

the Fellfarer

October 2005

Number 39





Ed

Well, that's it. Number 39 put to bed. Thank you to all the contributors.

Now for issue number 40!

It would be good to mark the tenth year of The Fellfarer with something special but I'm not sure what yet. Does anyone have any bright ideas? A competition? A special bumper edition of the newsletter? A photo gallery? A party? I'd really appreciate some help on this so, if you have a suggestion, give me a call or drop me a line.

Thank you to Myers Ferguson who responded to the request in the last newsletter about information on the mysterious carved stones on the shores of Windermere. He's lent me volume 25 of the *Transactions of The Ancient Monuments Society* which describes in detail the inscribed stones at *Ecclerigg Crag*, along with an invitation to visit the site. I'll definitely be going to have a look. Anyone else interested? All will be revealed in the next newsletter..

ED

PS. The views of a contributor on the artistic merit of a certain 60s folk singer (page 11) do not necessarily reflect this publication's editorial opinion. Feel free to write me a letter on the subject, though (see below).



Ain't no letters.

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Cover Photo: Gordon all geared up for a day's walking on Taransay, Outer Hebrides

Contents photo: Visitor at the picnic bench, High House

News from the Committee

The preparation work for the kitchen improvement scheme is continuing to move forward. The next stage is the implementation of Phase 1. Take note that this will be a major operation, carried out by volunteer members (plus a qualified electrician) and taking a full week (Monday to Friday) some time during this winter. There is still a lot of planning, purchasing and prefabricating to do before we start at High House so we do not have start date yet.

It is important to remember that when it happens the kitchen will be effectively unusable and that water, gas and electricity may be cut off for some time for the duration of the works. So, until further notice, **it is important for your own comfort and safety that you check with the Hut Booking Secretary before going to High House at any time during the winter months.** All members should be doing that anyway, of course.

Phase 1 will provide a new sink, gas burners, extract fans, shelving, cupboards and a plumbed-in boiler, all along the gable wall (where the fridge and sink now are). The fridge will be temporarily located elsewhere until Phase 2 is completed.

Other work to be carried out soon includes the completion of a new bin enclosure by the bottom gate and the precautionary repair of a cracked floor-joint over the main room.

Note that the AGM appears in the Social Calendar. January is not that far away. Make a note in your diary. A formal notice will be sent out as usual.

Does anyone know anything about discussions between The National Trust and the County Council about highway matters at Seathwaite? Rumours start so easily. It would be nice to know if anything is being planned.

The FellFarers' Trip To St. Kilda June 2005

Roger and Margaret list their highlights from the trip:

1. Alfresco lunch on the journey up in HOT sunshine. Is this Scotland?
2. Rob Roy's Bathtub, just north of Loch Lomond.
3. Callanish Stones. Why? What for? But the atmosphere makes you tingle.
4. Meeting Murdo, Cathy and Gary, the crew of our boat they spoiled us for a week.
5. MV CUMA. It wasn't what I expected but soon became home.
6. Sea Eagles spotted on the first stop, not a bad start, eh?
7. Taransay for it's island Dun, Norse Mills and Walter's boyish enthusiasm, spoilt by the dross and junk left from the making of TVs Castaway 2000.: the makers should be ashamed!
8. The relief when Murdo decided to give St Kilda a go. The stacks emerging from the gloom. The snowdrifts that turned into thousands of birds. Big, big cliffs so difficult to see in scale. An atmospheric lunch in Village Bay. Peter's fifteen hour shift on the poop deck; he never let a wave wet his fag! So much sea and so few boats. The first glimpse of sun all day at 10.45 pm. A forty year old ambition fulfilled.
9. *"No, there's not a lot to see upon St Kilda,
Two dozen empty bothies and a wall,
It's a dreary little dot of desolation,
One hundred miles due west of buggar all."*
10. Loch Resort, like a canal with scenery and eagles, unique in my experience.
11. Sron Ulladale, some crag. I used to be a climber but!!!
12. A wet day's walking, followed the following day by a glorious scenic walk from Loch Tamnabhaigh to Abhinn Cheann in hot sunshine. It's a country with weather, not a climate.
13. So much wild country with so few people and so little litter, even on the high water line.
14. Return trip to Ullapool in a dawn flat calm; where were you when we needed you?
15. A week of chat and laughter and a dram with good companions.



CALLANISH



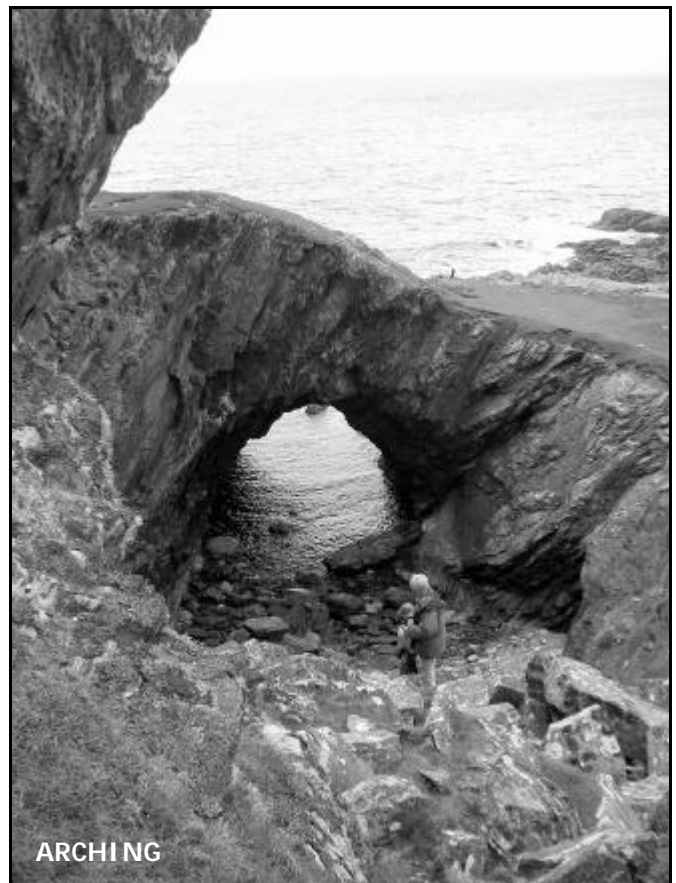
CUMA



CREW



LANDING



ARCHING

Krysia writes:

Taransay

One of the islands we were able to explore on the Hebridean trip was Taransay, off the west coast of Harris. It is not inhabited now. The last family left the island in 1942 but it was later re-inhabited only to be abandoned again in 1974. Prehistoric man was well established here and the Vikings probably settled as well, judging by the wealth of Norse names (Herraval, Neishnaval, Bullaval, Leomadal). The BBC filmed the 'Castaway 2000' series here and have left many unsightly remains which should have been removed when they left. We were all indignant that this was not done-did anyone write that letter of complaint?

Apart from this one blot on the landscape, the rest of the island is a delight. It is divided into two by a low sandy neck of dunes. The main settlement was on the larger part (maximum population 76 in 1911).

