

# Lakeland Summits 2013

Walk description

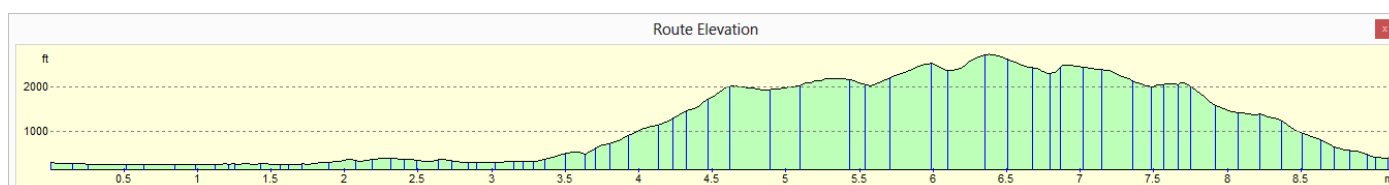
Day 1: Keswick to Buttermere 9.2 miles\3533 ft ascent



From Keswick, with huge hangovers, we take the tried and tested route to Portinscale but rather than take the Cumbria Way path we head through the hamlets of Swinside and Stair before starting our ascent on the serpent-backed **Causey Pike**, the first Wainwright of the walk.

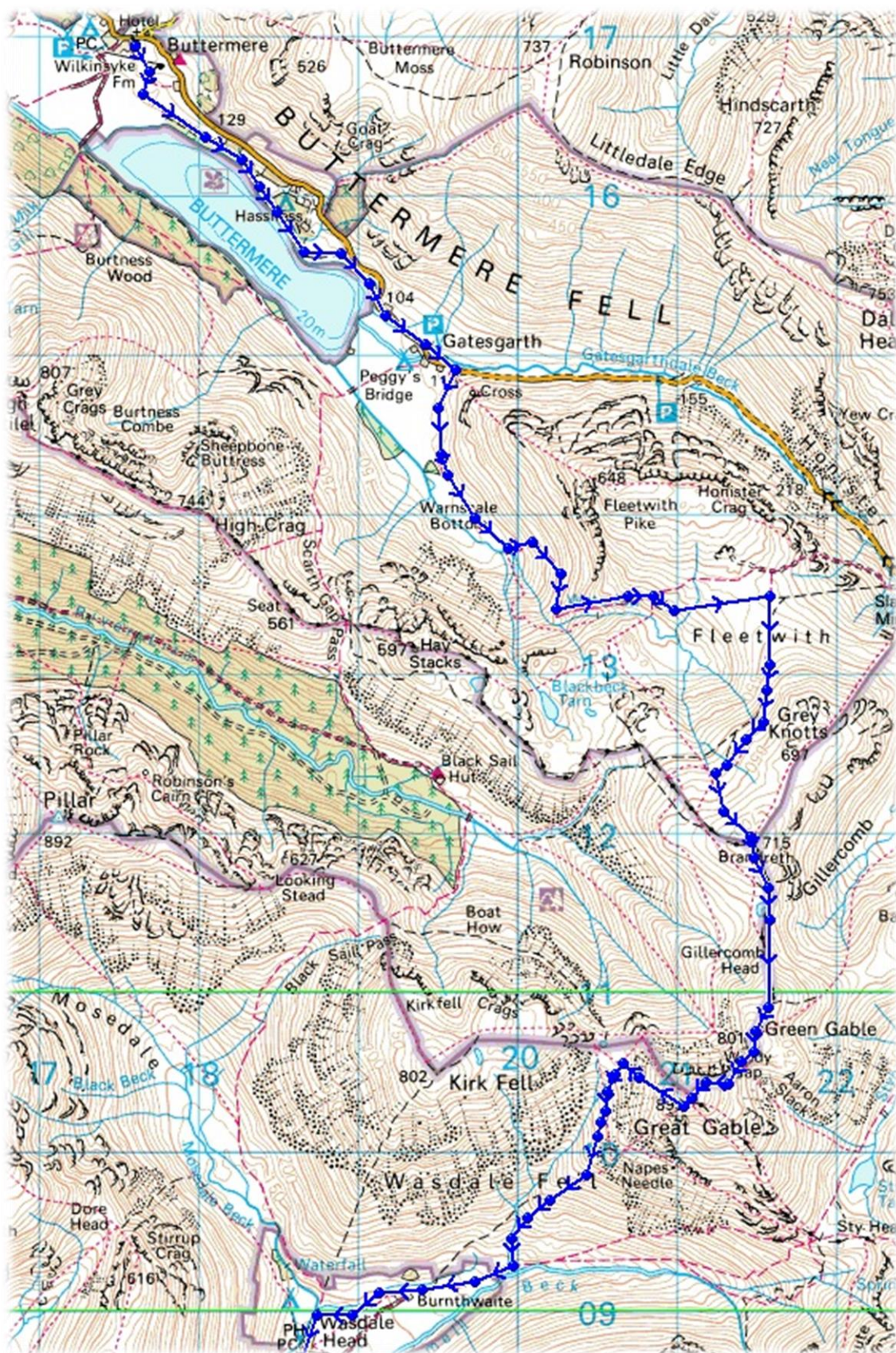
After successfully negotiating the easy scramble to reach Causey Pike's summit (there's a possibility that at least one of us will die at this point) we continue along the ridge over **Scar Crag** and **Sail**. We then ascend to the high point of the day, **Crag Hill** (839m) where far reaching views will be enjoyed in all directions. If the weather isn't at its best it'll probably be a bit shit. The route descends from Crag Hill towards **Wandope** where we can gaze over the huge hanging corrie and far below us will be seen the route of the Lakeland Valleys walk from 2008.

