

'Thursday, 15th October 1801 - William and I walked up Loughrigg Fell, then by the tranquil waterside. Saturday, 24th - Attempted Fairfield, but misty. We went no further than Green Head Gill; mild, misty, beautifully soft. Sunday, 25th - Went upon Helvellyn. Glorious sights. The sea at Cartmel. The Scotch mountains beyond to the right. Mists above and below, the sun amongst them. A soft grey evening; the light of the moon...'

october in langdale: a woman's place?

On Sunday 14th October, 12 Red Ropers turned up at the the Wayfarers, 'Robertson Lamb Hut' (RLH) in the Lake District's magnificent Great Langdale for a week's stay. The weather proved very changeable! The facilities were good and the place had a homely, 'lived in' feel. This was possibly because it **had** been lived in, at least on and off, for a very long time! A couple of other groups stayed there during the last two days which made it crowded but fine. The other guys were a good bunch - not at all bananas, ho, ho.

The RR cast list included Olya and Amber who were on fine form, Olya taking a dip in the hut's own mini-pool, the original way of getting a wash. Rob, Pete (Kos), Sean, Heather, Dave, Barbara, Bronwen, Nigel, Dermot, and the organisers Pete (Watson) and Uta who did a fantastic job, earning, a 'Ten from Len'! (Who he? Ed.) At the sight of us, quite understandably, terrified passers-by tried to call the police, but without a signal in the vicinity, it was to no avail.

The views across Langdale can be stunning on a clear day in autumn and as evening looms twilight and mist can create feelings of awe and eeriness in the urban visitor. Perhaps the legendary beast of Cumbria (said to be a big black panther) is lurking in those hilltops? You could imagine that Cumbria's 'faery king' and Celtic god, King Eling was holding his court somewhere up high, full of secrets and magic. This area, and particularly Stickle Pike, were the sources of Neolithic polished stone axe heads, which were traded all over prehistoric Britain and even Europe.

The Langdale Pikes are among the best known features in this rugged scenery. Most of us went up at least some of them. The colours of the light over the hills made for magnificent autumnal views. Dermot successfully undertook the challenging scramble up Jack's Rake, which runs diagonally across Pavey Ark. Sean and Pete Kos managed to climb some of the steep cliff faces which lurk behind the Old Dungeon Ghyll.

Rob Steel also went up the Rake and, on another day, did Helvellyn, successfully hitching part of the way to Patterdale - it must have been something to do with the alluring figure he cut in his 1950s style shorts! Bronwen also undertook a couple of tough solitary walks, one involving a very wind-swept Pike of Blisco, when she was obliged to lie down at times - at least that was her excuse!

Some of us went up Crinkle Crag where the

names of the various tops are confusing with five crinkles on the summit ridge. (Do five crinkles equal a wrinkle?) Fortunately, Pete Watson's navigation was good and we were also helped by excellent weather. We descended eastwards via 'The Band', a very stony path, steep in parts but with great views down the valley.

Other highlights of the week - literally! - were Loughrigg Fell, Lingmoor Fell, Blea Tarn, Stickle Tarn and High Raise. On our 'day off' there was the option to amble around Ambleside, visit the National Trust's Townend Farm, which has been preserved as it was in the 17th century, or go to the Wordsworths' Dove Cottage or the Heaton Cooper art gallery in Grasmere.

There were two good pubs locally, the ODG and the New Dungeon Ghyll, which is now owned by the National Trust, who staged a small rock and film festival on our last weekend - ska band 'Imperial Leisure' were particularly fab - plus, vertical cross country races in horizontal rain!

Being a socialist club political discussion inevitably occurred with sharp disagreement over Brexit and the rights and wrongs of the former Soviet Block socialist states. Dermot left on the Friday to go to the 'People's Vote' march in London, whilst others, who shall remain nameless - OK, it was me - were very critical of G.B. being in that pesky Common Market!

It was a shame that there weren't more climbers to take advantage of the area but a good time was had by all. One point of contention, which we discussed with members of the Wayfarers Club, was that it was one of a handful which still had a men only membership policy. This led to an email discussion by several of the people on the trip as to how RR should respond to that.

Nigel Green

A selection of the emails in question:

I was joint trip organiser on the national trip to the Robertson Lamb hut in Langdale. I propose that we don't book this hut until women members are allowed in the Wayfarers Club which owns the hut. Why?

