo : Unbinding Prometheus in Modern China: Shao Xunmei, P. B. Shelley, and the Subversion of Christian Imagery
1805	Paper 4: Sheng Yao : From Eden to Grasmere: Milton’s ‘Woody Theatre’ and Wordsworth’s Pageantry in Home at Grasmere
1900	Dinner
2030	Lecture 2: Paul Whickman—‘Scenes renowned for beauty’: Wordsworth’s Derbyshire and an ‘ingenuous poet of Derby’

Wednesday 5 August

0715	Early Morning Walk
0815	Breakfast
0915	Lecture 3: Sarah Zimmerman—Clare's Print Poetics
1030	Coffee
1115	Paper 5: David Garcia : Reading the Alfoxden Notebook
1150	Paper 6: Weiyan Li : Tracing Romantic Echoes: Bing Xin and the Transnational Afterlife of Wordsworth in Republican China
1300	A Walk — Wansfell Pike
1300	Walk from the door to Ambleside and Troutbeck, return by 555 from Brockhole
1730	Paper 7: Charles Mahoney : Hazlitt and Wordsworth (and Schlegel) and Shakespeare
1805	Paper 8: Nikolaos Anapliotis : The Social Imaginary in Wordsworth and Hölderlin: Beyond Constituent Power.
1900	Dinner
2030	Lecture 4: John Williams— Wordsworth's Glass Bead Game: Music, and the Fate of Culture in Time of War

Thursday 6 August

0715	Early Morning Walk
0815	Breakfast
0915	Lecture 5: Patrick Vincent —Liberal Imagination: Wordsworth versus Brougham
1030	Coffee
1115	Paper 9: Chia-Jung Lee : Wordsworth's Relational Landscapes: Textual Ecology, Ruins, and the Limits of Reconciliation
1150	Paper 10: Aaron Tan : Romantic Hexameter, The Cultural Mediation of Landscape, and Anthropological Philosophies of Nature via Wordsworth's 'The Pet-Lamb'
1300	A Walk — Todd Crag and Loughrigg
1300	By 555/599 bus to Brockhole Visitor Centre with stunning views of Windermere and the Langdale Pikes and an attractive tearoom.
1730	Paper 11: Hongxia Xu : 'No Prisoner Am I': Reclaiming Leisure through Care in Dorothy Wordsworth's 'Thoughts on My Sick-Bed'
1805	Paper 12: Katherine Nelson : Dorothy Wordsworth: Overcoming Illness in the Quest for Imagination
1900	Dinner

2030	Erica McAlpine— Poetry Reading
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Friday 7 August

0715	Early Morning Walk
0815	Breakfast
0915	Lecture 6: Emily Rohrbach—Landon, Keats, Wordsworth: Reading Environments
1030	Coffee
1115	Paper 13: Landi Huang: Moral Capital and National Aesthetic Education in Maria Edgeworth's <i>Harrington</i>
1150	Paper 14: Anne-Lise Francois: 'And the evening and the morning were the first day': Lines bound 'each to each', Seasonal Parenthesis and the Retreating Sun
1300	A Walk— Red Screes
1330	Lunch interval followed at 14. 40 by Saeko Yoshikawa's tour of the Rydal Hall grounds to visit the haunted ice house, the waterfalls and swimming holes, the hydro-electric dam, the ancient chestnut tree, the grotto and lower fall, and the formal garden.
1805	Wordsworth Conference Foundation AGM
1900	Dinner
2030	Auction of books and other items to support funding for future bursaries!! ☺

Saturday 8 August

Arrivals and Departures

Today's events before 1630 are for those attending both parts of the conference. It is not possible to provide transfers from or to Oxenholme or Windermere on this day: local buses 555 or 599 or shared taxis are advised. Web links for 2025 train and bus times and tickets are on page 8 of this programme. If there are spare seats, participants registered for only Part 1 or Part 2 may join one of the all-day events on payment of £15.00, but it is unlikely to be possible to spend an extra night at Rydal Hall to facilitate this.

