

Wordsworth Summer Conference 2025



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 The Wordsworth Trust, Rydal Hall, and Rydal Mount 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 changeover day)

The Wordsworth Conference Foundation

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Wordsworth Summer Conference Programme 4-14 August 2025

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: 4-9 August

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

Monday 4 August

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| Travel 2025: All trains require a change at Oxenholme for Windermere connection. | Euston to Oxenholme 11.30–14.09 [direct] Manchester Airport to Oxenholme 12.04 –13.29, 13.04 –14.34 [direct] Glasgow Central to Oxenholme 12.40 – 14.23 [direct] Oxenholme to Windermere 14.39–14.56; 15.37–15.56; 16.32–16.52 [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 Boots 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 10 of this programme. |
| 1600 | Tea [1600 – 1700] |
| 1800 | Welcome and Reception |
| 1900 | Dinner |
| 2045 | Reception & visit to Dove Cottage by Candlelight |

Tuesday 5 August

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|-------------|---------------------------|
| 0715 | Early Morning Walk |
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| 0815 | Breakfast |
| 0915 | Lecture 1: Fiona Robertson — Scott, Wordsworth, and the Dissolution of the North |
| 1030 | Coffee |
| 1115 | Paper 1: Charles Mahoney — ‘Wild Wandrings’: Coleridge and the Poetics of Surmise (University of Connecticut) |
| 1150 | Paper 2: Kurt Fosso — Coleridge’s ‘Raven’ and Natural History (Lewis and Clark College) |
| 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 | Alternative option: An afternoon in Grasmere via 555 or 599 buses. |
| 1730 | Paper 3: Emily Rohrbach — Codex Attachments: William Hazlitt, Bibliopolitics against Apostasy (Durham University) |
| 1805 | Paper 4: Angie Dunstan — ‘The Discipline of Wordsworth’: The Wordsworth Society and the Evolution of English Studies (Queen Mary University London) |
| 1900 | Dinner |
| 2030 | Lecture 2: Meiko O'Halloran — ‘To fresh woods, and pastures new’: Keats, Wordsworth, and the Pastoral Epic |

Wednesday 6 August

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| 0715 | Early Morning Walk |
| 0815 | Breakfast |
| 0915 | Lecture 3: Jacob Lloyd — Licence and Liberty in Wordsworth’s ‘Ode to Duty’ |
| 1030 | Coffee |

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| 1115 | Paper 5: Jon Quayle — ‘Oh, were they but a bird!’: Wishful Thinking and Daydreaming in Clare’s Poetry (Newcastle University) |
| 1150 | Paper 6: Inês Rosa — A not-so-subtle nostalgia: Wordsworth and the French Revolution (University of Lisbon) |
| 1300 | A Walk — Stone Arthur from Grasmere |
| 1400 | B: Castlerigg Stone Circle and the chapel at St John's in the Vale (by minibus - numbers limited) |
| 1730 | Paper 7: Lauren Cooper — The Wordsworths’ Little Ice Age: Climate Injustice in Dorothy Wordsworth’s Grasmere Journals (Syracuse University) |
| 1805 | Paper 8: Deborah Pfuntner — Dorothy Wordsworth and Resisting the Dunning-Kruger Effect (Independent Scholar) |
| 1900 | Dinner |
| 2030 | Lecture 4: John Williams: ‘Ill met by moonlight’: The Waxing and Waning of the Wordsworth Circle |

Thursday 7 August

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| 0715 | Early Morning Walk |
| 0815 | Breakfast |
| 0915 | Lecture 5: Fiona Stafford — ‘And time will come’: Wordsworth's Fields of Hope’ |
| 1030 | Coffee |
| 1115 | Paper 9: Zara Castagna — The Friendship of Dorothy Wordsworth and Thomas de Quincey (University of Birmingham) |
| 1150 | Paper 10: Margaret Russett — The Stoniness of the Stone (University of Southern California) |
| 1300 | A Walk — Todd Crag and Loughrigg |
| 1330 | Walk from the door: a leisurely ramble along the Coffin Path, with time to inspect the 'resting stones', then through the lane over White Moss with a pause at the 'Wishing Gate', along the |

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| | shore of Rydal Water to the stepping stones across the River Rothay, and then back across the Rydal Park. |
| 1730 | Paper 11: Shuyu Guo — Between Grief and Revolution: Allegory of Trauma in Percy Bysshe Shelley and Guo Moruo (University of Connecticut) |
| 1805 | Paper 12: Paul Stephens — Shelley’s Numerical Quotations (University of York) |
| 1900 | Dinner |
| 2030 | Lecture 6: Greg Leadbetter — A Poetry Reading |
| 2200 | Erica McAlpine launches her new collection of poems — <i>Small Pointed Things</i> |