There are two duns*, one of which is in the middle of Loch an Duin on the slope of Beinn Raah, reached by a precarious causeway. Some dared it, some didn't, some only got halfway! Roger retrieved a welsh flag left by some wag and bore it back to our skipper as a trophy. Walter enlightened us about Norse mills, the remains of which were still there, including the mill stones. We found the two ancient graveyards on the shore — one for women and one for men.

We had two walks on the island and were amazed at the amount of cultivation that was evident. Every available bit of land has its lazy beds and there was a huge area on the smaller part of the island that was entirely given

over to them. An incredible amount of work to dig and fertilise all these in the old days

There is a magnificent natural arch near here where we were able to view a variety of seabirds on the ledges - guillemots, razorbills, fulmars, gulls, shags, a marvellous array of wildlife with the waves crashing in below.

As we walked on the beach near the Castaway site we met and spoke to a farmer who keeps sheep on the island. He has a small ferry-type vessel and made quite a killing at the time of filming, transporting stuff from the mainland (i.e. Harris) to Taransay. He seemed totally bemused by the antics of the Castaways (anyone who saw the series will know why).

The sea loch which divides the island almost in two is bounded by a wonderful stretch of shell-sand beach. Beyond this is a superb bothy complete with fishing net hammocks. What a place to spend a while contemplating 'life, the universe and everything'.

As for wildlife, apart from the birds we didn't see anything that I can remember. There is a small herd of red deer, apparently, and also mink, which are a great threat to ground-nesting birds like puffins and shelduck. Evidently the mink are strong swimmers! I believe Stirling University are doing a study on them with a view to finding a way to eradicate them.

I think we were all impressed by the beauty of the rocks and sands of Taransay, and fascinated by the ancient remains of duns, mills, and graveyards. This is somewhere I could return to again and again. I have no doubt it has more secrets to divulge. Roll on the next trip.

* A dun is a small Iron Age fortified retreat for family and stock; also called a broch. An island dun is also called a crannog.

Gordon writes:

Fellfarers Boat Trip 2005 -A personal view

I looked forward to this trip with interest, not having been further west than Ullapool before. I had a mental picture of expanses of sea and sky (both blue of course!), surrounding green islands with the occasional sheep and eagles galore, the whole separated by rocky shores with impressive crags or golden sands.

All of which was true up to a point. When the sun shone, which it did from time to time, the scenery was just as I had imagined it and there were a satisfactory number of eagles. However much of the time the sky was grey and so was the sea, punctuated by the odd white-cap and a white fringe of waves breaking on inhospitable looking shores under severe crags – stern stuff. St Kilda under its cap of cloud and in driving rain showed us what life must have been like there – and it wasn't even blowing a gale.

What did surprise me was the feeling of desolation which hung over the whole area – not the natural desolation of empty wild places but that of communities built up and then abandoned by mankind, sometimes in living memory. This was brought home when we looked at the remains of houses, jetties and cultivation (mostly 'lazy beds'). The sheer scale of back breaking effort put into scraping a living from these inhospitable surroundings was mind boggling – we saw acres of lazy beds on Taransay which could only have been made by manhandling hundreds if not thousands of tons of kelp to form the beds. All this is now abandoned as, not surprisingly, the natives look for easier living on the mainland or further a field.

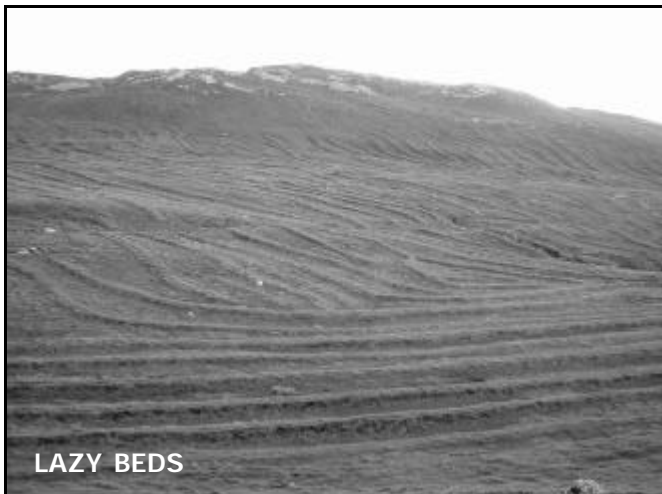
Having said all that I place this trip high up in my list of real life experiences

**Peter writes:**

Although it must be said, the trip out to St Kilda was the highlight of this holiday, every day brought something new and exciting. The advantages of having a boat to operate from became obvious from the start. It enabled us to be dropped off in one loch, take a walk through some of the most remote hill country in Great Britain, and be picked up again in another loch at the other end. One such walk was definitely a highlight for me:

We were put ashore at a ruined croft in Loch Resort and, following a burn to a low bealach, dropped down to Loch Uladal, a freshwater loch. No foot-path. Glen Uladal was a beautiful wild valley stretching before us but dominating the whole scene was Sron Uladal with its mighty crag. Unforgettable. This crag has a lot of routes on it, all Extreme-very big numbers, and as we picked up a very good path under this vast face we contented ourselves by trying to pick out the lines. Alec spotted an abseil post at the top. Continuing on, we climbed to another bealach at the head of Glen Uladal with two lochs on the watershed and dropped down Glen Chliostair. The boat arrived in Loch-a-Siar.

It had been a wet day, but what a day.



Clare writes:

It looked as if we would not get even a glimpse of St. Kilda as the weather forecast each day predicted heavy seas and storms. However on Tuesday morning things were about to change. There was a knock on our cabin door before breakfast and Margaret excitedly yelled 'we're going for it'. I gave a gleeful little dance in my cabin, quite a feat as there was not enough room to swing a cat, and we rushed up to an early breakfast. We were joined by eight other excited folk looking forward to the day's trip ahead.

We left Harris behind us as we bounced along on a 'moderate' sea heading west. I took the precaution of ensuring my sea bands were securely on my wrist and I had taken my travel sickness pills. I can get car sick just going to Langdale! Pete and most of the others were on deck watching the waves and looking out for St. Kilda

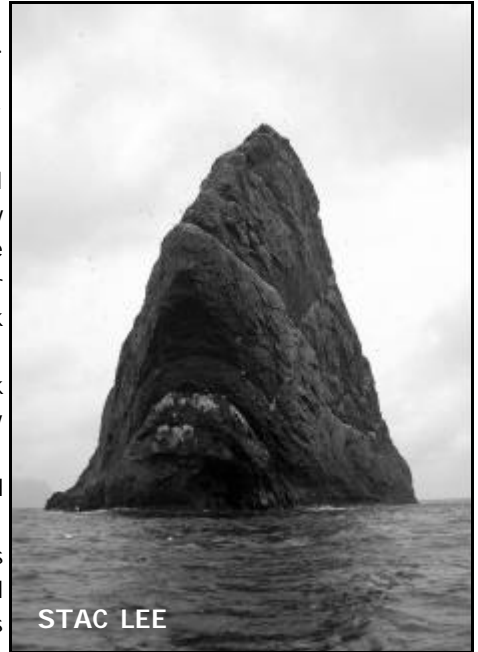


BORERAY AND STAC LEE

on the horizon. Margaret and I joined them on deck with difficulty, luckily strong arms grabbed us before we were both hurled overboard. We all huddled together on deck getting use to the roll and swirl of the boat. Then I couldn't believe my eyes as Walter staggered on deck clutching a glass of red wine I thought this is all going to end in tears!! After a while Margaret and I went back to the saloon, leaving the hardier folk on deck, and gazed through the porthole windows watching the sea rise and then disappear. The advice I was given, to avoid sea-sickness, was "don't lose sight of the horizon" - this advice I would ruefully recall in the not too distant future. I was then asked by a slightly green Walter for a travel sickness pill so I duly went below deck to get one and in doing so I lost sight of my horizon! I'm afraid it was a bad move and I started to feel very sick indeed.