0730	Breakfast and Part 1 checkout
0830	All-day AA Walk – Helvellyn from Wythburn and back via Grisedale Tarn and Tongue Gill
0900	Castlerigg Stone Circle, the chapel at St John's in the Vale, Low Bridge End Farm (by 555 bus)

Part Two: 8-13 August

****Please see the notes on Lecture and Paper Presentations on page 10****

Saturday 8 August

1730	Welcome for Part 2 participants
1745	Reception at Rydal Mount, with an opportunity to explore Wordsworth's garden

1915	Dinner
2030	Paper 15: Juliette Paul: Mary Wollstonecraft's trees
2105	Paper 16: Maggie Morgan: Forgetfulness and Realization in Wordsworth's 'Home at Grasmere'

Sunday 9 August

0715	Early Morning Walk
0815	Breakfast
0915	Lecture 7: James McKusick—George Perkins Marsh: Romantic Ecologist
1030	Coffee
1115	Paper 17: Zara Castagna: From Draft to Fair Copy: Dorothy Wordsworth's 'Thoughts on my Sick-Bed'(c.1832)
1150	Paper 18: Bruce Graver: Imagining Dorothy Wordsworth
1230	Lunch
1300	Walk from the door: a circular walk along the literary lane under Loughrigg to Ambleside Roman Fort, Wordsworth's tax office, Stockghyll waterfall, 'The Golden Rule' tavern, and return through Rydal Hall Park
1330	Watercolours workshop with Kate Marriott
1700	Lecture 8: Jake Phipps—Burns and Wordsworth: Affinity and Influence
1900	Dinner
2030	Paper 19: Piper Winkler: The Female Goethe: Wollstonecraft's Werther in Letters Written During a Short Residence
2105	Paper 20: Robert Nield: Still further portions of "The Recluse": James Hogg's responses to William Wordsworth

Monday 10 August

0715	Early Morning Walk
0815	Breakfast
0915	Lecture 9: Kaz Oishi—Wordsworth and Westminster Bridge: Visual Culture, the Urban Picturesque, and Romantic London
1030	Coffee
1115	Paper 21: James Aglio: A thieving Love
1150	Paper 22: Saeko Yoshikawa: Ruth Mary Wordsworth in Japan: Education, Missionary Work and Friendship
1300	Qualifying 'A' walk – High Pike & Low Pike

1315	Walk from the door: Elterwater and the Britannia Inn
1730	Paper 23: Margaret Russett: Wordsworth's Leech: 'Resolution' and 'Independence'
1805	Paper 24: Kristen Pond: 'This weary frame': Illness and Nature in the poetry of Dorothy Wordsworth, Dora Wordsworth, and Susanna Blamire
1900	Dinner
2030	Poetry Reading: Polly Atkin

Tuesday 11 August

0715	Early Morning Walk
0815	Breakfast
0915	Lecture 10: Herbert Tucker—Getting Intimate with the Intimations Ode
1030	Coffee
1115	Paper 25: Kira Welland: The Tortured Poet's Apartment: The Literature and Architecture of Rydal Mount
1150	Paper 26: Boróka Andl-Beck: Immobile Movement: Wordsworth's 'Gipsies' and the poet in Romantic landscapes
1300	A Walk – Stone Arthur from Grasmere
1315	Walk from the door: Coffin Path walk ('B') to Town End, to hear Melissa Mitchell, Curator at the Jerwood Centre, on Wordsworth Trust Treasures (from 1415). Return 'B' walk around Grasmere including a visit to the Heaton Cooper Gallery shop and Allan Bank (Wordsworth's home 1808-11). OR, 'C' option, take the 555 / 599 bus from Rydal Church to the stop opposite the Jerwood Centre, and return by same route.
1730	Paper 27: Mark Sandy: 'Unto Eve Surrendering': The Poetic Artistry of Birdsong and Evening Meditation in Leopardi, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and Hopkins
1805	Paper 28: Patty O'Boyle: Wordsworth's Revisioning of <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> in early texts of <i>The Prelude</i>
1900	Dinner
2030	Grevel Lindop—Poetry Reading

