Directions to Mountain Ringlet Colonies on Irton Fell / Whinn Rigg

To have a good chance of seeing the Mountain Ringlet the temperature should be at least 15° C with some sun on the colony. Look between mid-June and mid-July.

Park in the old quarry car park (Grid ref, NY 122013). From the A595 go to Santon Bridge (The Bridge Inn is a landmark). From there head towards Eskdale Green, over the bridge, up a long hill, past double wooden gates each side of the road giving access to the forest. Go round a left-hand bend and the old quarry is on the left.

Leave the quarry on foot, go about 20m back down the road towards Santon Bridge and go up the footpath (8 feet wide track!) on your right to Wasdale. After 150m, a track joins from the left, go straight on upwards.

After about 800m the track forks, keep straight on ignoring the left fork. After another 400m you come onto the open fell through a wide gate and stile.

Go on up the fell, trending to the right. The objective is to walk parallel to the forest wall on your right and about 20m from it. Go slightly downhill into an area of grazed gorse and a tiny muddy beck. Within a short distance you will see a small old mine trial pit and the Mountain Ringlet (MR) can be seen from here onwards.

Look for a small dark chocolate brown butterfly flying just above the grass.

The path goes through a very muddy dip with a small beck coming out of the wall and after another 200m to 300m a bridleway crosses the path. All this area is good for MR.

IF you want to see the next colony, which flies a week or so later, continue uphill on the path to a wall corner and then beside the wall on a rather wet track until you reach a gate.

Go through the gate on the path. At the top of a rise there is open grassland on both sides and, after going slightly downhill you reach an enormous ravine (Greathall Gill) on the left-hand side. There is a large colony of MR around here: look on your left between the broken wall and the edge of Greathall Gill.

Return the same way to the quarry car park.

**Safety Note** (for those that don’t normally go on the Fells)

This is high fell country and the weather can change quickly. Cloud can lower restricting visibility to a few yards. Take a warm layer and a waterproof layer in your rucksack, and be sure you can find your way back to the drum house to the Great Gable track, which is safe and easy to follow in mist.

Know the Fell Top weather forecast, see the link on Cumbria branch website
[www.cumbria-butterflies.org.uk](http://www.cumbria-butterflies.org.uk)

Take it easy and go at a comfortable pace when going uphill. Take plenty of cold drink if it is a hot day. Enjoy the scenery!