This was a shame really as we were now approaching Hirta and the amazing sea stacs covered in birds. I'm sure I've never seen so many birds, mainly fulmars, perched on and flying round a cliff before - it was truly amazing. We dropped anchor in Village Bay after our five and a half hour voyage and had lunch on board as it was much too stormy to land. We all managed a sandwich and tea and for a while I felt a bit better!

Murdo then offered to take us around the island if we so wished. If we couldn't land then a trip round the island was the next best thing so we all smiled and nodded. The boat bounced up and down like a little cork in a black, black sea as we set off again. What an awesome scary place to be in - we were thrilled and amazed by the spectacle which met our eyes. Tall rock spires and walls of black rock rose menacingly out of the sea. Waves crashed around fantastic sea arches and thundered into tremendous caves. I cannot



STAC LEE

imagine how people ever made this their home!! Yet the birds seemed at one with nature and swooped and glided on the stormy winds in amazing numbers. We were then moving away from Boreray, homeward bound. Unfortunately the storms did not abate and the sickness I was holding at bay overwhelmed me. I crawled slowly down to my cabin not knowing what to do with myself. After saying a violent goodbye to my lunch and breakfast I lay down on my bunk and let the sea rock me violently to sleep. Although I felt very sorry for myself I was amazed to wake a few hours later (11 pm) to discover we were back in a sheltered bay and the nightmare was over! In retrospect it was well worth it and I wouldn't have missed my visit to St. Kilda for anything!



FILL IN YOUR OWN TITLE

PS Cathy the captain's wife also confessed to being sea sick and said she ran like a little mouse into her bunk and stayed there for the whole of the journey back!!



PETER AND ALEC GAZE ON HIRTA

St. Kilda

Water once grey, then emerald green,
 Becomes a raging, foaming white
 When from its depths, like Goliath,
 Ebony rocks rise beyond height,
 While the sea falls to rise again
 Against this immovable might.
 With aspect grim as gods of old
 Looking down on a sea of sin,
 We mortals are shown to be held
 At the whim of the world we live in,
 While these rocks float on a sea of fire
 That is as powerful again.
 And the Earth spins around the Sun
 Whose life will inevitably end,
 And draw us in to oblivion,
 Against which force we cannot fend.
 So I'll hold in my memory
 The feelings that these great rocks lend.

Alec Reynolds



THE SUN IS OVER THE YARDARM

Walter writes:

Personal Recollections of a Day in the Hebrides or "It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time"

The weather had been foul. However before Murdo (our skipper) landed us in the usual two trips in the rubber dinghy on the very rocky shore of a small bay off Loch Reasort (MB 070 165), the sky had brightened and it looked as though it might fair up. (Personally I am fairly sure that Murdo had heard the forecast and just wanted rid of us for the day!)

All of us now safely ashore, we walked round to the mouth of the burn that flowed from Loch Brunabhal to the sea where there were three very large ruined blackhouses and a small enclosure. It all looked very Norse, but a later trip to the Museum at Stornaway revealed that they were 19th century, indicated by the fireplace in the gable wall and the stone partition between human and animal residents. It was still an impressive sight, particularly imagining the number of people who must have inhabited this small inhospitable bay.

The route now lay up a short glen to the west of Mullah an Roin through a maze of trackless peat hags and bogs to a col where, in spite of the light vertical rain that had started, the carboniferous members of our party had a fag break. (How the hell do you light a soggy fag?). This enabled us to take in our first glimpse of Sron Uladal, an impressive, but not awesome triangular very vegetated crag with three large gullies up the face. Fag break over, we contoured round the large bog that eventually turned into Loch Uladal in a well dispersed rabble, each thinking that they knew the best route through the wilderness of peat hags. Meanwhile the light vertical rain was gradually turning into horizontal heavy rain blowing right in to our faces, As we came abreast the triangular face of Sron Uladal, its true nature was revealed hazily through the rain. To the right of the large triangular crag was a smaller crag like the side of a giant apple that someone has taken a huge bite out of and then spat the bits out on the fellside beneath, leaving an overhang of perhaps 40' and 300/400 feet high. It must have made a hell of a bang when it came down, Deer Bield Buttress x 10!

Some of us had started gaining height thinking of lunch under the some shelter stone amongst the fallen boulders. However Peter Goff shouted out he had sighted a wooden hut on the shore of Loch Uladal. Eventually all of us bar Krysia splodged down to the hut to discover that it was locked resulting in a soggy lunch in its lee. After a suitably short break we set off up Glen Uladal into the teeth of the horizontal rain. WHOSE BLOODY IDEA WAS THIS ****! Still no sign of Krysia. A consensus of opinion was that she had gone on ahead having no over trousers. The indistinct track turned into a well graded stalker's trod

to the col at the head of the glen giving spectacular views back to the huge overhang on Sron Uladal. The view was so good I risked taking my camera out of its poly bag to get a shot. All the burns were now in spate with fantastic waterfalls emerging from the mist, I think we all sensed that there were some large hills to the south of us. Still no sign of Krysia. On the summit, a superb white orchid was in flower, I think it must have been a variant of the normally purple Northern Marsh Orchid, sadly much too wet to chance the camera. Just over the summit, we waited for Peter and Alec to catch up, but still no sign of Krysia. On the descent now into the full force of the wind and rain, we started looking for footprints, the odd ones here and there led us to believe it must be Krysia.

The descent goes past three lochs, the middle one being a reservoir with elaborate piped catchment from adjacent corries for a small Hydro Electric plant. The stalker's trod here turns into a concrete road covered in the invasive garden escape New Zealand Burr. On this stretch we discovered that you cannot shelter under a cylindrical Hydro pipe, the rain just comes out of the bottom in bigger drops. So we went on down the last 2 to 3 miles past the Hydro station and the last loch which feeds a salmon hatchery, to the Grand House which is now the Estate office for the North Harris Co-operative Estate and the small harbour at Loch Leosavay (NB 046 080) where CUMA was to

pick us up.

Alas after walking the length of the village, ten or so houses spread over at least a mile, there was no sign of Krysia or the boat! After a short conference we formulated a self help mountain rescue plan, after all anyone can put their foot down a rabbit hole can't they?, and decided to wait three quarters of an hour before starting up "that bloody track" again. Time was nearly up and still no sign of the boat, when Alec said he thought Krysia was coming down the road. I walked out to meet her hoping he was right and he was. The smile on Krysia's face, and I am sure mine too, when she realised we were all there and I realised that we would not have to mount our rescue plan, will stay with me for the rest of my life!