Wednesday 12 August

0715	Early Morning Walk
0815	Breakfast
0915	Paper 29: Alan Bean: 1826: Four paintings and a poem
0950	Paper 30: Yuzhi Chen: Picture the Poems: Shelley's Drawings as Gateways to His Wordsworthian Echoes and Symbol-Making
1030	Coffee

1115	Lecture 11: Gene Stelzig—'Such a figure in such a place': Wordsworth's Visionary Encounters with Solitary Figures
1300	A walk – Helm Crag & Far Easedale
1300	An afternoon in Keswick via the 555 bus, taking in the Southey grave, Greta Hall exterior, Derwentwater and the Ruskin memorial.
1900	Dinner
	Final evening party including Romantic Charades and Music at the Bar

Thursday 13 August

0815	Breakfast and Departures
0930	Transport to Windermere Railway Station for trains as follows: Windermere to Oxenholme 10.57–11. 16 [direct] Oxenholme to Euston 11.26 –14.12 [direct] to Manchester Airport 11.26–13.15 [one change] to Glasgow Central 12.12– 13.44 [direct] Web links for train and bus times and tickets are on page 8 of this programme.

Bursary Awards, 2026

Ena Wordsworth Bursary

Robert Nield
Nikolaos Anapliotis
Sheng Yao
Weiyan Li

Richard Wordsworth Bursary

Katherine Nelson
Landi Huang
Aaron Tan

Marilyn Gaul Bursary
Yuzhi Chen

Notes to Participants

TRAVEL

To research rail connections we suggest:

<https://www.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/>

<https://www.thetrainline.com/>

Bus routes 555 and 599 between Windermere, Rydal Church, and Grasmere:

<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/timetables>

There are frequent buses (routes 555 and 599) from and to Kendal / Keswick and Windermere Station, with a stop at Rydal Church for Rydal Hall. Local taxis can also be found at Windermere Station. Uber operates in the area.

AT THE CONFERENCE

BANKS/POST OFFICE/SHOPS: There are no banks, or ATMs, or shops at Rydal. At Grasmere there are ATMs in the Post Office (opposite the school) and in the Co-Op. Ambleside, accessible from Rydal Hall by car, by bus or on foot, has several banks and ATMs, a Boots pharmacy, numerous shops, and a main Post Office in the central square.

BOOTS: Please see our ‘Guidelines for Walkers 2026’ for a description of the kind of mountain boots and clothing required for all A-walks and advised for all other walks. **Low-cut approach shoes or all-terrain shoes are shoes, not boots, whatever their soles,** and would invalidate our risk assessment policy if worn on fell-walks. There are shops for outdoor clothing and boots in both Grasmere and Ambleside

CASH PAYMENTS: You are responsible for settling your own bar bill and returning your room key on departure and you may use credit cards for this purpose. We accept debit and credit card payments for sums due to the Wordsworth Conference Foundation. We cannot accept foreign currency, foreign cheques, or travellers’ cheques.

CHECK-IN and CHECKOUT: check in on both arrival dates is from 4pm. Check out is 10am.

CHILDREN: There are no child-minding facilities and parents are responsible for the supervision of children *at all times*. Children are not permitted to attend lectures or papers.

DOVE COTTAGE and THE JERWOOD CENTRE: Participants are made welcome at the Jerwood Centre for research purposes before, during and after the conference, but space is limited and it takes time to access unique materials. If you would like to use the Jerwood centre **please contact the Curator and Head of Learning Melissa Mitchell [Melissa.Mitchell@wordsworth.org.uk]** well before the event, indicating *what* you would like to use and *when*. **Please ensure that you take your Conference name badge with you for free access to Dove Cottage and the Museum.**

DOWNTIME: Participants are at liberty to take time out at any point, if they wish to relax or do their own thing outside the scheduled programme of the conference. Please note however that the terms and conditions of bursary awards require attendance at all programmed conference events.

GRATUITIES: We collect gratuities for Rydal Hall staff towards the end of Part 1 and Part 2 of the conference, which means that you may want to ensure that you have sufficient cash to meet this eventuality! We usually suggest about £30 for those staying ten nights.

LAUNDRY: The nearest laundry facility is the beautiful Ambleside Laundrette on Kelsick Road. Go to <https://www.laundrylocations.co.uk/laundry/347920/ambleside-laundrette> for details.

