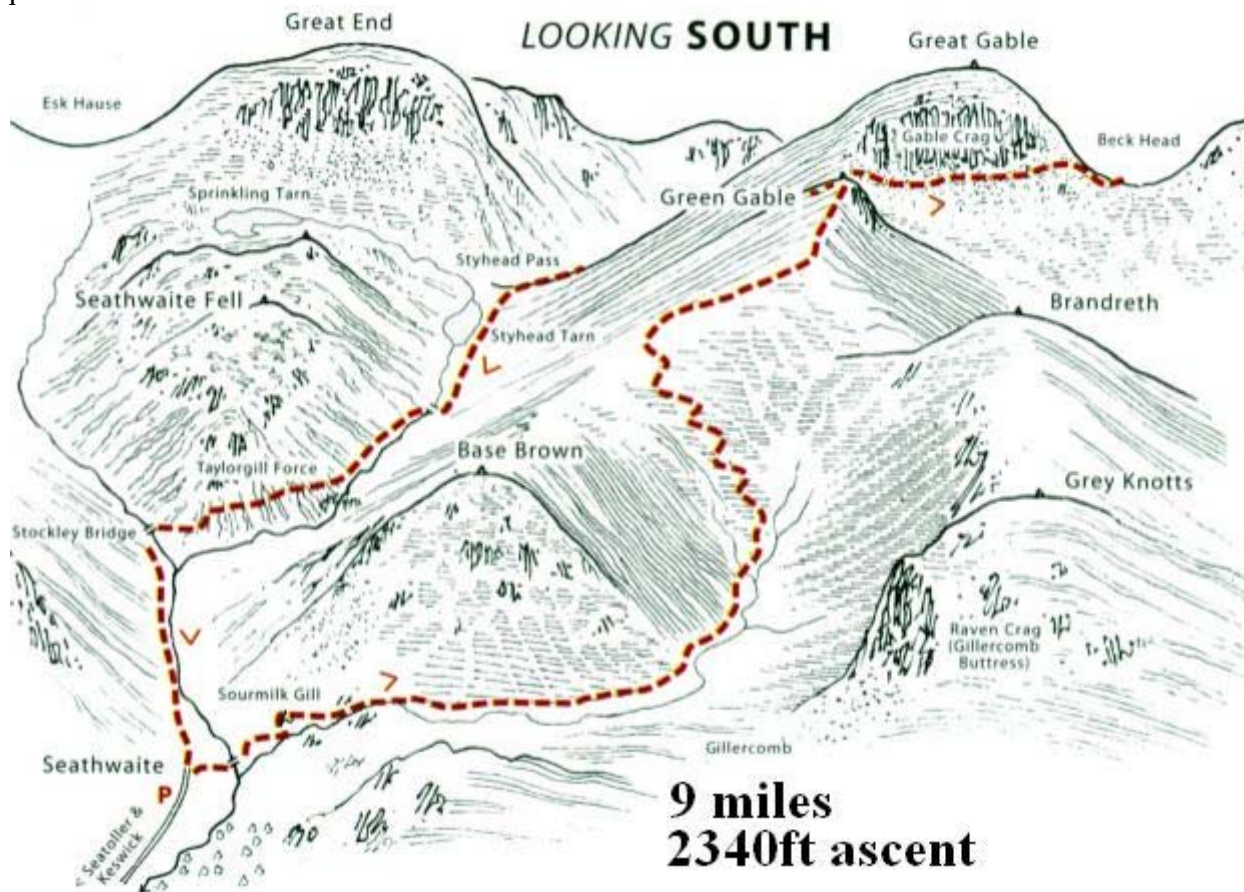


Gateshead Civic Walking Club **NEWS**

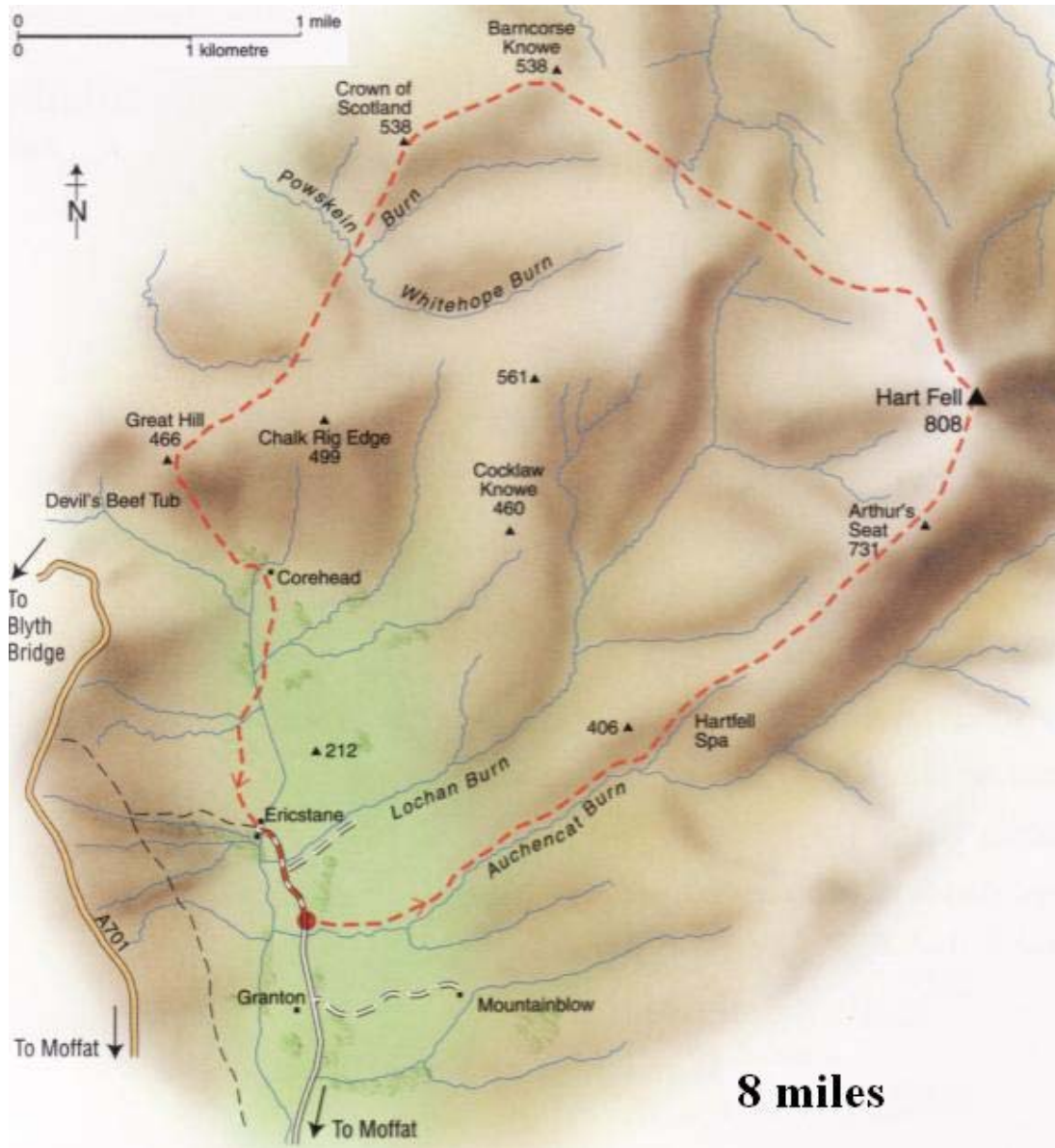


Seathwaite [11th September] - It is difficult not to extol the qualities of Great Gable, as the fell offers the fell walker, scrambler and hardened rock climber well-rounded entertainment and many thrilling situations. So it is no wonder that a tour can be undertaken that gives the walker tentative entry into the world of the scrambler and rock climber without setting foot on tough rock nor even venturing to the summit, though obviously one may do so. In seeking the base of the cliffs the Gable girdle route traverses rough but accessible ground, slinking under Gable Crag and angling down beneath the magnificent southern facade of the Great Napes. The anti-clockwise orientation of the route will be understood when you climb the one double-move bad-step (it is much easier to climb it than to tackle it in descent). Hence the walk begins with the cascades of Sourmilk Gill and rises through Gillercomb onto Green Gable, bringing the walker handsomely onto the climbers' path at Windy Gap. The route then departs from the girdle at Sty Head and troops back into the beautifully wild depths of upper Borrowdale to end a quite memorable mountain adventure.