We descend further to **Whiteless Pike** where the views over Crummock Water and Buttermere begin to open up. After descending over Whiteless Breast we see the village of Buttermere just below. Buttermere is famous for its memorial to Alfred Wainwright but from our perspective it's more famous for its excellent selection of quaffable ales. The Bridge Hotel was one of the best hotels we've used on our travels so there's no reason to suggest that things have changed unless of course the owners of the White Lion in Cray have taken it over. I forecast that the food will be excellent and too many beers will be enjoyed.





## Day 2: Buttermere to Wasdale Head 8.5 miles\3208 ft ascent



We'll all wake up with heads like a blind cobbler's thumb and wonder if we're too old for this type of holiday.

Things improve after breakfast and we all proceed to march alongside Buttermere's northern shore. On reaching Gatesgarth Farm we enter the grim portals of Warnscale Bottom and climb towards the back end of **Fleetwith Pike**. If



any of the team have a surplus of energy we can ascend to the summit of Fleetwith Pike – this is a chargeable extra as you'll pay for it later in the day.

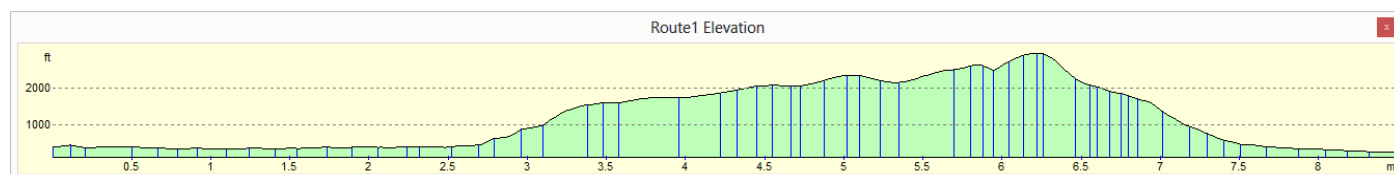
We skirt the side of **Grey Knotts** and then climb onto the summit of **Brandreth** where we'll enjoy the views down into lonely Ennerdale. On we go. Next on the list is **Green Gable** where we'll gasp and cry in terror at the behemoth that is **Great Gable** directly ahead of us.

We descend Green Gable to reach Windy Gap and begin the scramble onto Gable. The rockiness soon relents and we're soon at the day's high point – Great Gable (899m).

