

Gorphwysfa Club

Journal

Vol. 48 no. 2 December 2025

Dedicated to

**Nicolette Winterbottom
and Regina Smith**

Much missed members
of the Gorphwysfa Club



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Nicolette and Regina – memories and legacies

Welsh 3000s revisited

Coast to Coast

Donations, £5 please

Cover photo:

The Glyders by Hristo

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Editorial 2025

Again we sadly have to open our Journal in remembrance of another two of our long term enthusiastic members, how sad it is that Nicolette and Regina are no longer with us. So many times and occasions, so many times their influence has brought joy and excitement, together with companionship and support into our association. We certainly have travelled through some very sad times over the last 3 or 4 years - Brian, Andrew, Len and now two wonderful ladies, life can be very cruel at these times, loss and sorrow to us all – and particularly to the families.

Of course now we are thankful for the joy and support that they all brought to us and hopefully by reading our Journal these points will be brought out in the following pages. Certainly their contribution to the Gorphwysfa Club was significantly great, their personalities radiated so much that the club benefited hugely from the membership and joy of Nicolette and Regina being amongst our membership.

They both were popular with so many people, and skilled in a broad field of skills. Early on Nicolette was the Queen of support, when support was needed. She had huge personal problems, but rose above them always, negative words and thoughts did not exist in her vocabulary. She certainly was the Queen of her garden and her helpfulness and support was extended to her neighbours and friends. She was a very kind person, a wonderful person to know.

Brian was a very lucky person to meet Regina in 1979, (married in 1983) and he knew that, and said so! Brian had been living through huge personal problems, and like an angel Regina crossed his path. I suppose it could be said that Brian needed some help and amazingly found Regina in the USA. There were problems, like commuting from California to Oxford when she had a terror of flying was just a problem to be sorted. Her first visit to the UK in January saw her dragged up to Snowdonia, and on the first evening walking up the Miners Track. However her personality, intelligence and joy for life was soon absorbed into the Gorphwysfa, and she always, with a smiling face slotted into whatever that Brian or the club demanded. This included falling into a crevasse in the Alps (note account in this Journal), trekking to Annapurna Base Camp and being trained in psychology taking on work in Oxfordshire with children who lived in deprived circumstances. Of course she found Appletree house was a challenge(!), a new home full of challenges, but the family and many new friends, some closely related to mountaineering, softened the blow of a challenging environment in a new country! Photography and walking through the Oxfordshire countryside and her development as a career as an educational psychologist soon brought joy to her new life. Mountaineering holidays fitted in fine!

Moving over to the Gorphwysfa and 2025, we have once again had a reasonably happy and active year. Our first journal of the year (July) has already told a little of the story, very many thanks to all that contributed, (particularly Gerry and Terry Jones) but as this year draws to an end there are still a little to report on. The adventures of the ladies, getting a hands on feel for the 15 X 3000s mountains in Snowdonia, was at times a real wet and windy adventure. Our Oxfordshire Meet hosted by Trish Shorter was a grand gathering. The 2025 AGM weekend certainly has the need for several pages to be used for the summary of this year's jolly; reducing it to a few lines is a challenge! The main item of confrontation was our membership of the British Mountaineering Council, (BMC), and it could be said that (fortunately) a great deal of water ran under the bridge before the meeting commenced! A lively debate saw the proposal by John Middleton, for the club to resign for the BMC was not supported by the meeting, sadly this has meant that John and Leah have resigned from the club. The BMC is the governing body of the sport we are involved with and the majority felt that we should continue with our support. Kate's management of the meeting went very well, Tricia Shorter kindly took the minutes (to be circulated) and then followed a very pleasant meal in the Tyn y Coed Hotel. Our current Journal does report of the further exploration of the Lake District by Gerry and Terry, and their friend.

The club has one or two problems at present – probably the most important and sad situation is the loss of existing members and the recruitment of new blood. The reduction of membership is causing problems with the finance of a professionally printed Journal – the July's Journal cost £10 each to print etc plus £2 40 to post to those who lived away. I am pleased to have received a note that one member 'really enjoyed reading the last journal' One way we are tackling this is that Kate is sorting out the layout of the Journal – I think that this will save us about £250. The subs are now sorted, and we do hope that all existing members will not find the new membership rate a problem. If you are considering resigning from the club, I would ask you to reconsider this, as the loss of your membership has serious consequences to the whole club. Please contact me if you feel that you need any help or support.

I do now think that we should all thank our chairman, Kate, for her huge contribution to the club. She has for some years looked after the club website (please use this, it is a work of art, full of information and well deserves the attention of the club members). This Journal is in print through 90% of Kate's efforts. Also please note the website address is on page 3 of this journal. This is only a small part of Kate's contribution, Kate you are fantastic – thank you for all that you do for the Gorphwysfa.

Enclosed within the covers of this Journal is the Diary 2026. It would be good, if you already keep a diary, that you transfer the dates listed into your own – in this way there should not be too many clashes! You will note that the New Year Meet is up and running and we hope to have about 20 persons gathering together. I of course will be organising the New Years Race on the 1st January, another very popular event! Following this is the ever popular Steve Ogden Memorial Meet, in the Lake District, mid-week this year, 3rd – 6th of March. If you have not yet booked, do it quick!

I think that this could well be the time for the executive Committee, and the membership, to add to the agenda the word Recruitment! We are losing Jean and Dave Hall, probably Jesse and Maggie and probably two or three others. First of all I would again ask to carefully consider your decision. Dropping out of the club means you lose a group of friends, and losing friends is not good news! Your subs in the past have been used very carefully to provide a service within our circle but outside the club's management too. The BMC provide facilities for young and old – continuing the support for them is an important aspect of your membership. To this I think I can seriously add that the loss of our Journal, annually or bi annual is also another step on the downhill ladder of away from health and well-being. Think carefully!

Finally, I hope that 2026 is a cracking year – you may have to delete all mention of war and politics to reach that height! Try to support the Diary/programme – and if you don't like it let us know; I hope to see you in the Lakes in March!

Harvey Lloyd 1st December 2025

Gorphwysfa Meets Diary 2026

Accurate as of <publication date>. For an up to date version, see the website.

<https://www.gorphwysfaclub.org/diary>

29/30/31st December, the stay can be extended over the 1st

New Year Meet 2025/26. Will be based at Hafod y Gwynt

It is now time to decide to go for it. Same social gathering with plenty of hill walking thrown in free. It is hoped that Gorphwysfan locals will join in, both in the day and the evenings. It is suggested when HyG is full that a S/C cottage is hired close by – and of course Pen y Pass is available. Let Harvey know if you are interested phone. 01865 750067 The Llydaw Race will happen on the 1st.

3rd – 5th March 2026

The Steve Ogden Memorial Meet 2026

Confirmed. As last year we return to Glenthorne Quaker Centre & Guest House, Grasmere, £100 pppn dinner, bed and breakfast. A great location. Deposits should already paid to Andrew, andrew.middlestone@gmail.com. M: 07340 955252. Accommodation still available.

17th to 21st March

Anglesey Coastal Footpath

This is the first stage of a walk along the Anglesey Coastal Path (Llwybr Arfordirol Ynys Môn), which is a 200-kilometre (124 m) long-distance footpath around the island of Anglesey, mostly through Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The aim is to walk the path in three separate sections of four days, averaging about 10 miles a day and not exceeding 12. The three sections will be 17th – 21st March, autumn 2026 and spring 2027, with a stay of 4/5 nights per section, with self-catering accommodation at a central point for each section. To express interest contact organiser Frances.

12 – 19th May

Scotland in the Spring 2026

Confirmed, vacancies available for Friends

Kindrocket Lodge, near Blair Athol, Pitlochry a great venue (our venue in 2022). Many thanks for Lucy who is in charge this year, **Lucy Norton, Firs View, Bladon Rd., Woodstock, OX20 1QD, 01629 580049, cmm701@gmail.com**. A couple of vacancies still exist so jump in quick to book them.

Saturday 30th May

Welsh 1000 Metre Peaks race 2026

Race details online entries open 1st December 2025. Anyone interested in either marshalling or competing? Or what about the 3000's! Room available at present at HYG for the Saturday night onwards, if needed. Email Harvey for details.

June

What about another celebration? The house can be booked for multi activity or something similar for one week. Booking needed to bring forward the organisation – early contact Harvey initially.

4th or 11th July date to be confirmed

Oxfordshire Meet

Accommodation normally available, a walk Saturday, evening meal & /or buffet, Sunday explore Oxford.

Mid/late July

Alpine Meet 2025

Will it ever happen again?????

Early/mid-September

September Meet

The YHA have a few Hostels in Wales that are available to sole hire. What about exploring the availability?

10th October

Gorphwysfa AGM and Dinner

Probably Tyn Y Coed – Hafod y Gwynt is available for beds and meeting

October

Himalayan Meet

Will it happen again????? What about a club member pushing the boat out?

November

Winter Meet

Watch this Space!

29th/30th/31 December 2026/27

New Year Meet

Watch this Space! Will it be Hafod y Gwynt? The Llydaw Race will be on 1st.

March 2027

Lakes Meet

Watch this Space!

If you are interested in getting out on the hills with the Gorphwysfa then you need to note the above dates in your diaries now and get in touch with the appropriate organiser! Friends are really welcomed to come along to our meets, and so become involved in the club. On all meets please feel free to ask if there is room. Note our web site: www.gorphwysfaclub.org for reports and ideas.

Memories of Nicolette and Regina

Legacies

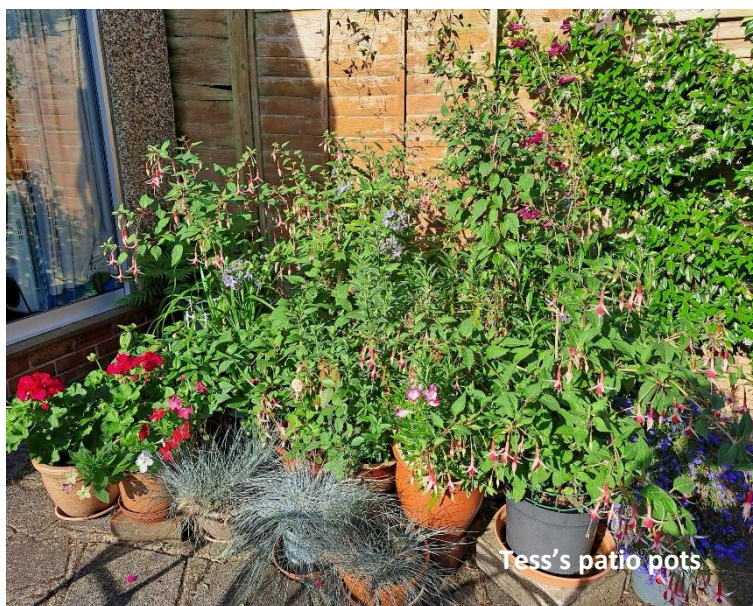
Memories fade but the influence which someone may have had on your outlook or interests remains firm. And so it is for me with both of these now much-missed friends.

I think I first met Nicolette at my very first encounter with the Gorphwysfans, when Liz Leask invited me to join a Ladies' Meet in Derbyshire. Then there were the many New Years spent at Pen y Pas, Nicolette, Lucy and I sharing a room as well as the journey to Wales with Lucy at the wheel. I remember walking back to the hostel with Nicolette on one occasion when she and I had had enough and left the rest of the party to tackle the tough last bit of the walk I clearly remember a wet, windy weekend – oh so wet and windy! – one September, possibly the first of these Meets organised by Vicki and Rodney. Michael [Winterbottom], Stella and I found a sheltered, wooded gorge to walk in, while Nicolette went up with other hardy ones onto the hills and she was very nearly swept away!

But the lasting legacy from Nicolette to me is Sudoku and knitting. I remember us sitting side by side on a bottom bunk somewhere when she showed me how she tackled one of these puzzles and I've used her method ever since. And she was such an example of industry, never sitting idle as her knitting was always to hand. She gave me the pattern for her teddy bears and many little knitted teddies were contributed by me to Rotary boxes sent to various parts of the world in times of crisis. You have to count stitches and rows if you're going to end up with a recognisable bear and I like to knit while I watch telly so I'm currently on the third of my blankets of knitted squares which go to the homeless, Ukrainian refugees or whatever cause is in need as the blanket is finished.



Tess's blanket of knitted squares



Tess's patio pots

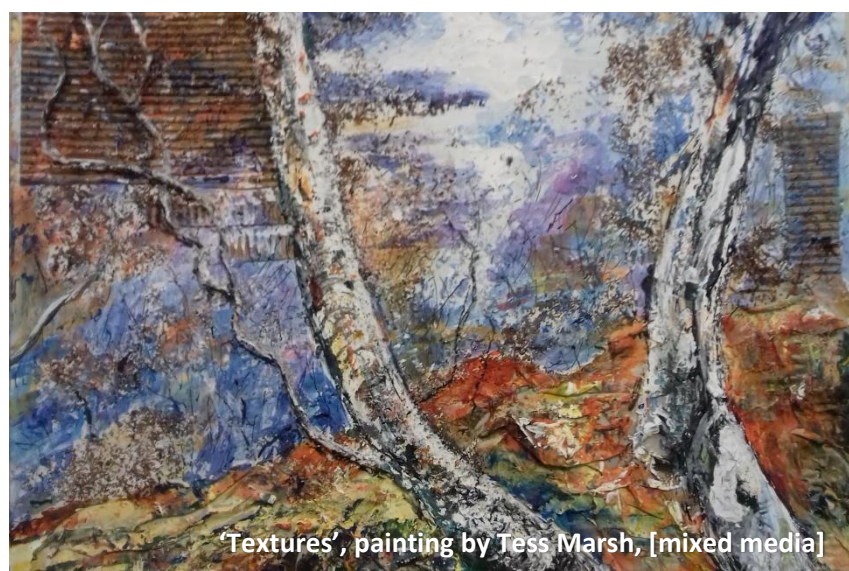
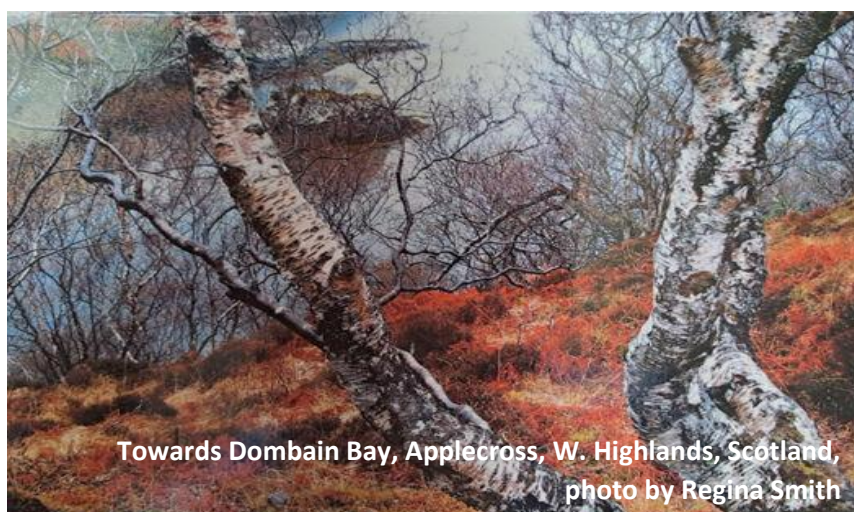
Nicolette was renowned for her gardening knowledge and skills. I had seen her lovely Oxford garden several times and she expressed a wish to see mine. I didn't think she'd find much to admire but I was wrong. She was most enthusiastic about my pot-planting on the patio and said she was going to copy the idea. I was flattered.

I remember Nicolette, Regina, Nancy and me taking the little train to the top of Snowden where we joined Liz Leask and others who had hiked up for the scattering of Mike's ashes.

When I first met Regina she was still joining in walks in Wales but gradually did less and less as her back worsened. I only went on one of the trips to the Dolomites, to Canazei in 2014.

My hip was giving trouble so I couldn't go on the demanding walks and had fun instead packing my drawing gear in my rucksack and taking the lift to various vantage points where I spent time taking photos and sketching. I was 'close up' to the distinctive peak, the Grand Vernel, which we could see from our apartment so was able to record its detail. On one occasion, Regina came with me and we enjoyed time together as she was also not up to the difficult walking. Towards the end of that holiday, Christine and Andrew nobly sacrificed their walking time one day to shepherd Brian, Regina and me to a very high point where we could enjoy a bit of easy walking - more like sliding really – on steep snowy paths surrounded by magnificent mountain views.

I remember when Brian and Regina opened their splendid house at Radyr Chain for a club weekend and we were able to see their fine collection of paintings. I looked forward each year to receiving their Christmas card, always one of Regina's beautiful photographs which I greatly admired. I saved them and, with her permission, have reproduced several of them in various media. I may have one or two yet to use and that is Regina's legacy to me.



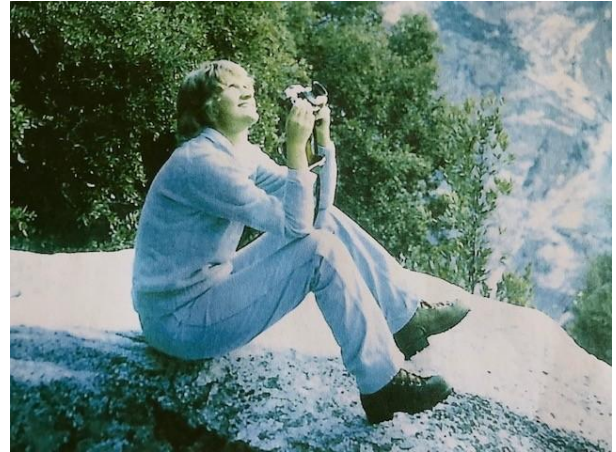
Tess March

Regina, ace photographer!

Many of you will have received a Christmas card from Regina and Brian and been surprised that the wonderful scenes were photographs taken by Regina. She was an avid photographer to a professional standard!



Les Gets



The Matterhorn

A lane in Old Marston



Kate Williams

Memories of Nicolette

Nicolette organised The Lake District meet for many years. Many of the places we stayed in had an open fire. An example being the Coniston Copper Mine Hut below The Old Man of Coniston. She used to refer to myself and Bill McCann as the coalmen. We did have some fun! I can see her smile now.

In terms of climbing, she was very good.

In those days we often used to climb on Glyder Fach. Especially The Chasm Route. It has an interesting move at the crux called The Vertical Vice. If you had long arms or you were small, thin and flexible, you had an advantage. Nicolette had no problems with it. The laughter we had, watching our friends thrutching with legs and arms, is still talked about.



John Middleton

Nicolette and the Ladies Meets

The women of the Club enjoyed themselves for many years by having weekends walking together, staying in a variety of accommodation, good and bad! Nicolette came on many of these jaunts and wrote them up in a very amusing style. Here are a couple of excerpts.

The First Ladies Meet: October 1979, the Berwyns

We all arrived safely with the aid of Chris' beautiful maps with the remembered tunnel of trees. Nancy, Liz and Gillian arrived first and, refreshed from a visit to the pub, had a lovely fire going. Chris and Helen, Katie and Nicolette followed.