What had happened was that Krysia had continued to the shelter stones beneath Sron Uladal having not heard Peter's shout and had had a dry sandwich and a non soggy fag in comfort before eventually wandering down to the hut expecting to find us nice and dry inside. Finding it locked and us gone she walked on 30 minutes behind us and not, as we supposed, 10 minutes ahead.

I can't remember whose BLOODY IDEA it was, but with hindsight and after drying out on the boat, it was one of the most memorable days of the trip, and possibly, a most unlikely best.

Rose's Walk - Arnside Shoreline and the Knott Thursday 14th July 2005

Apparently some members met inside the Albion, not outside, although when we started walking everybody set off with a *fairly* steady gait so I suppose they didn't meet too early.

It was a great turn-out and a big bunch of us set off westwards along Arnside's high water mark.

As is usual on these occasions, chat was incessant and eclectic. The still waters and the glistening sands away to our right were of almost the same

hue and the sky came close in colour too. Seabirds fell silent when faced with a dozen-and-a-half chattering Fellfarers. Even the tide, unable to compete, had retreated to the horizon.

Sands gave way to rock and a little ramp (pictured) led us up off the shore into the woodland above the little limestone cliffs. The campsite at Far Arnside surprised some of us; we passed caravans numbered 510, 511, 512. That's a lot of caravans, a lot of cars, a lot of people.



A field of Shetland Ponies was a delight. The miniscule beasts came to the fence in response to our proffered handfuls of plucked grass and weren't at all rude when they saw just how pathetic those offerings were.

The climb up towards Arnside Knott summit sorted us out and we became well strung out until Rose and Paul gathered us for **The Ant Guessing Competition**. How many ants had they counted at this anthill on the previous evening? Answers

ranged from the ridiculous to the even more ridiculous. Except one. The editor, cunning fellow, submitted the closest guess and was rewarded with a large rubber ant which is now proudly displayed in a cardboard box somewhere beneath a stack of firewood in his cellar.

Mr Bell, just passing on his bike, was invited to join the merrymakers sitting outside the Albion and a modicum of drink was taken. It was an excellent evening. A big THANK YOU to the Easts, Rose and Paul.

CHAMONIX

16-30th June 2005



Bill on the slopes of La Petite Aiguille Verte

Many Fellfarers will probably have been to Chamonix, so I won't bore you with details, like we went here and there and blah blah blah. But I will give you an account off our summer trip to the Alps:

Mick, Alan and I left Kendal on Saturday morning, and duly arrived in Dover Saturday tea time. Unpacked the car of all visible gear, as it was parked in quite a public place outside the youth hostel, then off we went for a pint and a meal at Wetherspoons. The only problem here is that the drink and food are cheap so we had twice as much as we planned but - what the hell- we were on holiday. Up with the lark and on to the ferry Sunday morning, then drove about 500 miles none stop in the blistering heat and duly arrived in Chamonix about nine pm. We found a camp site and started to erect the tents; Mick started to put his up, I was putting one up I had borrowed from Mick, and Alan was in the back of the car looking for his.... Now whether it was the cheap beer from the night before or what, but it came to light that Alan's tent was still in Dover at the

youth hostel, in our haste we had left it under the bunk. Not to worry because luckily Mick's tent was like the millennium dome so could quite easily accommodate them both.

First day out after arriving consisted of Alan and myself going up to a glacier at the back of the camp site and to a small hut for a coffee; very civilized this alpine mountaineering, Mick didn't come with us as he had come down with a cold and didn't feel up to it or had he secretly seen the weather forecast? For what started as a nice morning turned out to be like hurricane Rita in the afternoon. So Alan and myself ended up like two drowned rats in the most torrential downpour we had ever seen or been in. Luckily when we arrived back at the camp site we where able to take refuge in the millennium dome and sit the rest of the storm out.



Approaching the Italian Border on Mont Blanc

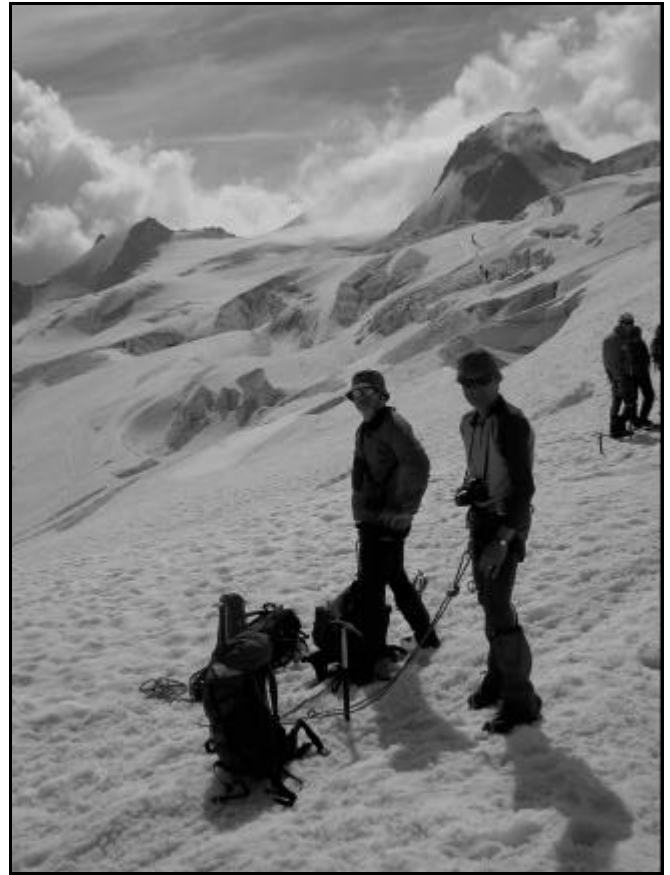
As the first week went on Alan also started with a cold as well, so that was two off them down, but they both managed to soldier on in true Fellfarer tradition. Luckily for me I didn't get it and the millennium dome once more came in



was 4000 meters high. So we returned to the valley, to enjoy the rest of our holiday and so we did, going here there and every where in one of the most spectacular of places I have ever been to. In the evenings we found a brilliant little bar close to the campsite and the atmosphere was wonderful.

It had a very European air about it, and one evening when we where there some Eastern European people where having a sing song with a guitar, we think they had just returned from Mont Blanc and where celebrating there success.