Because:

1) Red Rope is a socialist walking club and should therefore be opposed to discrimination. This shouldn't just apply to our internal affairs but in the wider world too. What is the point of Red Rope if we don't act on our principles?!

2) To stay at Robertson Lamb says to them "it doesn't really matter" that they discriminate. We paid over £900 in fees to them. Not to go has a financial influence.

3) A men only club isn't the same as a women only club. The Scottish Ladies Climbing Club was founded in the early part of last century when women didn't even have the vote. I think in a male dominated activity women should have the right to organise separately if they choose to. Take a look at www.ladiesscottishclimbingclub.org **Pete Watson**

Thanks to everyone for organising/buying grub/cooking etc. on what was a very enjoyable jaunt... I'll probably be in a minority of one but I don't see any reason not to book the hut again on the basis of the Wayfarers membership policy. It would be different were women excluded from staying, or made unwelcome, or if the women's accommodation was in any way unsatisfactory.

As none of those were the case I think, although their membership policy is obviously anachronistic, we are indulging in gesture politics. And, as we were told on several occasions, the bar for constitutional change in their club is very high - was it 70 or 75%? They could have had a lower bar (like 52%, to pluck a figure from the air which Brexit enthusiasts may be familiar with!) and we would not be having this discussion. There are women only clubs which we have not sought to boycott and nor would I wish to if male guests are welcome.

Rob Steel

I agree it was a very nice hut, although the women got much the better deal accommodation-wise, I felt. In May, we stayed at the wonderful Ronnan Cottage owned by the Ladies Scottish Climbing Club but nobody suggested that we shouldn't book it again because they excluded men from membership. Although, looking at their membership requirements it nowhere stipulates that you HAVE to be female. Perhaps it's assumed that no man would dare ask to join? I had a great time everyone, thanks for the walks and company.

Heather Morris

I was surprised when I heard it's a men only club, as I didn't think this sort of thing would be allowed any more. But, whether allowed or not, it made me feel uncomfortable. Maybe because it feels a bit condescending, like an act of generosity by the blokes to let us stay.

Uta Praekelt

Becky Bates, RR national trips booker, then received this message about 2 weeks later:

Dear Rebecca, during your visit to RLH, some of your members showed some concern that the Wayfarers was a men only club, and it was said Red Rope would not be visiting again because of that. Last night at our AGM we voted with an 84%

majority to change the rules to allow women to join! You may wish to pass this on. As far as I'm concerned Red Rope are welcome guests at RLH (even if I don't share your politics!)