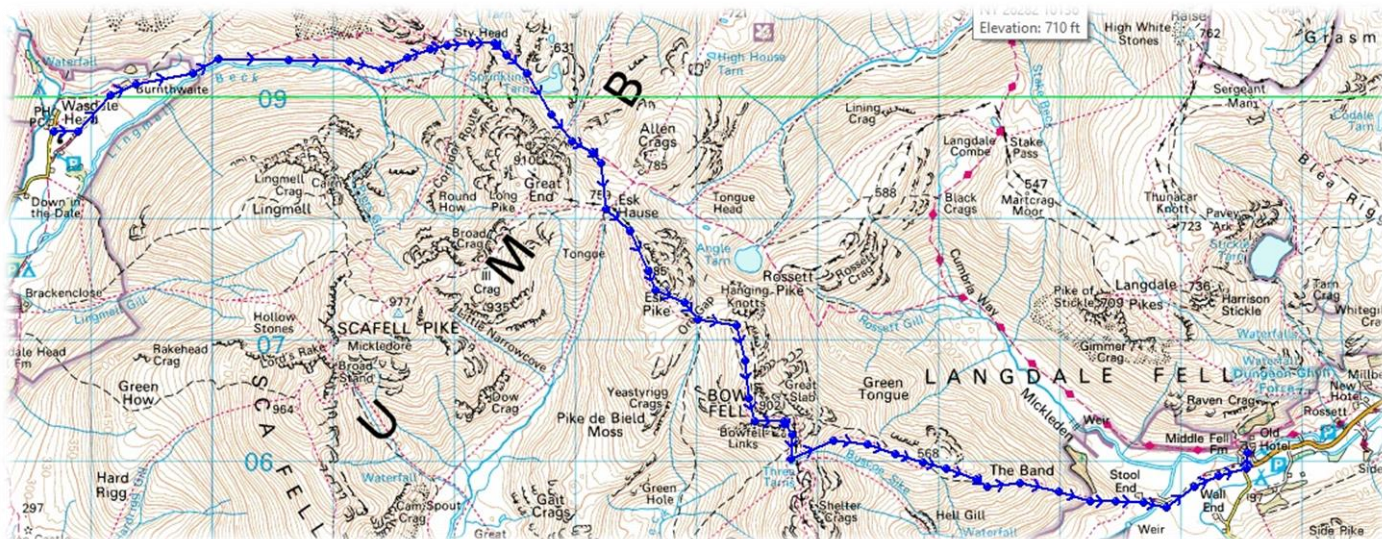
All that's left is the descent to Wasdale Head. The descent will be a loose rocky affair and again, there's a chance that one of us won't make it. Only fifty percent of people descending Gable reach the valley floor so we'll have to be at the top of our game. You can do it!

Finally, after the day of our lives, we reach the Wasdale Head Inn and safety.

The evening will follow the same, sad, predictable pattern but we'll have a quiet few moment as we remember those that didn't make it.



## Day 3: Wasdale Head to Langdale 7.9 miles\3094 ft ascent



If you've not been killed in the evening by a falling 19<sup>th</sup> century ice axe you'll enjoy breakfast and wonder if the bodies of the team members that didn't survive the previous day's walk have been recovered. In fact, knowing what the locals of Wasdale are like you may actually be eating one of them.

Today's aim is to reach Langdale, the most popular of Lakeland's valleys and the scene of many a good time.

We begin the day with a steady climb across the southern slopes of Great Gable where crows and ravens will be seen picking on the rotting corpses of fallen comrades. Don't let this upset you – there's better things to come.

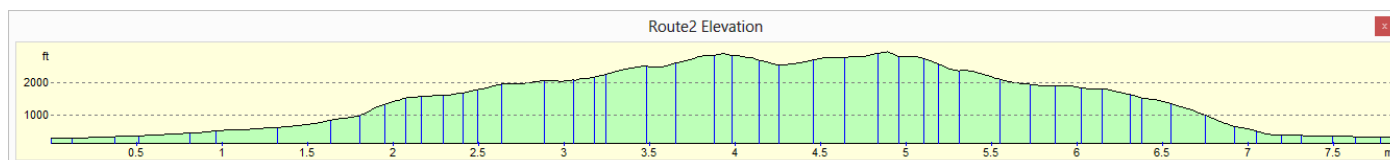
We pass Sprinkling Tarn and the towering cliffs of Great End and then head towards the great crossroad of Lakeland – Esk Hause.

There's a chance at this point of making numerous severe navigation errors but the availability of satnavs and the ability to wail into the fog will save us.

We ascend **Esk Pike** where we can stare into the upper reaches of Eskdale. Next is **Bowfell** (902m), one of Lakeland's most climbed peaks and with deserved justification. Its rocky top is the perfect way to 'top out' on the walk and the view from just below 3000ft should be a cracker!