Soon after, the epic of the beds occurred and the first revelation of many about each was revealed. Liz cannot, not prefers but cannot, nay will not, sleep with the windows closed. This would not have been a problem had not some windows refused to open; a reshuffle took place rather suddenly, which resulted in less comfort for some, perhaps, than they had originally acquired, but Liz got her fresh air.



For this weekend, in fact, the revelations remain more memorable than the walks. Nicolette was clearly super slut when it came to washing the cat's dishes and there was fascinating details about husbands, flashers and many other things. Liz's secret weapon when map reading was also revealed for the first time; in 28 minutes precisely we would arrive somewhere, or even 3 minutes 20 seconds – and often we did, though time keeping can be a strain.

The planners of the weekend introduced several items, later to become traditional – the bottle of sherry, the wine, and our roles were soon chosen – Katie, of course, poured the sherry.

The bath rota, to be taken in order of age, also provided a few surprises, perhaps super slut just has pre-senile dementia!

The walking was not too arduous for those out of training. One lunch had a shower and we sat on a hillside and decided we had all enjoyed the weekend so much, it must be twice yearly and we sat looking at a strange building wondering what it was.

As Katie was leaving, she had a puncture but a passing bloke fell for her charm and changed it for her. As Nancy was leaving, she got stuck in the mud and it was an epic and a half to unstick her and poor Liz got muddy all over.

The whole weekend was, I think, a really happy occasion embodying all that's the best that the Gorphwysfa Club is about.

Nicolette

The 16th Ladies Meet, (now called the Women's Weekend!) 1991. Buxton

This was a rather different women's weekend. Why? Well, there was all this comfort – no searching for remote farmhouses in the pitch dark, but a clearly illuminated B&B was our destination. No damp beds, no recalcitrant smoking fire, no shopping, no cooking, no washing up, a genial mine host, enormous breakfasts, kettles in the bedrooms, bright lights, and feathery plumes in the lounge – Katie knocked them over and broke one but she quickly hid the fact.

The walking was superb; on Saturday, dry and moderately bright, up to Kinder Scout, big boulders on the skyline and the walk leading us through deep peaty gulleys, stone paved at the bottom. After lunch, the party divided. The stronger walkers making a bigger loop and taking in Jacob's Ladder above a charming bridge; all return home well satisfied and to gallons of hot water – well all those who weren't sleeping on the top floor, it couldn't quite make it up there.



On Sunday again the party divided; the weather was rather damper and mistier and after a detour up and down a lane to try and park, Chris and Katie disappeared into the mist to run up and down hill and dales and then meet us for lunch. The walkers set off more soberly down a splendid track almost certainly once a drovers' lane, deep sunk, now and again stone flagged. Much later, the mist suddenly cleared and we could see the view and look across at yesterday's walk with pride. We met Katie and Chris before the descent and as they lightly ran down, we all followed galumphing down the hill, packs bumping behind, it was fun but we must have looked absurd. Down in the valley, a huge patch of cuckoo flower greeted us and a welcome pub. So gently back to the cars.

The Saturday night celebration/reunion was perhaps a little muted. Was it the bright lights or the plumes? Maybe because we were seated at three tables, the party spirit was suppressed and jokes not shared. Maybe because it was a bigger party with several VERY WELCOME newcomers, it would inevitably be different. Either way, we were fed wonderfully well and had a journey down memory lane with readings from the journal, but also there were no new little intimacies revealed on this occasion, of life in Pullens Lane or Charlbury.

As always, it was sad to drive away from the space and the quiet and the sheep and the sky and the hills and the friendship.

Nicolette

Nicolette the dancer

Nicolette was a very good rock climber. I think it had a lot to do with the balance and agility she gained through being a dancer.



Illustration from Ballet Shoes

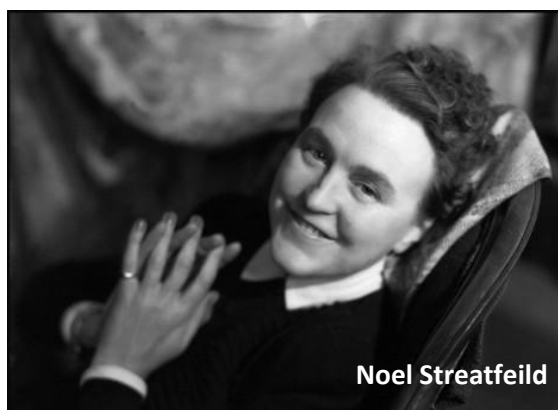
by Ruth Gervis

Her mother, Ruth, painted and drew from a very young age and made a career for herself, painting, illustrating and in due course running a small art school. When Nicolette left school, she had no idea what she wanted to do with her life, so when her parents suggested she go to an art school she rather vaguely said alright. She had inevitably painted and drawn from an early age but truthfully it wasn't something she loved passionately.

However, the Head of the Art school believed in doing all the arts and Nicolette did do a lot of dancing which she enjoyed much more! One of the Art teacher's wife had been a dancer and she was delighted to teach Nicolette and another girl every day before breakfast.

Sadly, Nicolette failed her art exams but her aunt Noel knew someone who ran children's dancing classes who took her on as an assistant. She loved the classes and became qualified to teach in schools.

The older (and probably female) Gorphwysfa members may recall a children's book called "Ballet Shoes". It was written by Noel Streatfeild (sic), Nicolette's aunt, and illustrated by Nicolette's mother, Ruth Gervis. It came out in 1936 and has been in print ever since, been adapted twice for TV and now for the stage at the National Theatre. So it is clear where Nicolette got her grace, strength and flexibility which stood her in such good stead on the rock face!



Noel Streatfeild

From Nicolette's memoirs and The National Theatre programme for Ballet Shoes.

Kate Williams

Regina's account of Chamonix, Summer 1989ish

(Taken from her memoirs)

Our journey to the Alps - to the start of our high-level mountain walk from Chamonix to Zermatt - began late on an August afternoon. A TV crew packed up cameras after filming a news magazine interview with Brian (Does Oxford really need more money?) while we made a final check of essentials: ice-axes, ropes, boots, karabiners, and crampons. To practice knot-tying, I put a small piece of rope in the glove compartment of the car. Our pleasant evening drive to Dover was followed the next morning by a rather rough crossing to Boulogne.

During the lovely drive through France, I made an attempt to learn to tie a bowline knot. "Essential," said Brian. Noticing that my knots, when pulled tight, disappeared into the single straight length of rope from which they began, Brian coached me:

Hold the rope to make a tree with a hole at its base.
The end of the rope becomes a rabbit which then comes out of
the hole, goes around the tree and back down the hole.

After practicing a few times, I realised that the rabbit had to get it just right as he circled the tree; I became distracted by my duties as navigator and the rabbit enjoyed early retirement in the glove compartment.

We were welcomed to the Michabel Hotel in Zermatt by its proprietress of many years, Madam Perrin. She seemed more stooped than when we were last in Zermatt. Her yellow-white hair seemed thinner and her glasses thicker, but she greeted us warmly with improved English. (Her English was to be put to the test later when Brian tried to explain that he needed a wrench because I dropped a contact lens down the drain. Being a wise woman, she feigned incomprehension and sent a maintenance man). The charm of the Michabel is enhanced through familiarity and economy: the wonderful balconies facing the Matterhorn and overlooking the town, the entertainingly thin walls separating the bedrooms, the utilitarian bathroom down the hall which may be used by the weary and pungent mountaineering guests for three francs a bath, and the dining room with its overly generous portions of straightforward food. The Michabel now is on the circuit of recognised bargains for young travellers and this summer many of the dining room voices were those of American students.

In addition to the obvious assets of the Michabel, we believed that the 64 steps up to our room provided good training for crossing the cols of the Haute Route. To supplement this training with altitude, we spent a night at the much higher and more remote Fluhalp Hütte - where we got up at 3.00 a.m. for an early start to get as high as we could towards the summit of the Rimpfischhorn. The night was quite warm and the moon very bright. We didn't use our head torches nor our jackets as we followed - more or less - the trail up the dark mountainside. After about an hour, we were overtaken by a party of five serious climbers and we watched their head torches bob into the distance. A boulder field presented what seemed to me endless challenges. A further ascent led to a col. The threatening thick mist from the valley, which had risen with us during the night as we moved up the mountain, now blanketed everything below us. We watched the wonderful drama of sunrise-pink brighten the mountain peaks above shifting clouds. The full moon slowly disappeared behind the Matterhorn. The Rimpfischhorn seemed nearly as far away as it had when we started from the hut. It was clear that we would have to be content with a climb up a minor peak and a practice crampon-walk over what was considered by me to be a treacherous ice-dome and considered by Brian to be a nearly horizontal snow-walk. After watching the five climbers through my telephoto lens - now five dots moving simultaneously up a distant snow field - we descended in the warm sunshine down the mountainside, through the boulder field, down to the hut, and back to Zermatt.

I was beginning to sense a certain discontent within Brian that seemed to have to do with my general state of fitness. We had only one day left in Zermatt before taking the train to Argentière to meet John, Gillian, and Jeremy. To reassure Brian, I suggested we walk from Zermatt up the steep trail to the Restaurant Edelweiss (guide book time approx. 45 minutes) and I would carry my own back pack! On the fine sunny afternoon, fellow walkers, after saying the obligatory "Grüss Gott", would look with curiosity and/or pity at this breathless woman in mid-life bent by the weight of a pack, crampons, jackets, and an ice axe. The sight was made even more curious by her male companion, carrying nothing, bounding about like an impatient puppy, and encouraging her to go faster. We took somewhat longer than the guide book time.



We arrived at the village of Argentière just outside of Chamonix, on Sunday afternoon. We met John, Jeremy, and Gillian at the hotel and spent the evening planning the following two weeks of challenging mountain walking. We planned to have a leisurely breakfast the following morning, pack, take a lift up the mountain to Les Grands Montets and walk from there down to the Refuge d'Argentière, the climbers' hut where we would spend the night before crossing the challenging col du Chardonnet and continuing towards Zermatt. (Guide book time: Les Grand Montets to Refuge d'Argentière - 2 hours.)

Midday on Monday we emerged from the building at the top of the lift into an icy world of cold bright sunshine, mountain peaks, and fields of snow. We had a conversation with two young men from Liverpool before descending down several stairs to the snow field where people fastened crampons before setting off for various destinations. At the bottom of the stairs I read the following sign:

ATTENTION!	AU DELA DE CE PANNEAU ZONE DANGEREUSE CREVASSES À VOS RISQUES ET PERILS
BEWARE!	VENTURE BEYOND THIS SIGN AT YOUR OWN RISK AND PERIL DANGER OF CREVASSES
ACHTUNG!	JENSEITS DIESES SCHILDES AUF EIGENE GEFAHR GLETSCHERSPALTEN

Brian must have felt that the lack of a warning to the Welsh was a good omen for he moved past the bright yellow sign with no comment. We roped up, with Brian in the lead followed by me, John, Gillian, and Jeremy at the end. For the first time on a mountain I stepped into my smart new Willens harness. A very good device, Brian had explained; the only potential problem may occur if one happens to fall upside down - then one might slip out.

After roping and reassembling ourselves, we crunch-crunched to the edge of the snow field and saw that the way forward was a tricky descent down a nearly vertical rock, ice, and snow wall to the sloping snow below. The distance down was relatively short and the moves were made easier by a wire cable. Because I reached the bottom of the wall rather quickly and without incident, I felt renewed confidence and enthusiasm. I looked forward to the walk down the snow slope, across the glacier, and up the moraine to the hut; perhaps we would arrive early enough for a warm afternoon nap on the deck.

The snowfield felt steeper than it had looked from above and crevasses of various shapes and sizes creased its surface. One quite large and very deep crevasse required a small step from safer snow downward to a slightly sloping edge before moving on to a crossable snow bridge several feet away. Brian had already made this move and stood safely on the other side. As I stepped down towards the edge of the crevasse something unexpected happened. I slipped! I found myself bouncing into an unstoppable swift slide to the crevasse's edge and over into its cool darkness. After what seemed like a long time, I came to a sudden stop as the rope to Brian and John became tight. My relief immediately turned to concern as I realized I was dangling nearly upside down at the crevasse's centre. It now was a long way down, a long way up, and awkwardly distant to either side. Very shortly after remembering Brian's explanation of what might happen if one went upside down in the harness and as a result of both good fortune and much adrenalin, I found myself sitting on a narrow snow bridge. I was reassured to hear Brian shout from above, "Has anyone seen Regina?" Ah, they've missed me, I thought, as I shouted cheerfully "I'm down here". I felt secure on my snow bridge. Unfortunately the rope was running parallel to the centre of the crevasse and was of little use. However I was quite snug on the bridge and unlikely to fall off unless someone were to pull on the rope. A tug from Brian meant that I would fall forwards, and a tug from John meant I would fall backward. Behind me, the crevasse was seriously deep. In front of me the crevasse was less deep but still quite threatening. A distance ahead on the bottom of the crevasse I could see footprints and signs of messing-about left by another who had ignored the bright yellow sign. I explained to Brian, who had firmly secured his end of the rope and was cautiously peering over the edge, that I needed a rope to run perpendicular to the crevasse so I could climb out.

Not a lot happened for a while. I became increasingly aware of the effects of the warm summer on my snow bridge, as the drip-drip-drips seemed to get louder and faster. At random intervals, John or Brian would tug at the rope. To tighten it - they explained. As a result of the sudden unexpected lurch, I would grab the sides of the snow bridge and shout: DON'T PULL ON THE ROPE! Eventually I heard unfamiliar voices and was told a rescue was being mounted. A third rope was to be thrown to me from further up the hill. I was to tie it to my karabiner with a bowline knot and climb out. I was horrified! I realized I would have to shout loudly out of the crevasses DOES THE RABBIT GO CLOCKWISE OR COUNTER-CLOCKWISE AROUND THE TREE? What would John think? The unfamiliar voices threw the rope with skill and it came directly to me. Most welcome of all was the pre-tied knot at its end which I swiftly clipped into my karabiner. Next came some awkward moves. I had to turn around by swinging my cramponed feet over my head while holding onto the snow bridge in order to get in a position to climb out. The combination of my front-pointing up the crevasse wall and the determined pulls from the unfamiliar voices made swift work of my escape.

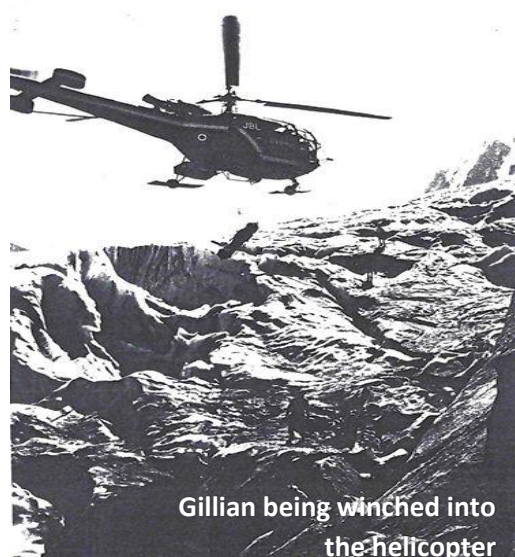
Although I was delighted to emerge into the sunlight, I was less happy to be no further along than the point at which I had fallen in. I still had to cross the now-too-familiar crevasse. With great care I managed to follow Brian's footsteps and cross the remaining crevasses on the snow field leading down to the glacier. Along the way I was able to thank the unfamiliar voices for their helpfulness. The voices, I learned, belonged to the lads from Liverpool. After a long slog across the pitted and rough glacier and up the far moraine we arrived at the hut.

An after-dinner sunset-on-the-deck conversation with three Dutchmen revealed the serious nature of the route we had planned to take the following day. They had just come across the Col du Chardonnet and

found it to be in quite a dangerous condition. "Would you recommend the route to someone like me?" I asked weakly. "I wouldn't recommend it to anyone! I don't know what I was doing there!" the muscular man replied.

We decided that the following day we would walk back to a lift, return to Argentière, and rejoin the Haute Route at a point beyond the Col du Chardonnet. By the following morning I was feeling stiff and moving (more) slowly. The walk down the moraine and over the glacier seemed very long. The glacier became increasingly challenging as we neared its ice fall. A helicopter hovered and circled above us. Why, I wondered. It then spent some time at the hill to our left, landed close to the crevasse into which I had fallen, and returned to circle us again before flying off towards the valley.

As the route left the glacier to follow the mountainside, deep holes, jagged crevasses, and smooth boulders punctuated our journey. I found one move particularly difficult, and I preferred to sit and slither rather than to step delicately down onto a smooth pillar of rock which would have been a more straightforward approach. Eyeing the uninviting black watery pools lying-in-wait at the bottom of the slippery slope we were crossing, I slithered from an ice ledge to the firmer ground of the hillside. Just as I reached a welcoming level ledge, I heard loud noises behind me and turned to see Brian falling precariously at the edge of the glacier. The ice had given way! He was pulled back to his feet by Jeremy. My relief immediately turned to shock and horror as I saw Gillian's feet protruding from under a huge boulder. After a few moments of truly frantic efforts by Jeremy and Brian to free her from her position it was clear, to the enormous relief of everyone, that she was not crushed and that she would be all right. Her ankle was seriously injured. Her ice axe, which had been attached to her wrist, lay crushed under the massive weight of the boulder. Some hikers arrived on their way from the lift to the Argentière hut. Believing the lift was not far away and, hoping that the predatory helicopter was just down the valley, I asked if they would go back to the lift station and report that we needed a helicopter. (We did this even though Gillian had said, of course, that she thought she could walk out). The hikers kindly turned back. It was much later that I realized it was not the simple half-hour straight-forward walk to the lift I had imagined and they had been very generous to make the journey.



Gillian being winched into the helicopter

While we waited for the helicopter, I began to notice that the route seemed to end with my welcoming ledge and picked up again beyond a smooth steep slope several yards wide which cut vertically across the direction in which we hoped to go. A bit of broken wire cable dangled uselessly above some tiny niches in the rock. I kindly offered to ride down on the helicopter with Gillian. Rejected.

Then I decided I should cross this slope before the helicopter arrived, just in case I needed to be wrenched from those icy pools below. With the patient help of Brian and John who held a rope, I moved to what I again mistakenly believed to be the welcoming beginning to the short walk back. I sat in the sun waiting for the helicopter to come for Gillian while Jeremy kept her as warm, comfortable and cheerful as possible. Eventually a competent duo descended from the sky to attend to Gillian. She soon rose through the air - her stretcher swinging at the end of a cable. After a final lurch she disappeared into the belly of the helicopter.

Our walk back to the lift included delicate ledges, narrow ladders, threatening boulders, a rope descent, and Brian's usual observation, "I feel the electricity building up. (Translation: If you don't hurry you will be struck dead by lightning. Having once heard the wild electrical humming of mountainside crucifixes, I always believe him.)"

We stayed in a hotel next to Chamonix's hospital for the following week. Our time was filled with day trips to interesting places, a challenging climb for Brian and John, lovely dinners, and most rewarding - the great pleasure of seeing Gillian's recovery.