Regards, Pete Dixon, RLH Booking Secretary

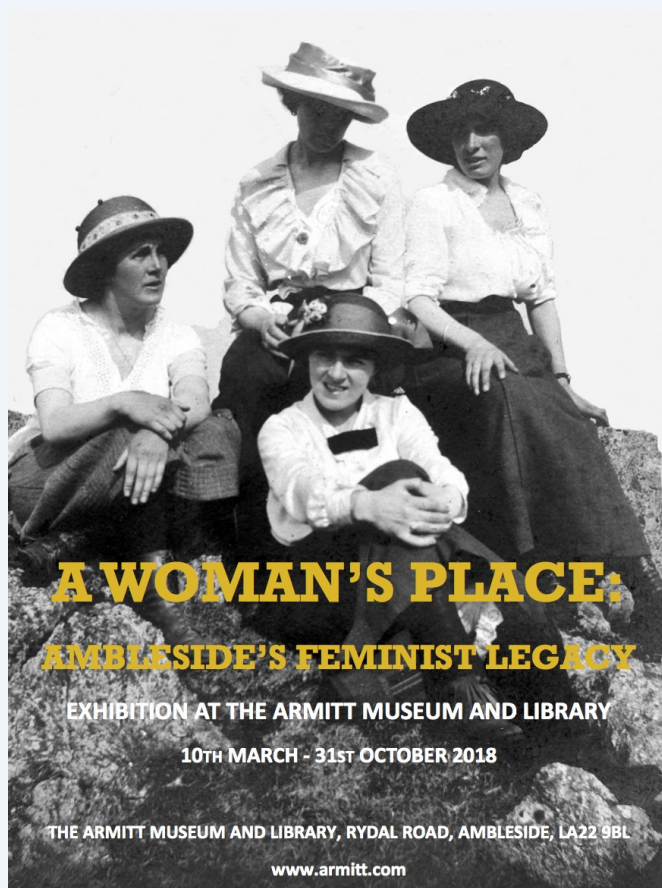
Result!*

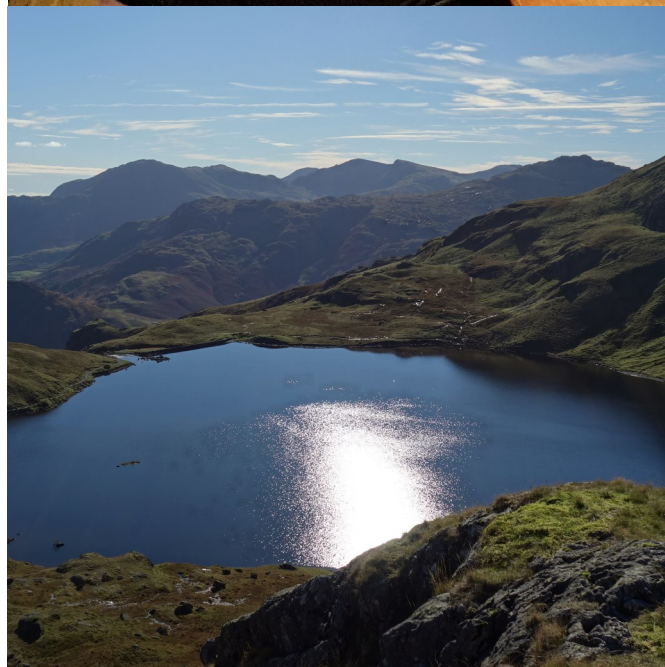
The quote on the front cover is from one of Dorothy Wordsworth's journals. It seems interesting to think of Dorothy, William and possibly Samuel Taylor Coleridge et al, in an October over 200 years ago, setting out to do the same kind of things that we were planning in Langdale but without a glimmer of Gore-tex!

As part of the Romantic movement they helped create our modern understanding of mountains, and the outdoors generally, as noble and invigorating - the Alps, for instance, had previously been generally thought of as misshapen, ungodly and to be avoided.

Dorothy's role in William's success has been recently reconsidered. It is now thought that she was not only a great practical support but also someone he would go to for advice about his work. He even, rather ungraciously, included 3 of her poems, attributed to 'my sister', in one of his collections! That sounds very patriarchal now but they did move in very radical circles, both artistically and politically, particularly before old age got a grip on them.

The exhibition publicised below featured other women who lived in the area in the 19th century and whose influence is, like Dorothy's, being belatedly reassessed - PTO for more details. **DS**





RR National Trip to Gt Langdale, Oct 2018. Top right: Dermot, Nigel and Bronwen. Bottom left: Sean, looking slightly aghast, and Pete Kos - our semi-domesticated climbers! Bottom right: Stickle Tarn.

'A WOMAN'S PLACE', edited from the Armit Museum's website: 'In 1918 Parliament passed an act granting the vote to 8.4 million women over the age of 30 in Britain. This was the culmination of a struggle with roots extending far back into the 19th century. The campaign for women's rights is a complex story. Largely the territory of the middle-class, campaigns advanced on several fronts. There were three main thrusts; the fight for married women's property rights, higher education for women, and the suffrage. Ambleside and its surrounding district developed a remarkable intellectual culture in which women played an important role. The Armit Sisters arrived in the 1880s and became a focus for the intellectual life of the town. Beatrix Potter had little interest in the suffrage issue but was a supporter of higher education for women. Ambleside had an educated population with a high percentage of independent women, and as the suffrage campaign accelerated in the years up to World War I, Helen Cunliffe and Amy Sharp led a large branch of the *National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies* (NUWSS) which by 1913 had 182 members. Meanwhile, Hawkshead had a flourishing branch of the Women's *Social and Political Union* whose suffragettes took a more direct line of action. The campaign was put into abeyance on the declaration of war, but by its end the contribution of women, particularly on the home front, meant that women's suffrage was undeniable.'



FRAN WALKER 24.02.1953 – 17.08.2018

Fran Walker was a stalwart member of London Red Rope for many years, a regular participant on Sunday walks and a willing walks leader. Since she found Red Rope in the early 2000s the walks became an important part of her social life. She made new friends as well as joining up again with old ones: someone she went to school with, and another member she had known in a support group for single parents when their children were young.

