High Street to Hell

This is a two day mountain bike route of just over 43 miles that starts from Waterhead in the Lake District. The first day takes you from Ambleside YHA to Patterdale YHA via High Street and contains 25.3 miles of riding and 5136ft climbing. It is a big day in the mountains that ends with a technical trail along the edge of Ullswater.

1. Leave the Ambleside YHA [(GR377031)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=337685&y=503092&z=120&sv=337685,503092&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=828&ax=337685&ay=503092&lm=0) and turn left on the A591. At the junction with the traffic lights follow the main road right and head towards the centre of [Ambleside](http://www.amblesideonline.co.uk/). Go past the entrance to the one-way lane on the left and take the next right climbing away from the main road at about 45deg [(GR377037)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=337735&y=503707&z=120&sv=337735,503707&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=337735&ay=503707&lm=0). A short distance up this lane turn right, up a steep lane signposted as a bridleway. Follow the tarmac as it winds it’s way uphill, then at the top of the road climb go straight on at the junctions with lanes on the left to follow the dirt track straight ahead, signed as a bridleway. This trail continues along the flat for a while until it comes to a junction. Take the bridleway that climbs away left to Jenkin Crag, the small bridleway sign is next to the big footpath sign. This leads to a very technical climb/push over bedrock and roots. It’s not too long though. After the large rock section follow the track 90deg right, over a bridge, to climb up the next, rideable, rock section. The track eventually emerges from the trees and flattens off, with great views of Windermere to the right. Follow the track to the gate at the farm [(GR390029)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=339090&y=502892&z=120&sv=339090,502892&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=339090&ay=502892&lm=0).

2. Go through the farm and follow the lane downhill to the gates just after a cattle grid. Go through the gate on the left and climb the singletrack as it winds its way up past a derelict building, through a stream crossing and onto a gate and junction at the top [(GR397024)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=339785&y=502417&z=120&sv=339785,502417&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=339785&ay=502417&lm=0). After the gate follow the wide track to the right, staying on the main track for a quite rocky but non-technical descent that turns into tarmac just before reaching a junction on the edge of Troutbeck [(GR407026)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=340700&y=502577&z=120&sv=340700,502577&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=340700&ay=502577&lm=0).

3. Turn left past the Post Office and go straight on at the next junction, keeping on the level, not descending to the right. After a short distance take the right into a small car park (courtyard) in front of a house set back from the road [(GR408027)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=340810&y=502767&z=120&sv=340810,502767&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=340810&ay=502767&lm=0). It is signed as a bridleway but the sign is hidden from view on the inside corner of the junction when coming from this direction. At the house at the back of the car park take the thin rocky track on the left that descends to stream crossing. After crossing the stream follow the track to a church then a junction with the road at the bottom [(GR413028)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=341315&y=502832&z=120&sv=341315,502832&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=690&ax=341315&ay=502832&lm=0).

4. Turn left onto the road then A short distance later take the road on the right leading into the Limefitt Park campsite. Follow the road 90deg to the right, through the centre of the campsite, to the buildings on the far side. Ride up to the house and go up the right hand side of the steps then follow the bridleway signs left at the top. Follow the rocky track through a gate and climb to the junction at the other end [(GR417027)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=341700&y=502767&z=120&sv=341700,502767&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=690&ax=341700&ay=502767&lm=0). Turn left and follow the wide trail up the valley. Eventually drop left through Hagg Gill and climb to a gate and a junction with a wide rocky track, below The Tongue [(GR425064)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=342585&y=506437&z=120&sv=342585,506437&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=342585&ay=506437&lm=0).

5. Turn right and follow the track up the left hand side of the valley. A steep grassy climb can soon be seen at the head of the valley. At the end of the rocky track bear right then left on the grass to start the steep climb. Bear right and climb to a gate in a drystone wall just to the left of the stream. After the gate continue straight up the steep grassy climb. The trail soon bears left across the face of the fell. Although a lot less steep it is still a hard push and carry. Near the top of the ridge the trail comes to a junction with a vague grassy trail ahead and left [(GR432093)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=343245&y=509302&z=115&sv=343245,509302&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=343245&ay=509302&lm=0).

6. Bear right and follow the more obvious trail to the ridge. At the ridge bear left to a junction. At the junction go right, past a trail on the left that heads to the top of Thornthwaite, for a section of rocky, exposed singletrack above Kentmere Reservoir, below on the right. At the next junction go straight on and climb to a grassy plateau. Follow the track as it bears right and climbs to a junction at the corner of a drystone wall on the left [(GR436102)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=343640&y=510239&z=120&sv=343640,510239&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=343640&ay=510239&lm=0).

