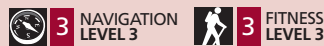
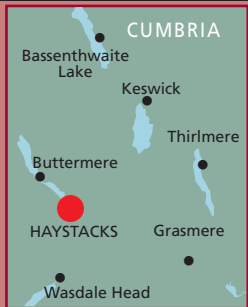


• Distance 14km/9 miles • Time 6hrs+ • Type Remote fells and valleys



Plan your walk



PHOTOGRAPHY: ALAMY



WHERE: Circular walk from Wasdale Head via Black Sail YHA in the Lake District.

START/END: The Wasdale Head Inn (NY186088).

TERRAIN: Clear, grassy fell paths and open sections with boulder scree, some scrambling and steep descent to end.

MAPS: OS Explorer OL4 and 6; Landranger 89.

GETTING THERE: Seascale and Ravenglass rail stations on the Cumbrian Coast Line (© 0845 000 0125, www.northernrail.org), then bus X6 to Gosforth and five miles by taxi (Gosforth Taxis © 019467 25308) to Wasdale.

EATING & DRINKING: Wasdale Head Inn, Wasdale (© 019467 26229, www.wasdale.com) for hearty meals, real ales and picnic lunches to take away.

SLEEPING: Glenfield Guest House, Whitehaven, ▶

Haystacks may not be the highest Lakeland peak, but its sheer diversity and ability to reveal new charms on subsequent walks made it the favourite of Alfred Wainwright. This year marks 80 years since Wainwright first set out to explore the Lakes, that eventually led to his best-selling collection of *Pictorial Guides*. The circular walk from Wasdale is a more taxing, remote walk and, as such, offers a more challenging alternative to the traditional ascents from Honister or Buttermere. Wainwright would, no doubt, approve. Some of the scrambling sections, notably the west ridge of Haystacks and the steep descent from Beck Head, will take some walkers out of their comfort zone. In return, however, the reward is drop-your-butties views down both Ennerdale and Buttermere Valleys, plus a chance to marvel at Windy Gap and the north face of Great Gable. For Wainwright devotees, however, the real highlight is to

sit and contemplate at Innominat Tarn, just below the summit of Haystacks, where his ashes are scattered. As always, be properly equipped and remember that conditions on the tops can be very different from those in the valley below. Check the weather before you set out.

1. START From behind the Wasdale Head Inn (NY186088), follow the bridle path by the beck (don't cross the bridge). At the junction, keep to the L fork and head up Mosedale along the grassy path. The path becomes increasingly steep and rocky as you climb from Mosedale by Gatherstone Beck (NY182107). Cross the beck on wet boulders and climb the path to reach Black Sail Pass at 546m/1,791ft.

2. From the pass, it's a steep, rough descent, without a very clear path initially, and a short scramble beside Sail Beck down to Ennerdale. Cross the bridge ▶

Continued...

(© 01946 691911, www.glenfield-whitehaven.co.uk); Black Sail YHA, Ennerdale (© 0845 371 9680, www.yha.org.uk).

VISITOR INFORMATION: Whitehaven TIC (© 01946 598914, www.western-lakedistrict.co.uk).

GUIDEBOOKS: *Rambler's Guide: Lake District* by John Gillham & Ronald Turnbull (£10.99, Collins, ISBN 978 0002201360); *Short Walks in Lakeland Book 3: West Lakeland* by Aileen Evans & Brian Evans (£12.95, Cicerone, ISBN 978 1852843083).

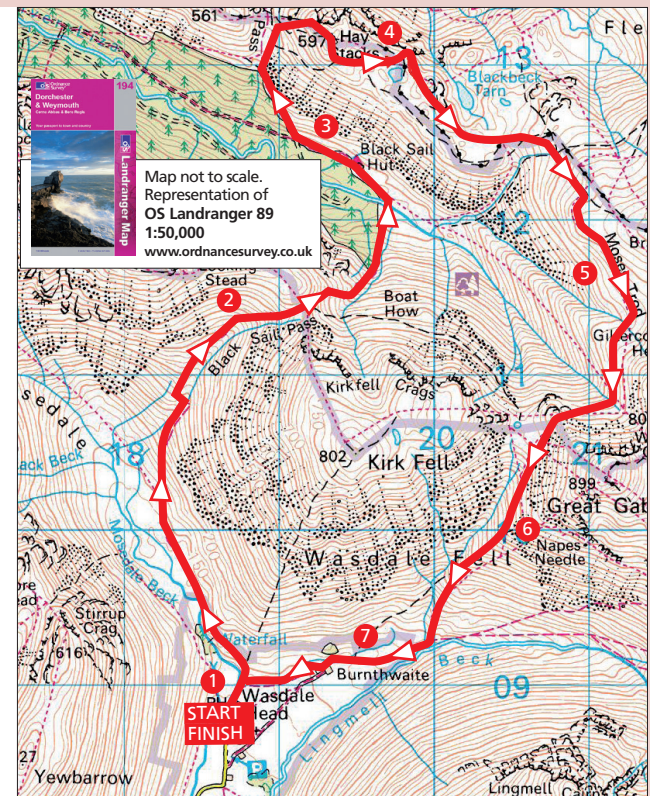
LOCAL RAMBLERS GROUP: West Cumbria Ramblers (© 0190 082 4519, www.ralakedistrict.talktalk.net).

over the infant River Lisa at the bottom and veer L, following the good path to Black Sail YHA (NY194123).

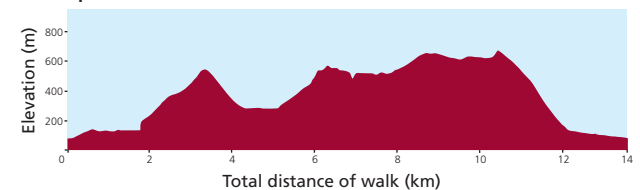
3. After the hostel, follow the track for 400m/1,312ft down valley and then fork R up a good path alongside an old plantation boundary. It's a 160m/525ft climb to reach the pass at Scarth Gap (NY189133).

4. Turn R and climb the west ridge of Haystacks. There's a choice of paths, all of which involve some scrambling sections on good, rough rock. The rocky summit outcrops and the summit tarn at 597m/1,959ft (NY193131) make for a good place to break for lunch.

5. Two paths lead eastwards down from the summit. Choose either the well-worn stony main path, or the more grassy option just to its south. Both arrive at Innominat Tarn (NY197129).



Steepness of walk



6. Take the main path east from the tarn but, before it starts to descend to Black Beck, follow a grassy trod to the R. This winds its way among tarns and outcrops, passing the landmark perched boulder (NY202126) and crossing the Coast to Coast Path, where it climbs out of Ennerdale by Loft Beck. Climb over the grassy shoulder above Brim Crag and join Moses Trod as it traverses round the head of Ennerdale. The narrow path reaches the shoulder above Beck Head at 675m/2,215ft (NY207107).

7. The final leg is downhill but no easy descent, dropping 610m/2,000ft over boulders and steep scree, then steep, often slippery, grass as it reaches the ridge of Gavel Neese (NY204099) with only occasional stretches of stone-laid path. The last section across the final valley floor is a gentler, one-mile plod along easy, flat path to return to the Wasdale Head Inn. *Route devised by Cathy Colam, Pace the Peaks*