

## Walk 1: Brockbarrow (Todd Crag)

Brockbarrow is the steep, craggy hill behind Tom Hopkin's house at the head of the lake. It was on this hilltop, that Tom first saw Maggie and Joel Green, while spying on Rufus Clay, before being persued by Squadron Leader Richard Riley in his Puma helicopter.

**Distance:** 3 miles

**Start:** The Brathay Trust has a car park available for public use, in exchange for a donation towards their work with disadvantaged children.

### Three words digital address

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### Coordinates

54°25'16.7"N 2°58'44.1"W

### Ordnance Survey Map

OL 7: NY365034

(Alternatively, if coming from Ambleside, turn off the A593 onto the B5286 and immediately on the right after the bridge there is some free parking.)

**Summary:** A short, steep climb through deciduous woods on good paths, rewards you with exceptional views over Windermere. Half way round there is an optional detour into Rothay Park which has one of the best playgrounds in the Lake District.

**Spy:** In the woods look out for squirrels, red deer and carpets of blue bells in the Spring. From the summit see if you can spot the *Teal* making its way gracefully down the lake towards 'Birthwaite Bay', (real name: Bowness) and the islands. And make sure you keep an eye out for RAF helicopters!

1. From the Brathay Trust car park **(A)** carefully cross the road to the River Brathay, turn left and proceed along Bog Lane with the river on your right until you reach Holy Trinity Church on the left. (Tom hid behind the towers of this church when being chased by the helicopter).
2. Cross the river by the stone footbridge. (Look out for great crested grebes and suspicious-looking kayakers!). Turn left and proceed carefully along the road for a few yards until you re-join a footpath that takes you past some Scots pines on a grass verge.
3. At a house called Pool Foot, carefully cross the road and turn right, following the footpath sign into Fishgarth's Wood. **(B)** Following the yellow arrows, keep to the main path that winds up through the wood. As you climb, look right to see tantalising glimpses of the lake through the trees. Near the top of the wood, take the right side of a clear fork, and head towards a small gate.
4. Go through the gate **(C)** and you will see a dramatic view of the lake stretching out to the south. You could catch your breath, or even have a snack of some Kendal Mint Cake on the bench. But don't linger too long as the views will get even better as you continue.
5. Leave the view point and take the left side of the fork, heading up hill. When the footpath surface changes to short grass, bear right. Look out for the Herdwick and Swaledale sheep which keep the grass nibbled short.
6. There are various small peaks and crags on the summit of the hill and you will soon reach the first, flat-topped, view point. The actual Todd Cragg is a little to the west of this. However, with the lake on your right make your way towards a jagged lump, with an array of rocks that look like the back of a stegosaurus. **(D)** Enjoy scrambling up the clear rocky path to the top.
7. This is Brockbarrow! Unlike in *Spylark*, there is no trig point, but there are spectacular views of the lake stretching down to the islands in the middle. Directly below you should be able to spot Aunt Emily's house, "Cedar Holme", on the crook of two rivers, with its own little harbour. Using a map, see if you can work out which of the many hills are the other two which, together with Brockbarrow, form Rufus Clay's deadly triangle of attack. These are Raven Howe (real name: Wansfell) and Rigg Knott (Latterbarrow). If you look carefully into the shadows of the wooded hills over the water towards Latterbarrow, you may be able to make out the imposing battlements of Blythe Castle (Wray Castle).
8. With your back to the lake, bear right down a steep path and pick up the main broad grassy path that leads through the bracken and around a small triangular tarn. **(E)** (There are lots of paths to

explore on this flat part of the hill. If you don't see the tarn, don't worry, just keep heading in a roughly easterly direction until you see a stone wall).

9. At the stone wall go through a kissing gate (**F**) and descend towards the wood, with Watertop (Ambleside) in the valley below.

10. Cross the stream on a wooden footbridge (**G**), go through the woods for a short distance, and then take the steps over a wall onto a steep concrete track heading down towards the town.

11. At the bottom turn right onto a tarmac road towards a pretty hump-backed bridge over the river Rothay (**H**). If you have time you can take a detour over the bridge into Rothay Park, where you will find a fantastic playground. Beyond that is the village with plenty of chip shops, cafes, toilets, the famous Bridge House and also Fred's independent bookshop, which used to be frequented by *Swallows and Amazons* author, Arthur Ransome.

12. Walk along the quiet road with the river on your left until you reach the A593, signposted *Coniston* and *Skelwith Bridge* (**I**). Cross the road and turn right on a footpath that leads to a left turn over a bridge signposted *Hawkshead*. Carefully follow the road for a few yards to return to where you began.