Moffat [2nd October] - The Moffat hills look particularly fine in the autumn, burnished in shades of gold and yellow, and this walk takes in one of the Borders' higher tops in an area richly packed with historical myth and legend. Just above the Auchencat Burn lies the Hartfell Spa, a chalybeate spring contained in its little beehive-shaped shelter. The waters were once believed to have healing properties — try them for yourself, as the climb out of the well's gully is the steepest part of the walk! Beyond the well you'll cross over the namesake of Edinburgh's best-known landmark, Arthur's Seat, although this one is infinitely wilder than the one in Holyrood Park! The Arthurian legends are strong in the Borders and these hills even have links with Arthur's wise counsellor, Merlin the Magician. The wizard Merlin, it is claimed, once roamed these broad slopes. He was able to transform himself into a hart, a deer often associated with royalty. More likely the only beasts which truly roamed these areas were cattle. The great hollow of the Devil's Beef Tub was important in former times as a holding place for great herds, when such livestock were the area's most valuable commodity and cattle raids were not infrequent. In 'tubs' like this one, the herd could easily be held and guarded until it was safe to release them. Start this walk from Ericstane, which is reached by a minor road from Moffat. Shortly before you reach the farm at Ericstane a signpost points over the fields to Hartfell Spa. Follow the path beside the Auchencat Burn, and climb steadily into a narrowing

valley. After a short distance the path leaves the burn and the sheep-cropped turf to climb to the well itself. Climb the steep gully above the small beehive-shaped building to reach the ridge above. Follow the ridge in a north-east direction, over Arthur's Seat to the wide summit of Hart Fell itself. From the trig point head north-west, following a line of fences to an obvious left turn. From here continue on your north-west line to cross the path on Barncorse Knowe and then head left to the top, intriguingly named Crown of Scotland. From the Crown, drop down to the junction of the Powskein and Whitehope Burns and continue south-west to Great Hill, with the deep hollow of the Devil's Beef Tub below you. A good path runs downhill above the Beef Tub to Corehead and the road back to your waiting minibus at Ericstane.



Keswick [23rd October] - Depart from the car-park through the gap in the stone wall near to the Century Theatre. Once on the path through here fork L. You are now in a fine, mature deciduous woodland, passing through glades of mainly beech trees. Your direction of travel is SSE. At a crossing of paths just before reaching a large sycamore tree, turn L down a hawthorn-edged path leading to the B5289 road. Along here there is a good view of Skiddaw rearing up to your L in the N. Cross the road, pass through a gap in the wall, and climb the steps. Follow the path uphill, initially to your L, and then immediately fork to the R and proceed further uphill on a wide gravel path NE. Veer round to the R and climb the slope to reach the rocky promontory of Castlehead Crag. This outcrop provides excellent views overlooking Derwent Water to the W.

To return to the main path below, retrace your final approach steps leading to the crag, and then turn R along this heading SSW. Follow the path down through the densely packed deciduous wood of mainly beech, oak and sycamore trees. You then take a L fork, and pass through a kissing-gate leading to a second edged pathway, which you proceed along. This leads to Springs Lane. Turn R along it, walking slightly uphill. A beck is then crossed by a stone bridge. Continue through Springs Farm, passing gates and reassuring signs, one of which reads 'Rakefoot Stone Circle'.