LECTURE AND PAPER PRESENTATIONS: All lectures and papers are as scheduled. Lecture slots are 1 hour and 15 minutes: questions should not continue after 10.30 a.m. or 9.45 pm. Panels with two 20-minute papers last 70 minutes and the changeover should take place 35 minutes into the session; panels with three papers last 105 minutes and the changeovers take place 35 and 70 minutes into the session. **As a courtesy to fellow speakers and the audience, please ensure that you stick to**

the 20 minutes allotted to each paper presentation: our twenty-minute Hour Glass, Thomas the Tymer, will be vigilant. On days with walks and excursions, morning panels will finish to allow time to get lunch and prepare for the afternoon's activities. Lectures and paper panels will be in the Rydal Hall Lounge.

MOBILE PHONES: Rydal is a hamlet surrounded by mountains, so please be aware that it can sometimes be difficult to get a signal. If you use your mobile with the Rydal Hall WIFI please be considerate by refraining from making or receiving mobile calls late at night – these always disturb neighbouring rooms.

POWERPOINT: If you have a presentation for your lecture / paper, please send it in *PowerPoint format* to:

wordsworthsummerconference@gmail.com

Please ensure that you 1) **include your name and paper title in the email's subject line**; and 2) send it **at least 24 hours before** your presentation, so that the program runs smoothly. If you wish to connect your own computer to the projector, please bring your own adaptor. No adaptors will be provided. The screen has both an HDMI port and a RGB Input jack.

PRINTING: The conference organizers have no printing facilities at Rydal Hall, and Rydal Hall staff must not be asked to undertake photocopying: if you need a handout please bring sufficient copies with you (50 should normally suffice).

WIFI: The WIFI available for residents in Rydal Hall has been upgraded and is now much better than it was in previous years.

YOUR ADDRESS DURING THE CONFERENCE IS: Rydal Hall, Rydal, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9LX UK.

Attendance at WSC 2026 and at WCF events at Rydal Hall, 3-13 August 2026, is at the discretion of the Director and Board of Trustees.

The 'A' Walks (subject to weather!)

All participants on 'A' walks must have read and agreed to the 'Guidelines for Walkers 2026' in this programme and have acquired suitable weather-proof clothes and hiking boots. You must complete the 'Qualifying "A" Walk' to make the other more demanding ascents on this programme.

Tuesday 4 August

Nab Scar

Nab Scar (455m) is a short and testing climb, a pleasing appetiser for Helvellyn, Red Screes, and High Pike and Low Pike.



Wednesday 5 August

Wansfell Pike

Starting from the Salutation Hotel, Ambleside, the climb to Wansfell Pike is steep and challenging but is stone pitched most of the way. En route, you will go past the breathtaking Stock Ghyll Force, a waterfall over 70ft high, while the views from the Pike itself are staggering, and well worth the effort.

Thursday 6 August

Todd Crag and Loughrigg

Todd Crag (224 m) is a short, demanding, yet not too challenging climb, and from the summit offers 'insane views' extending over Windermere and Ambleside.

Friday 7 August

Red Screes via Ambleside

Red Screes sit right next to the Kirkstone Pass from where a direct approach is tempting. However, this would be difficult for the slopes are steep and covered with crags and scree. Our better approach lies in the Scandale Pass from Ambleside with a return on the long southerly ridge to make a fine circular climb.

Saturday 8 August

AA climb: Helvellyn from Wythburn, return via Grisedale Tarn, Tongue Gill, and the Traveller's Rest

A classic ascent, from Wythburn Chapel beside Thirlmere. Helvellyn (950m) is the third highest mountain in England and the Lake District with, as you would expect, stunning views to all points of the compass. Return via Grisedale Tarn with an opportunity to view the Brothers' Parting Stone (a rock etched with an inscription from Wordsworth's poem in memory of his last meeting with his brother John, September

1800. William, John and their sister Dorothy had walked from their home, Dove Cottage in Grasmere, to Grisedale Tarn. Four years later John died when his ship was wrecked). Descend along Tongue Gill, with the possibility of refreshments at the Traveller's Rest Inn before a leisurely ramble along the Coffin Path back to Rydal.