Friday 8 August

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| 0715 | Early Morning Walk |
| 0815 | Breakfast |
| 0915 | Lecture 7: David Stewart — ‘Hab nab at a venture’: Getting Lost with Walter Scott |
| 1030 | Coffee |
| 1115 | Paper 13: Brian G. Caraher — Wordsworth’s Trip Round Ireland, August to October, 1829 (Queen’s University Belfast) |
| 1150 | Paper 14: Tonya Moutray — “My brother and the nuns are very merry”: Wordsworth’s Memorials of a Tour of the Continent (1822) and Dorothy Wordsworth’s Continental Journal (1820) (Russell Sage College) |
| 1330 | Lunch interval |
| 14:40 | Tour of the Rydal Hall grounds - a 'B' walk to visit the haunted icehouse, the waterfalls and swimming holes, the hydro-electric dam, the ancient chestnut tree, the grotto and lower fall, and the formal garden. |
| 1700 | Paper 15: Tammuz Frankel — ‘Perplex’d and cannot part’: Facing Autobiography in <i>The Prelude</i> (Princeton University) |
| 1735 | Paper 16: Marie Hulme — The Depiction of Childhood in the Poetry of William Wordsworth (Sacred Heart University) |

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| 1900 | Dinner |
| 2030 | Auction of books and other items to support funding for future bursaries!! Wine on the House ☺ |

Saturday 9 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.

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| 0730 | Breakfast and Part 1 checkout |
| 0830 | All-day AA Walk – Helvellyn from Wythburn and back via Grisedale Tarn and Tongue Gill |
| 0900 | An all-day minibus excursion to Wordsworth House Cockermouth, J. B. Banks hardware store and museum, the grave of John Wordsworth, and other local attractions (by minibus - numbers limited) |

Part Two: 9-14 August

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

Saturday 9 August

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| 1730 | Welcome for Part 2 participants |
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| 1745 | Reception and Book Launch at Rydal Mount, with an opportunity to explore Wordsworth's garden |
| 1915 | Dinner |
| 2030 | Paper 17: James Aglio — L.E.L.'s Lakes of the Imagination (Boston University) |
| 2105 | Paper 18: Scott Hubbard — 'As if Admonished from Another World': Apophatic Encounter in <i>The Prelude</i> (University of South Carolina) |

Sunday 10 August

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| 0715 | Early Morning Walk |
| 0815 | Breakfast |
| 0915 | Lecture 8: James Engell — Wordsworth's Longinian Ideal: Milton 'Within my private thoughts' |
| 1030 | Coffee |
| 1115 | Paper 19: Ian Haywood — 'Remote from Every Taint of Sordid Industry': A New Reading of Wordsworth's River Duddon Sonnets (University of Roehampton) |
| 1150 | Paper 20: Paul Whickman — 'What art thou, Life!': Elegy, Romanticism and the sonnet Revival in Brooke Boothby's <i>Sorrows. Sacred to the Memory of Penelope</i> (1796) (University of Derby) |
| 1230 | Lunch and Wordsworth Conference Foundation AGM |
| 1330 | Walk from the door: a circular walk along the literary lane under Loughrigg to enjoy the ruin of Ambleside Roman Fort on the shore of Windermere, Wordsworth's tax office, Stockghyll waterfall, and 'The Golden Rule' tavern. Return via Rydal Park or 555/599 bus. |
| 1330 | Alternative option: Watercolours — a workshop with Kate Marriott in the garden of Rydal Hall given good weather. |
| 1730 | Lecture 9: David Garcia — Cornell Wordsworths |
| 1900 | Dinner |

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| 2030 | Paper 21: Patrick Vincent — ‘Comfortable’ Inns and ‘Huge’ Hotels: The Wordsworths on the Continent (University of Neuchâtel) |
| 2105 | Paper 22: Bruce Graver — Sleeping in Queen Caroline’s Bed, and Other Odd Bits (Providence College) |

Monday 11 August

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| 0715 | Early Morning Walk |
| 0815 | Breakfast |
| 0915 | Lecture 10: Terry Robinson — Wordsworth and Siddons |
| 1030 | Coffee |
| 1115 | Paper 23: Saeko Yoshikawa — Trees and Tourism: Wordsworth’s Italian Tour of 1837 (Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, Japan) |
| 1150 | Paper 24: Jake Phipps — ‘So long and fair and beautiful’: Lord Byron’s Letters from Milan (Cardiff University) |
| 1300 | Qualifying ‘A’ walk – Helm Crag and Far Easedale (by local bus to Grasmere, option of returning if time permits via the Coffin Path). |
| 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. |
| 1700 | Paper 25: Kimiyo Ogawa — Jane Austen in Asia — a Case Study of Japan (Sophia University) |
| 1735 | Paper 26: Keerthi Vashista — William and John Wordsworth, Part 2 (Durham University) |
| 1810 | Paper 27: Elizabeth Way — Adaptation Matters: Felicia Hemans’s <i>The Forest Sanctuary</i> and Edmund Spenser’s <i>The Faerie Queene</i> (High Point University) |
| 1900 | Dinner |