Regina Smith

A memory of Regina

The few conversations I had with Regina left a lasting impression of her complete focus on the person she was talking to and interest in them. This felt warm and rewarding to me in addition to Regina being a very interesting person with so many different experiences. I was delighted when she joined a small group of us for dinner on the Friday of Brian's Memorial Weekend.

I was looking forward to seeing Regina again at the dinner of the AGM weekend in Betws-y-Coed. This was a late arrangement so we agreed she would repay me the deposit that evening. I was so touched when her plans changed and knowing she was very ill, with so much to do and think about, that Regina took time and care to send a handwritten card of one of her photographs with thanks, an apology (which was not needed) and the money. The card is still on my window sill.

Sarah Hargreaves

Nicolette a dear friend

I hardly knew Nicolette until she befriended me in 1998 shortly after I lost my husband Martin. She gave me with friendship and kindness at a time when I felt very alone and I subsequently learnt how fond she had been of Martin, whom she had known for a long time.

When times were difficult in those early years she always provided a listening ear, constructive advice and I respected her wisdom about all sorts of subjects. Our friendship gradually deepened over time we shared a love of gardening and her knowledge of plants was endless. Living locally I had many opportunities to visit her at her home in Summertown and we would always look round her pretty back garden together, so well designed. I remember with envy all the newts she had in her pond! Along with a lovely Belfast sink that she passed on to me I have plants in my garden that will forever remind me of Nicolette.



As she was getting on in years our walks together by then amounted to little more than gentle strolls, but pleasurable none the less as we had so much to talk about. A lovely walk on Port Meadow comes to mind. The last walk we did together was from Hafod-y-Gwynt on a warm and sunny morning when we went a short way up the new path to Pen y Pass and back again. It was such a beautiful place to share the experience.

I so admired her spirit of adventure she had, even in those later years. Travelling to France and Australia for family visits, and then the more unusual countries less visited by most of us as she accompanied Michael on his academic trips. She was an expert packer I realized, when sharing rooms with her at Harvey and Frances's house.

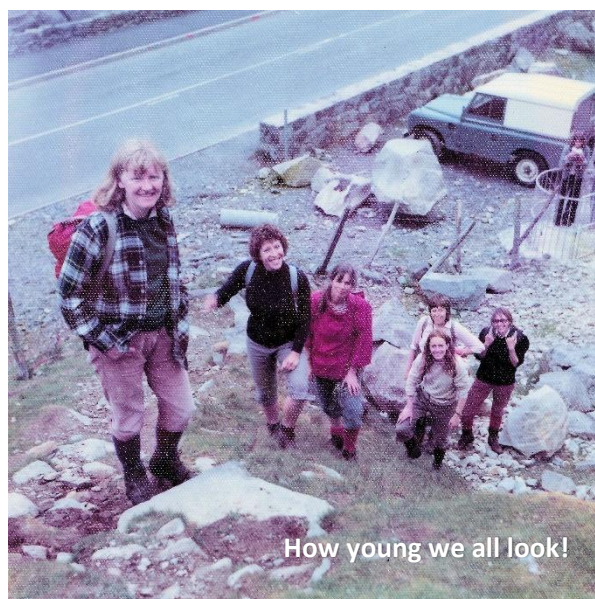
Finally but most clearly I remember the many journeys we shared to Snowdonia once she stopped driving those distances herself. She would chatter about her early life, of her extensive family and their activities, and about the many interests that she still had which made such enjoyable listening during those long drives.

You are missed by many, Nicolette.

Lucy Norton

Welsh 3000s revisited

The earliest known traverse of all 3000 ft peaks was in 1919 when **Eustace Thomas** led a Rucksack Club group. Later, Thomas Firbank, in his book "I Bought a Mountain" (pub. 1940) wrote an account of doing the Welsh 3000s challenge, a trip which included his wife, Esmay Kirby who did it in under 10 hours. He and his companions considered it to be an opportunity for a race. (We did not!) Back then (and when we first did it) there were 14 summits (a summit being defined as having a drop of at least 50 feet in all directions). After



How young we all look!

remeasurement by the Ordnance Survey, there are now 15 summits or even 16 (Castell y Gwynt has been remeasured).

In the 70s and into the 80s, members of the Gorphwysfa Club had several attempts at the Welsh 3000s. These early attempts were all-men affairs. In 1975, a group of women decided they would like a crack at it and the men agreed they would support us. The original party were myself, Christine Middleton, Gilliane Sills, Nicolette Winterbottom, Helen Middleton and Peggy Smith.

We managed to complete the challenge within 24 hours, by starting early from a camp on the summit of Foel Fras (thanks to the men who took the tents back down for us!). We got back to the Hostel where we were camping, very late at night and very exhausted!

2025 marked the 50th anniversary of the attempt and a group of us decided to try it again, this time over several days. The challenge party consisted of two of the original group, myself and Christine, Judith Holt and Andrew Middleton, average age about 77. Andrew, although not a woman (!), was welcomed both for himself and for his knowledge of the route, having done it several times. The group also included Harvey, Frances, Tricia and Lucy, who supported us supremely well, while also walking sections of the 3000s

The week of 20th to 27th June was selected, for long days and (hopefully) good weather and Hafod y Gwynt was booked.

From Christine's and my memories, Andrew's knowledge, a book "The Welsh Three Thousands" by Roy Clayton and a plan compiled by Brian Smith, a route was decided.

Our route was from North to South, the first peak being Foel Fras and the last, Snowdon. The walk is over 50km in length (including the up at beginning and down at the end) and involves 3,800m of elevation gain.

The route naturally divides into three sections, the Carnedd's, the Glyders and the Snowdon range, with a descent to a road on the completion of the first two. Our initial thought was that we should attempt to do it in three separate days, with a day's rest in between, if the weather allowed (but see later!).

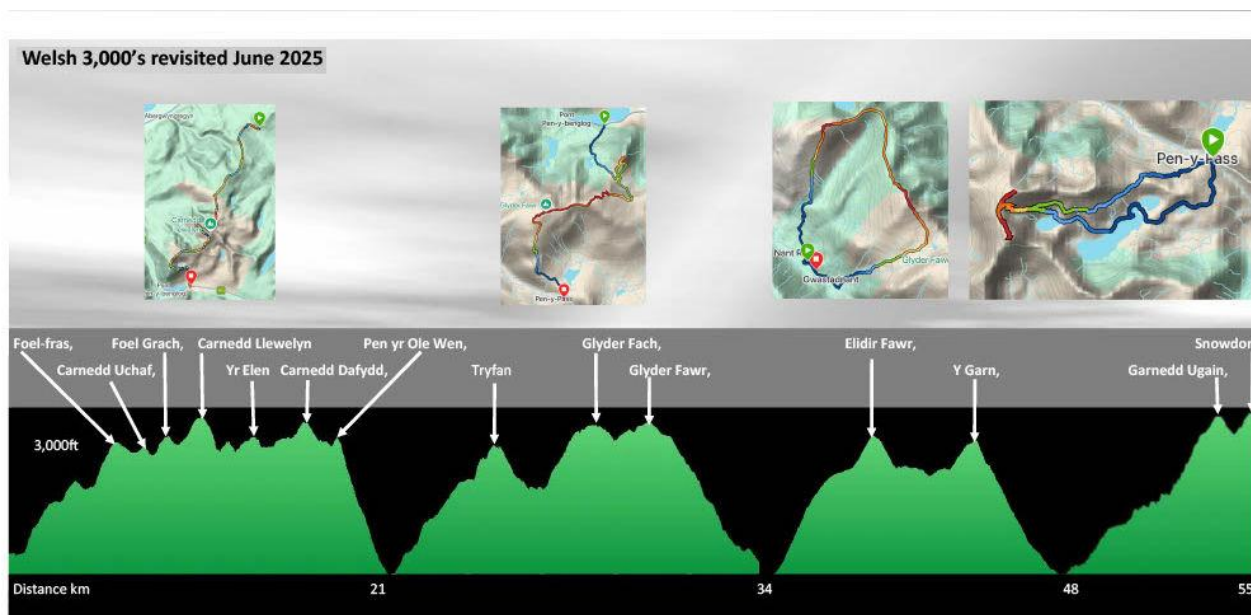
3,000 ft Peaks Walk.

Road - Foel Fras 280 (Keep N. of Har line to start) (ie. 295 to Col (1.2) then 235 (1.9))	Y Garn - X (1.5) 335 (X is 1/2 ml N.W of Y Garn)
Foel Fras - Carnedd Uchaf (1.0) 225	X - Foel Goch (1.4) 10
Garn Uchaf - Foel Grach (1.7) 175	F. Goch - Bwlch Brocan (1.4) 330
F. Grach - Llewellyn (1.0) 205 (1.4) YR ELEN (1.0) 167	Bwlch Brocan - Elidir (1.0) 250
Llewellyn - Craig Lluguan (1.0) 210	Elidir - Afon Dudderyn (1.5) 150 350
G. Lluguan - G. Dafydd (1.7) 270	A. Dudderyn - Nant Peris 225 (1.5) (2 1/2 miles on road)
Dafydd - P. y O. Wen (1.0) 225 (1.4) (1.2) (1.2) out at 240	P. y O. Wen - Bwlch Moel (1.0) 270
P. y O. Wen - Afon Lloer (1.0) 105	Bwlch Moel - Crib Goch (1.5) 280
Afon Lloer - Glyn Dda (1.7) 185 (1.2) (1.2) (1.2) (1/2 mile road walk)	Crib Goch - Crib y Ddydd (1.1) 275
Car Park - Tryfan (1.8) 165	Crib y Ddydd - Railway (1.2) 235
Tryfan - Top of Brit. Ridge (1.5) 215	Railway to Snowdon (1.1) 75! (1.1) 22.5 ✓ 23.3
Top Brit. Ridge - G. Fach (1.4) 245	
G. Fach - G. Fawr (1.1) 265	
G. Fawr - Llyn Cwn (1.5) 320	
Llyn Cwn - Y Garn (1.8) 340	

Handwritten notes on right margin:
Llewellyn - Y Garn 1.8 315
Y Garn - Llyn Cwn 1.0 155
Llyn Cwn - Craig Lluguan 0.5 225
2 1/2 miles Frar → Snowdon
Approx bearings corrected for Magnetic Variation.

Brian's plan

The logistics of the start and finish for each leg was complicated and often involved a car being left the night before at the end of the leg. We also had the valued support from others in our party at HyG, especially Lucy who dropped us off very early for the first leg.



Profile and route

Day 1, Sunday

We started early, Lucy taking us to the car park at car park near Bwlch y Ddeufaen. The forecast was awful, high winds and, later, rain. However, we set off regardless. After about an hour, before we had even reached the ridge, the wind was so strong that we had to brace to stand. With increasing trepidation, we soldiered on and steadily ticked off the early peaks. After lunch, the wind got up even more, and we were all four blown over by one violent gust.



But we were committed by this stage, just Pen yr Ole Wen to do. The rain started and, in conjunction with the wind, could only be called "driving"! However, it was not cold. The descent from Pen yr Ole Wen is always tough and in the wet it was tricky in places. But eventually we reached our car and were pleased to drive back to HyG for a meal and bed.

Day 2, Monday

The weather had improved somewhat and, although our plan was to take a rest day, the forward forecast was very unsettled. The rain had stopped and the wind had lessened although bad visibility on the tops was forecast. We had decided that the whole section of the Glyders was too long and strenuous for one day and we decided to leave Y Garn and Elidir Fawr for another day. We set off from our parked car up towards the west of Tryfan. I felt very tired and when we made an deviation from the expected path and faced with a scramble to the top of Tryfan, I decided to turn back and Judith kindly came along with me. Andrew and Christine bravely went on ahead and completed the first part of the Glyders section as planned

Looking cold!

Day 3, Tuesday

Andrew and Christine took a rest day and Judith and I tackled the first part of the Glyders section. Once we got to Tryfan, the mist descended and route finding for this point on was a bit tricky. Thanks goodness for the OS maps on the phone. Having found the tops of Glyder Fach and Fawr, we descend down the Red Spot path (difficult to find...) to the Pen y Pass hostel.

Day 4, Wednesday

This section required us to climb from Nant Peris to Y Garn and Elidir Fawr. The weather had improved and, after a long slog up, the walking was pleasant and we were rewarded with views down to the coast and Anglesey.

Day 5, Thursday

The final day. We walked from the hostel up the Pyg Track. The winds were strong again, forecast gale force on the tops and the rock was wet, so we made the sensible decision to omit doing Crib Goch. (When we reached Snowdon later, we chatted to a mountain guide and he told us he had advised a client not to attempt Crib Goch that day, so we made



the right decision.) This was a very familiar route and, unlike on the other legs, we had plenty of company. After Ugain (aka Crib y Ddysgl), we reached the top of Snowdon was heaving with people, so we took a quick photo and then walked back down.



Overall, although we took 4 days and we had to leave out one peak, I think the party was very satisfied that we achieved enough of our goal to consider the whole challenge a great success. We will return at some stage and climb Crib Goch, when the weather is clement!

I'd like to thank my fellow walkers, Harvey and Frances for the hospitality of HyG and Lucy and Tricia who came along for the week as support, both physically with lifts and food and mentally with encouragement and good company.

I am really pleased to have attempted and (virtually) completed this challenge in my advancing years! Would I do it again? Probably not....

Kate Williams

Adventures in the Lakes 2023

No heat wave this time but storm Isha!

During my trip in July 23 to the Lakes it soon became apparent I had landed up in Langdale in a heat wave and struggled up everything in extreme temperatures.

During that trip it was so strange to see all the tops, ridges, cols, crags, water bodies and flat-bottomed valleys but then there was one thing noticeable missing. Water! Streams, tributaries and small rivers were dried up, along with some of the ponds up high.

How very different conditions were this time – but of course, it was winter! Even the drive up was eventful for some. Water pouring off the hill side. Gushing torrents flowing down in all directions. What had been grazing fields no more but replaced by paddling areas as rivers had burst their banks There had been an amber weather warning for strong winds across the country. Storm Isha had arrived. It was the start of common sense taking a front seat in our decision making.

Sunday January 20th The plan was to drive up and aim to get to Wathendlath and warm up the legs on Grange Fell. We had superb views of the driving rain and strong winds from the National Trust car park. Lunch was taken in the front seat of the car as opposed to on a clump of grass high up on Grange Fell. So common sense won today.

Monday 21st January. The rain and wind had howled all night and the morning revealed roof tiles blown off on to cars parked nearby, causing some damage. But we woke up to dry conditions. A plus!! However, the forecast was still for very strong winds as storm Isha moved on. So, a rethink of routes and we settled for Graystones, at 456mts, in the Whinlatter Forest area.



Four of us set off with knowing the winds were only going to increase as we left the shelter of the car. We plodded straight up, following the boundary with the winds on our back to help us. In no time at all we were at Wainwright's top. Great! My Wainwright list is shrinking! We had two minutes at the top. Two minutes to try and stay perpendicular and take a few photos. Then it was a retreat back down the same way to the river.

The plan was to do Whinlatter next, but it would have been very exposed after leaving the protection of the forest on that route. Common sense then won the

next decision and it was agreed by all. Rain and hail had already started on our drive back and we finally lunched in the warmth of our accommodation.

Tuesday 23rd January. The forecast for today was for wind and rain all day with the next storm Jocelyne coming in after lunch. We knew we were in for a wet day. Terry and I returned to Scawgill bridge car park where we had parked yesterday. The rain was with us from the start as was the wind. We followed the track in the direction of Aiken Plantation with the view of going up via a fence line to the nose and then on up to Brown How and Whinlatter top. We over shot the hidden path through the woods that we had planned to take and continued to a point where we started to clamber over the heather and up a steep climb along a boundary fence. All the time the winds were trying to blow us over. The final stretch onto Whinlatter top was a struggle for me to stay upright. I was pleasantly surprised that we were at this point, given that I thought I would be struggling more in the wind up the nose. I was yet to experience the aspect of even stronger winds. It was at this point I thought were the winds too strong. But when Terry pointed out we were so close to Wainwright's top there was no way I was turning back. The last 500 metres was a balancing act to get from bump to bump between gust of wind and getting down on our hands and knees to avoid being blown away. At points I wobbled back onto my feet and made the last dash to a shelter and duck down out of the wind. Conditions were deteriorating and we knew that Jocelyn was due to come in soon. We retraced our route back down and avoided the nose as that would definitely have been more exposed. We also commented that the route up was definitely the best given the strength of the winds. In driving rain and winds, we descended back to the car. A round trip of under three hours. But we did it and we beat the next storm. Was common sense on our side today?

Wednesday 24th January. Well, what a contrast, today we had no rain and little wind. It felt odd to begin with. Calm and quiet. Four of us set off today and drove over the Kirkstone Pass, down the Struggle to Tarn Hows. Our plan was to ascend to Black Crag first. We picked up the path past some beautiful waterfalls and followed the Cumbria Way to just after The Tarns. It was then a gentle ascent along a well-marked track going east and then through Iron Keld Plantation. Although not marked on the map there was a well worn path all the way to the trig point. Wainwright stated his top was one metre West of the trig point and today we have great views. We could also stand up as there was no wind. Storm Jocelyn had gone through during the night. A lovely easy top!

We walked across to a structure not five minutes away and again there were superb views on the other side of the valley. We continued back down to the edge of The Tarns where a bench accommodated all four of us and we had lunch.

We were back at the car park area by 1:15 and continued on along the road to pick up the track to Holme Fell. This was our other planned destination of the day. The route gradually wound its way up Harry Guards wood with some rock bits and bobs to then peel off west. We picked our way over a craggy area and a few little craggy bits to pop out on the top. Again, Wainwright stated his top was 60 metres south west of the cairn. The last few metres were very blowy so we felt at home up here. With a few photos of the views, we retraced our route down. So, all in all a good day on the hill with the sun finally showing its face!

Thursday 25th January. Guess what! Yes, you have guessed it. Another blowy windy rainy day. Did that stop us? No. Three of us set off in the car to park at Newlands Hause. Hoods up to start with and head down with the winds on our back we started the ascent up to Knott Rigg and then on to Ard Crag. It was a steady up with a mixture of rocks and grass under foot. All very wet and windy. Nearer the top of Ard Crag, the wind began to gust. We did not stay long on the top and returned back almost the way we came.

We then drove around to Rannerdale Knotts and this was a very easy stepped route up to Wainwright's top. Again, very windy on top but a quick up and down. It was only when we were down that Terry declared "where is my ruck sack cover?" Neither Alison or I had seen it blow off in the wind as we both said we were concentrating on our feet to avoid a slip.

Friday January 26th A day with more leisurely plans. A part-rest day. But to start with we drove back round to Watenladth with the plan to do Grange Fell. We arrived in very different conditions to last Sunday. Dry, much colder and some wind. Route finding included missing a path straight off the track by the bridge but what I enjoyed was that I knew this and we cut across the clumps of grass and bog to pick up the route again. It was not long until we hit the wall, hand railed it up and curled round over the crags to the top. A rocky outcrop with superb views all-around of Keswick, Braithwaite, Basinthwaite Lake, etc. The best view day of this week. Clear cold and very sunny. We retraced our steps down back to the car and were away by 11.30 am. After lunch we parked in Keswick and did a short walk up to Jack's Rack. All clear and sunny but cold. We had a beautiful view on a beautiful day.