Monday 10 August

High Pike / Low Pike

Walkers will skirt by stately Rydal Park and then up via High Sweden Coppice to Low Pike and High Pike. Perhaps onwards for a sighting of Dove Crag, before heading round via Scandale Pass and back to Rydal via the ancient High Sweden Bridge (thought to date from the 18c but possibly older). An excellent introduction to fell climbing for those arriving for part 2 of the conference programme.

Tuesday 11 August

Stone Arthur from Grasmere

The top of Stone Arthur is visible from Grasmere where we will begin the ascent. An outlier of the famed 'Fairfield Horseshoe' on the edge of Great Rigg, this is a steep but rewarding climb, offering magnificent views of Grasmere, Easedale Tarn and Scafell.

Wednesday 12 August

Helm Crag and Far Easedale

Helm Crag is short and sweet: only 405m, but it dominates views of Grasmere and provided some of its building stone. From the top of Helm Crag there is a long ridge walk, ascending gradually to Calf Pike, before the (even longer) descent through Far Easedale (with an awkward beck to cross in wet weather) and back to Grasmere, possibly with time for a drink. Return by Coffin Path, if there is time, or by 555 / 599 bus.



Local 'B' Walks and Events

Tuesday 4 August

from Rydal to Grasmere and back ...



A Wordsworth Summer Conference Classic. This scenic **B-walk** will visit the Rydal Cave Slate Mine and Loughrigg Terrace (scene of Book 9 of *The Excursion*) with its wonderful view of Grasmere. We shall visit the Wordsworth family graves. Return via the Coffin Path or 555 / 599 bus. About 5.5 miles, and includes nothing that could be called a climb. **Boots strongly recommended. Seriously good walking shoes are essential.**

the Dove Cottage site, St Oswald's church, the Heaton Cooper Studio, Sam Reed's bookstore, and Wordsworth's home at Allen Bank.

Alternative option: An excursion – By 555 or 559 bus for the afternoon in Grasmere, with opportunity to revisit

Wednesday 5 August

Thursday 6 August

Brockhole Visitor Centre

By 555/599 bus to Brockhole Visitor Centre with stunning views of Windermere and the Langdale Pikes and an attractive tearoom. Return by bus or via the quite demanding footpaths to Ambleside.

Friday 7 August

Rydal Hall Grounds

An enjoyable ramble around the picturesque grounds of Rydal Hall, visiting the haunted ice house, waterfalls and swimming holes, the Gilkes and Gordon hydro-electric installation, the ancient chestnut tree, the grotto and lower waterfall, and the formal garden. **Good walking shoes essential.**



Saturday 8 August

Castlerigg Stone Circle, the chapel at St John's in the Vale, and Low Bridge End Farm

By 555 bus to view Castlerigg Stone Circle and its spectacular setting with views to magnificent Helvellyn. This is the 'Druid temple' visited by John Keats and Charles Brown, 28 June 1818, while en route to Scotland: 'those aged stones, on a gentle rise in the midst of Mountains, which at that time darkened all round'. We will then walk to the pretty chapel of St. John in the Vale, and along to enjoy refreshments at Low Bridge End Farm before returning to Rydal on the 555 bus from the Thirlmere Dam turn.

Sunday 9 August

B option: a circular walk under Loughrigg to Ambleside Roman Fort, Wordsworth's tax office, and Stockghyll waterfall. Return via Rydal Park or 555 / 599 bus.

Another Wordsworth Summer Conference classic. A delightful ramble along the quiet track Under Loughrigg, the most literary lane in Britain. We will pass Loughrigg Cottage, holiday home of Woodrow Wilson; Stepping Stones, home of Wordsworth's son, William; Loughrigg Holme, where Wordsworth's daughter Dora lived with her husband, the poet Edward Quillinan; Fox Ghyll, for a time home to Thomas de Quincey, and Fox Howe, summer home of Dr. Thomas Arnold, famous headmaster of Rugby School, and his son the poet Matthew Arnold. Thence back in time 1800 years to *Galava*, the second-century Roman Fort on the shore of Windermere at Ambleside. Finally, we shall explore Stock Ghyll waterfalls, visited by John Keats in summer 1818. Optional refreshments at 'The Golden Rule' tavern, the original Wordsworth Summer Conference watering-hole in the 1970s. Return to Rydal Hall will be via footpaths or by 555 / 599 bus. **Boots strongly recommended. Seriously good walking shoes essential.**

Alternatively, join Kate Marriott for her much-loved watercolour painting workshop in Rydal Hall gardens.