But their singing was, I'm sorry to say, a bit dull,



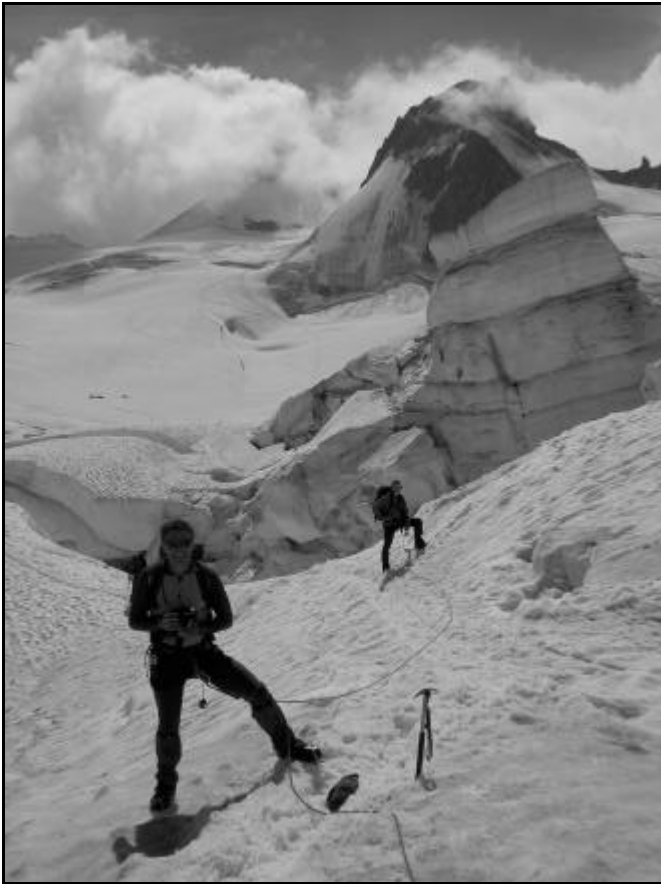
to its own and doubled up as a sanatorium and kept me away from all the dreaded viruses that were floating around them. For a while I used to wake up in the morning and listen to the coughing and inhalers being sucked on and think to myself, "Am I in Chamonix or Meathop".

As the days went on things settled down; people started to feel well again and so we could start to think about our main objective, Mont Blanc. We soon found out that the rest of Europe and other nations as well had the same idea, and that it had been booked up from April to September and the only way to get a bed in the huts was to hire a Guide which would have cost about £300 each.

We had a brief look up the mountain, and went up to the first hut for a reconnaissance trip and that confirmed it—Blackpool

Top left: Alan on hot Chamonix rock. Don't know who the young lady is.
 Above: Bill and Alan on the Crossing of the Vallee Blanche.
 Below: Bill and a crevasse.
 Top right: More crevasse fun on Mont Blanc.
 Bottom right: Bill was enjoying himself, honest!





and not being disrespectful, they were a bit like Leonard Cohen after a hernia operation (*for those who don't know who he is, he was the dullest folk singer in the 1960s bar none*) so after a few drinks Alan decided to join them and put in his request for 'Whisky in the Jar'. They tried but failed, but it brought Czechoslovakia and Staveley closer together. Perhaps the Eurovision song contest could be held in Staveley sometime in the near future.

So the holiday came to an end, Mick dropped us off at Geneva airport and we were home before you could say Julie Andrews.

Mick had four more weeks to go, lucky devil. When he returned to the camp site he probably found the millennium dome had been commandeered and turned into a United Nations refuge for people waiting for a bed space on Mont Blanc or something.

Bill Hogarth



FRITH HALL

(A Short Walk in the West - Number 1)



Many of you will have driven the Duddon Valley from its southern end to reach the high peaks surrounding Cockley Beck. I have done so many times and have often wondered what the ruined castle was on the skyline away to the west when approaching Ulpha. It is, in fact, Frith Hall, which is located adjacent to a long-disused roadway. The Hall was originally a hunting lodge for the Ulpha deer park owned by the Huddleston family. Near the end of the 16th century it became an Inn, which in the 18th century had gained itself a reputation. It was the "Gretna Green" of the area, and in 1730 seventeen marriages were recorded. In 1736 a guest at the Inn met a mysterious end that was never solved.

If you wish to pay a short visit, you can drive on the back road from Whistling Green that heads for Bigert Mire. From near Millbrow, you can walk less than a mile gently up the ancient roadway to the Hall and then retrace your steps.

For those wishing to make it a feature of a longer walk, make use of the plentiful parking at Whistling Green and walk to the Hall on the aforementioned route. From the Hall continue south through splendid mixed countryside to the road at Beckstones. Turn left and continue on to the Corney Fell road. Turn left again and head down the road for about half a mile, looking for the footpath that takes you through the delightful hamlet of Beckfoot. The footpath continues through the beautiful ancient woodland along the lower Duddon for a good two miles before rising clear and continuing up to the road at Millbrow. Return to Whistling Green by the outward route.

Alec Reynolds



Gaping Gill Winch Meet 29th August 2005

It was the last day of Craven Potholing Club's annual Winch Meet at Gaping Gill. Only three Fellfarers responded to the advert. The rest of you are craven, with a small c.

Bill drove us in his works van. Walter waited in the foul weather at Sizergh roundabout, looking suitably gnome-like for underground work in his new chin-strap beard.

Clapham was, not surprisingly, deserted as we changed into boiler suits and wellies. It was, after all, still only 7.30 am. And raining.

Trow Gill took us to the dreary plateau in mist and drizzle. CPC's big encampment, with its heaps of discarded bottles and beer-cans showed that the week had been a lively social occasion for club members. Surprisingly, we had to queue. We were disappointed to be told that, being the last morning, we were banned from leaving the Main Chamber. We paid anyway and, one by one, were lowered the 300+ ft. into the awe-inspiring cavern.

The landing was spray-lashed and the main column of water, diverted on the surface to make this trip possible, thundered onto the boulders only yards away. We each scurried, head-down, away from the tumult. Walter, clad in his old mining gear and grinning broadly, looked like he'd been caving all his life although this was his first descent into a natural cave.

Half an hour was plenty of time for the main chamber and we perched at the Bar Pot portal for a hot drink and chocolate picnic, watching the other punters coming and going below us. Bill got restless and took Walter for a few minutes foray into Bar Pot while I sat and flashed my light about, pretending to be three people. It didn't work. Bill got a ticking off on the way out, the bad lad!

We rose to the surface to find a different day. Sunshine had brought out many Bank Holiday strollers and the queue was now, surely, way beyond the mid-day cut-off. We peered into the other end of Bar Pot and Walter expressed real enthusiasm for returning next Bank Holiday and for more caving experience generally.

It was not a classic trip but we all agreed that a tenner for the ultimate fairground ride was money well spent.



Black Rock Cottage

26th-28th August 2005



I was looking forward to this August Bank Holiday weekend because I had not stayed at Black Rock for about ten years. When I arrived I was pleased to find that no improvements had been made at all in the intervening period. Even the coal was still of that high quality that we can usually only dream about these days. There was a great heap of it in the shed, which proved very necessary because the traditional Scottish autumnal weather had set in early. Gone was the sunshine reflecting from the white walls of the cottage and the severe face of Rannoch Wall that Kryisia, Peter and I had stopped to view on our way home from the Outer Hebrides. The weather dictated events.

I had arranged to meet the other two in Callender for lunch, after which we had a pleasant last stage of the journey to Glencoe where our first job was to light the cottage fire and settle in front of it. On the way to pay a visit to the King's House in the evening, I noticed that there was a plethora of flora along both sides of the road. The eyebright was particularly profuse.

On Saturday morning we were up early and discussed which of several walks to do. By the time we had decided and were ready, the rain had started. Peter suggested a trip to the Slate Museum in Ballachulish. We drove to Ballachulish, during which time the rain had stopped, and enquired in the Tourist Information Centre where the museum was. It turned out that it was long gone, but there are some splendid old photographs in the shop/



café. Also, the slate quarry is open to the public and entry is free. It is well worth a visit, not only to view the extent of the old workings, but also to view the wonderful range of wild flowers that have taken over.