7. Turn left, keeping the wall on the right, and ride a short way to a wide rocky track. Turn right and climb the wide track over the crest, below the highest point of High Street on the right. Take in the stunning views of Hayeswater below on the left before enjoying the rocky descent. Climb to the next junction [(GR439123)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=343940&y=512289&z=120&sv=343940,512289&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=343940&ay=512289&lm=0) then turn right towards Kidsty Pike and continue climbing. At the rocky outcrop at the top, just before the main trail starts descending, turn left on the grassy trail that heads towards a cairn on the ridge. Follow this trail straight on, down a grassy and stepped trail. Continue straight ahead to climb over High Raise then descend to where a fence, coming in from the left, joins the start of a drystone wall [(GR449138)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=344897&y=513816&z=115&sv=344897,513816&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=344897&ay=513816&lm=0). Be careful of the big boggy drops just before this.

8. Go over the style in the fence to follow a concessional track on the left hand side of the wall. This grassy trail comes to a gate in a fence. Follow the trail in the direction of the bridleway marker, straight on from the gate, not the track that heads left along the fence line. Follow the obvious trail straight on over Wether hill. After the descent off Wether Hill go past the vague grassy trail on the right and straight up the trail to the trig point at the summit of Loadpot Hill. Although not the BW marked on the map this was the obvious trail and I didn't see the bridleway. At the trig point turn right to descend a fast grassy track to a junction [(GR456187)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=345649&y=518708&z=120&sv=345649,518708&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=345649&ay=518708&lm=0).

9. Turn right and follow the undulating track across the boggy hillside. I was planning to descend the track down Brown Rigg but didn't see it and ended up on the undesignated track that went past Arthur's Pike instead. After passing the to the right of the cairn on the Pike, the track bears right then left for a blast down to a junction with a wide dirt track, with a drystone wall ahead and Aik Beck on the right, and views across the eastern end of Ullswater [(GR472220)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=347264&y=522003&z=120&sv=347264,522003&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=347264&ay=522003&lm=0).

10. Turn left and follow the wide dirt track for a great, rocky descent, ignoring any tracks off to the right. The trail becomes singletrack before coming to some houses on the left, on the edge of Howtown. Go through the gate on the left just after the houses [(GR445195)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=344559&y=519543&z=120&sv=344559,519543&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=344559&ay=519543&lm=0) and follow the grassy trail a short way to a stream crossing. Using the ford or the bridge cross the stream. After the stream go across the track and climb the grassy trail straight ahead that follows the line of the wall on the right. This steep climb soon flattens, becoming a wide hardpack trail. This section of the track ends with a rocky climb to a junction, with some grassy tracks climbing steeply away on the right, where the main trail bears left and descends [(GR437191)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=343784&y=519143&z=120&sv=343784,519143&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=343784&ay=519143&lm=0). Of the tracks climbing away on the right take the left hand one, to climb over the top of the hill before descending past the left hand side of an old church. At the road turn left and descend to the next junction [(GR434191)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=343429&y=519083&z=120&sv=343429,519083&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=343429&ay=519083&lm=0).

11. Turn right, following the sign to Sandwick. Go straight on over the bridge then follow the lane right. The lane then bears left round the hill and comes to another junction [(GR428188)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=342854&y=518813&z=120&sv=342854,518813&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=342854&ay=518813&lm=0). Turn hard right and ride along the left hand side of the stream. Just before the road drops into Sandwick take the grassy and rocky bridleway sign posted off to the left that almost immediately comes to a rocky track climbing alongside a drystone wall [(GR423195)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=342354&y=519548&z=120&sv=342354,519548&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=342354&ay=519548&lm=0).

12. Turn left and follow this rocky track for some technical riding along the edge of Ullswater. It's hard work but great fun if you have the ability, if not it could just be hard work (the climb out of Boredale may be preferable, see the [Ullswater loop](http://www.theedgecycleworks.com/mtbroutes/ullswater)). At the end of the technical part bear left on the trail as it follows the edge the lake, heading south. The trail eventually descends to a farm on the right [(GR398162)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=339829&y=516273&z=120&sv=339829,516273&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=339829&ay=516273&lm=0). Turn right through the yard of the farm, which contains a café, then drop left and right for a wide track that ends at the A592 [(GR394160)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=339409&y=516108&z=120&sv=339409,516108&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=339409&ay=516108&lm=0). Turn left and follow the road through [Patterdale](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patterdale) to the YHA just after, on the left [(GR398156)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=339879&y=515678&z=120&sv=339879,515678&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=339879&ay=515678&lm=0).

The second day of this mountain bike route takes you from Patterdale YHA back to Ambleside YHA via [Helvellyn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helvellyn). At only 17.8 miles it's not that long but contains 4207ft of climbing, with some very technical riding and some hike-a-biking.