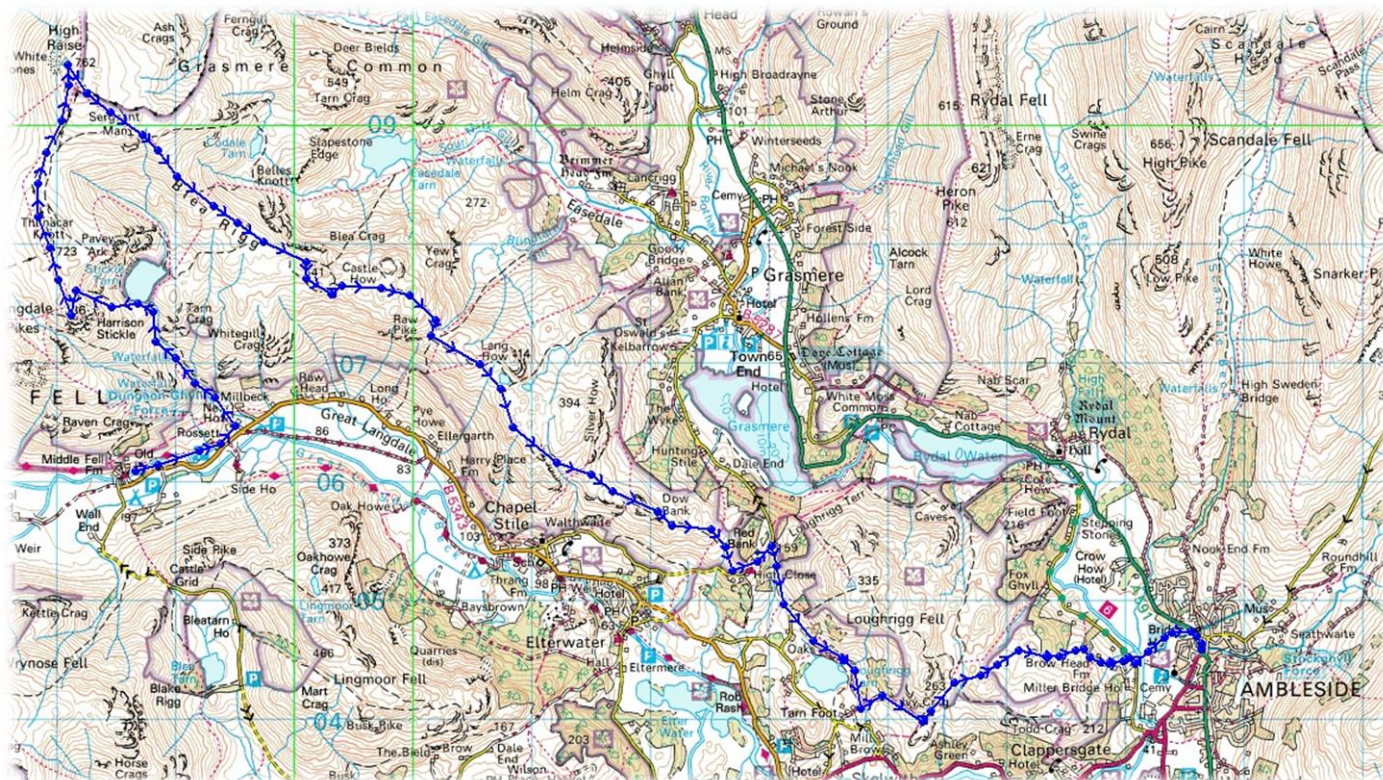
We descend towards the Three Tarns and then head west to descend into Langdale by way of the Band. The views into the valley are excellent and our destination for the evening, the famous Old Dungeon Ghyll, will be a great place to eat, drink and remember lost friends.

By this stage of the walk you may find that your legs will be stiffer than Dick's hat band but if you're not sure I'll assist with my leg squeezing service – free of charge! It always receives great feedback.





## Day 4: Langdale to Ambleside 11.5 miles\3195 ft ascent



A bit of a sharpish climb up to Stickle Tarn starts off today's walk. I'll be requiring assistance from the team after receiving two black eyes after the previous evening's leg squeezing. I'll soldier on.

The view of Pavey Ark is one of the best in the Lakes. The 500ft cliff rises vertically above the tarn and strikes fear into all that survey its harsh magnificence.

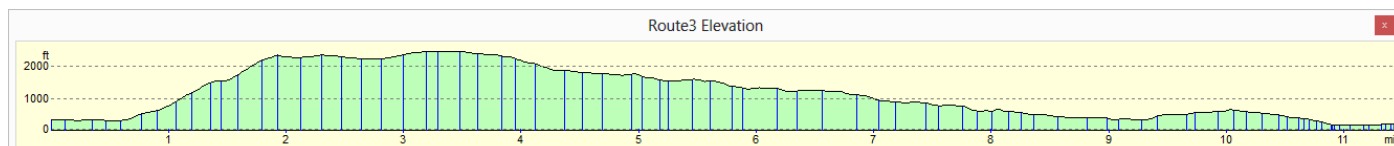
We ascend to the left of the cliff to reach the highest point of the Langdale Pikes – **Harrison Stickle**. We then head north to summit on **Thunacar Knott**, **High Raise** and **Sergeant Crag** before heading in a south-easterly direction towards Ambleside.