Upon our return, we set off to wander around the pools on the moor looking for the "Rannoch Rush", which is only found in that area. We failed, presumably because we were too late in the year, but we did find a lot of "Lesser Bladderwort". At about teatime the rain returned and we spent the whole evening in front of the fire.



Sunday started the same way and we spent most of the morning in front of the fire looking at the horizontal rain. When it stopped, we went on the "great water hunt". It did not take much finding. All the streams and gullies were full to overflowing. I had never seen so much boiling foam at the Waters Meet. We headed for Kinlochleven and had a walk in the area of the Grey Mare waterfall, which none of us had visited before. We had chosen the best day for it. Standing close enough to take a photograph was akin to having a cold shower.



The gloriously hot sunshine on Monday was a welcome change. By eleven we had said our farewells. Krysia and Peter headed north for a week in Moidart, while I returned to the slate quarry, this time with camera and sunshine, and spent a happy hour indulging my new hobby of wild flower photography before heading for home on the tourist route around the coast to the Connel Bridge. From there I proceeded homewards via the Pass of Brander, Inverary and Arrochar, taking my time and stopping often. A splendid way to travel.

Alec Reynolds

Moidart and Ardnamurchan

September 2005

After a wild and wet August Bank Holiday at Blackrock Cottage, Alec headed south whilst Krysia took me north to an area I had never visited: Moidart and Ardnamurchan.

Krysia had been numerous times so I was in good hands. Over to Ardgour by the Corran Ferry and, once past Resipol farm, all was new territory. Driving down Loch Sunart and turning inland to Salen, we got some supplies at Acharacle. Interesting place. It has a fish and chip shop, a village store, a superb bakery and a bookshop. A visit to Caisteal Tioram a little further north on the shore of the south channel of Loch Moidart, and then on to Base Camp at Glenuig, a hundred yards from the pub on the shore of Glenuig Bay.

There's room for two of three tents and a short way off is the Village Hall, which seems to be permanently open with toilets and showers. Perfect.

Over the next few days, with the weather improving, Krysia took me to many interesting places:

Smirisary, which was originally a crofting township on which a book has been written and which is only accessible by walking or by boat to one of those incredible white sand beaches at Port Achad an Aonaich. A good day out. A wet day drive to Mallaig along the famous Road To The Isles through Lochailort and Arisaig.

A trip to Ardtoe on the coast by Kentra Bay, an important wildlife habitat. The views from this western coastline are fantastic: the northern end of Col, Muck, Eigg, Rhum and Skye towering in the background, always prominent.

Then, on one really good day, Krysia took me to Ardnamurchan, back through Salen and on to Glenborrodale and Kilchoan. From Kilchoan to Sanna on the coast one drives through the internationally important Ring Complex, an extinct volcano crater. This is also where the climbing is situated, on the volcano rim. Sanna is another abandoned crofting township on which an excellent book has been written. Sanna Bay is another magnificent area of white sand, and the lighthouse, the most westerly point in Britain, stands a few miles to the south. On the way back Krysia spotted the obvious walk-in to the crags. It looked about half an hour's plod, a mile south of Achnaha in the centre of the crater.

Next day, Mike Cooper arrived from Broughton mills. Now Mike has a small boat moored at Glenuig so after a day looking and finding the ancient township of Egnag on the north channel of loch Moidart and a walk down loch Shiel from Dalelia to look at the ancient burial isle of Eilean Fhianain, the next three days were spent on the water. This was a bonus.

We explored Samalaman Isle, just off the coast. Then

out into the Sound of Arisaig to Eilean nan Ghobar and it's vitrified fort, up Loch Ailort to Eilean nam Bairnich and visited a couple of white sand beaches on the way back. Behind one of the beaches was a bothy at Pean-meanach, quite remote but with several people staying. We tried to get round the Point of Smirisary but it proved too rough so we turned back, switched the out-board off and floated with the tide. A family of about nine seals were in view for a while, sea birds including the odd Skua, Gannet and even a Black-Throated Diver and others were evident.

Mike was staying on, but the next day Kryisia and me headed for Fort William and home. It had been an extended stay, and worth every minute.

Just a word about the pubs:

The Hotel at Kinchoan allows camping in the garden and the use of toilets etc for two pounds per night, which goes to local charities. It's the obvious centre for climbing in the Ring Complex. About ten minutes up the road

The Glenuig is brilliant, friendly locals and staff, room for a few tents close by, a bunk house and several rooms separate from the pub. These go at fifty pounds a night and will sleep four or five people but beware: there are no cooking facilities. It is an ideal centre to explore from, with walking, canoeing, sailing, climbing, or just pottering. The beaches nearby are ideal for kids. If I get any feedback on this, it may be a good venue for August Bank Holiday 2006. Oh, and Glenuig does good food as well as good ale.

Peter Goff

Working Weekend 16-17th September 2005

Miles 'Basher' Ferguson had been at work again by the time most people had arrived and a gaping hole in the ground and one through the wall by the entrance door testified to his energy and enthusiasm. It also revealed a rather worrying lack of foundation to High House. Stones came out of the base of the wall rather too readily, bound together, or rather, separated, only by soil. It was all very, very worrying.

His work was, of course, Preparation Stage 2 of The Big Kitchen Plan and on Saturday Kevin (S.) and the ed. installed the drain which will eventually serve the two proposed new sinks. The holes are filled in now so you can stop worrying about the building falling down. We think. Incidentally, in knocking through the walltiles in the kitchen for the holes (the tiles are fixed on boards on timber framing) we discovered that the kitchen is about a foot (30 centimetres, oh little ones) wider than we thought. Amazing eh? Go and have a look if you don't believe us.

The chairman replaced, not just the broken switch on the ladies shower but the whole shower. Very smart it looks too.

The boulder poking out of the ground (outside, obviously), which we had hoped to remove to make room for the drain, proved to be huge. The deeper we dug, the wider it got. It was like excavating the top of one of the Pyramids. Fortunately Myers had estimated that we could just about work around it. And he was right. The gully just, only just, fitted in to one side. If drainage work could ever be beautiful, this was it. Serendipity rules. So the boulder is still there and very good it looks too.

Walter masterminded the completion of phase 28 of the Water Supply Plan by installing a cut-off switch in the big tank to prevent the pump burning out in times of drought (!). Phase 35 and 49 were also carried out on the pipework and the water filters were replaced. Oh, they really needed replacing. So we inch forward towards having a perfect water supply system. Perfect? Well, the best we can achieve.

Graham and Ray toiled for most of the day on the proposed Fire Pit. The base is fairly level now but is something of a quagmire. The drain around the Pit, also extended by Ray, carries away much water but we will need to do a lot more work yet before you can sit around a bonfire without having to wear wellies.

It seems that the committee hadn't prepared a big enough list of jobs and so members, unwilling to idle the day away or to go off for a walk or something, as is traditional, foolishly used *initiative* and *found jobs to do*. So walls and ceilings got painted and tiles got replaced. As Ali said, "They all did very well. Very very well indeed. Exceptionally well"

The rear roof replacement has been postponed until spring. It will take a big commitment of time from the 'Summer Wine' team (i.e. fewer holidays) and a decent forecast before we dare make a start.