At the beginning of this week leading up to the Steve Ogden memorial weekend I had 90 Wainwrights left to do. During this week I completed another 8 Wainwrights, leaving 82 to do. It was then back to Patterdale Hotel where we met up with the Gorphwyfsa Club to now join in the Lakes meet for the weekend. I wonder what lies ahead?

Gerry Wigglesworth, January 23

The Spirit of Adventure is with me!

During my trip in June to the Lake District Judith and I celebrated Terry completing all his Wainwrights. Judith is left with 31 to do and I am a bit behind with 54 to do. The challenge for Judith, Terry and I is to coordinate which Wainwright's Judith, and I need to do together and which Wainwright's I will independently begin to solo. So let my adventure begin.

September 15th Day One Today I start my next series of Wainwrights. My only companion for today is the Spirit of Adventure. I know this spirit quite well and got a lot of encouragement while planning my routes. I started my 1st adventure from St Martins Church in Martindale. A beautiful little church that has seen services held there for over 750 years It also has next to it a yew tree with an age of 1300 years. Beneath it lies a tomb protected by the yew branches of one of its long serving ministers.

I went to follow a path, with a gentle climb, up behind the church, to go on through a wall and on up around Branthwaite Crag. By now it had been raining for some time but onward and upward I went past the ruins, over a few streams to finally, after a steep climb, reach the Roman Road running along the tops. My first Wainwright was Wether Hill which was marked by a pile of stones. A quick check of the grid reference and yes, I was bang on Wainwright's top. Then with visibility down to a hundred or so metres and rain dripping off me I continued along, past a little pond to start a gentle climb up to Loadpot Hill. It was not long before I spied the trig point through the clouds and arrived knowing that this was not Wainwright's top. He stated 80 metres SW. So off I trundled in the rain to get to this spot. There were supposed to be views from this point but the clouds that had stayed with me on this little top gave no views at all.



I retraced my path all the way back, over Wether Hill to where I picked up the Roman Road. A 10-minute stop for a sandwich and flask of coffee and then I continued down back to my first wall junction. Here I peeled off and started my ascent up to Steel Knotts or Pikeawassa. I was blessed with a gap in the clouds and a beautiful view over Ullswater. No rain now, I descended back and peeled off early to cut the corner off and for the last 10 minutes I was blessed with the sunshine again. I had a short wait before Terry and Judith came along to pick me up after they had completed a Wainwright for Judith. What a lovely little adventure and thank you my Spirit of Adventure for keeping me safe today.

September 16th Day 2 The Spirit of Adventure was well pleased today. She had booked excellent conditions both overhead and under foot. Our route today took us to the back of Skiddaw to park at Longlands. Judith, Terry and I started our route by going to NE along the Cumbria Way and turning up to start a gentle ascent to Longlands Fell. Although the air temperature was cool, the sunshine warmed us up. We had great views from Wainwright's top. A descent down to skirt around Charleton Gill and then on up to Brae Fell, our second top of the day. Again, beautiful views as we had clear conditions with the sun blazing down on us.

We continued on south, to Little Sca Fell and stopped for lunch in the small shelter here. One of our topics of conversation as we bumbled along was the 4 W's - where, what, when and why. But Terry superseded this discussion with the 5 D's - destination, direction, duration, description and danger. All aspects of teaching navigation which we applied to each leg of our journey just to practice those skills in good visibility.



It was onward and upward to Great Sca Fell with superb views, once again. A quick look at the map and onto Meal Fell and then Great Cockup. A minute to take some photos and then off to Little Cockup and down the nose, off route, to hit the path which took us along the Longland Beck back to the car. All five Wainwright tops achieved. A look back and the fells were still bathed in sunshine as three happy walkers contemplated their next route selection.

September 17th Day 3 Well, what can I say the Spirit of Adventure has done me proud again. After being dropped off by Judith and Terry, her planning took me straight up from the road, a slog of 730 metres, following Cinderdale Beck, before waggling through the heather on to the exposed track, screes and scramble bits. The gradient became steeper and the use of hands and careful foot placement was my main focus. At a few points I thought 'just don't look behind' stay focused on what's in front. Keep on going, low and slow over the convex slop until eventually I popped onto the ridge leading up to Grasmoor. Then a nip west along to the shelter to mark what Wainwright put as his top. I can't believe the views there were superb.



A quick drink and then in blazing sunshine head on east to drop down to a col and begin the ascent to Wandope Moss. The rest of the route was a breeze after my ascent to Grasmoor. Wandope knocked off, a quick lunch and onto Whiteless Edge. A lovely edge with ups and downs before the final ascent to Whiteless Pike. I could see all around me and views were incredible. I looked across to the ascent I took up to Grasmoor and thought whoo-hoo what an edge to scramble up to Grasmoor.

In no time at all I clocked the top of Whiteless Pike and checked my timings. I was due down at 3.00 pm to meet Judith and Terry who were coming off Whinlatter and then driving round to pick me up. So, get my skates on to get down. Down was interesting. The path is under quite a bit of maintenance and had long stretches of little scrambles. But down I went passing a couple enroute and another person to finally reach the cross road I was expecting to get to.

Finally, it was a little walk out through Squat Beck, over a bridge with the sun shining on the waters to my start point and wait for Judith and Terry to arrive in the car. The coordination of both our routes worked perfectly and it was not long before I was able to hear about their walk and enjoyment of the day. Well done to the Spirit of Adventure as today was fantastic.

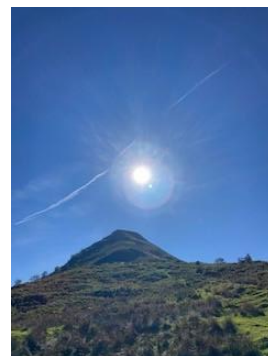
September 18th Day 4 Another day for everyone to be proud of. With the sun burning off the cloud inversions Judith, Terry and I set off from Ambleside and soon left the town behind. Our focus today was initially up to Low Pike and then onto High Pike for lunch. It was a hot and sometimes boggy climb with a debate about staying left of the wall or to the right of the wall. On our final section up to Low Pike we chose to stay left of the wall which took us bang on Wainwrights top whoopee. With little hanging around for photos we then headed onward and reached High Pike ready for a much-earned rest and lunch.



At this point the Spirit of Adventure joined me as I left Terry and Judith finishing their lunch and sunbathing. I headed onward towards Dove Crag. A little craggy out crop of rock standing all on its own. It was a bit busier along the last section due to the fact that it is part of the Fairfield Horseshoe. I retraced my steps back a short way from Dove Crag and peeled off on a north north east direction, a less busy path, where very few people were around. Old fence posts were my guide all the way across to my next point, Little Hart Crag. This entailed a little clamber up to the penultimate Wainwright top for today.

I headed out to my last top of the day, High Hartsop Dodd. Initially I had concerns about this section of my walk, as I was not sure what 'going over the nose' was like. So once at High Hartsop Dodd all was revealed and there was an easy path dropping steeply down the nose all the way to the valley floor.

All that remained was a walk back past Brothers Water to Cow Bridge to meet Terry and Judith. Our timings for Judith and Terry to descend down to Ambleside and drive round to Cow Bridge and me getting down were planned well. With another five Wainwrights ticked off, I still have a way to go with the Wainwright's so the Spirit of Adventure has her work cut out for me still.



September 19th Day 5 Oh Spirit of Adventure you left us today to be replaced by the Fern Spirit for part of our ascent. We started from Jubilee Bridge following a wall to a steep slope where the fern spirits took over. Oh, what a challenge you gave us. Terry, Judith and I became entangled with the ferns which towered over the 'little people's' heads. We were not amused. Two hours later we emerged from the ferns to have lunch at Cat Crag, with the sun blazing down on us.

From Cat Crag you could see clearly our final destination now, Slightside. It seemed extremely high from our lunch spot. A height gain of 400 metres to Wainwright's top. We had a gentle ascent until we hit the screes when Judith and I played the vegetable game. We both focused on that rather than the ascent. It worked and we ran out of ascent rather vegetables!

A scramble over slabs up to the final point over some interesting rock structures with, once again, superb views. Once our photo shoot was over, we began the descent but chose to avoid the ferns and walk straight out of the valley, via Bull How and Goat Crag. Another Wainwright ticked off and our longest day on the hills this week. Spirit of Adventure please avoid the ferns!

For me it was a gentle and lovely little route, all the way up, passing only one lady who had discovered she was off route. At the col I kept going again up a gentle ascent to Wainwright's top on Scar Crag. One minute for a photo and to message my location and off. Next, I went along the ridge towards Causey Pike. I stopped to talk to a man who asked me was I going down off Causey Pike because it was a scramble, and he said it was outside his comfort zone. So, there was only one thing to do, go and see. I had already measured the contours and was not concerned, but perhaps he was concerned for me. Nice thought!



September 20th Day 6 Oh, Spirit of Adventure you did me proud once more, but not without a re-route from my plan. Terry's suggestion to go up via Stonycroft Gill to the col between Sail and Scar Craggs and walk an anticlockwise route over Scar Craggs to Causey Pike was easier than my planned clockwise route. I waved farewell to Judith and Terry as they drove on round to Newlands Hause to start their route up to Ard Craggs and Knott Rigg.



This next top had a very different feel to it with craggy outcrops and stoney paths. It was not long before I was on the top of Causey Pike and met the lady who had got herself back on route. A quick check in, a few photos and a look at the fantastic views and then it was over the nose and down the scramble section which was great fun because I found a chimney section to use my bridging techniques to descend. After the scramble all that was left was to get back onto a track and weave my way down. The sun had shone all morning, and I finished with lunch in the car park waiting for Terry and Judith to return and pick me up and hear all about their adventure.

Thank you, Terry and Judith, for the planning which enabled me to individually reduce the number of Wainwright's I needed to do and enjoying your company for the other tops. We are planning our next trip in November as I have 35 Wainwrights still to do. I look forward to again walking with the Spirit of Adventure.

Gerry Wigglesworth, September 2024

The Spirit of Adventure introduces me to her friends

During my trip in September to the Lake District Judith and I had celebrated Terry completing all his Wainwrights. We are now in the position where Terry is on Wainwright's round two as Judith and I work towards achieving Wainwright's round one. Judith is now left with 20 to do and I am a bit behind with 34 to do. The challenge now is can I catch up with Judith so we can share our last Wainwright together.

I ask myself how come I always seem to plan a trip just as a major storm hits the British Isles? I'll blame Terry because he is accompanying me on my next series of routes

Sunday November 24th Today we travel to the Lakes and planned to warm my legs up on a short route north of Mosedale, starting at The Apron of Stones. I had just this blip to walk up as one of two remaining blips to do in this area. We followed the path along past Further Gill Sike to find the Spirit of the Wind playing at the top of the Gill. Oh boy did she play with us for a while. The higher we ascended the more playful she became. Her game was to try and get me onto my hands and knees as she had done so on Whinlatter earlier in the year. The Spirit of the Wind achieved this as I hit the last 10 metres, where I had to crawl on all fours to the cairn on the summit of Carrock Fell. There was no hanging around at the top and we beat a hasty retreat by returning down the same way we came up. We left the Spirit of the Wind at the top of the gully. Our timings allowed us to get back to the comfort of the car before the rain started. This was a great little introductory walk with which my legs concurred. I wonder what the Spirit of Adventure has planned for my next summit.

Monday November 25th The day started with a very poor forecast with the Spirit of the Wind being the major element. This meant we had to consider a route for the day taking this into consideration. Bakestall was our chosen summit, as it enabled us to walk in from a NW direction so providing some shelter from the Spirit of the Wind at the start. Setting off from Peters House Farm we picked up the Cumbria Way. I had completed the Cumbria Way way back in the 90's but the difference then was that the Cumbria Way route goes through and not over the fells. We followed the Cumbria Way to White Water Dash. At this point we turned right and hand railed a wall up Birkett edge. Approximately 20 metres from the ridge line the Spirit

of the Winds began to play with us. On reaching the ridge line the Spirit of the Winds taught us some new moves for the last 100mts to the summit cairn. We practiced a series of new dance steps which even the Strickly Come Dancing judges would have been impressed by. The return route took us back the way we came and immediately after leaving the ridge the spirit of the Winds departed. Once again, I wondered what is she is planning for me next?

Tuesday November 26th 32 Wainwright's to go, whoopee, and a chance today to find another lonely fell at the end of the Dodds, which for me was unfinished business. Our chosen summit was Clough Head from Threlkeld. There is no route through the quarry onto the fells so we walked along the disused railway line to the access point onto the fell. On leaving the old line we turned up and followed Birkett Beck to join the Spirits of the Bog. There were plenty of bog plants to walk over and feel the liquid oozing up over my boots. This seepage of water confirmed how useful my new gaiters were.

There followed a steady, steady plod up a steepening slope, to White Pike. I set myself a challenge here to hit the slope without any stops but to keep the rhythm going until I reached the top. I was pleasantly surprised how good it feels to get into the old rhythm of plodding and keeping going. A surprise met me at White Pike. Back came the Spirit of the Wind, blowing through me and chilling me and very quickly. I lost the feeling in my fingertips.

The Spirit of the Wind accompanied me all the way to the summit where I caught up with Terry and a group of three other walkers with their dog. They planned to continue over the Dodds. The chill began to set in, so I donned an extra layer, took a quick photo, stroked the dog who was trying to look for food in my rucksack and we started to head back.

At this stage the sky blackened behind us and we had a visit from the Spirit of Hail. So, nothing for it but head down into the wind and hail and keep moving. By the time we got back to the boggy area, both the Spirit of the Wind and the Spirit of the Hail had departed. All was quiet again. Our views at this point were wonderful. Blencathra and Sharp Edge in front of us with the magic of a rainbow thrown in too. A good spot to stop for a quick lunch and ponder which Wainwright will I do tomorrow. Who will accompany me, the Spirit of the Wind, the Spirit of the Hail, the Spirit of the Bog or maybe this time the Spirit of the Sunshine?

Wednesday November 27th We were blessed with the Spirit of the Sunshine as we started our route today. However, she had invited her friends the Spirit of the Frost and the Cold Spirit. The entire environment was bathed in sparkles with the Spirit of the Sunshine rising over the fields, rocks, paths, gates and valley floor and more. The Spirit of the Frost had worked her magic all along the edges of the water bodies which were frozen too. It was 0 degrees as we drove out to the start of our route. It had dropped to minus 2 degrees as we parked in the valley ready to begin the route up Hartsop Dodd, our first top of the day.

In frosty, sparkling conditions we started up the steep, 438 metres of ascent, to our first objective. Another steady, steady plod with careful foot placement over the frozen ground. Soon the fell levelled out and we were at Hartsop Dodd with just the Spirit of the Cold with us. We had views all around, in cold, crisp conditions.

There followed a little stretch of the legs, on flat terrain, before our next 163 metres of ascent, onto Stony Cove Pike. We did not linger for long here and began the descent down to the col, heading for our next Wainwright, Thornthwaite Beacon. The terrain changed somewhat on our descent to the col. A slow descent over rocks, blocks, ice and mud, with use of hands and down climbing for the vertically challenged! The Spirit of Adventure was with us all the way as we approached the Col and caught up with other walkers, who were also taking great care as they descended.

The Col was our decision point. We were on our target time and feeling good. It was a no brainer, we were going for the 3rd Wainwright, Thornthwaite Beacon and onto Grey Crag to finish. I was ready for the steep slog up the path to Thornthwaite Beacon. A climb of 184 metres almost straight up. It became a counting game for me. I decided six steps equalled a height gain of one metre. I counted all the way up to 140 sets of six steps, which kept me focused on my steps and not on other thoughts.

As we gained height the Spirit of Adventure had invited her friend the Spirit of the Wind to meet us, along with the Spirit of the Clouds. The Spirit of the Clouds had shrouded everything, and we had very little visibility at all. The Beacon popped into sight, and we huddled down to hide from the Spirit of the Winds and tried to keep warm by layering up immediately. It was a very quick food stop and then a compass exercise to determine which of the paths was our intended route off to Grey Crag.

The cold was radiating through me as we departed in the direction of the wide ridge down to Grey Crag. A little pile of stones marked the top of our 4th Wainwright of the day. Here we met a man who was not at all impressed with the weather forecast and did not linger long to talk. It was not until the last 20 minutes of our descent did the Spirit of the Winds, along with the Spirit of the Clouds finally leave us and we finally walked back into the village of Hartsop.

Thank you to the Spirit of Adventure who gifted us with meeting the Spirit of the Winds, the Spirit of the Cold, the Spirit of the Frost and the Spirit of the Clouds. What a wonderful sparkly day it was. Will we meet the Spirit of the Snow next I wonder?

Thursday November 28th 27 Wainwright's to go! Today's plan was a circuit taking in Dodd, Long Side Edge and finally Ullock Pike. The route started North of Keswick in the car park by Mire House. We were definitely lulled into a false sense of security at the start of today's route. A gradual, gently walk up a steady track before peeling off and finally ascending onto the Dodd. Clear, dry conditions and a visit from the baby Spirit of the Wind at the top. Views were superb of Bassenthwaite Lake and Derwent Water.

We then returned to the track split and climbed over a stile onto the higher fells and soon reached Carl Side Tarn. At this point the Spirit of the Wind spied us once again and called in reinforcements. This was unexpected as the forecast claimed it was only going to be 20 mph winds. The strength of the wind was greater, much greater. Our path took us along the ridge to Long Side Edge, our second Wainwright of the day, where the winds strengthened due to a funnel effect crossing our path. Another couple of walkers were also walking this section and stopped to see if we were all right. An act of kindness from strangers on the fells. We continued undeterred along the ridge, which angered the Spirit of the Wind, who again increased her velocity, resulting in Terry supporting me across the next part of the ridge. Needless to say, we did not stop for any photos or lunch at this point nor did we stop at the summit of Long Side Edge.





A couple of metres after the summit we dropped down to a crag where we found shelter and both Terry and I and the other two walkers opted to grab some lunch and a much-needed hot drink, before we continued our dance with the Spirit of the Winds to the summit of Ullock Pike. Again, we did not linger for photos and continued on. As we descended from Ullock Pike the Spirit of the Wind abated. Just as well as to our astonishment a lad on a bike flew past us and over the ridge edge and was away before we clambered down our next rocky structure. How he stayed upright on two wheels over this terrain and in these conditions, I found mind boggling.

By now it was feeling decidedly Mediterranean as we reached Ling Howe and took the path descending to the woods and the forest trails back to the car. This was our final walking day of the week and what a superb week it had been. Ten Wainwrights completed in such fun conditions. Planning has already begun for my remaining 24

Wainwright's. I have one final question to ask the Spirit of Adventure. What other Spirit friends are you going to introduce me to on my next adventure?