The long gradual descent includes the Wainwrights of **Blea Rigg** and **Silver Howe** and the walk takes on a more gentle quality to that of previous days. These are the sort of hills that Ann and Ken should really be doing. Let's hope they make it this far.

We finally reach the Grasmere – Skelwith Bridge road and then set off around the southern slopes of Loughrigg Fell where we'll pass Loughrigg Tarn. All that's left is the soft perambulation into Ambleside where the pool, sauna and steam room of the Salutation await. This will be a great moment.

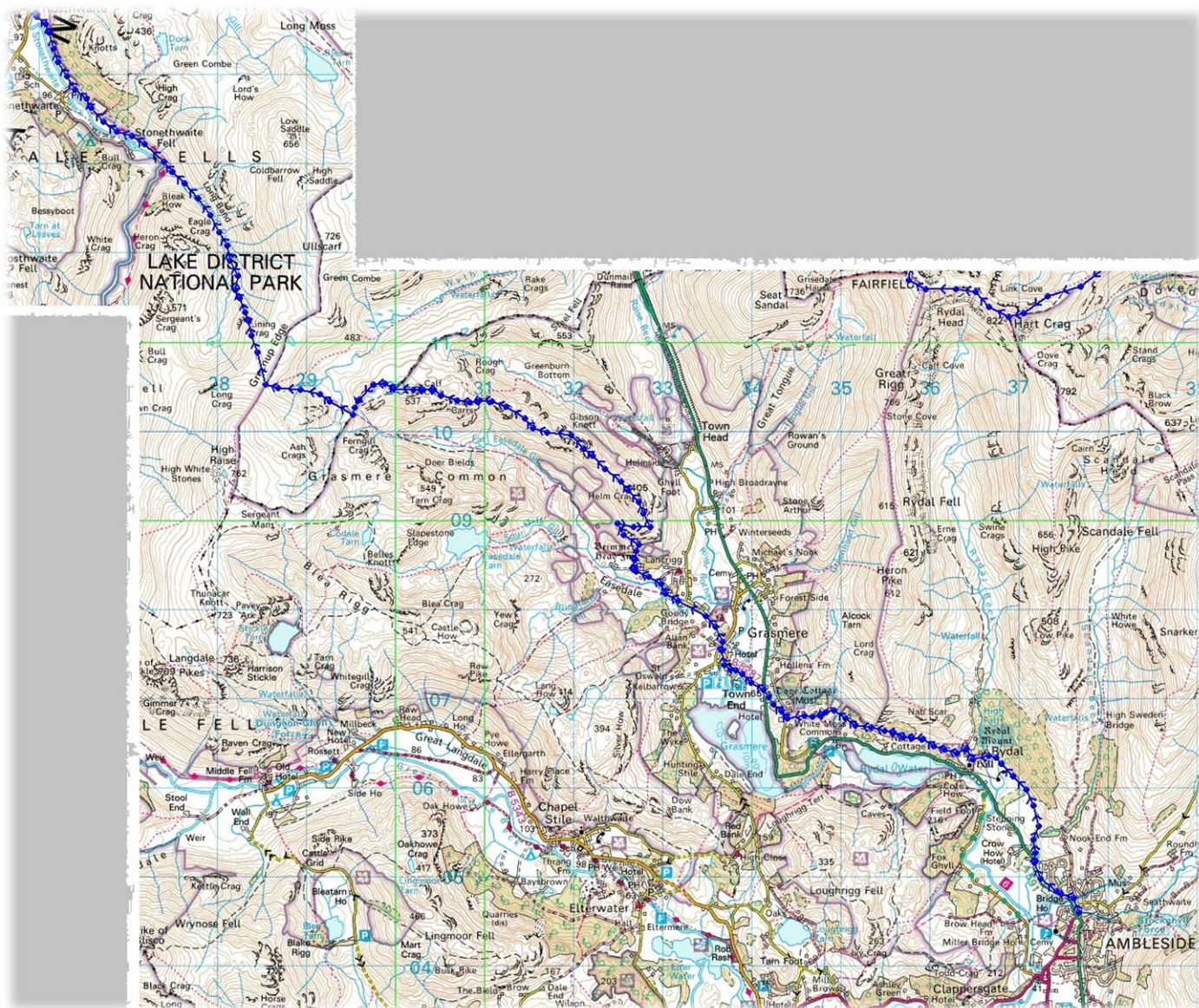
The great moment in the pool won't last for long as a few of us will be kicked out due to the state of our feet. A quick visit to Boots and/or the nearest chiropodist will be in order to remedy the sad situation.