13. Turn right out of Patterdale YHA. Follow the road through Patterdale then on to [Glenridding](http://www.visitcumbria.com/pen/glenridding.htm). In the centre of Glenridding turn left up the lane directly before the main road crosses the bridge over Ulls Water [(GR387169)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=338679&y=516908&z=120&sv=338679,516908&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=338679&ay=516908&lm=0). *Directly before this junction are some shops on the left that are good for stocking up with food.* Follow the lane up the left hand side of the river. After leaving the houses continue ahead through the trees to a junction with a track descending off on the right. Turn right to stay by the river and follow the rocky track all the way to [Gill Side Farm campsite](http://www.gillsidecaravanandcampingsite.co.uk/index.html). Go straight on through the campsite to a junction with a lane, by a bridge on the right [(GR379169)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=337955&y=516895&z=120&sv=337955,516895&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=756&ax=337955&ay=516895&lm=0).

14. Turn right and follow the lane across the bridge then climb to a junction at the top edge of Glenridding [(GR381170)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=338135&y=517005&z=120&sv=338135,517005&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=756&ax=338135&ay=517005&lm=0). Turn left and climb steeply up the lane, bearing left to where it gets less steep at the row of houses on the right. After the houses the lane becomes a double track that climbs ahead up the right hand side of the valley to Helvellyn YHA. Go straight on past the YHA to a junction with a gate ahead [(GR365173)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=336490&y=517385&z=120&sv=336490,517385&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=756&ax=336490&ay=517385&lm=0). Turn right and climb the steep, rocky track that goes through a number of wide, loose bends. After the final left hand bend the track comes to a junction with a steep grassy trail on the right, signposted to Sticks Pass [(GR362174)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=336250&y=517390&z=120&sv=336250,517390&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=817&ax=336250&ay=517390&lm=0).

15. Turn right and climb the grassy trail to where it ends at a junction with a rocky trail. Turn right and climb the steep, rocky trail. A short distance later the trail climbs through sharp left hand bend, the first of a few bends on the way up. After the second right hand bend the trail becomes a definite hike’a’bike, no matter how good at climbing you are, across the face of the slope. The trail eventually comes to a junction at a large pile of boulders, on the left, where the trail ahead flattens off [(GR362177)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=336215&y=517715&z=120&sv=336215,517715&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=756&ax=336215&ay=517715&lm=0). Turn left and climb through the boulders. The trail soon goes through a right hand bend and becomes grassy. Follow the trail ahead, which eventually climbs through a left hand bend before flattening off and becoming rideable again. At the top follow the track straight ahead until it descends to a bridge at the bottom of the old earth works [(GR359180)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=335915&y=517990&z=120&sv=335915,517990&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=756&ax=335915&ay=517990&lm=0).

16. Go across the bridge then on the far side climb left across the sand. At the top of a short climb go straight ahead and follow the track across the bottom of the valley. At the far side turn left and follow the singletrack trail up the right hand side of the valley. This is a great trail dotted with tricky rock sections to try and clean. Towards the end the trail becomes an increasingly steep hike’a’bike out of the valley. At the top the track flattens off before coming to a crossroad junction on the ridge, a good spot to refuel [(GR342182)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=334165&y=518230&z=120&sv=334165,518230&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=817&ax=334165&ay=518230&lm=0).

17. Turn left to head south along the ridge path, keeping an eye out for the cairns that mark the direction of the track, and climb towards the summit of Raise. Eventually the climb becomes a hike’a’bike up a rocky track to the top. Go straight on over the top then down a short drop to a rock strewn plateau. Bear slightly right then go across the plateau to where the track becomes more defined on the far side. Descend through some steep loose corners before a fast straight blast to a junction at the bottom [(GR339169)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=333910&y=516910&z=120&sv=333910,516910&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=756&ax=333910&ay=516910&lm=0). Go straight on through the dip then up the steep track to the top of Keppel Cove. Go straight on over the summit and descend the rocky track to the bottom of the Lower Man climb. Go straight on up Lower Man, which soon becomes a long hike’a’bike. Remount at the top and descend to a junction then bear left and climb the wide track straight ahead all the way to the trig point at the summit of Helvellyn [(GR342152)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=334180&y=515175&z=120&sv=334180,515175&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=817&ax=334180&ay=515175&lm=0).

18. Turn right from the trig point, so the cliff edge is on the left, and follow the ridge to the stone shelter, which is another good place to refuel. Go straight on past the stone shelter and descend the wide, rocky track south along the ridge. At the following forked junction, after about 1/3 mile, turn left for a short climb up a wide, rocky track [(GR342145)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=334275&y=514515&z=120&sv=334275,514515&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=817&ax=334275&ay=514515&lm=0). At the top continue straight ahead on the multiple lines across the lumpy, rocky plateau. After a while the trail starts descending, lower down bearing left into a dip. At the bottom bear right for a short but tricky climb. At the top follow the obvious track ahead that soon bears left to follow the contour of the slope. It then straightens out before going up a shallow climb to the top of the Dollywagon Pike descent [(GR346128)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=334600&y=512830&z=120&sv=334600,512830&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=756&ax=334600&ay=512830&lm=0).