Monday 10 August

Melissa Mitchell on Treasures of the Wordsworth Trust, the Jerwood Centre, Town End

A ramble along the Coffin Path walk to Town End, where Curator Melissa Mitchell will present her annual talk about Wordsworth Trust Treasures in the Jerwood Centre reading room. This event, by courtesy of Wordsworth Grasmere, is always a highpoint of the Summer Conference and a good opportunity to learn about the current work and activities of the Wordsworth Trust. Return through Grasmere with options to visit the Heaton Cooper Gallery shop and Allan Bank, Wordsworth's home 1808-11. **Good walking shoes essential.**



Alternative option – by 555 or 599 bus to Town End and the Jerwood Centre.

Tuesday 11 August

Elterwater and the Britannia Inn

A ramble along Rydal water and across Loughrigg Terrace, then over red bank to picturesque Elterwater and the Britannia Inn. Return via Loughrigg Tarn and the lane under Loughrigg. **Boots strongly recommended. Seriously good walking shoes essential.**

Wednesday 12 August

Ambleside and Loughrigg

Across Rydal Park too Ambleside, though the town and then a brisk ascent through Skelghyll Wood to contour across the lower slopes of Wansfell to the pretty village of Troutbeck and the 'Mortal Man' pub. Return by 555 buys from Brockhole turn.



WORDSWORTH SUMMER CONFERENCE AND WINTER SCHOOL WALKS AND EXCURSIONS: GUIDELINES FOR WALKERS 2026

If you plan to join the 'A' or 'B' walks you **MUST** read the following advice, and equip yourself accordingly with boots and high visibility and weatherproof clothing.

The Wordsworth Conference and Winter School are well known for their outdoor element, including fell walks, which are offered as an optional alternative to excursions or local walks. Neither the Conference nor the Winter School is run as an outdoor course, and those who choose to participate in fell walks do so as responsible adults and at their own risk. Because this is primarily a conference, and we have to get back for the next event, fell walks are faster, and involve fewer stops, than most people are used to. Unless you are used to climbing a thousand feet an hour, with few stops, or covering at least three miles an hour on the flat (*including flat uplands!*) you may find our fell walks, particularly at the Summer Conference, too challenging.

Risks

Walking in the Lake District is made dangerous by rapid changes in the weather. Hail is not infrequent in high Summer and icy paths are a normal hazard in Winter. The terrain is steep and the 'paths' are frequently eroded or eroding, or 'paved' with awkwardly shaped stones: they can be almost equally hazardous in wet or excessively dry conditions.

The primary risks of fell-walking are falling, exposure, separation from the group, mist, dehydration, exhaustion and minor abrasions. To minimize these risks to yourself and others you must undertake to follow the advice below at all times:

Falling: you are very unlikely to fall any distance, but you are very likely to slip, slide, or trip, possibly twisting an ankle or breaking a bone. To minimize such risks we require that you follow the advice on footwear overleaf. *Our standards are higher in this respect than most organizations and we do require compliance.*

Exposure: more people die from exposure than from accidents: to minimize the risk of fatal chill always carry the items of clothing recommended overleaf, *whatever the conditions* at the start of the walk.

Separation from the group: it is essential that members of a group stay within a reasonable distance of each other even in good visibility, so that the walk leader can remain in touch with those at the back. Never leave the group unless you have agreed this with the group leader; always alert the person in front of you if having difficulty; never go ahead unless asked to.

Mist: in misty conditions it may not be possible to see from front to back even of the smallest walking party. Always keep within sight of the person in front of and behind you, and raise the alarm *immediately* if you lose contact. *All* members of the group must take responsibility for ensuring that any such alert reaches the walks leader promptly.