Members' tributes to Fran describe her as cheerful, kind, stoic, resourceful, cheerful with a beaming smile, and wearing adversity lightly. Friendly, with an active mind, a voracious reader.

She was very community minded. In young adulthood she lived in Brixton and was involved in initiatives that supported children and families. She was active in the Anti-Nazi League. This was important to her partly because her father had come to the UK as a young adult in the late 30s, a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany.

In the mid 90s she moved to Hackney with her young daughter and worked in the voluntary sector supporting and improving IT for several organisations. Later she changed her work as her midlife hearing loss led her in a new direction.

She became an excellent lip-reading teacher and also supported other lip-reading teachers by developing a relevant online package.

One member sought her help for a friend who was becoming deaf and she was generous with her time and experience. The deafness was a profound adjustment which she faced without complaint and with great fortitude. Any misunderstandings arising from communication difficulties were managed with humour.

Trips were a little tricky with larger numbers and new people but she continued to enjoy day walks with people she knew and which enabled her to pursue her love of the natural world.

She took any challenges in her stride: one walker remembers being on the South Downs in the blazing heat with Fran and one other, unable to find shelter and Fran being the one to keep her cool.

A few years ago Fran was able to have cochlear implants and this made an improvement in her hearing although it remained problematic. One memory is of Fran delighting in her ability to hear birdsong again on a walk after missing it for several years.

Fran was an accomplished musician, a member of Highgate Chamber Orchestra and an early member of Hackney Community Orchestra. She had played viola and as her hearing changed this was another loss she had to manage.

In the final year of her life Fran faced cancer with great determination to get the best out of life. She was wonderfully supported by her daughter Nancy. In spite of a broken hip she persevered to become as mobile as possible. She changed her allotment so she could reach it in a wheelchair and, with Nancy, continued planting.

She suggested some much easier day walks for those of us whose mobility is temporarily or permanently restricted. Any member is invited and sometimes the more able bodied come along to socialise. She was able to join the first of these walks to the Olympic Park and made good use of their scooter loan and of her walking frame. We carry on these walks on a monthly basis and they are Fran's legacy to London Red Rope, making it as inclusive as possible.

Val Gorbould

Red Rope AGM: Wirksworth, Oct 6, 2018



John Dickie, as AGM chair, thanked Adrian Jones for his years as National Secretary and Sherry McLiver for her work as National Trips Treasurer.

David Symonds was elected as the new National Secretary and Adrian replaced Sherry as National Trips Treasurer. Steve Wright continues as Assistant National Secretary.

John also thanked Andy Bateman for his work as BMC contact. Malcolm Donne will now take on that role.

Linda Goss was thanked for overseeing the tricky task of converting the membership system to the calendar year and, with Janet Saunders, bringing in the GoCardless facility, meaning membership can now be paid on-line. Gill Platt will take on this role which she did for several years in the past.

Tony Birtill was appointed interim Training Officer. Tony has the summer Mountain Leadership qualification and has completed most of the winter ML course. Unfortunately he currently has health problems so if anyone else would like to take on the role he would be happy to step aside.

Other officers were re-elected. Many thanks to John who was an excellent chair, keeping the meeting on schedule whilst maintaining a very pleasant manner.

Motions

The Merseyside motion, to give £1 per member annually to regions, with any region with fewer than 20 members receiving £20, was passed almost unanimously. This will commence in February once the new membership figures are clear. However, regions will need to qualify for this by showing that their accounts are up to date. Some regions may decide that they don't need the money and others that they have a surplus which they can donate to club funds, as West Midlands RR generously did last year.

An emergency motion proposed by Barbara Segal to donate £1000, partly from the club's Action Fund, to the BMC's 'Mend Our Mountains'

campaign, which was mentioned in the last bulletin, was also passed. The BMC hope to raise a million pounds.

The weekend was generally successful and was reasonably well attended. Most people squeezed in a couple of walks, including one around the town chasing treasure hunt clues!

Gill Cox and her hard working helpers provided a sumptuous three course meal and the folk band Clarion Call, who played for an hour after the meal, were entertaining and informative, with material based on the local countryside and the struggle for access over the years.