The stony path leads uphill into Springs Wood with its less mature trees, as a beck appears down below on your L. The way then bends to your R, from ESE to SSE, and is signed 'Rakefoot Farm Walla Crag Castlerigg Stone Circle'. Then you veer R away from a path on Your L that descends to the beck. Your way continues to climb, now squeezed between trees and a fence and lane. The lane provides access up to a communication pylon.

After coming to a stile and kissing-gate continue ahead ignoring a path off to your R to 'Great Wood'. You then walk SE up a path with a wire fence to your R and a steep-sided wooded gully on your L through which a beck flows. Another kissing-gate follows and then a yellow arrowhead waymarker confirms your direction of travel. Continue through a pleasant dell before reaching a wider path, along which you turn. You then cross the stream at a narrow footbridge, climb the steps on the far side and pass through a gate to reach a lane. Turn R here and walk towards Rakefoot.

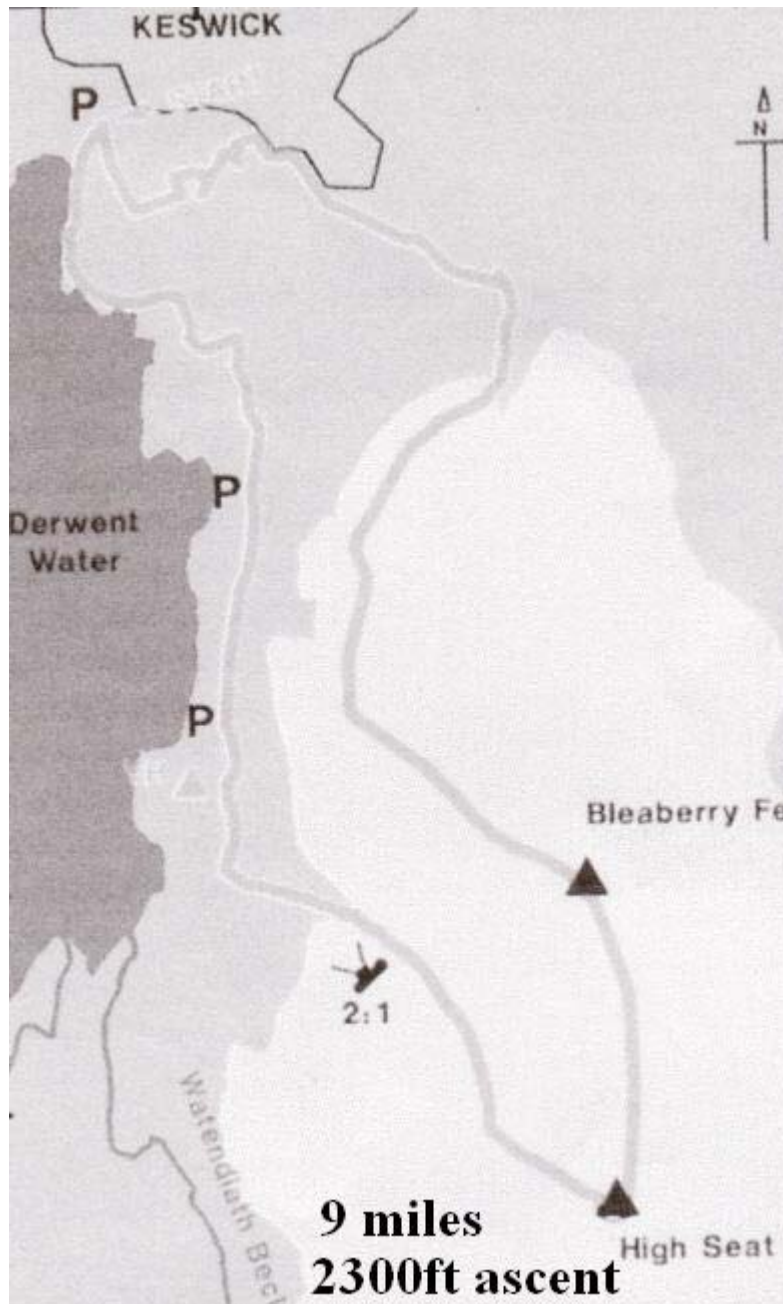
The lane bends to the R in the direction signed 'Walla Crag' and a farm is passed to your L. Next cross the beck to your R by the wooden footbridge, turn immediately L and take the stony footpath leading uphill alongside a stone wall sw. Further up look around for a fine unobstructed view of Skiddaw NNW, Blencathra NNE and down to Keswick with Bassenthwaite Lake beyond to the Nw. A p-stile is reached and here there is a National Trust sign indicating 'Castlerigg'. Your good path continues up the wide grassy band veering to the R and heading s to sw as it follows the line of the dry-stone wall. Then the rounded heights of Bleaberry Fell, your first major target, come into view over on your L, to the S.