Exhaustion: always keep a high energy component of your packed lunch for use in an emergency, and alert the group leader if you feel unable to keep up for any reason.

Dehydration: even on a winter afternoon it is wise to carry half a litre of water to prevent lethargy and dizziness; in summer a litre may be required, and possibly more on an all-day walk.

Minor abrasions: to reduce wear and tear on feet please follow the guidelines on boots and socks overleaf, ensure that your boots fit well, and cut your toenails (the commonest cause of discomfort, which can cause accidents, is the nail of one toe slicing into the skin of the next!).

Our Procedures

The safety of all members of any group is our prime concern. Walks leaders and their deputies (most often deployed as back marker) are familiar with the terrain and the route; they carry a compass, map, hypothermia bag and first aid kit; they will always adjust the pace of a walk for anyone who is having difficulty, or assign a appropriate companion in the very rare event that anyone without local knowledge has to leave the group for whatever reason.

We cannot guarantee that all walks will be undertaken in ideal weather or that they will be without the risks inherent in fell walking, but we always seek to minimise risks, and we do reserve the right to cancel or amend a planned walk if conditions are inappropriate or seem unlikely to improve.

Before joining the walks please discuss with the leader(s) any **medical problems** you may have which could affect your safety (and that of others) on the fells.

Essential equipment for fell-walks:

Walking boots. These are defined by (1) ankle support, (2) lateral rigidity (you should not be able to twist them easily); (3) good (preferably Vibram) soles, (4) a sharp (not rounded) heel so you can dig in rather than slide downhill, (5) a definite 'step' between sole and heel so that you can hook on to rock.

These characteristics are essential for walking quickly and safely over the usual year-round Lakeland hazards of loose stones, mud-slides, scree slopes, wet grass or wet rock. Whatever their makers or retailers may say, the item in column 2 is *not* a boot. The **boots** in column 1 below cost about £10 to £15 more than the **shoe** in column 2, and may even keep your feet dry.

1. These walking boots meet our criteria for fell walks 	2. A good multi-activity shoe, adequate only for low-level walks. 	3. Fine on made paths or an excursion, but not for 'off-road' walks 
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Trainers or so-called 'multi-activity shoes' or 'approach shoes' as illustrated in column 2 may be acceptable for the terrain you are used to, and they are sold in lake district shops *for low level walks*, e.g. around lakes, but it is foolish to rely on them for high-level walks. A high quality 'multi-activity shoe' with a serious tread (column 2) will be accepted for the lower-level walks—though they usually cost nearly as much as a boot and you would be better advised to go for the real thing. For safety reasons we cannot permit anyone to join a fell-walk who is not wearing boots as defined above— *you will not be permitted to join the group, and we ask that you do not cause delay by attempting to do so.* Sandals, high-heeled shoes, city shoes, flip-flops or flimsy trainers will not be acceptable on **any** walks except incidental walks during excursions.

Clothing and equipment: a high visibility water- and wind-proof anorak, long trousers in quick-drying fabrics (no jeans); a sweater or fleece or both; gloves, preferably waterproof; seamless inner socks and cushioned outer socks. A sun-hat, sun-screen cream, and insect repellent are strongly recommended in summer **plus a water bottle which you can refill from the tap in your room.**

Optional equipment: waterproof over-trousers; gaiters; blister treatments; a stick, staff or walking poles.

Plus: A light pack containing a packed lunch; weather proof upper clothing; additional energizing foods; and at least a half-litre bottle of water (a litre for an all-day walk in summer).

YOU WILL NOT BE PERMITTED ON ANY A-WALK WITHOUT ADEQUATE WEATHER PROTECTION. WARM CLOTHING, INCLUDING HAT AND GLOVES, IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE HIGHEST LEVEL WALKS, ESPECIALLY THE ALL-DAY WALK. FAILURE TO CARRY THESE CAN RESULT IN A WALK BEING CURTAILED FOR EVERYONE ELSE.

Please note: carrying an adequate packed lunch is a requirement on fell walks, not an option.



Remember your WSC **2027** dates for next year: Monday 2 August to Thursday 12 August 2027.



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