The 2019 National Gathering/AGM will be in the St Michael's Education Centre in Hathersage, west of Sheffield, which sleeps 35 in particularly sturdy bunks! See Jean's piece opposite for a variety of reasons to ensure you make it to this great walking and climbing area on Sept 27-29! The AGM is the club's most important decision making forum but the weekend is also a great chance to meet and share activities with Red Ropers from other regions. You might even win the treasure hunt! **DS**



The Peak District has always been a back-drop to my life. I grew up west of the Pennines and now live east of them in Sheffield, in between spending years travelling from Norfolk to Wales, camping in the Peaks on the way. Over the years I've explored most of the area and love it.

There's a huge mixture of landscapes and moods - from the wild, bleak eeriness of the open moors and crags to the secluded valleys and gorges of the White Peak limestone area. I'm still discovering hidden gems and unknown corners when I stray off familiar routes. I always marvel that even though the Peak District is within an hour's drive from several major cities most people stick to well known routes and with a bit of exploring and map reading it's possible to enjoy an almost solitary day.

I'm always uplifted by getting out in the Peaks. The scenery everywhere is stunning, even when shrouded in mist! For climbers and crag-loving walkers there are world-famous edges, crags and outcrops and also sublime meadows disguising hidden gorges and deep valleys below. A day's walk can take in all this variety - including a stop at a pub! Hathersage is almost in the centre and from there you'll find something for everyone.

Jean Luce: artwork, photos and text



!Beddgelert: Good Weather Shocker!

Report by Janey Hewitt

Summery textile design by Josie Rudd

May 2018, West Midlands Red Rope

Cae Ysgubor, Beddgelert, Snowdonia.

11 walkers: 1 Brighton, 1 London,
1 Bedford, 8 West Midlands.

Thursday

After leaving work I arrived at the hut 2030 to find the group in Beddgelert, enjoying their evening meal. The current council restriction of 12 sleepers, even though there are 19 beds, meant there was plenty of space.

The hut door is operated on an electronic key fob system. The key fob was posted to the organiser prior to the trip, and then stored in the key safe outside the hut, the code being issued to all of us. This system worked well - the spacious kitchen, two fridges and living area makes life easy.

Friday: Four of us practised our map reading skills walking Cnicht from Gelli Lago (SH633 485, off road parking for about 20 cars) on a sunny day, perfect temperature. We reported a sheep tangled in barbed wire, our good deed for the day. This is a lovely walk with excellent views, a short drive from the hut.

Saturday

Although I hate car swapping this was an opportunity for 5 of us to walk the linear Nantlle Ridge in glorious sunshine with no wind, and with good navigators. At just over 8 stone, I avoid ridges in the wind in case I am blown off. The disadvantage of the excellent visibility was that on the very short stretches of exposed rock, we could clearly see the drop below us. All part of the fun! We later witnessed a scrambler who had fallen off 'The Wall' being rescued by helicopter, which wasn't fun.

Photo by Bob Powell





The views were generally remarkable. We parked one car at Rhyd Ddu station (which fills up very quickly) and one car at Nebo. It is possible to find off road parking for a very few cars at the start of the walk in Rhyd Ddu, if you are early. (Fellow walkers commented on Pen y Pass car park being full even at 0400. This is probably because the car park is used by the hostel.)

Back at the hut we appreciated another splendid meal of salad, vegetables and warm ciabatta bread, followed by rhubarb crumble.