After passing through another kissing-gate the stony path leads round the more revealing edge of the fellside. Just beyond, some magnificent views open up across Derwent Water, right into the heart of the folded, high north-westerly fells. To the SW are Hindscarth and Robinson towering above Cat Bells, the Causey Pike ridge rising to the dominating mass of Crag Hill w and further to the R the separate, distinctive peak of Grisedale Pike rises in the NW; and these are only a selection of the highlights! You may also have the thrill of seeing falcons along here. Advance along the well-used path close to the edge of the cliff-face of Walla Crag, which drops very steeply on your R through densely wooded slopes with intermittent rocky promontories jutting out. When you reach the next cairned, craggy outcrop of rocks at Lady's Rake you will be able to view the mighty Helvellyn range of mountains. These stand out on the SE skyline over to your L. From here descend slightly along the grassy path leading down SSW. Near the stile ahead, which you cross, the shapely, far-off peak of Bow Fell can be made out on a clear day on compass bearing SSW. Turn R over the wall and when you reach the cairn below, fork L to the SSE, and continue through the high moorland opening out to your L. Just past two further cairns, locate a less distinct track that branches L away from the main path, and this will lead you SE towards Bleaberry Fell. The landscape now changes quite abruptly, and soon you are walking through an open terrain of bracken, heathers and scrubland above the tree-line, save for one solitary ash tree.

The ground underfoot becomes boggy in parts here, and this, unfortunately, is a taste of what is to come further on. You then cross a small beck above a miniature waterfall, and following more soggy patches, a firm grassy path becomes clearly established. Make for the rocky plug ahead to the S under the lee of which the remains of a dilapidated sheepfold still stand. Your path bends to the L of this structure, and then ascends further in a broad sweep to the L across more boggy ground to reach the final, severe slopes of Bleaberry Fell away to the ESE. The worst parts of these hags demand careful and wide detours, particularly after prolonged heavy rain. This area is, however, a site of special scientific interest and therefore merits minimum disturbance.

Next comes the ascent of the rocky mound of Bleaberry Fell. A large marker cairn is passed at the top of the steepest part of the climb, after which a wide stony path leads s over moderately rising ground to bring you to another equally impressive cairn at the summit. Bleaberry Fell rises to 590m (1,932 ft), and its isolated summit commands open views in all directions. You will already be familiar with most of these, but one further revelation is the relatively low-lying, but nevertheless, very interesting separated ridge of Low and High Rigg to be seen to the NE.

Continue along the path s from the summit of Bleaberry Fell towards the craggy promontory of High Seat some 2 km (11 miles) away. The way undulates through less distinctive terrain, which in the hollows becomes somewhat featureless. Small narrow tams are passed tucked away in the many folds of the fells you are walking over. Keep to the highest ground whenever you can, always tracking between s and ssw towards the approaching outline of High Seat. There is one particularly frustrating spot along here. Eventually your path will lead you to a newly constructed taut wire fence that runs across your way forward. A minimal low stile has been provided for you to get across. The



problem is on the other side. The land is quite boggy, especially along the line of the fence to your L, which appears to be the way the interfered-with path is intended to lead you. There are alternative ways forward, either directly ahead, or by circumventing the nasty wet area on the rising ground to the R. None of these alternatives is entirely satisfactory, and in wet conditions you will have done well if you manage to keep your boots dry here.