Another *Member Initiative* was the building of a shelter for firewood. We don't have Planning Permission for this impressive erection but we will have dry wood for when we have a dry Fire Pit.

The remaining apple trees were permanently planted. If you're up there in the next few weeks and the ground is dry, do you think you could pour a few buckets of water on the roots? Ta.

Protective equipment was tested and found to be ok generally. Drains and field drains were checked. High House was proclaimed to be in better shape than it's ever been.

A VISIT TO THE COBBLER, 1988

Sylvia Forrest

We clamber up the track by the Sugach stream. Water rushes through rocky chasms. Bronze ferns uncurl to bright green; bluebells are an intense deep blue. There are other plants, such as wood anemone, tormentil, creeping jenny and purple violets among the trees and rocks.

Near the top, we are tickled pink to see people sitting on giant flattened bread-buns. A woman glances at me, her look says aren't me and my family lucky to get this bigger rock? We lunch on a vacant bun.

Out into the open, a voice says, 'This is like Union Street.' I add, 'Or Blackpool.'

Past the small dam a healthy spread of white wood anemones at the base of a large boulder. The stream is narrower here. First sight of spotted orchid - one purple flower.

A dark knob shows above the moor and the range of the Cobbler gradually comes into view. The top is jigsaw like in outline. The path looks a rough scramble and not too daunting. Among those scrambling are five fellows from Leeds who get up to Scotland most weekends. They are in the middle of a brain-storming session for ideas for a project

concerned with a community programme. Somehow I'm involved in talk about Lenin and Shakespeare and made up words e.g. accommodation. Shakespeare's vocabulary was 17000 words, ordinary mortals 7000.

The going is getting a bit hairy. From safer ground I watch and hear the climbers as they search for foot-

holds in narrow upright cracks. Spread out in twos, threes and more, they're making slow progress on the tall cliff face, topped with a head like a leopard. Other groups are spaced out elsewhere, some figures on the skyline. I decide to go on a bit and J sees me and waves

from much higher up. Two descending climbers had recommended the keyhole view farther along the ridge and he's climbing towards it. Rock hangs above me, my way ahead towards a dip between the jigsaw outline. The wind is stronger. I reach the dip. The land sweeps down towards the Rest and Be Thankful.

While we shelter and have a cuppa, somebody else's Presto carrier bag flies about. Litter conscious, I go after it. It hides in rocks then lifts like a balloon and falls too far away for retrieval.

It's colder and misty. The wind just about knocks me off my feet. So begins the long and jerking track down: slithering down rock, hands behind back, crab fashion; loose stones and earth unavoidable. Turning to see where we've been, I find the height astonishing. Jumping across peat bogs with numerous boot prints. Rain becomes persistent. Down in

the wood again among fresh green and blue a globe-flowers. Two fellows bathe their feet in a pool.

Legs that have felt like spaghetti and jelly, recover and stride out again. 6.15 and it is really dark. Westwards, the sky is a dull orange. Very heavy rain.



Jeff Forrest has donated two rucksacks, shown right, to the club for auction.

The left-hand one is black and is brand new. The right-hand one is purple, slightly used but in very good condition.

They can both be inspected by contacting the Chairman.

They will each go for the highest bid submitted to the Chairman by 21st October.

Proceeds will go to club funds



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Three more pieces from the 1945 edition of *The K Fellfarers' Journal*:

THE YEAR WITH THE CLUB

SALLY HINE

It is pleasing to know that the K Fellfarers are still flourishing, in memberships, visits to High House, and local activities.

The present members number 93 plus 78 members in the forces. This latter figure includes three P.O.W's who, we are very pleased to say, have returned home. We hope to see them with us in the near future.

The club nights (held fortnightly) were a great success, due to the interesting lantern lectures and film shows, which covered many parts of the Lake District, Scotland, North Wales, London, Switzerland, Norway, Canada and New Zealand. These—as proved by the ballot—were the most popular of the club nights.

The slides of Auld Kendal (left by the late Clarence Webb to the Town), were not available during the last season, but we are hoping that they will be ready for use to be shown during this coming season.

The Quiz and Debate which were tried out as an experiment were not so well attended. This may have been due to the fact of the black-out, or bad weather, or both, but in spite of this, there have been many requests for another Quiz and Debate. Here's hoping that these will prove more successful.

The Quiz had a women's team and a men's team, and were asked Lakeland questions, some easy, some catchy and some humorous. The women's team won—much to the amazement of everyone—and the night was enjoyed by all who attended.

The subject of the Debate was, "Are the best bits of Lakeland in Westmorland or Cumberland?" Again it was the women versus the men. The women's team batted first, favouring that the best bits of Lakeland were in Cumberland, but they were soon bowled over when the men appeared on the scene—being a 'walk over,' or was it a 'talk over'? for—well need I say? (My apologies, Mr. Editor). Although everyone really agreed with the women, the majority of the votes went to the men, for the way they had challenged the women.

The walks during the first half of last season were enjoyed by all who went, thanks to the leaders. The Bannisdale and Longsleddale walk had to be abandoned owing to the bad weather, and since then the rain has been the cause of the cancellation of many other walks. Someone must have stepped on a lot of worms, so tread lightly in future!

Activities at High House. A good party including some Netherlune girls spent August week's holiday, 1944, at High House. On the whole, the weather was good, and the party took advantage of it by being quite strenuous. The weather seemed to be settled, and after three days of sunshine it was agreed that a small party should set off at 2 a. m. to see the sun-rise off Great End. The moon was shining as the party left the Hostel, but soon it disappeared behind

the clouds and as the party ascended Sty Head Pass they were enveloped in mist, which turned into rain. The party returned to High House at 5 a.m. feeling tired and disillusioned at not having seen the sun-rise.

Stock-taking week-end saw a full house at High House. The weather was pretty bad, and this put a stop to any strenuous walking. The main feature of the week-end was the potato pie (made by Mrs. Edmondson), and this was enjoyed by all.

Two bachelors spent Xmas week-end at the Hostel, and they claim to have seen the man in the checked suit.

A working party went by chara to spring-clean the Hostel, in the middle of March. A flying start was made (thanks to the advance party, who had gone the previous day), and by 4 p.m. all but the Common Room was finished. As usual, rain was falling, and this stopped anyone from going out for a stroll, and as the Common Room was full with the working party, it was impossible to Spring Clean it. At 5 p.m. all enjoyed another of the famous Seathwaite potato pies.

Easter brought many Fellfarers and friends to High House, but the weather was terrible, and so there was very little walking. After such an awful week-end at Easter, only six people ventured to stay at the Hostel for Stock-taking week-end in May, and eight people at Whitsuntide.

MEMORY LANE

WALTER DENNISON

There's a Memory Lane in every dale,
For a pal who's shared with you
The thrill of climbing Lakeland's crags,
Or the splendour of a view.

When thrills were shared on scree and slope,
And two hearts laughed at danger.
When friendship was linked with a piece of rope,
Now who could be a stranger?

In that heavenly land away from sin,
Where God is all around,
Where small things end and truth begins,
That's where a pal like you, is found.

Though now you're just a memory,
And we are far apart,
Down "Memory Lane" I'll stride again,
And you'll go in my heart.