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| 2030 | Lecture 11: Nicholas Roe — 'Of necessity a painful retrospect': Leigh Hunt's <i>Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries</i> as a pioneering modern biography |
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Tuesday 12 August

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| 0715 | Early Morning Walk |
| 0815 | Breakfast |
| 0915 | Lecture 12: Kate Singer — Dorothy's Flora, Keats's Lamia, and James Allen's Horses: Shapeshifting and the Labours of Slow Change |
| 1030 | Coffee |
| 1115 | Paper 28: Aditi Jain — 'Yet are they here?': Wordsworth's Poetics of Interruption (Independent Scholar) |
| 1150 | Paper 29: Sara Yaya Hamed — Unreferenced Myths Borrowed from the <i>Arabian Nights Entertainment</i> and its <i>Continuation</i> in Southey's <i>Thalaba the Destroyer</i> (University of Edinburgh) |
| 1300 | A Walk – Wansfell Pike |
| 1315 | Walk from the door: by 555 / 599 bus to Grasmere, then 'B' walk and climb to Easedale Tarn; return by Coffin Path or 555 / 599 bus to Rydal Church |
| 1900 | Dinner |
| 2030 | Lecture 13: Grevel Lindop — Writing <i>A Literary Guide to the Lake District</i> |

Wednesday 13 August

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| 0715 | Early Morning Walk |
| 0815 | Breakfast |
| 0915 | Paper 30: Patty O'Boyle — 'No, not Imagination, Heart, Heart', Michael O'Neill. |

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| | The return to the body in Wordsworth and Coleridge (Independent Scholar) |
| 0950 | Paper 31: Susie Cochran — The Powers of Music in James Hogg’s Literary Work |
| 1030 | Coffee |
| 1115 | Lecture 14 – Mina Gorji — Listening to Echoes: Wordsworth's 'Winander' |
| 1300 | AA Walk - Fairfield Horseshoe |
| 1300 | Hawkshead Grammar School and Library, Colthouse and the Quaker Meeting Room (by minibus - numbers limited) |
| 1900 | Dinner |
| | Final evening party including Romantic Charades and Music at the Bar |

Thursday 14 August

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| 0815 | Breakfast and Departures |
| 0930 | <p>Transport to Windermere Railway Station for trains as follows:</p> <p>Windermere to Oxenholme 10.57–11. 16 [direct]</p> <p>Oxenholme to Euston 11.26 –14.15 [direct] to Manchester Airport 11.26–13.15 [one change] to Glasgow Central 11.28–14.02 [direct]</p> <p>Our minibus transfer to Windermere Station must be pre-booked with Kate by 1 August. Spaces are limited to 16 and only those who have booked will travel.</p> <p>Web links for train and bus times and tickets are on page 10 of this programme.</p> |

Bursary Awards, 2025

Ena Wordsworth Bursary

Susie Cochran

Aditi Jain
Lauren Cooper

Richard Wordsworth Bursary

Zara Castagna
Shuyu Guo

William Knight Bursary

Scott Hubbard
Sara Yahya Hamed

Marilyn Gaull Bursary

Inês Rosa

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>

We will arrange one transfer bus from Rydal Hall to Windermere railway station at the end of the conference. Seats are limited to 16 passengers, **and you must pre-book with Kate by 1 August. No pre-booking, no travel!** At other times there are frequent buses (routes 555 and 599) from and to Kendal and Windermere Station, with a stop at Rydal Church for Rydal Hall. Local taxis can also be found at Windermere Station.

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 2025’ 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 numerous 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 1500. Check out is 10.00 a.m.

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 and bus drivers 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.

INSECT REPELLENT: We strongly recommend that you bring some insect repellent for all outdoor activities. There are no dangerous insects in the Lake District, but mosquitoes, wasps and other insects can be a nuisance.

LAUNDRY: The nearest laundry facility is the 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 Hourglass, 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: There will be a projector linked to the WSC Windows PC. If you have a presentation for your lecture / paper, please send it in *PowerPoint format* to:

wordsworthconferenceppt@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 projector 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.

Attendance at WSC 2025 and at WCF events at Rydal Hall, 4-14 August 2025, 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 2025' in this programme and have acquired suitable weather-proof clothes

and hiking boots. You must complete the 'Qualifying "A" Climb' to make the other more demanding ascents on this programme.