19. Go straight on down the steep, loose and rocky trail. All too soon the trail comes to a very steep and technical section paved with huge uneven boulders, broken by a number of big water bars. I’ve ridden all but a couple of the biggest water bars but it’s a big test of my skills and makes my arms and legs burn….a lot. Just before reaching Grisedale Tarn the trail bears left where the boulder paving gives way to a more natural, but still technical, riding. Continue ahead along this trail until it comes to a junction on a flatter part of the trail at the far end of Grisedale Tarn [(GR351123)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=335150&y=512355&z=120&sv=335150,512355&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=817&ax=335150&ay=512355&lm=0).

20. Before the trail drops over the rocks into Grisdale turn right and descend a short way to a stream crossing. After the stream bear right to skirt the edge of Grisdale Tarn for a hike-a-bike climb to the top at the saddle between Fairfield and Seat Sandal [(GR349117)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=334954&y=511698&z=120&sv=334954,511698&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=334954&ay=511698&lm=0). At the top go straight on, over the crest, though the gap in the wall. Descend the steep, rock paved trail. The trail flattens off slightly and the paving disappears but then crosses a number of unrideable rock sections. The tail eventually becomes rideable again before bearing right and steepening up for some very challenging descending to a junction [(GR348112)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=334859&y=511278&z=120&sv=334859,511278&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=334859&ay=511278&lm=0).

21. Turn right, past the left hand trail that heads down the left hand side of the valley, for a tricky section of singletrack that undulates over the top of the Great Tongue. After a difficult rocky descent off the Great Tongue the trail comes to a vague junction in a large area of grass [(GR342109)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=334229&y=510958&z=120&sv=334229,510958&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=334229&ay=510958&lm=0). Turn left and descend the grassy trail that can be seen heading straight down the Little Tongue, just to the right of the Great Tongue. The steep, brake burning descent comes to a stream crossing where the trail leaves the grass behind for rocky hardpack. Continue descending to a wide stream crossing and bear right to the gate on the other side. After the gate descend the fast rocky track to the A591 at the bottom [(GR336092)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=333614&y=509218&z=120&sv=333614,509218&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=333614&ay=509218&lm=0).

22. Turn left on the main road and ride through Grasmere. Continue along the main road out the other side of the village to a roundabout. Go straight across the roundabout, taking the first exit, then at the junction that follows immediately after [(GR341071)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=334174&y=507068&z=120&sv=334174,507068&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=334174&ay=507068&lm=0) turn left up the lane, to go past the Wordsworth museum. Climb the lane to a pond on the left with two junctions, one on either side, where the main lane flattens off and bears right [(GR344068)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=334384&y=506798&z=120&sv=334384,506798&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=334384&ay=506798&lm=0).

23. Take the second lane on the left, just after the pond, and climb through a couple of bends. The lane then flattens out and comes to a junction with two bridleways, one in front and one descending on the right [(GR347068)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=334754&y=506803&z=120&sv=334754,506803&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=334754&ay=506803&lm=0). Go straight on for a wonderful rocky and rooty trail. There are a number of gates and quite a few walkers but they don’t spoil the fun too much. Follow the trail all the way to a junction with a lane at the far end [(GR364064)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=336399&y=506448&z=120&sv=336399,506448&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=336399&ay=506448&lm=0).

24. Turn right and descend the lane, past a junction on the left, to the A591 at the bottom [(GR364061)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=336489&y=506183&z=120&sv=336489,506183&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=336489&ay=506183&lm=0). Turn left on the main road and ride to the next junction with a lane on the right, signposted to Under Loughrigg [(GR366060)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=336629&y=505983&z=120&sv=336629,505983&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=336629&ay=505983&lm=0). Turn right and go over a small bridge then, at the junction just after, follow the lane to the left. Stay on this lane for around two miles to the junction at the other end [(GR371039)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=337169&y=503903&z=120&sv=337169,503903&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=337169&ay=503903&lm=0). Turn left on to the A593 and go over the stone bridge. Now in the outskirts of Ambleside, follow the one-way system to the left. Get in the right hand lane and turn right at the next junction [(GR373040)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=337314&y=503993&z=120&sv=337314,503993&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=337314&ay=503993&lm=0). Turn right and follow the main road all the way back to Waterhead. Go past the car park and up to the junction at the traffic lights [(GR377032)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=337699&y=503193&z=120&sv=337699,503193&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=696&ax=337699&ay=503193&lm=0). Go right on the main road then, a short distance later, turn right into Ambleside YHA to complete the ride.