Through the worst of the boggy area take a diagonal line to your L to reach a well-defined path ahead bordered by defunct fence posts. Turn R along this sanctuary and climb to the summit of High Seat at 608m (1,995ft). There are magnificent 360° views from this interesting craggy top.

Descend from High Seat through heathers along a grassy path leading NW. At the division of the ways veer to your L. Continue towards the rocky promontories and hillocks ahead on which cairns have been positioned. You will have to contend with more wet, soggy patches before you reach firmer ground ahead. This is attained after crossing the remains of a dry-stone wall at rising ground further on. Veer R here along the distinct path before continuing NW and making for a cairn on the near horizon. In this area there are several variants possible, and your exact route will depend upon how many of the rocky crags you wish to visit along the edge of the high ground overlooking Derwent Water. Whatever else you do in this area, do not yet surrender significant height to the W, and quickly abandon any paths, including canned ones, leading steeply down in that direction.

Continue to work your way along the tops between N and NW, forging your own route among the mounds with the aid of paths that start and finish

with bewildering complexity. Your next goal is a prominent fell above Ashness Gill, which is a meeting point of the ways. From this confluence of minor and indistinct tracks, a definite, narrow, stony path leads down, initially in the direction of Bleaberry Fell ENE. The descent becomes steeper as the path bends northwards to transport you quickly to the stream below. The final section is quite difficult, down a packed earth shoot, where secure footholds are not easy to maintain.

The stream at the bottom compensates for the exacting descent. Continue down round the spur of the fellside along the clearly marked pathway, with Ashness Gill below in the rocky gully to your R. Your path then rounds a pleasant terraced traverse, and the way continues through heathers and bracken. The path drops to a p-stile, and then you continue downhill to reach the road near Ashness Bridge. Turn R and cross the famous Ashness Bridge.

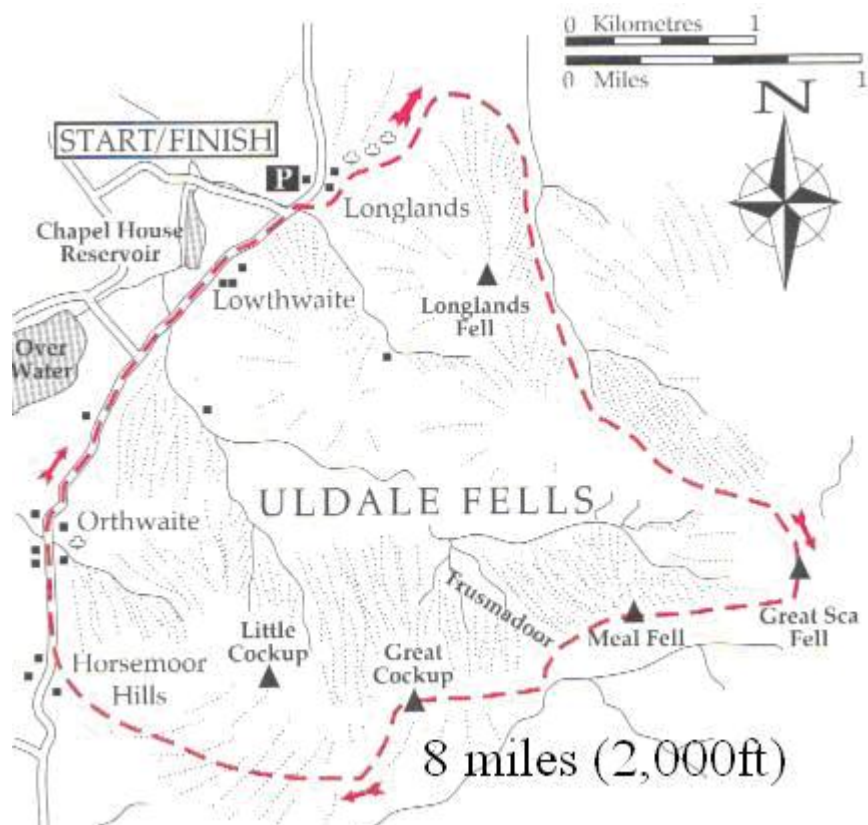
Take the footpath immediately to your R snaking up the fellside to a crooked p-stile ahead. There is a sign here that reads 'Footpath to Great Wood and Keswick'. Select the lower path, which descends gradually to the N. The stony way traverses along the fellside, undulating through sparse hawthorn trees, gorse bushes and the inevitable bracken. Falcon Crag is passed on your R with its great sheer rock buttresses and steep scree and rock-shattered slopes below. You may be able to watch the athletic endeavours of climbing parties testing their skills on the rock pitches along here.