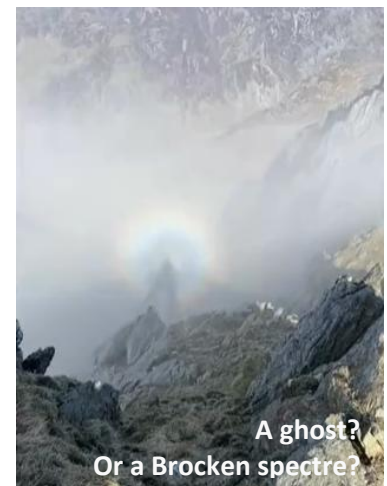
Thank you, Terry, for accompanying me on this series of Wainwright's and ensuring I stayed on my feet too!

Gerry Wigglesworth, November 2024

Ghosts in the Hills

There are many accounts of ghostly encounters in the mountains. Those of you who were at the Dinner this year will have delighted in the recital by Andrew of Brian's tale of the "Ghost of Corrie Lagan". The very environment of monumental rock and swirling mist can trigger feelings of the supernatural or other worldly.

Sometimes, there is the 'sensed-presence effect', where one is aware of an invisible companion. On June 29, 1970, mountaineer Reinhold Messner had an unusual experience. Recounting his descent down the virgin summit of Nanga Parbat with his brother, freezing, exhausted, and oxygen-starved in the vast barren landscape, he recalls, "Suddenly there was a third climber with us... a little to my right, a few steps behind me, just outside my field of vision."



Below, is the text of the Brian's tale and also a short poem from Geoffrey Winthrop Young where he describes the sense of an invisible companion

The Ghost of Corrie Lagan (1972)

The ice-cold rain started again as we crossed the floor of the Corrie. 'It's a clearing shower,' said Andrew (Middleton). He'd been saying this throughout the last three days of continual sleet and rain. Our families were a few yards ahead of us on the path. They would come with us as far as Scurr Alasdair then we would investigate the Thearlaich-Dubh gap-the crux of the Cuillin ridge, so we were told.

We had been planning to traverse the Cuillin for almost a year. Only able to make very occasional visits to the mountains, we wanted to make each trip something of a challenge. The previous summer we had

walked the Welsh Three-thousands. It was a great day, and, at its end, watching the sun setting over the sea from the summit of Snowdon, we had all agreed that next year it had to be the Cuillin. And so the following Whit we met for six days' holiday at Glen Brittle; a summit party of four, wives and children as cur Sherpas. It was a strong group. Andrew the meteorologist; he understood the little maps on the back page of the Guardian. Unfortunately he didn't seem very good at forecasting the weather. John (Middleton) was our medical officer. He had a small first-aid kit in a tin box he had been given when he first joined the Boy Scouts and a very large plastic bag. J.D. (John Darling) was the rock-specialist and in charge of equipment. He brought along the karabiners, nuts, slings and, though he never admitted it, was reputed to carry P.A.'s at the bottom of his rucksack. I was in charge of intelligence. Not climbing had given me plenty of time to read the literature and get ahead on theory. You never knew when such information might come in useful on the mountains, or at the pub. I also had a little red note-book into which went all the facts I could garner about the Cuillins. This was necessary as between us we had been on only a small fraction of the ridge.

So it was that Andrew and I plodded up the boulder strewn slopes of Corrie Lagan heading towards the Stone Shoot. Two men walked down towards us-tweedy, old-school mountaineers. Passing by our families they stopped when they reached us. Only one spoke. After exchanging a few pleasantries he explained that he had visited Skye every Whitsun for the last forty years and had never known the weather to be so bad. Pointing up to Sgumain he told us of a new route up the face he'd climbed many years ago. We asked his name and he surprised us with the name of one of the great pioneers of British rock climbing. When we told him of our ambition he counselled us to travel light and to have food and water cached on the ridge 'Don't worry about this weather' he said 'Tomorrow will be better than today and the day after will be better still.' With that we went on our way, rapidly catching up with our families. "Those old chaps told us the weather is going to get better' we told them. 'What old chaps?' they asked with a note of surprise. 'The ones who just came down the path.' 'Didn't see them.' 'You must have done. They walked right past you. Look. We turned to point them out on the path below. But the Corrie was empty-not a living soul in sight. It was a chilling moment. Our rational selves told us that somewhere nearby, sitting behind a rock two senior mountaineers were unwrapping their sandwiches. But our rational selves could not suppress our unease. We must have transmitted this to the children for they were clearly frightened. We climbed on up the lower screes of the Stone Shoot, gaining a good view of the Corrie floor. It appeared quite empty. Then the heavy rain turned to snow and we toiled up to Sgurr Alasdair with the visibility limited to a few yards.

That evening we sat listening to the rain drumming on John's tent trying to decide how to make the best of the two days of holiday remaining to us. 'Let's try tomorrow whatever the weather' John and Andrew suggested 'Even if we fail we'll have the next day to make another attempt.' 'No.' J.D. and I were resolute. 'If we exhaust ourselves on a bad weather attempt and fail we'll not be in any condition to try again the next day. Let's stake everything on the last day.' It was deadlock and an hour passed as we went over the arguments again and again without either party changing their views. 'Let's give the Ghost the casting vote.' I suggested in desperation. 'He said the day after next would be better than tomorrow?' No one wanted to stand against the supernatural and the Ghost's words were decisive. Furthermore they were correct. The next morning was as bad as ever but by early afternoon the rain stopped and we saw the sun for the first time. Andrew, John and J.D. spent the day on Bidien Drum nan Ramh. It turned out to be the most useful bit of prospecting we carried out.

We were up before 4 a.m. the next day. The sky was clear and the last stars were fading in the first light. As we ploughed through the bogs to Garbh-Bheinn a corncrake cheered us on our way. We seemed to spend a long time on the crisp and frosty upper slopes and it was full daylight by the time we reached the top.

The ridge stretched before us turning and twisting; behind us the islands and the blue sea, overhead a cloudless sky. This was a moment to savour. Remember Murray said he felt exhausted on Gars Bheim and he went on to complete the Greater Traverse,' I recalled. But it was no use pretending-we all felt very fit and

soon the ridge was slipping by. A cold wait for an hour at the Thearlaich Dubh Gap watching the struggles of others checked our progress but in no time we were on the summit of Sgurr Dearg for a family reunion at the Inaccessible Pinnacle. The wives and children had carried up a grand lunch and rather to our surprise we found the water we had cached earlier in the week. The visibility was then so bad that John and J.D. were convinced they would never find the place again. We spent a pleasant hour in the sun watching J.D. climbing up and down the Pinnacle then went on our way. The wind had changed direction over lunch and soon the temperature began to fall and clouds came rolling in. The good weather was over but it didn't matter now, we were on the home straight. Over Bidein,

without checking our pace, this was the reward of the previous day's exploration. Almost everybody else we talked to got lost on Bidein and one party we knew spent that night out on the ridge in appalling weather after losing time here. J.D. led us up Naith-smiths route on Bhasteir Tooth, our cold fingers clutching the unbroken series of jug handles. 'Murray wrote that he was very tired and found this hard,' I announced as we climbed a little overhang. 'Perhaps it was because he only took half the time we took to get here,' said J.D. crisply. With the end in sight their thirst for knowledge was gone. On Sgurr nan Gilleann the rain started so we spent only a minute or two on the summit before starting down for Sligachan. We raced along the last leg, hoping to be down before closing time. We failed by five minutes but our faithful support party had the pints lined up. The best day we'd had on the hills we all agreed. To the Ghost,' said John and we all raised our glasses. 'The best sort of Ghost,' said Andrew and no one could argue with that. 'Do you know,' said John thoughtfully, 'the Ghost had boots with vibram soles-doesn't that strike you as funny?' 'No, even ghosts must have to get new boots from time to time if they climb on gabbro,' said J.D.

Brian Smith

Poem from Geoffrey Winthrop Young

I never see him, but his tread
sounds just before my own
one thought designs the task of day,
one effort wins the upward way,
dividing, yet alone;
one hope, one vigour of intent,
swayed by one resolute consent
of sympathy unsaid.

He shares the song-time round the fire,
the morn-break bitterness;
he revels in the sheer ascent,
and finds new worlds for wonderment
in every grim recess;
sure foot to grip the perilous ledge,
strong hand to grasp the rough-glad edge
of each unconquered spire.

He opens an enchanted gate
for each untrodden ridge;
he cleaves the blue precipitate stair
up the white domes of frozen air,
and moulds the foam-snow bridge;
how small the earth to those wide eyes,
and the near welcome of the skies
how infinitely great!



Down Memory Lane

“Did we really bring Helen and Stephen up here when they were 4 and 6 years old?”, I remarked to Christine as we negotiated the final rocky scramble to the summit of Cnicht, on the Sunday of the Dinner meet. In 1982 on a lovely sunny day it had taken us four and half hours to reach the summit: we stopped and played in every stream and little pond and plied the children with snacks. We don’t remember the final scramble as difficult...perhaps we saw risk differently back then. Of course, we fondly reminisce about the walk; we hope Helen and Stephen do too!

Standing at a mere 691 metres above the sea, it richly deserves its title of the “Matterhorn of Wales”. When viewed from the path out of Croesor, the view is spectacular. The scramble takes you right out on to the edge of an intimidating drop into Cwm Croesor and on the summit the drops are even scarier. Yesterday we’d had a wonderful walk on Moel Siabod with a party of seven Gorps (no, not dwarfs but there was more than one Snow White!) We had enjoyed spectacular views of inversions and sights of the big peaks of Snowdonia poking out of the clouds. This morning, feeling a bit jaded after last night’s annual dinner, we’d had the usual Sunday morning discussion about whether we should just go home. However the thirst for more great views won the day and Christine suggested we go up Cnicht. “It’s a really easy walk from Croesor - just one little scrambly bit”!



Trudging upwards I wondered if we would be as lucky today? Being significantly lower than Siabod, I thought that Cnicht may not be able to punch through the clouds. However as we got onto the long ridge a descending walker assured us we would soon be in the sunshine (no he wasn’t a ghost!) Suitably heartened, we took a brief drink and pushed on.

Another 30 minutes went by and we were still in the mist though it was certainly getting brighter. We passed several rockier spots all of which I thought was the rocky scramble I remembered. Suddenly there it was: the magic moment as you step out of the mist and you’re above the clouds. We both tried to recall when we last enjoyed this moment agreeing that it was probably on a Scottish trip in Torridon.



Safely negotiating the real scrambly bit we reached the final ridge and then very soon we were on the rocky summit. We sat with our feet dangling over the cliff on the eastern flank and so some care was needed with rucksacks, lunch boxes and drinks. We spent a delightful 45 minutes enjoying the views and chatting amiably to two young women, one of whom was celebrating her birthday. We estimated they were a third of our age!



Somewhat reluctantly we set off to retrace our steps taking even greater care descending the scrambly bits. Going down the last stretch into Croesor, the leafy lane was dappled with beautiful autumn colours picked out in the westering sun. We drove home arriving in the dark feeling pretty weary but agreed that we were pleased to have “seized the day”.



Andrew Middleton

Double Diamond

Double Diamond is a HVS (Hard Very Severe) climb on Lundy Island. Mike Leask was leading and it took him several tries, flinging himself out of the signal box while a friend and I stood below watching. I was sure that, if Mike was having difficulty, I'd never be able to do it. But, when my turn came, I just did. No one more surprised than I! It was a most exhilarating climb.



I have only been writing poetry for the past couple of years since I was invited to join a small group of poets. We've recently published a small anthology, each of us being given 10 pages to fill and this poem is one I included. Anyone interested in poetry can find the anthology on Amazon: *Temys Poets. Seven Voices*. [Temys = an old spelling of Thames]

Double Diamond

The grassy slope slides steeply
Down to the surf
Where a cathedral arch of rock
Rises majestically.
And there the climb begins

First tackle a rugged gulley
To reach a signal box
From which
to fling
Yourself
Onto the sheer, slippery surface

Handholds are scarce.
Chalk covered fingers
Grip tenuously,
Feet toe into hairsbreadth ledges.

The leader's knots secure,
He calls from above:
'Ready to climb!'

Now brave the rock face
Trusting the knotted ropes
Ascending with a gymnast's grace

Tess Marsh

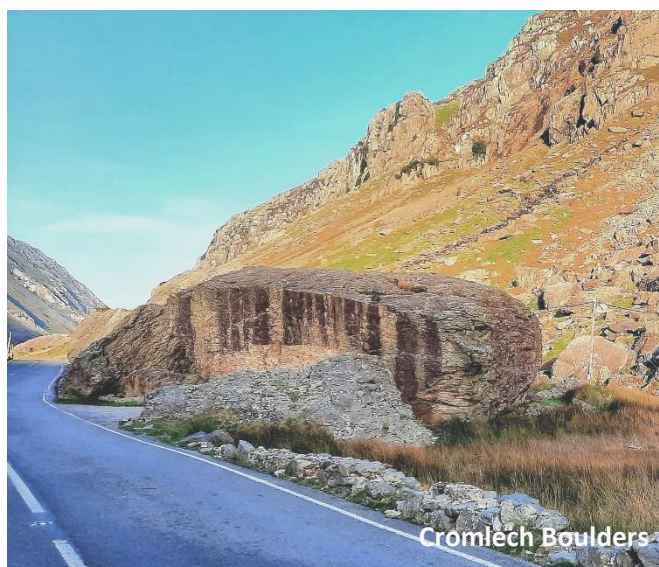
The Battle of the Boulders

In the realms of mountaineering there are some very significant dates; everyone will be able to make a stab on the answer the question “what happened on the 29th May 1953”, but what about 6th December 1973 a few years later?

On that date, there was nearly a requiem for the Cromlech Boulders, features that are today even more important to the sport of rock climbing and bouldering than they were then. On this morning, they were within an hour or two of being blown up by the Gwynedd County Surveyor’s men for road widening purposes.

In those days I was the joint manager with Rosie of Pen y Pass Youth Hostel. The county surveyor had decided late in the autumn of 1973 to devote some of his department’s resources to widening the A4086 road, about a mile above Nant Peris. As they slowly progressed with the widening, I had a nagging question about what they would do when they reached the Boulders

As days progressed into weeks, the width of the road grew by about six feet. The work arrived at the first boulder, and by this time I was starting to get a little more anxious. The new road had arrived in the position of having the big boulder partially blocking its way. By the afternoon, a good size lump of the boulder was missing, (mind you they did create an overhang, which today is covered with patches of chalk!).



But I felt that they would be happy now, they would leave the others alone, after all everyone respects and loves the Cromlech Boulders. Suddenly things went banana shape. Thursday 6th of December arrived and as I did my usual traverse of the bridge, I said to myself “What are those two fellers doing with that pneumatic drill on the top of the boulders?”

How was I going to stop them drilling holes in the top of the rocks? I climbed up to them, and with good imagination, told them that there was an unholy row going on in the Council Offices in Caernarfon about the work, there had been a change of mind in the Highways Department, and that they were to stop drilling till the County Surveyor, Tegid Lloyd Roberts came on site. I must have sounded convincing, for they believed me and stopped drilling.

Returning to Pen y Pass, I then rang everyone I knew who might have some influence or could be of some help. At that time I was the Hon. Sec. of the Snowdonia National Park Society, so the first person I rang was Mrs Esme Kirby, the Chairperson; anyone she didn’t know in the National Park wasn’t worth knowing. Having explained the situation and my action so far, she set to arrange a site meeting ASAP. I then rang Plas y Brenin and quickly they agreed to move things on via the BMC and use the contacts that they had through their management committee to bring pressure to bear on the Highways Department. The regional office of the YHA, who have a countryside department, were soon brought on board, and by 10 am the Battle of the Boulders had been well and truly launched.

The next line of action seemed to be very clear. I would drive down the pass and park my car under the said boulder. More frantic phone calls were made and another car was parked there and the drilling was halted. The media were sounded out and support began to trickle in. The story was fed through to John Hunt, who I believe was in the House of Lords. He immediately sent a telegram to Caernarfon protesting against the proposals. I'm sure that stories of Boulders being blown up in Snowdonia would have added something to that day in the exalted chamber!

Using Esme Kirby's words, "It might be stretching a point to say that there was an international outcry, but the locals, climbers, historians, conservationists, geologists and the ordinary people who loved the Pass rallied to the defence of these great rocks". It was discovered that the boulders stood on land that belonged to the Welsh Office so protests and appeals poured in to the Secretary of State, Mr Peter Thomas. Even the executive secretary of the Prince of Wales committee wrote to the Clerk of the council asking for details of the proposals, so that he could pass them on to the Prince's private secretary.

We set about putting together a large petition against the demolition. Many thousands of signatures were eventually dispatched to the Welsh Office, including that of Sir Michael Duff the previous owner of the land. After a period that seemed an eternity Peter Thomas eventually intervened and the Boulders won their reprieve. But of course the county surveyor had an unfinished road widening scheme.

So nearly three years after the first plans were thwarted, plan B was announced, to "Tidy Up" the road widening, and yes you've guessed it, the boulders were in the way.

And so stage two of the Battle commenced, the mood of the protesters was that the council should leave things as they were; there had been no traffic accidents, no congestion and as it seemed to everyone no inconvenience either. But Councillor Albert Owen of Llanerchymedd had different thoughts and told the park committee who were considering it, "These are two stones, and not two families. I doubt whether we would have paid so much attention to them if they had been people's homes and family hearths. I move that we go ahead and split them for the sake of road safety". The councillors agreed with him.

The media again played their part – we even got a mention in the Editorial of The Daily Post. But their sympathies were split - headlines like "Three Thousand Tons of Sentiment" and the fact that Caernarfonshire ratepayers were going to initially find £10,000 and later £26,000 were not found to be supportive by the protesters. But the resolve to save them could not be diluted.

Again the Welsh office was targeted, and it was said that the Secretary of State knew the Pass and that our pleas would not fall on deaf ears. Whatever his reasons, the protesters had found a receptive home and after another delay he found in favour of the protesters, nearly a unique event in the world of public protest. Interestingly the County Council never realigned the curb, the proposed line is quite clear to see. One wonders if they have left it that way out of spite – or perhaps they will say "We told you so" – if there is ever a serious road traffic accident on the site.

We all owe a great deal to a number of people that manned the front line. Esme Kirby was one of these and of course the BMC Officers too. But at the end of the day many, many people contributed and when I drive past the boulders today, I am thankful that we were able to draw on their support and that it was readily given.

Harvey Lloyd 27 February 04

Gorphwysfa Traditions

Gorphwysfa is a club with traditions established right from the earliest days. The origins of the two club mottos can be found in the first issue of the Gorphwysfa Journal Vol 1 number 1, covering the year October 1975 – October 1976. The first is described in the highlights from the President's 'boring speech on the occasion of the 1st Gorphwysfa dinner'. The text is reproduced: "We follow Dante, that perceptive writer on the climbing scene, who is now rightly acclaimed as the Ken Wilson of his age, in saying: 'to look back is wont to cheer climbing men' or better rendered 'Ascendentes respicere iuvat'."