A choice of restaurants awaits us in Ambleside and we'll all be looking forward to the following day's walk towards the beautiful valley of Borrowdale. We're nearly there – come on team!





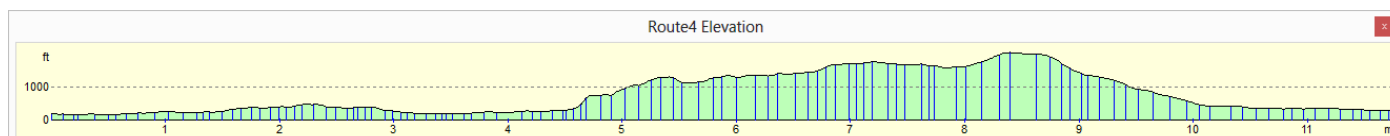
## Day 5: Ambleside to Rosthwaite 12 miles\3026 ft climbing



We've all drank far too much and boy don't we know it! Luckily it's a genteel start that sees us off today as we head towards Rydal and Rydal Water itself. A walk through White Moss brings us into Grasmere and its pretty shops and houses. We can't stay though – there are Wainwrights to be had! The famous little peak of **Helm Crag** (405m) and the Lion and the Lamb will wet our appetite for what lies ahead.

We continue along the wide ridge and add the summits of **Gibson Knott** and **Calf Crag** to our impressive list of Wainwrights. We then ascend steady slopes to the top of Greenup Edge where with a bit of luck we'll be spared the awful boggiess that rules these parts thanks to weeks of dry weather. If we're not all thigh deep in peat and stuck like a Dartmoor pony it's time to begin the long descent to the day's end – Borrowdale, Rosthwaite and the Scafell Hotel.

We resist the temptation of the pub in Stonethwaite. Well, when I say 'resist' I really mean to say that we won't be let in due to being covered in head to toe in slimy boggy shit. We don't let this upset us and turn our thoughts to the final mile and our lodgings for the evening. Only one day to go – let's drink too much!





Day 6: Rosthwaite to Keswick 8.5 miles \ 2536 ft ascent





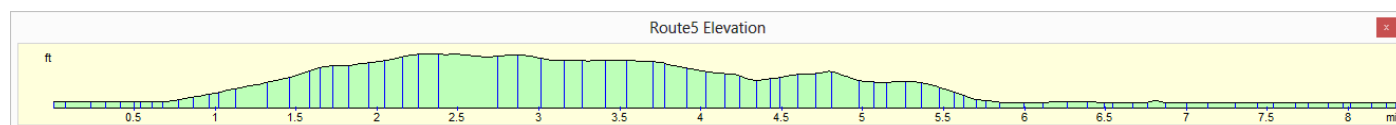
We apologise to the owners of the Scafell Hotel after killing their two cats and letting off a fire extinguisher. Ann is found sleeping in a hedgerow and Gordon rings Jane to inform her that he's in Catterick with two black girls.

The Cumbria Way route is followed for half a mile where we proceed to climb past the old mine workings of Rigghead.

Next on the list is **High Spy**, **Maiden Moor** and the small yet perfectly formed **Cat Bells**. The fitness build up from the previous day's walk sees us flying over the hills. Nothing can stop us. Nothing!

We reach Nichol End where the option to take a boat to Keswick may be taken. It could be the perfect end to what could be a disastrous week.

On reaching Keswick we enjoy a pint or two in one of the many quality hostelries before breaking into tears. The scale of what we've achieved will be too much for some along with the rank awful smell of our walking gear.



In fact, the smell will see us getting ejected from the Dog and Gun. We drink our beer in the Market Square.

A record number of Pigholers started the walk but will a record number complete?

Will Gordon and Jane get wed?

Will the experience force John and Janet to sell their Bowness love pad?

No matter what happens, even an unforeseen death or two, it'll be a holiday to remember and one that'll take a good couple of years to pay off.

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