The path continues N, and at the fork ahead keep to the higher path on the R. Your way then enters Great Wood and rises alongside a stone wall to the

L before you cross a stream. Walk downhill from here to your L. At the next junction keep straight on, avoiding a path off to the R leading to Walla Crag via Rakefoot. Proceed along the forest trail and keep to this wide track as a car-park is passed on your L. The track leads to a gate and a p-stile on your L about 50 paces from the entrance to Great Wood car-park. Turn L over the stile and walk down the car-park entrance lane. Cross the busy B5289 and veer R down the path through the woods, crossing a wooden footbridge before the way bends back to the R, alongside the road. An excellent path then leads N beneath a shading canopy of mainly coniferous trees. Some distance along here turn L down a surfaced lane signed 'Public Footpath' and pointing WSW.

Pass through a gate at a cattle grid ahead. Turn R through a further gate and walk along the path into another wooded area alongside a tiny watercourse on your R. After a footbridge and gate, your way leads down to the attractive shoreline of Derwent Water. The path continues across a footbridge, round a sweeping shingle bay and on towards Keswick through another gate. Turn L along here for a short detour to the well-regarded viewing point of Friar's Crag on your L. Then continue along the wide gravel path, which will bring you past the boat moorings back again to the car-park situated beyond the Century Theatre.

Caldbeck Fells [27th November] - Most walkers in the Lake District could reach for their maps and proudly indicate the whereabouts of Scafell and Scafell Pike. They would be less sure about Great Sea Fell, which is an unremarkable hump of grass tucked away in a quiet corner "Back o' Skidda". There is a fine circular walk which takes in a handful of the Longlands fells, crowned by Great Sea Fell and including the amusingly-named Great Cockup.





6 Person Tent – The Club now has a tent which is available for hire. Please contact Graeme if you want to arrange to borrow it.



Cheques – should be made payable to “**Gateshead Civic Walking Club**” and posted to 59 Walden Close, Urpeth Grange, Ouston, Chester le Street, Co Durham, DH2 1TF.



Civic Walkers Walking Club.
59 Walden Close.
Urpeth Grange.
Ouston.
Chester le Street.
Co. Durham.
DH2.1TF.
Date 2010-07-09

In response to your various Emails sent 5 /07 /10 and 12 /06 /10
Also your letter of enquiry sent 17 June 2010 I am now able to comment on your comments.

The management advised all groups using our services of the increase in fuel costs in January and April 2010. These increases are out of our control.

Our method of charging for fuel costs, hire charges and affiliation fees are in line with c.t.a the Community Transport Association advice and in line with the charity commission's rulings as you are aware we are a registered charity and are not for making a **profit organization**.

In response to your suggestion increase the hire charges instead of the fuel costs , this has been carefully looked at, but as we have a lot of Vulnerable and Elderly people groups who only travel a short distances in the Tyne and Wear areas, increasing the hire charges would not be productive to these groups.

As we are a community based transport charity we have to look at The Vulnerable and Elderly in priority.

I hope this answers your queries and concerns. **The charges** laid out in our correspondence dated April 2010 stands.

James Cullen Secretary.

Jack Dodd Chairman

Transport North East
St Mark's Church
Shipcote Terrace
Gateshead
NE8 4AA

Fax: 0191 4775321
Booking Line: 0191 4775764