The following two pages list the meets of Oct 1975 - Oct 76 and end with the item "Nancy, our very own classicist, while being coerced (sorry, I mean escorted of course – Ed) by John into crossing the Glyders under atrocious conditions had the happy thought, in Latin of course, "haec olim meminisse iuvabit". What a marvellous motto for our club - as fitting as our first Latin motto, for which see President's speech. Many thanks Nancy." The editor didn't provide the translation, obviously expecting members to be fluent in Latin, but for those whose Latin studies were as long ago as mine, I offer 'even this, we will one day be glad to remember'. And Nancy knew, although I didn't, that the origin of the phrase is Virgil's Aeneid. The Trojans have experienced a horrifying sea passage and Aeneas tries to console them that, perhaps, one day they'll look back on these events without the terror, even with gladness.

The first motto *Ascendentes respicere iuvat* – mountaineers like to look back – is interesting, in that it has two possible interpretations: one that we look back at what we've just climbed, presumably providing a sense of achievement (or relief?), or to look back at those who still have to follow us, allowing us to feel slightly smug that we set off earlier in the day. But the second interpretation, that we like to look back in time, is the one I'd like to explore.

We Gorphwysfans do indeed like to look back into the past. Our 'late patron' was Geoffrey Winthrop Young, who began climbing around 1897 and died in 1958, and his widow Eleanor Winthrop Young, a climber in her own right, was our guest at the 1977 dinner. Geoffrey Winthrop Young and Eleanor were key members of the Pen-y-Pass climbing meets that took place from the early 1900s, were interrupted by the war and started again in 1919, continuing into the 1920s. Looking still further back, we used to celebrate AF Mummery by drinking 'Mummery's blood' (good thing we don't do that any longer – not all traditions are good ones!). Mummery climbed with Eleanor's father Cecil Slingsby, and, with Norman Collie and G Hastings, the foursome made the first ascent of the Dent du Requin in 1893, two years before Mummery disappeared in the Himalaya attempting a first ascent of Nanga Parbat. Reading Mummery's 'My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus', I found much that chimed with our Gorphwysfan experiences and I've picked out just a couple of passages. The first describes his feelings about climbing the same peak more than twice, something he thinks is not approved of in some circles.

He says “No sooner have I ascended a peak than it becomes a friend. The idea that a single ascent, on one day, in one year, enables that same mountaineer to know and realise how that peak looks on all other days, in all other years, suggests that he is still wallowing in the lowest bogs of Philistinism. It is true the crags and pinnacles are the same, but their charm and beauty lies in the ever-changing light and shade, in the mists which wreath around them, in the huge cornices and pendent icicles, in all the varying circumstances of weather, season and hour. Moreover, it is not merely that the actual vision impressed on the retina reflects every mood and change of summer storm and sunshine: but the observer himself (*or herself – my addition!*) is hardly less inconstant. On one day, he is dominated by the tingling horrors of the precipice, the gaunt bareness of the stupendous cliffs, or the deadly rush of the rocks when some huge block breaks from its moorings and hurtles through the air - a fit emblem of resistless wrath. On yet another day, he notices none of these things; lulled by the delicate tints of opal and azure, he revels in the vaporous softness of the Italian valleys, in the graceful sweep of the wind-drifted snow, or even in the tiny flowers wedged in the joints of granite.”

In my second excerpt, Mummery picks up the same theme again, that mountains can be scary places at times. He says “But grim and hopeless as the cliffs may sometimes look when ebbing twilight is chased by shrieking wind and snow and the furies are in mad hunt along the ridges, there is ever the feeling that brave companions and a constant spirit will cut the gathering web of peril, *forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit.*” Mummery would have had a classical education as Nancy did, and he quoted the whole of the phrase, including *forsan*, meaning ‘perhaps’. I like Nancy’s certainty without the ‘perhaps’, but actually the two are very close and, by looking back as our first motto enjoins us, ‘*Ascendentes respicere iuvat*’, we can see AF Mummery as a Gorphwysfan in spirit.

Ref My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus by AF Mummery, with an introduction by M Mummery, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1946.

As described after the AGM dinner of October 2025.



Gilliane Sills

Coast to Coast September 2025

In August 2022 the Government allocated funds for the Coast-to-Coast path (C2C) to be upgraded and recognised as an official National Trail even though it is probably already the most popular multi-day walk (especially with other nationalities). The expectation was for the improvements/upgrades to be completed in 2025. On this basis, I decided that I would walk the C2C again in September 2025.

During 2024, various friends indicated their interest in joining me in walking the route but when push came to shove, and accommodation needed to be booked, we were down to 2. Undeterred, bookings were made. A few months later, another friend asked if they could join us. No problem I replied but explained that booking another single room may prove to be a challenge. No problem was the response, we have a caravan and my husband will provide support by picking me up each evening at the accommodation and bringing me back the following morning. It also gave us the opportunity to have an overnight bag transported for each of us. Our plan was to walk East to West. Robin Hood’s Bay to St Bees. The traditional route walks the opposite way. This is due to the belief that the wind generally blows from the SW/W so would be behind you, pushing you along. I believe that it is a better walk towards the Lakes rather than away from it and wind direction tends to be variable anyway.

Preparations for the journey were made with the route planned, timings agreed and for my friend, caravan sites booked. Her plan was to use 4 sites with the caravan being moved along the route by her husband.

Day 1. We all travelled over to Whitby where Jean and her husband had booked their first site. Gerry and I then caught a bus to Robin Hood's Bay and took a leisurely stroll down to the North Sea and collected a pebble to carry over to the Irish Sea. Checked in to a B&B, enjoyed an evening meal at a local pub and retired for the evening.

Day 2. Met with Jean in the car park and handed over our overnight bags to Mike. We all then walked down to the sea to dip our toes into the water. High tide. No way of collecting a pebble for Jean. Fortunately, I had collected an extra pebble the previous day and gave this to Jean for her to dip in the water as well as her boots. For the previous 3 weeks, fires had been raging on the NY Moors. Although it had been tamped down on the surface, the underlying peat was still burning threatening to erupt onto the surface almost anywhere. Both the C2C and Lyke Wake Walk walkers had been advised not to walk in certain locations because of the fire risk and the associated problem of smoke being blown about. Various campsites and livery stables had been evacuated and closed with the smoke reaching to Whitby at one point. The



alternative route for the C2C was to follow the Cleveland Way up the coast to Whitby and then follow the Esk Valley Way (EVW) to Grosmont. So, leaving the water's edge, we walked back uphill to begin our journey along the coastal path. New signage had been created for the C2C with the initials AW carved in the top of the post (a nice

touch) along with direction information. The weather was good with the sun shining and a cooling breeze. Good for us but not the firefighters. At Maw Wyke Hole we ignored the C2C turning inland to Hawkser and continued north to Whitby. Passing through a caravan park we took the opportunity to stop at the café for refreshments. This is an amazing walk as Whitby comes in to view with the Abbey standing proud ahead of us. Turning left at the Abbey we avoided the 199 steps leading down in to Whitby and picked up the EVW. This turned out to be a pleasant walk following the River Esk and at times the railway line between Whitby and Grosmont. Reaching Grosmont we met up with Mike at the pub. The day finished with welcome refreshment.

Day's stats: - distance 22.5km; height climbed 541m; (13.98mls; 1774ft)

Day 3. We were now back on the C2C which is also the EVW as far as Glaisdale. At this point we left the EVW and headed up on to the moors. Walking up Glaisdale Rigg the storm clouds gathered ahead. Stopping for lunch before taking the track to Trough House the storm approached. We were being looked after by someone as the main thrust of the storm swung to our right following Great Fryup Dale rather than heading



straight for us. Thunder boomed and lightning flashed but we were on the periphery and although our waterproofs were wet, we had no great deluge or battering. Leaving the storm clouds behind us we continued past "Fat Betty" and approached the Lion Inn to be met by Mike. After a meal together Jean and Mike returned to their caravan.

Day's stats: - distance 21.2km; height climbed 577m; (13.17mls; 1893ft)

Day 4. A relatively short day today. The Lion Inn to a pickup at Clay Bank along the old railway line. As you would expect no significant height gain and a good surface to walk on. Today we were joined by another friend for the short walk. Just after leaving the Lion Inn a cavalcade of vehicles passed us, 13 in all, preceded earlier by 2 vans. Shortly after, we passed all of the vehicles parked up. We had met up with a shooting party. Continuing cautiously, but safely, we passed various guns in grouse butts as they waited for the beaters and dogs to begin the drive. We could see the beaters ahead as they waited for a signal to start disturbing the grouse towards the guns. Once we had passed the beaters began. Whilst the day looked threatening, we had no rain and a gentle breeze blowing toward us. Once we reached Clay Bank we were picked up and taken to our accommodation for the night.



Day's stats: - distance 14.6km; height climbed 169m; (9.07mls; 554ft)

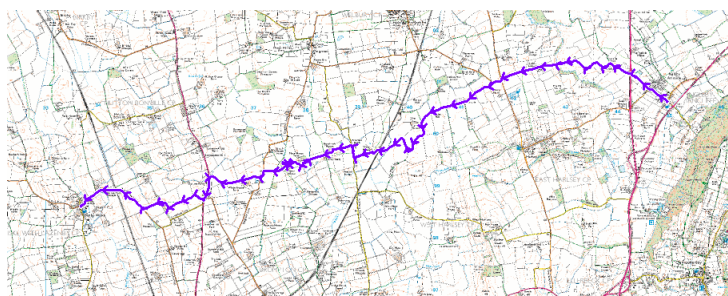
Day 5. Today was a great walking day. Sunshine, slight breeze with a cool air temperature. As is often the case we soon warmed up in the sunshine and layers peeled off. Our route took us up and over 3 tops, the final one, Cringle Moor has a viewpoint with a plaque indicating the distance and direction of various distant landmarks and notable tops. Leaving the viewpoint we reached a well-established café/restaurant called Lordstones. After refreshments we continued up towards another high point, called Carlton Bank. It was here many, many years ago that gliders would be launched by a converted



truck with a drum and cable attached. The cable stretched back to the nose of the glider and as the engine began the drum rotated and the glider towed along a bumpy moorland runway. As it took off and climbed, the hook was disengaged and fell to earth to be dragged back to another waiting glider and the process repeated. Although it closed about 2008 the airfield is still not classed as open access land but a public right of way for the Cleveland Way and the C2C to run alongside the old runway. Continuing we entered Chain Wood. Chain Wood, an ancient woodland after which we ascended to Beacon hill. Descending through more woodland we reached Ingleby Cross, our pickup point.

Day's stats: - distance 19.6km; height climbed 710m; (12.17mls; 2329ft)

Day 6. A late start today and this was to be (in my opinion) the first of 2 boring walking days. Ingleby Cross to Danby Whiske. This is in the Vale of Mowbray which occupies the undulating flood plains associated with the rivers Swale, Wiske and Cod Beck. As such it is a vast area of agricultural farming land with flat fields, muddy paths, numerous field boundaries and having to navigate through or around farms. An alternative is to follow the quiet B roads but they can be hard on the legs and feet and realistically only an option if the fields are too muddy. We were fortunate with having had a number of dry days so the fields it was to be. Before reaching these however we had to face a challenge of crossing the busy A19. Eventually we spotted a break in the traffic and reached the central reservation before another gap appeared for us to cross to the safety of the other side. To negate



this potentially dangerous crossing an alternative C2C crossing utilises a minor road bridge further north but this would add about 8Km (5mils) to the day. No real issues with navigation. Having been accepted as an LDT, new signage is in place with small C2C roundels in place making it fairly straightforward although some farmers give the impression of not being in favour of people walking in the area with some signs obstructed. Reaching Danby Whiske, we waited for a while before The White Swan pub (our accommodation for the night) opened its doors at 4pm. After checking in we had a very pleasant meal and met up with Alby Williams a great character. Alby was on his 50th C2C walk and he was raising money for James Cook hospital where he had had treatment earlier in the year. A friend of mine had asked me to look out for him and to say hello for her. Coincidence that I was able to do so.

Day's stats: - distance 14.7km; height climbed 107m; (9.13mils; 351ft)

Day 7. Today was from Danby Whiske to Richmond. The second of our 2 days over flat agricultural land and leaving the Vale of Mowbray. The day started with light rain and it persisted during the morning before easing. Around fields, across now muddy fields we reached Kiplin Hall. Kiplin Hall has an amazing history and also an amazing café with home-made cakes, scones and other delicacies along with a selection of beverages. It would have been disrespectful not to have made use of their offerings. Continuing to Catterick Bridge it became a slithering day. Not to be mixed up with Harry Potter this referred to the surface layer of mud which kept us sliding from side to side. Passing through Brompton on Swale and Colburn we reached Richmond. The C2C passes over Richmond Bridge but the route to our accommodation took us along the disused railway line to the market square and our hotel for the night. Richmond is quite often a rest day for many C2C walkers but not for us. After a refreshing drink, check-in, shower and an evening meal we were ready for another day of walking.



Day's stats: - distance 24.1km; height climbed 353m; (14.97mils; 1158ft)

Day 8. For me this feels like the start of the C2C. The moors are a familiar tramping ground and the Vale of Mowbray is just a plod although it does add to show the variety and character of the country as you walk from one coast to the other. Today is from Richmond to Reeth. Leaving the market place we soon left civilisation behind following tarmac and then a track on to the rolling hills of the Dales. Passing Willance's Leap we dropped down to the 12th century church of St Edmund in Marske. The Church offers snacks and



drinks with an honesty box. Or you can pay by card!! Onwards over open fields, past Hutton's Monument to Nun Cote farm. Another essential stop. Attached to the farm is a conservatory used as a café with again home-made cakes and scones by the chatty farmer's wife, Elaine. Another good-sized portion of carrot cake and a mocha for me. Onwards to Marrick then down through the woods on ancient worn slabs to Marrick Priory. The Priory was originally established as a Benedictine nunnery between

1140–1160. The Nunnery thrived until the 16th century but on 17 November 1540 the prioress, Christabel Cowper, and her 16 Nuns were evicted as part of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. From here to Reeth was over grassland before following the swollen river to Grinton. A well signed path then took us to Reeth, our stop for the night. We arrived at 2:45pm and the rain started at 3pm but we were in the pub. Up until then it had been a good day with sunshine, a slight breeze and no rain.

Day's stats: - distance 18km; height climbed 538m; (11.18mils; 1748ft)

Day 9. We left Reeth in the rain. It then stopped. It started again. It was like this throughout the day although we did have the chance to dry off between the showers. We continued into a strengthening breeze which, although it did not impede us, demonstrated the benefit of walking west to east. However, the weather cannot be predicted or guaranteed when planning 6 months ahead. Not a cold day and



although there appeared to be a scarcity of the new signage there were no major navigational difficulties. Approaching Surrender Bridge, we passed the ruins of an old smelting mill before taking the track up toward and past the Old Gang Smelting Mills. On the track up to Level House Bridge another shooting party drove past us for a day's shoot. We stopped to talk with a gamekeeper who was using his dogs, along with other gamekeepers, to clear the area of the previous shoot of any birds that may not have been collected after being shot down. He also told us that each of the guns would be paying about £15,000 for a day's shoot. That probably accounted for the expensive vehicles that had passed us on the track. As we climbed higher on a good track we walked in to the low, damp cloud base and at

times it seemed surreal with an almost moon like appearance all around us. This whole area is steeped in the history and development of the lead industry and the remains of spoil heaps act as a reminder of the industry that was once here. Approaching and dropping down in to Gunnerside Gill, where we crossed a rock slab bridge, we were in an area where streams were dammed, and the water released as a torrent to scour soil off the surface and reveal lead ore (galena) seams. The resultant scars are known as hushes seen as great scarring on the landscape. Following another estate road in to the breeze we soon branched off to take a track leading to Swinner Gill with more lead mining visible. Climbing out of the gill we passed Crackpot Hall before reaching Keld and our overnight accommodation. Although it had been at times a damp day it did not dampen our spirits. Day 9 completed only 6 to go.

Day's stats: - distance 19.4km; height climbed 736m; (12mls; 2414ft)

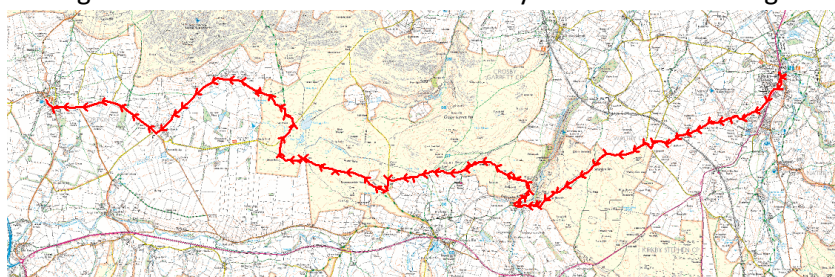
Day 10. The forecast for the day was for precipitation from about 2pm with gusting winds, so an early breakfast enabled us to leave at 8:30am. Sun shining, slight breeze and a few clouds about. After a short distance along the road, we broke off on to a grassy, muddy track leading up to Ravenseat Farm (known from the Yorkshire Shepherdess). From here a damp tussocky path took west along Ney Gill. Today's walk will take us over 9 Standards Rigg. Traditionally 1 of 3 seasonal routes was used according to the time of year. This was to help preserve the environment and to reduce and repair the erosion caused to the peat hags. Whichever route was walked it was always boggy and wet and you could



easily sink up to your knee or beyond. The “Red” route is the one which has been selected for the “official” C2C route so we continued along Ney Gill and past a shooting box to the sign indicating the C2C route. Wow, what a difference. From this point north the track has been tastefully paved and is a pleasure to walk. The paving was still being worked on for a stretch of about 200m but the overall length is about 4km. Approaching from this direction the monuments/cairns of 9 Standard’s Rigg are clearly visible from about a kilometre away and they stand proud against the skyline. The wind was moving about and was now blowing from behind slightly over our left shoulders and we could see storm clouds gathering beyond the direction of Kirkby Stephen. Descending on a path with more paving, the breeze strengthened and the temperature began to drop before we reached Kirkby Stephen. About to sit in a beer garden it began to rain. So, a quick retreat indoors to watch the rain, later than expected. We had remained dry all day and had amazing views.

Day’s stats: - distance 19.4km; height climbed 736m; (12mls; 2414ft)

Day 11. Generally, walkers take 2 long days from Kirkby Stephen to Patterdale, staying overnight in Shap. This is about 58km (36mls). I had decided to break this route in to 3 shorter days so today was just to Orton. This is a gentle walk over pasture land with grazing livestock with little height gain. The day started wet after overnight rain and the rain continued all day with an occasional gentle breeze. Visibility was good although

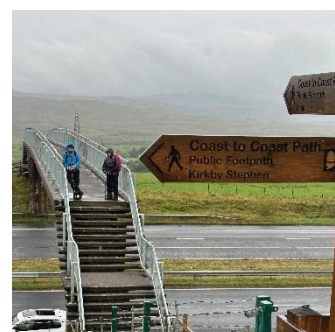


the cloud base was down around 500m. Still well above our journey height. Paths were fine but there had been very little signage. Just as well we could read a map. Not a difficult day walking but the persistent rain and being very wet underfoot did not make for an

enjoyable day. Today, the people we kept meeting walking the C2C from St Bees were all complaining about the weather and water crossings in the Lake District, where streams which were normally a quick plodge across or where stepping stones were above water, this had not been the case. It was due to the wet weather that we had experienced having passed through the lakes before reaching us. Fingers crossed for when we got there. Reaching the George in Orton, we left puddles on the stone floor whilst we enjoyed a much welcome drink.