Tuesday 5 August

Nab Scar

Nab Scar (455m), the qualifying 'A' climb for Part 1, is a short and testing ascent, a pleasing appetiser for Helvellyn and the Fairfield Horseshoe.



Wednesday 6 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.

Thursday 7 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. There is a fun but tricky descent back towards Rydal, involving many ferns. Bring insect repellent!

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.



Helm Crag and Far Easedale

Helm Crag, the qualifying 'A' climb for Part 2, 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 lovely 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.

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.

Fairfield Horseshoe

AA climb: The Fairfield Horseshoe is a classic Lake District walk and deserves its popularity, rewarding the walker with fine views overlooking much of Lakeland. The distance is moderate - 16.4km (10.2 miles) - and as the summit is just under 300 metres it might not seem challenging, but do not be deceived: this is a serious climb, described by Alfred Wainwright as follows: *'From the south it appears as a great horseshoe of grassy slopes below a consistently high skyline...but lacking those dramatic qualities that appeal most to the lover of hills. But on the north side the Fairfield range is magnificent: here are dark precipices, long fans of scree ... desolate combs and deep valleys'*.



Local 'B' Walks and Events

Tuesday 5 August

from Rydal to Grasmere and back ...



A Wordsworth Summer Conference Classic. This scenic ramble 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.***

Alternative option: An excursion – By 555 or 559 bus for the afternoon in Grasmere, with opportunity to revisit the Dove Cottage site, St Oswald's church, the Heaton Cooper Studio, Sam Reed's bookstore, and Wordsworth's home at Allen Bank.

Wednesday 6 August

Castlerigg Stone Circle and the chapel at St John's in the Vale

By minibus 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'. If time permits we will also visit the pretty chapel of St. John in the Vale though the drive in a minibus is somewhat testing.

Thursday 7 August

Walk from the door

This will be a leisurely ramble along the Coffin Path, with time to inspect the 'resting stones', and the lane over White Moss with a pause at the 'Wishing Gate', along the far shore of Rydal Water to the stepping stones across the River Rothay, a short stretch on the pavement beside the busy A591, and then back across the pastoral expanse of Rydal Park with its hydro-electric power station.

Friday 8 August

Rydal Hall

Grounds

An enjoyable stroll around the picturesque grounds of Rydal Hall, visiting the haunted icehouse, waterfalls and swimming holes, the Gilkes and Gordon hydro-electric installation, the ancient chestnut tree, the grotto and lower fall, the formal garden, and - finally - the inscribed stone in Dora's Field. ***Good walking shoes essential.***



Saturday 9 August

The All-Day Excursion

By minibus via Keswick to visit the ancient market town of Cockermouth to visit Wordsworth's birthplace and childhood home with its beautiful riverside garden; the J. B. Banks traditional hardware store and museum, dating from 1836; and the

grave of John Wordsworth, the poet's father, who died after a short illness on 30 December 1783. Opportunities for visiting local shops and pubs.



Sunday 10 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 11 August

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

A ramble along the Coffin Path brings us 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 12 August

Easedale Tarn

Walk from the Door: by 555 / 599 bus to Grasmere, followed by a walk up the Easedale Road, a pastoral riverside path leading to a brisk and in places quite

steep climb up to view beautiful Easedale Tarn. Return via the Coffin Path or 555 / 599 bus. ***Boots strongly recommended. Seriously good walking shoes essential.***



Wednesday 13 August

By minibus to Hawkshead Grammar School and Library, Colthouse, and the Quaker Meeting Room.

A visit to the school attended by Wordsworth, 1779-1787, where the schoolroom he had known remains wholly intact, along with the now carefully restored library collection of books-- many of which would have been familiar to him. A short walk brings us to the picturesque hamlet of Colthouse, where Wordsworth may have boarded, and an opportunity to visit the Quaker Meeting Room and the pretty hillside graveyard - another location that he would have known well.



WORDSWORTH SUMMER CONFERENCE AND WINTER SCHOOL WALKS AND EXCURSIONS: GUIDELINES FOR WALKERS 2025

If you plan to join the ‘A’ or ‘B’ walks you MUST read the following advice and equip yourself accordingly with boots 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 must 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 hazardous 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 always follow the advice below:

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.

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| <p>1. These walking boots meet our criteria for fell walks</p>  | <p>2. A good multi-activity shoe, adequate only for low-level walks.</p>  | <p>3. Fine on made paths or an excursion, but not for ‘off-road’ walks</p>  |
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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 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; weatherproof 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 2026 dates for next year: Monday 3 August to Thursday 13 August 2026.



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