RECOLLECTIONS

I. BOWERBANK

A number of years ago I belonged to another Rambling Club in a big industrial town in Lancashire.

I was one of the original members. We were brought together by a mutual desire to get out into the country and breathe clean air, see trees and fresh green grass. We wanted to walk on woodland paths instead of narrow shut-in streets.

And so we came together—the people who wanted these things—through the agency of one man inserting an advertisement in the local paper. We met and liked each other. We arranged a walk to be held on Good Friday. We walked all day through country lanes and fields and villages. For me it was a delightful experience. That was the beginning of our club.

A committee was formed, and a syllabus of rambles was drawn up. Membership increased. Reports of each week's ramble was given in the town's paper. Every now and then we held what we called an " Invitation Ramble." The thing was publicly announced through the press. An open invitation was given to those who wanted to join the club. A time and place of meeting, the route chosen, the approximate mileage and the name of the leader were given. And we did get new members in this way. The club was a huge success.

One of the things I learnt from my old club was that one didn't need a lot of money to enjoy the delights of the countryside. Indeed during that time few of us had a great deal of money, so the cost of the rambles was cut down to the minimum.

Mostly, we took a three-halfpenny, or twopenny tram ride to the outskirts of the town. And then we walked, with our backs to the factory chimneys and the streets upon streets of red bricked uniform houses.

The further away we walked the happier we became.

We sang and joked and argued. We were happy. And that meant something in Lancashire in those days. Green fields, birds singing, and the occasional glimpse of a tarn worked wonders in us.

We were kind to each other. There was no class distinction. The man who was assured of a good job and had cigarettes in his pockets, gave freely to the boy who couldn't afford the twopenny packet of Woodbines.

We all shared what we had. There was friendship and real comradeship, and talk. My, how we talked !

And then I had to leave it all—the club, and the friends I had made. I came up here to the Lake District—a much lovelier part of the country than I had ever known, with the hills, and the lakes, and the river running through the little grey town. After the bleak industrial town with no hills to mark the horizon, no clean crisp air to breathe, living and working here was like a perpetual holiday.

The Hodder Valley, Pendle Hill, Rivington Pike and the moors of Lancashire I had known intimately and well, in summer and winter, sunshine and shadow. But now I was seeing different country. I climbed Helvellyn, and saw the tiny church at Wythburn. I went over Kirkstone Pass and lunched at the famous Kirkstone Pass Inn. There was Garburn Pass, and Benson Knott where I saw my first fox, and the lovely view of the coast line of Morecambe Bay which showed up like silver paper on sunshiny days. And, much later, when I joined the Fellfarers there was Borrowdale, wild and rugged and splendid. There is nothing in Lancashire like this. Pendle Hill dwindles in significance, and the Hodder Valley becomes any other valley in Lancashire that holds a tree and a river and grass.

I think that those days in Lancashire, rambling every week-end, learning the moods of nature, rediscovering all the delights of the different seasons, was an apprenticeship for this later time, when I, once more, became a member of a Rambling Club in this, to me, most lovely part of England.

C'mon then, own up. Who are these Fellfarers lazing around in 1956? Answers to the Ed please.



Social Calendar.2005

october

The committee will meet on Tuesday 11th October at the Rifleman's Arms. Come and join us for a pint., but not of the beer the Chairman and the Editor were drinking at the last committee meeting!



7th-8th October
High House
is booked for
Fellfarers



Friday 14th October
7.30 pm
at the
Cock & Dolphin
A Natural History
Quiz Night
Prizes - Buffet



24th-30th October
Half-Term At
High House



Bring the kids , if you must.

november

The committee will meet on Tuesday 8th November at the Rifleman's Arms. Come and join us for a pint.

Saturday November 5th

Bonfire Night

Little Strickland Hill
(courtesy of Tony and Ann Walshaw)
Approx 1 mile north of Witherslack Church
OS ref. SD 427 853



Barbecue/Veggie food supplied

Bring your own drinks, marshmallows, toffee, musical instruments, fireworks. Space available for camping.

Please contact Krystia in advance so that we know how many to cater for.

Armistice Weekend
11-12th November 2005



High House is booked
for Fellfarers



Thursday 24th Nov. 2005
Discount Evening

7 pm

Kentdale Outdoor
Market Place, Kendal
20% off:

Boots, socks, tents, ropes, compasses, crampons, guidebooks, cagoules, gloves, stoves, guidebooks, fuel, maps, overtrousers, axes, hats, carabiners, watches, camping cooksets, shades, scarves, quickdraws, lighters, slings, thermals, sunhats, mitts, ice-screws, shorts, beanies, vests, camming devices, trail shoes, sleeping bags, nuts, screwgates, deadmen, canoes—no, they don't do canoes, fleeces, headtorches, rucksacks, neck gaiters, base layers, thermarests, shirts.....

What do you mean you've got it all? Come for a pint after, then.

december

The committee will meet on Tuesday 13th December at the Rifleman's Arms. Come and join us for a pre-festive-season pint.



Thursday 8th December 2005
Games Evening
The Rifleman's Arms
 Competitions start : 7 pm.



Yep. Those games— darts and dominoes.

Prizes

Buffet

Christmas Eve
 Saturday 24th December
 An Evening at
The Rifleman's Arms

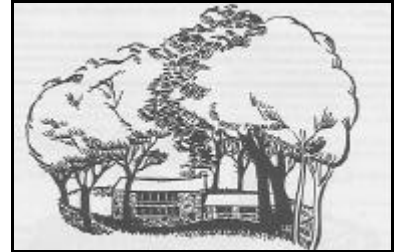


There may be some carol singing

Followed by a short stroll to the Editor's House for Mince Pies and a Glass of Wine in front of the log fire.

Merry Christmas everyone!

23 Dec 2005–1 Jan 2006



Escape that endless round of parties back home, of gossip and meaningless small-talk with people you haven't spoken to since last Christmas. Come to one big party at High House instead and don't speak to anyone!

New Year Party

Including tobogganing if snow conditions allow.

January 2006 **another year aargh!**

13th—14th January



**The Chalets
 Clachaig Inn
 Glencoe**

**14 Bedspaces
 £15 p.p.night**

Call Val to book your place asap

Saturday 14th January

**Charlie Birkett
 Memorial Walk**

Start at 1 pm. from
**The Old Racecourse
 Brigsteer Road
 Kendal**
 (a gentle walk of about
 2-3 hours)



Details: Bill Hogarth

19th—20th January

High House



Is booked for Fellfarers
Walk/Meal

**Details of the route to
 be agreed on Friday
 night.**

Friday 27th January

The
 K Fellfarers'

**Annual
 General
 Meeting**

**Revolution is in the air!
 Sweep away the old regime!
 Time for some new blood!
 Scrap this stale adminis-
 tration!**

**Bring on the young and the bright!
 Give us the ideas people!**

Or we could just vote the old committee back in and get on

CLUB OFFICIALS

1

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Other Information

2

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High House Website www.k-fellfarers.co.uk.

OREAD HUTS (cost £2.50p. per night.)

Heathy Lea Cottage,
Baslow, Derbyshire.

Tan-y-Wyddfa
Rhyd-Ddu, North Wales.
O.S. Ref. 570527

Oread booking secretary

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Beginning of 2006, so material for
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