Day’s stats: - distance 21.4km; height climbed 537m; (13.3mls; 1761ft)

Day 12. Orton to Bampton. Yet another wet day. We had had a good run of weather so we didn’t feel too bad about the rain. From the George we had a choice of either following the quiet road to rejoin the C2C path or to follow paths over sodden fields to rejoin the road. The road won. After about 2km of road walking we reached a junction where the C2C crossed. We continued along the road for about 1km to where the C2C veered off over open land to Robin Hood’s Grave. We saw no signs of it. Whilst the OS maps do not show a path there is one there and it continues to the old Roman road known as Wicker Street. Following this unmarked path, we met a crocodile of international walkers doing the C2C from St Bees. Beware of the stream ahead they all said. It was either knee deep or thigh deep depending on who you listened to. They also had bad water experiences whilst in the lakes. My thought was that they had all survived so it could not have been all that bad. Approaching the stream yes it was swollen and deep but from our side it was a tentative step on to a boulder, another boulder then a leap for mankind (well not quite). Dry footed we reached the far bank. Walking past a couple of erratic boulders we reached Wicker Street. From here a good track took us past a limestone quarry to reach the M6. Over the footbridge we reached Shap and in dripping waterproofs we made a



welcome stop in a high street café. Leaving the foggy interior, we headed past Shap Abey where we veered away from the C2C route. Had we continued it would have taken us to Haweswater reservoir and High Street beyond. Our deviation was to take us to Bampton and the Mardale Inn. The path followed alongside the River Lowther and was very wet underfoot, the same as the previous day. Reaching our accommodation for the night we again dripped on the flagstone floor whilst enjoying a light refreshment. The Mardale Inn is a community pub and was very welcoming, well-appointed and the food was good.

Day's stats: - distance 22km; height climbed 403m; (13.67mls; 1322ft)

Day 13. What a difference a day makes. Blue sky, a few clouds, dry, a gentle breeze from the north and an air temperature of about 4 degrees C. A superb day for walking and what a walk it was going to be. From Bampton over the tops to Patterdale.

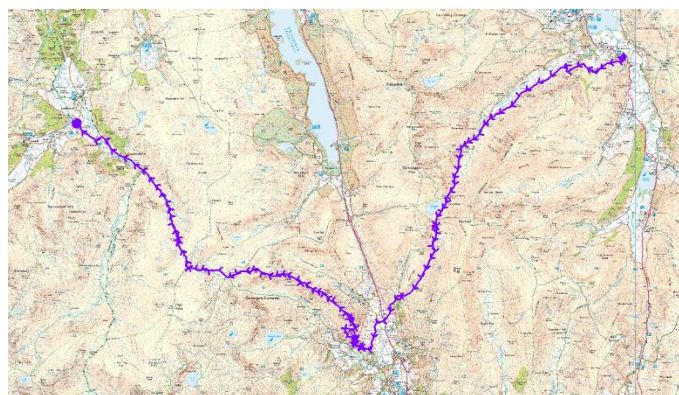


Leaving Bampton, we had chosen to take a more direct route to the old Roman road of High Street over Bampton Common rather than walk along the shoreline of Haweswater and up over Kidsty Howes to Kidsty Pike. Ascending to Drybarrows the ground underfoot was pleasantly dry. Continuing along the ridge on to Bampton Common we had our first view of Haweswater below us. Still following a good track underfoot (with the occasional damp patches) we passed a number of wild ponies grazing. Reaching

High Street, we turned left (now with a slight breeze behind us) and continued along a good, sometimes wet/boggy, track to Rampsgill Head. Bypassing Kidsty Pike we picked up the well-trodden path descending from the Knott to Angle Tarn. Passing a few wild campers, we continued to Boredale Hause and then to Patterdale. Our accommodation for the night. A great day and a great walk.

Day's stats: - distance 20km; height climbed 843m; (12.42mls; 2765ft)

Day 14. We knew this day was coming. A long challenging day from Patterdale to Stonethwaite. Another day with fine weather and a cool air temperature as we leave Patterdale. Following the C2C route we



walked around it to pick up the path descending to Grasmere. Various C2C walkers heading to Robin Hood's Bay were passed and conversations had. Approaching Grasmere, we skirted round to Lancrigg for morning refreshments.

walked a wet grassy track before following the route up Grisedale to Ruthwaite Lodge. Before long I was feeling rather warm and wishing that I had started off in lighter-weight trousers. Passing the lodge we arrived at the tarn. Its surface seemed slightly choppy as we



Whilst various new signs for the C2C had been passed we had noted that many important changes in direction were not signed. From Lancrigg we had 2 options to Greenup Edge. One was to take the route up Far Easdale Gill and the other more challenging route up to Helm Crag and along the ridge. We chose (with hindsight the wrong one) the tougher route. The ascent to the ridge was a steady plod but the ridge had far more ups and downs than I remember and time was slipping away. Eventually we reached the head of Easdale Gill to find a line of paving slabs stretching across to Greenup Edge. Unfortunately, they did not stretch all the way but it still covered most of the previous boggy bits. After the steep climb up to the edge we began our descent to Stonethwaite. Some paving, some steps, some boulders. Not an easy path especially past Lining Crag. Down, down, down. We eventually reached our accommodation. Jean was collected by Mike and we then went to the YHA for a meal. This was the only place available for food with the alternatives being either closed or not serving food on certain nights of the week. A long tiring day.

Day's stats: - distance 27.9km; height climbed 1417m; (17.36mls; 4648ft)

Day 15. From Stonethwaite to Ennerdale Bridge. This was the third day of fine weather. A bonus when walking in the lakes. Along the road to Seatoller then paths up to Honister pass. After refreshments in the café, we continued climbing up the path of the dismantled tramway turning off at Drum House. A path led us to the top of Loft Beck



leading down to Black Sail Hut. Improvement work was being done on this steep path to reduce erosion and make it safer. Black Sail Hut has an honesty system for refreshments to be made when not manned. Black Sail Hut used to be a youth hostel but is now an independent hostel and is said to be the most remote hostel although a private rough forestry road leads all the way from Ennerdale Water. From Black Sail we followed this vehicle track to the head of Ennerdale Water. At this point we had a choice of routes to Ennerdale Bridge. We decided after yesterday that we would follow the easier north side. Various walkers had



described the south side as tough, wet, boggy and rocky. From the end of Ennerdale Water some new paths had been created for the C2C and led us to our accommodation for the night.

Day's stats: - distance 23.8km; height climbed 615m; (14.79mls; 2017ft)

Day 16. This is it. Our final day and yet again great weather. Leaving Ennerdale Bridge in good spirits, each in our own thoughts, we followed newly created paths alongside to minor road to Scarney Brow. Leaving the road, we dropped down to Nannycatch Beck and on to Nannycatch Gate. At this point we had some confusion. An old sign indicated for safety reasons the path had been redirected as per the displayed map and yellow pegs should be followed. We decided that this was no longer relevant and proceeded with an awareness of care needed. Totally unfounded. Climbing out of Uldale through trees on good tracks we approached the top of Dent and descended through signs of tree felling work. Perhaps this was the reason for the sign.



Through Cleator and then to Moor Row by a disused railway line. Leaving the old railway line, we headed for a working railway line between Barrow in Furness and Carlisle. No signs or sounds of a train so over the lines we went. We are on the home stretch now. Footpaths to Sandwith and then to the coast. Onwards to St Bees lighthouse and then continuing on the coastal path to St Bees. As we approach St Bees, Mike has walked out to meet up with Jean and to accompany her on the final section. Rounding the coastline, St Bees came in to sight and the promenade clearly visible. The end of the journey. Woo hoo!! Standing at the board depicting the beginning of the C2C (the end for us) we had a

celebratory glass of fizz before dipping our boots and the pebbles we had carried from Robin Hood's Bay in the Irish Sea. A great walk with great company. Walk it again? Most definitely.

Day's stats: - distance 22.5km; height climbed 541m; (13.98mls; 1774ft)

Total stats; - Distance 313.20km; height climbed 8801m; (194.61mls; 28867ft)



Terry Jones

Pen y Pass Meets in the 1930s

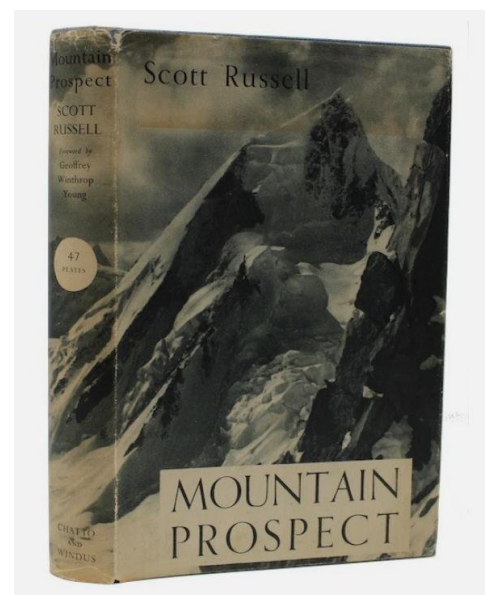
I found descriptions of early Pen y Pass climbing meets in 'Mountain Prospect' written by Scott Russell and published by Chatto and Windus in 1946. The author was born in Scotland in 1913 and travelled to New Zealand in 1919 when his father retired. They lived in Nelson in the north of South Island and his interest in mountains and nature developed as he explored with his brother. He joined the NZ Alpine Club and became a competent climber and mountaineer. In 1936, Scott returned to England to start postgraduate research in Botany at Imperial College in London and travelled to the Lake District in December where he was introduced to British climbing which seemed very different from what he had been used to and he initially found terrifying.

Part 3 of his book is headed :

THE OLD MOUNTAINS

*We look upon them, and our nature fills
With loftier images from their life apart.
They set our feet on curves of freedom, bent
To snap the circles of our discontent.*

Geoffrey Winthrop Young



After his Lake District visit his next recorded trip was to North Wales and he continues:

'Helyg Cottage, the Climbers' Club hut below Tryfan, was the scene of several delightful visits but I enjoyed most of all the Easter gatherings at Pen-y-Pass. The friend who had arranged to take me there on the first Easter after my return to England was at the last moment unable to go, and I approached the Pen-y-pass hotel shyly through soft rain early on Easter Thursday. I knew some of my contemporaries, but dinner was scarcely over before I felt myself already part of the community. For the first time since I left England I was at home among the hills.



Elsewhere climbing clubs were gathered for their Easter meets, but the Pen-y-Pass gathering has a naturalness never quite achieved by the formal organisation of a club. There was a sense of spontaneous harmony difficult to describe. Some parties 'go', people are at their ease and by enjoying each other's company enjoy their surroundings more fully, other parties, apparently similarly constituted, are awkward and uncomfortable for the lack of an intangible social grace. The Pen-y-pass Easters were of the former type and their

charm lay in the personality, dominating yet unobtrusive, of Mr and Mrs Winthrop Young who gathered us together. For many of us they are inseparable in memory from our delight in North Wales.

There were neither young climbers nor old ones, novices nor experts, at Pen-y-pass, but a blending of all. It was a community which, thought its members might change with the years, had long existed; the yellowing pages of an album held the record of the party for more than three decades. One had a sense of a continuous yet expanding and growing tradition.

The varying date of Easter and the vagaries of climate gave pleasant variety to our days. There were white Easters when the rocks were plastered with ice, the cwms snow-filled and the ridges corniced; easy rock climbs became adventures. Sometimes we would chip our way up the Snowdon gullies or walk the Horseshoe from Lliwedd to Crib Goch, delighting in the alpine views, for snow turns small hills into the likeness of great mountains. Then there were Easters when the rocks were dry and warm as at midsummer, and we climbed the crags, pleasant in name as in memory, of Tryfan, Lliwedd or Clogwyn Du'r-ar-ddu.

For me the ideal return to Wales was to walk at leisure to the Heather Terrace on Tryfan and climb the day through, up and down the sunlit buttresses; pure enjoyment and exercise well suited for muscles soft from inactivity. On such a day we were never too preoccupied with the immediate task to appreciate our surroundings; the cloud patterns drifting over the fields below; the shapes of the hills which seemed to grow in height as the sun lowered towards evening and a haze of smoke drifted up from the valleys; the bathe as we walked homewards, without which no sunlit day was perfectly complete.

In each holiday there was usually at least one day of storm when rain and hail cut our faces as fiercely, it seemed, as they had ever done among remoter mountains, but whatever the weather it was too good to stay indoors. Sometimes we tramped across the mist-shrouded hill, sometimes we climbed up dripping gullies and once, in the extreme effervescence of enthusiasm, we plunged into a tarn while lazy flakes of snow fell on our shivering bodies.

From these varied activities we returned to the luxury of hot baths before a roaring fire. There was no plumbing in the annex to the hotel in which we lived, but a couple of tin baths in its central room were more pleasant and more encouraging to reminiscence than any more modern arrangements could have been. The dinner gong always caught us unawares.

Afterwards over pewter tankards of ale or shandy, the best I can remember, we talked or sang those songs which have become part of the tradition of the party. One night was by custom reserved for tricks of skill and balance – climbing round a kitchen chair or through a climbing-rope suspended from the ceiling, without touching the floor; drinking a glass of water which had been balanced on one's forehead without touching it with one's hands, and returning it there when empty; and many more – an exhausting evening never without its hilarious mishaps.

Thus we lived in a house lacking wireless or telephone, separated from the outer world, until Easter Tuesday found us packing into cars and returning to our normal living. Some at any rate of our number carried away a lingering feeling, which time has strengthened, that in those weekends we almost recaptured the art of simple enjoyment. '

The chapter ended there, and the next chapter begins 'A sunny morning in July 1937 carried me up the Rhone valley....' and the next is headed 'A Summer in the Arctic' which is followed by 'Our return to England had been clouded by the Munich crisis.... but my plans were nebulous until a November afternoon when Eric Shipton asked me to join him in the Karakoram.'

This was followed by details of the planning for a typical Shipton expedition with 4 members, including a doctor, and on the march to Gilgit, 9 Sherpas and 18 laden mules with supplies for 6 months. They left Victoria in May 1939 and details follow of a very successful expedition. The war news did not reach them until they reached civilisation and he tried to enlist but with no success but was eventually sent to Malaya to advise the rubber planters.

He finally enlisted but was captured by the Japanese at Singapore and sent to Changi camp. There he was put in charge of the extensive kitchen garden where over 200 prisoners helped to grow vegetables to augment their poor rations. He persuaded the Japanese that gardening entailed a lot of list making and so obtained supplies of paper. He then started writing his memoirs to keep himself sane and a fellow Australian prisoner copied out his writing every night and buried this copy in the garden in case the Japanese found his original. By the time he was released in 1945 two copies of the book were in existence and this, with a short postscript describing a tentative return to climbing in Langdale in October 1945, was published. The foreword was written by Geoffrey Winthrop Young who ends with: 'We are left with no little curiosity as to what will come next...'

After the war, he lectured at Oxford and then set up the Agricultural Research Council Radiobiological Laboratory, to monitoring and predicting the consequences of nuclear fall-out on food crops and human nutrition. In 1946, he married George Finch's daughter Anne who was also a climber. However, he had no more expeditions but continued to attend meetings at the Alpine Club. He died in 1999 aged 86.

Vicki Archard

A Dales High Way

Andy Jackson and Sarah Hargreaves undertook this long distance walk from Tuesday 23 to Sunday 28 September 2025

References

- A Dales High Way Route Guide by Tony and Chris Grogan 2020 Skyware Ltd.
- A Dales High Way Companion by Tony and Chris Grogan 2018 Skyware Ltd.

The maps in both publications were helpful with planning. We used only the Route Guide during the walking days along with Outdoor Active. Andy had planned our route into the latter before we left home. The Companion did give detailed route descriptions to add to the Route Guide tucked between background information about the history, archaeological features and current information.

Statistics

Day	From	To	Distance	Climb	Total time
1	Saltaire	Addingham	19.9k	503 m	6.40
2	Addingham	Malham	31.8k	827m	9.35
3	Malham	Austwick	20.7k	560m	8.00
4.	Austwick	Dent	27.1k	1055m	9.10
5.	Dent	Ravenstonedale	25.1k	1130m	9.00
6	Ravenstonedale	Appleby	23k	263m	6.30
Total:			147.6k	4338m	48 hrs 55mins

Note: Ravenstonedale was actually High Greenside Farm, high up a track above the village.

Birds we saw

Standing heron - two	Buzzard
Flying heron	Red Kite
Wheatear	Meadow Pipit
Goldfinch	and a Red Admiral butterfly

Introduction

Some while ago, we agreed to do a 5-6 day UK trek in September 2025. We settled on the Dales Way, a second time for me and a first for Andy. This was until Christine Middleton heard about this and suggested A Dales High Way might suit us better. She, Andy and friends had done this route relatively recently. Thank you for this advice Christine.

Looking into it briefly, we agreed and changed our plan. It was easy to find the publications and then plan our route. As we were doing it in 6 days rather than the 8 in the books, we had to find different places to stay. I was working through these successfully until the last night when I found a walking group had booked all the beds in Ravenstonedale. The only option was to pay for 2 nights at High Greenside Farm and stay for just the one night.

Day 0

Staying in Leeds on day 0 popped up as an option 8 days previously. We were on a weekend in Bristol with a group of friends and Moira and Dave offered to put us up for the night before in Leeds and look after our car on their cul-de-sac. What was not to like? We had a lovely evening and a good night's sleep.

Day 1

We left some additional clothes and overnight toiletries in the car and each took our pre-packed rucksack, which we were to carry for the six days. Dave kindly drove us the 45 minutes it took to Saltaire famed for Titus Salt. A local pub is called 'Don't Tell Titus' as he was teetotal. We had not been there before. An impressive mill complex with a David Hockney exhibition but it was closed and we had to get going.

The first challenge after leaving Dave was to get out of the area and onto Victoria Road, high above us to start of the walk. We found a way round one building, a group of people said to carry on for the exit and we came to a security office. The two guys refused to let us through as we would not be able to come back to our car. Rather dramatically, we said 'We are not coming back, we are walking to Appleby' and politely just walked past them, out and up the steps to the road.

Day 1 was a good introduction with very varied terrain. The towpath by the Leeds-Liverpool canal was attractive with the autumn leaves and the bubbling water. Crossing over the River Aire, through a housing estate and then into Trench Wood was a contrast. The path covered with beech leaves and mast wove through the wood above a stream. As usual with beech, the forest floor was very clear of undergrowth. A beautiful fly agaric signalled an abundance of different fungi.



A contouring path through Romalds Moor with Hope Hill on our right led to a racehorse training track. It was a soft, inches deep cinder track. We were surprised by a bunch of about six horses and jockeys galloping in wide circuits round where we were crossing. Another group appeared. It was dramatic and exciting to watch, given the speed they were travelling.



Weecher reservoir was small and not very visible. A long undulating straight track took us through the next moorland section with no habitation. Shortly afterwards, we joined the main Dales Way. We had missed cup and ring marked stones earlier but were on a careful look out for the Twelve Apostles Stone Circle on Burley Moor. It boasted a trig point, which is popular with both of us. There was an offering of an apple in the centre stone. The ring was thought to be Bronze Age but more recently it has been resolved to be Neolithic. Some other walkers gathered there. We had met only a few previously during the day.

We enjoyed the ornate Lanshaw Lad boundary stone. The white golfballs in the distance were identified as Menwith Hill spy station. White Wells, the old Victorian spa house was not open for viewing nor was the café open. The latter was unsurprising but, I have to admit, was disappointing. A pretty waterfall named 'Willy Hall's Spout' appeared shortly afterwards.



We enjoyed the long undulating path along the lower edge of the moor with a good view on the left. We are used to such paths above edges in the Peak District not below. The 'Swastica Stone' in its fenced enclosure was noted. The original faint Iron Age marking was not easy to identify but the Victorian replica was. To us it looked more like the well-known Hindu marking rather than a Nazi swastika. Piper's Crag Stone with modest cup and ring markings entertained us next followed by the large Noon Stone. We pondered the origin of its name without success.

Upper Wharfedale afforded us views here with Addingham below. We were on the final stage of the day dropping down off the moor edge through fields and over the lethal A65 before arriving in Addingham opposite the Fat Lamb pub. It was rude not to patronise them and we bought cold drinks and crisps enjoying a welcome seat in the sun. Later, we walked up the road to our accommodation, The

Craven Heifer, only to find I had booked a pub of the same name in Kelside miles away. I blame the search engine optimisation being better for Kelside! Fortunately, no panic needed, as they had a spare room. The shower and tea tray were most welcome. The Fat Lamb provided an excellent dinner.

Day 2 Addingham to Malham

Another risky but successful dash across the A65 with our modestly heavy rucksacks started the day heading into territory we both knew. The weather was sunny and very pleasant. After Draughton Height, the long straight track of prehistoric origins called Rombalds Way is known locally as the 'Roman Road'. It was a turnpike road from 1755-1803. It gave us a stunning view of Shap How, which we, satisfyingly, walked up later and Rough How, a little lower. A lovely gentle descent along a beech track took us into Skipton. A café for coffee plus toilets were the immediate need. Kibble Café met the criteria. Unusually, it was also a dog grooming parlour, hence the name. Wensleydale cheese (Wallace in mind) and carrot chutney in a sandwich from M & S set me up for a picnic lunch later. Skipton was heaving. It was market day. We escaped with relief heading out up a side road to go through fields and a golf course. Sharp Haw trig point 367 metres made a good lunch spot from which we watched 3 dirt bikers playing on the rocks. Looked less safe than mountain biking to me.



A good descent path took us to Flasby. The beautiful sandstone houses with mullioned windows were stunning. A pleasant riverside path came next to Hetton with clear water flowing over pebbles at first, later becoming deep and dark. The Angel Inn there was super posh, out of place we thought.

Moor Lane 2 was long and straight with a gentle gradient followed by a descent to a footbridge at the end of Winterburn Reservoir. Then came a long steady uphill climb round Brown Hill, up Hetton Common Head and onto Weets Top, with our second trig point of the day. The boundary of gritstone and limestone was obvious from the scenery, in particular the gash of Goredale Scar. The limestone outcrops of Malham Cove were visible in the distance. We looked forward to being there again.

Descending all the way to the entrance of Goredale Scar was not a pleasure. My knee was playing up as had happened a few times and that slowed me down. We made a good choice to take the Janet's Foss route. I wanted to see the waterfall, to walk along the lovely riverside path and to avoid further tarmac ascent and descent. The Buck Inn was a welcome sight over a narrow pedestrian bridge. We had a good evening and night's stay there.



Janet's Fosse

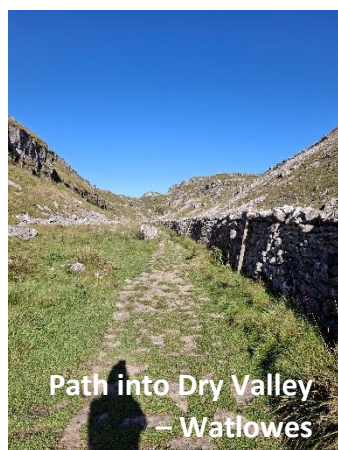
Day 3 Malham to Austwick

We left in lovely light along the well known path towards Malham Cove but for the first time for about half an hour, we were the only ones there. The sun and the silence except for the water were memorable. Andy went ahead to look for the water resurgence of the Cove and I took a video of the surroundings to commit to memory.

The steps up to the top of the Cove, across the pavement and then down into Watlowes, the dry valley, was a good route. We met a bunch of D of E students by the stile. Lucky that one of them knew how to navigate,



Malham Cove



Path into Dry Valley
– Watlowes

although the others read the finger post. We were definitely heading into familiar paths and scenery now. Langscar and across Kirkby Fell were followed by Stockdale Lane with a view of Rye Loaf Hill and its trig point and cairn. We recognised the long, rocky edge of Attermire Scar at a distance from our Sunday morning runs from Giggleswick on the weekends when a group of us stayed with Jean and Dave Hall. We walked the familiar route into Settle heading for The Naked Man café hoping there would be space in this popular venue. There was, just, and we enjoyed a tasty lunch.

Following our detailed plan for buying lunch for the days following where there would be no further opportunity, the Co-op met our needs. Heading towards Feizor, still thinking of refreshments, I was optimistic the lovely café there would still be open, Andy was less sure. Fortunately, I was right, though of course not smug about this (!). Big pots of tea sitting in the sun was very pleasant. Day 3 was an easy day. Heading uphill we could see Pen-y-Ghent with the memories for me of the two classic Yorkshire Peaks Fell Races I had run and the many times a bunch of us walked the route. Nostalgia indeed, knowing I can no longer run like that.

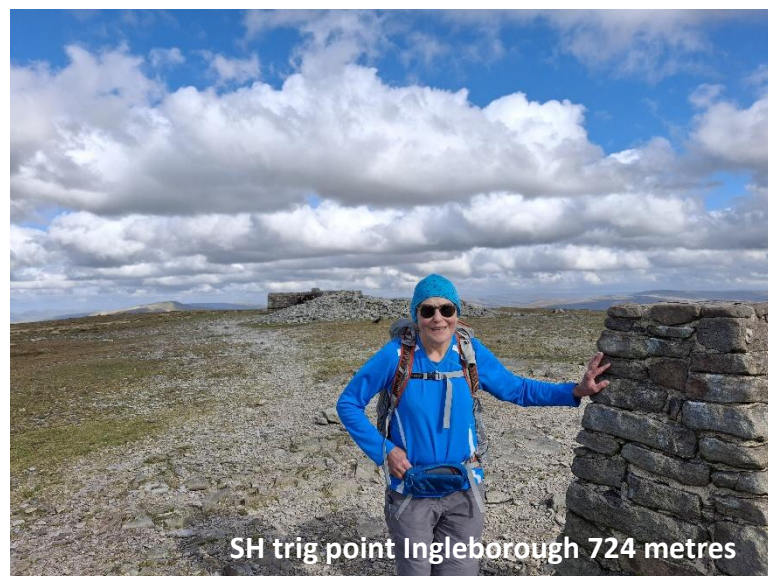
We chose a field route with lots of stiles with gates on top, double barriers, until Austwick came into view. We knew the tennis court car park but not the village. The Gamecock Inn surprised us with a patisserie in the porch. We did not succumb to temptation for cake, although beer was in the plan! Dinner was delicious, fish pie and steak frites. Yes, the chef is French.

Day 4 Austwick to Dent



We knew this was the big day. We would join the Dales Way and the Three Peaks Race route and I was looking forward to staying in Dent. This was unfinished business from my attempt at walking the Dales Way with an injured knee. With hindsight, that was an agreement that would have been best not kept. I did 29 miles that day surviving on two hourly doses alternately of paracetamol and ibuprofen. I longed to go into Dent for a cup of tea and cake as I walked up the valley but there was no time at all. The joy at the end of the day was that our lovely B and B host was waiting for me in a layby just over the bridge as you walk into Sedburgh. Having identified me as 'the Sarah who should be with 2 Sues and a Laraine in the pub' he said that I was not to walk another step that day. He took me to the pub and picked us all up after our meal having taken my rucksack home with him. What a lovely man.

I digress. Day 4 started as a sunny, cloudless day, pleasantly cool for our 26k. We crossed another limestone plateau that felt very remote and isolated but, given the good weather, benign. The path was good, once we left the tarmac, with undulating terrain. We saw no-one at that stage. This section was new to both of us.



We met the path up from Horton which is the descent path off Ingleborough in the Three Peaks Race. Happy memories of the four miles of descent running well, despite missing a chunky depth of skin on my right heel, and overtaking other runners. The geology clearly changed here from limestone to gritstone. We turned left heading up towards the summit of Ingleborough. We started seeing more people including two D of E groups going up and others in the distance. The path was uneventful but the wind got stronger as we climbed higher. We walked beside Simon Fell, a new name to me, to a saddle and then went left. We emerged from a

rocky, slightly scrambly path onto the plateau. Another trig point which we touched and also the true top, which is one metre higher! The star shaped shelter gave us choice to get out of the bracing wind for a swift lunch.

The steep descent off the summit was slow and hard for me, a first time in this direction. A lot of walkers were coming up. Then came the familiar long paved section exiting on the road just above the Hill Inn. We chose the alternative route on the Dales High Way to take in the summit of Whernside. No discussion had been needed in the planning about this. We considered a longer route off-road from Chapel-le-Dale to take us part way up Whernside but decided to follow the race descent route up Phillipin Lane. Very many people were descending from the top, most in groups but some in pairs. A long line of blue paving steps have been put in place, since I last did this nineteen years ago, due to the erosion on this very popular route.



AJ in Whernside shelter

The strengthening, increasingly cold wind was a challenge on the ridge until we reached the trig point behind a wall with a little bit of shelter and a seat for snacks. Yes, more food! We headed off down the path at speed, Andy spotting our left turn off the path, onto the least certain part of our route. The track was visible enough with bog avoidance needed in places, a wall corner to aim for and then following the wall handrail. Initially it was grassy and not too steep but this was misleading. We got onto a track, which then involved an interminable descent on rocky ground with very sore knees and an ankle for me and soles of feet for Andy. The valley looked

such a long way down. Slow progress was made enlivened by a young man running easily and fast with a dog up this track past us. He was impressive. We did get down to the gate to the road before he overtook us on his way back. A narrow steep tarmac road took us down to a bridge. We took the pretty path alongside the river rather than the road. The river disappeared underground for a stretch before reappearing.

We arrived at Dent Stores B and B only fifteen minutes late. A warm welcome and a phone call to the pub to delay our meal booking and all was set for a relaxing evening.

Day 5 Dent to High Greenside Farm, above Ravenstonedale

We continued along the road out of Dent past the campsite and then rejoined the easy path by the river. A narrow road rose to Lunds Farm, which looked semi-deserted. We continued the ascent with glances back to Dent and the way we had come. Long Moor and Longstone Fell were remote, clearly not an often used route. There were no sheep, few signs of wild life – a barren land. The Howgills gradually emerged into view and then we dropped into Sedbergh. It was no longer the thriving place I remembered from ten years ago. No café was open, one due to illness, one opening soon and one boarded up. A bookshop was open with a non-barista coffee machine self-service but nonetheless welcome. We were thankful to find a friendly, well-run takeaway sandwich shop making enormous cobs, which we tucked away for later.



Howgills 'sleeping elephants'

The well-named Joss Lane was our route out above the very pretty steep valley of

Settlebeck Gill. We topped out on our first main ridge, Rowantree Grains. We hunkered down beside the path out of the wind to have lunch. Two separate groups were having a break nearby. This was classic 'sleeping elephant' Howgills scenery with the spurs inter-weaving along very steep valleys. I was somewhat awestruck at what we raced in the Saunders Mountain Marathon in 2019.



Howgills steep, narrow valley

Voices presaged the arrival of two e-mountain bikers who passed us to effortlessly ride up the steep final slope to the next ridge, the Calders. It was exciting to watch. We followed a bit later and were passed by a farmer driving a Land Rover whom we watched driving along the rutted, narrow track then heading off over the hills.

The trig point of The Calf is the high point of the Howgills. A runner was coming towards us and stopped for a brief chat. He was running all the hills over 2,000 feet that day. We walked the nearly level 300 metres to the tarn that we had run to in July when staying in Bowderdale Beck Farm. Due to time constraints then, we turned right there and did not ascend The Calf that day.

We diverted from the main Dales High Way route here as our accommodation was in High Greenside and we did not want to follow the standard route along the ridge down to Bowderdale Beck and then along the footpaths to Ravenstonedale and up to High Greenside.



We took the route to the right down to the path beside Bowderdale Beck. The first section was steep, one we ran up on the Saunders when we were overtaken by a well known fellrunner. No shame there. The descent was unproblematic as we headed towards the 'bridge' that Andy remembered. We found the crossing point that we had noted previously but no bridge was to be seen. This section we knew would be the hardest of the day. It involved crossing the stream and then climbing, up the very off-piste line, to Randy Gill Top. Stepping stones added by Andy aided the stream crossing. The ascent was very steep and utterly relentless. My rucksack felt less reasonable than before. Eventually, I joined Andy on a flatter section, not feeling very positive about this experience and carried straight on wanting to get to the insignificant small cairn marking the high point. We took thirty minutes, had saved 5k but used a lot of energy. We went left before Green Bell, which we had climbed in July.

Then Andy had said Strava suggested people had taken a route across the boggy moor between Poskey Bottom and High Cocklake. It was indeed indistinct, or invisible, to start with but, after not too long, we came upon a decent trod with no holes, avoidable mud and enough stones to cross a ford. Lower down a sheep rushed past us to join five more running ahead of us leading all the way to Greenside Farm. At this point we turned left along a track towards the warm lights of High Greenside Farm. Angela, our B and B host, opened the door as we approached in the gloaming and greeted Andy with 'Well you are not Sarah'.

Disappointment reigned when I was in the shower and no water came out. Fortunately, Andy fetched Angela who relieved the air lock in the hose, while I stood by wrapped in a fortunately large towel. Two showers later, Angela gave us a lift down to Ravenstonedale where we had booked dinner in the Black Swan. There was no accommodation available at either pub in the village hence our stay high above it.

The Black Swan had the ambiance of a Victorian hotel more than a pub. There were no seats in the lounge until a couple said to the assembled company 'Come on, we can make room', which was kind and helpful. They then chatted with us as we were planning Day 6 and they were interested. We made modest dinner choices and our waitress 'Ocean' was charming and efficient. Angela picked us up at the agreed time in the pouring rain.

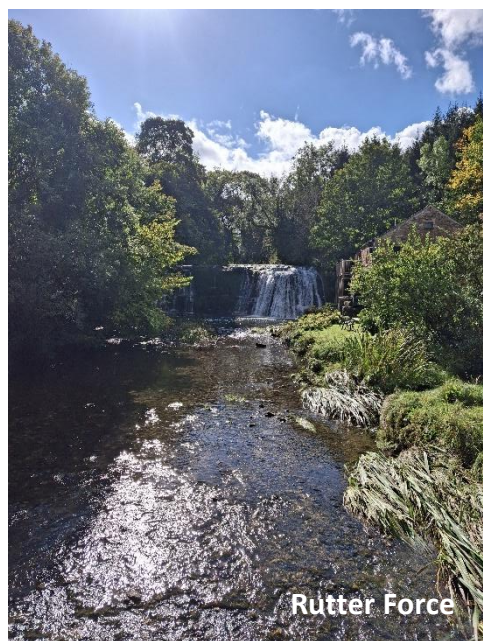
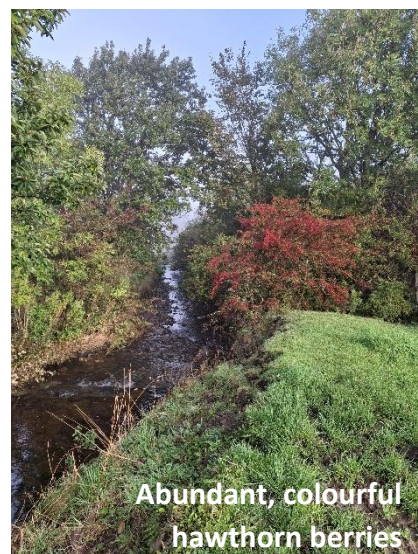
Day 6 High Greenside to Appleby-in-Westmoreland

For our first time on this trip, the day started with very low cloud and no view at all. We found our way onto the diverted footpath round the new barn. The dew on the cobwebs on fences and gates was pretty and more so as the sun began to emerge. This created several fogbows. There was no-one about. We followed paths over fields and stiles down onto the minor road through Newbiggin-on-Lune. After crossing the busy A685, we headed up the Great Asby road and onto a good path through Ravenstonedale Moor and Tarn Moor with no walls, no sheep given the poor grazing walking towards the 'humble peak of Great Kinmond.' We chose to make the short climb to the cairn for views over Orton Fells, the Great Asby Scar, an unexpected 'vast and spectacular limestone pavement', the Howgills, the distant Lakeland Fells and the Pennines.



We identified signs of an ancient settlement and saw a kestrel on the way down to Clockeld. This was a farmyard with more rusty, broken, abandoned equipment over an extended area than we had ever seen. It was a very depressing place. By one gate, there was a herd of calves pressed together. Maybe, they were soon to be moved, maybe to market. A dog barked and leapt on a chain. Two animal trailers passed us on the quiet road down to the lovely stone village of Great Asby, which is split in two halves by the beck.

On the previous moors and along the quiet roads out of Great Asby were hawthorn bushes bearing many deep red, glossy, relatively big, berries. They looked stunning in the bright sunshine against the bare wood of the leafless branches. The field were bright green, a contrast from previous days.



A pleasant walk by the sandy soil and undercut river banks of Hoff Beck led us to Rutter Mill. Scale Beck and Asby Beck meet here to form Rutter Force, quite a deep waterfall. The Mill looked an interesting old building, a private home now.

We had lunch next to a small beach with handy rocks for sitting on and the river close by. After lunch, we continued on the footpath beside the water, which was overgrown and muddy in places to Hoff where we crossed a road by a pub. We continued to follow Hoff Beck past Cuddling Hole, which we did not notice, and on to cross Bandley Bridge. A woman in a Land Rover passed us in a field and told us the horse there was a 29 year old ex-racehorse. We went through some of 'Rachel's Wood' wondering who she was and uphill where at the top there was a great view of the Pennines in the sun. High Cup Nick was visible as was a white spy dome on the skyline with Appleby Castle not too far away.

We emerged into Appleby by the Castle and descended Boroughgate pausing for very expensive drinks of lime and soda before a short stroll up the hill to the station. We sat on a bench in the sun waiting for the 4 p.m. train back to Leeds. Job done – the planning worked out, the weather was fine and the route was wonderful. It will be hard to beat in future in England.



High Cup Nick and Appleby Castle

Sarah Hargreaves 24 November 2025