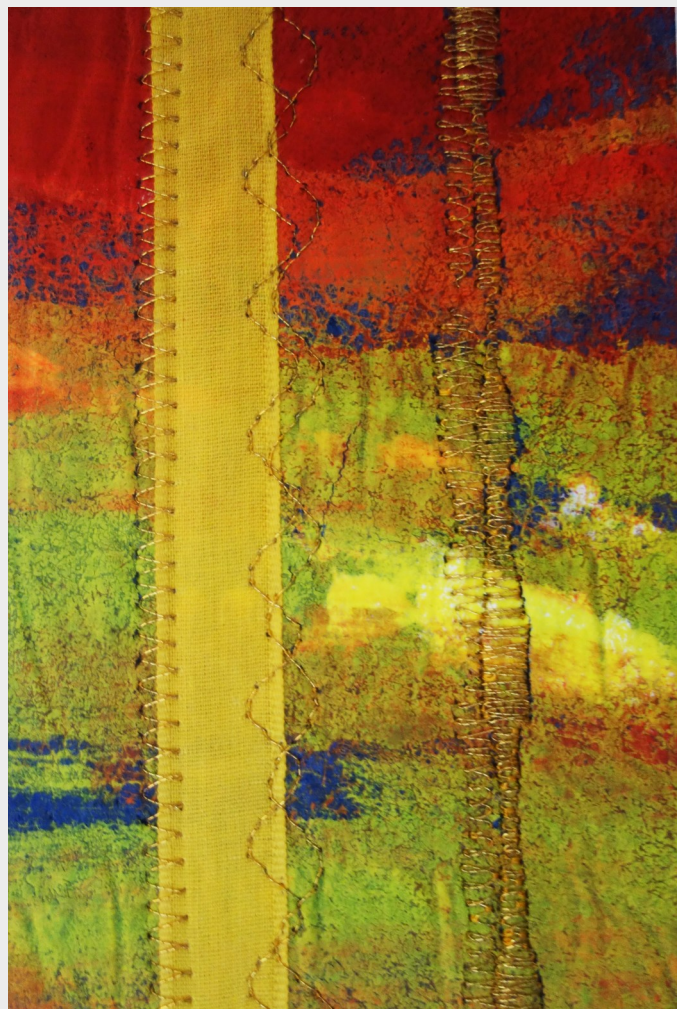
Sunday

Four of us walked Moel Siabod, avoiding the scramble on Daeir Ddu by approaching the N E ridge, which made it an easier walk. A+ views, cloudy and good company.

Bob, above left, knows about geology and plants. He gave us a mini-tutorial on identifying quartz V calcite, the differences between spruce, fir and pine and identified butterwort and birch saw fly.

Back at the hut, there was a challenge when a bird flew in, confused by the 20' high ceiling and roof windows, slightly delaying another delicious evening meal.

Monday: Departed 0610, at work for 1000!



London RR - a charitable bunch!

London Red Ropers with nothing better to do on alternate Thursdays - and that's almost all since pensions have no longer needed to be collected from the Post Office - have been engaged over the past year on a project of walking the Thames Path, from Goring in Oxfordshire down to Erith in Kent (a settlement memorably described by the late Linda Smith as "not twinned with any other town, though it does have a suicide pact with Dagenham.")

Though I don't quite come into the pensionable category, I am perpetually available during the working week because I've been so long out of gainful employment in the UK that all my would-be referees for job applications are either dead, demented or defrocked. Indeed I can proudly claim to be the only member of the group who participated in every leg and as such can vouch for the fact that the Thames does indeed run all the way, something that might have been in doubt at the height of the summer.

For the sections outside London, one of the major constraints was identifying start and finish points fairly adjacent to public transport, and in Reading & Maidenhead in particular we

seemed to spend more time *off piste* traipsing through suburbs and industrial estates than we did on the path itself. As a general rule of thumb, the trick when you're looking for a river is, when in doubt, head downhill.

In the worst case scenario you will arrive at the sea, but if you then follow the coastline you will eventually find your river. A river. In any case, the treks to and from transport hub to river path invariably gave participants the opportunity to indulge their principal passion: patronising charity shops. Shepperton had about ten all in sight of one another, which made the Thames Path almost an irritating distraction.

The Thames west of London passes through some decidedly Tory territory, and we felt obliged to post advanced scouts and back markers to ensure we weren't picked off by right wing ambushes; we left our scent in Henley just prior to the snooty Regatta, made a mess in Eton, ran through a wheat field in Theresa May's Maidenhead, played Pooh Sticks in Philip "Eeyore" Hammond's Weybridge constituency, skipped a light fandango in Vince Cable's Twickenham and pissed into a tent in John Redwood's woeful Wokingham.



Along the way, like good lefties, we talked, and of all the topics we touched upon, debated, analysed, contested, the single biggest thing we established was that prior to 1965, every music act that reached the top 10 in the UK pop charts since their inauguration in 1952 was either an artist's name (eg Lonnie Donegan, Winifred Atwell), the somethings (eg The Kinks, the Shangri-Las) or an artist's name and the somethings (e.g. Buddy Holly & the Crickets, Cliff Richard and the Shadows).

The closest thing to a departure from this was Lord Rockingham's XI (bloody aristocracy!) who hit number 1 in 1958 with *Hoots Mon*. Brazilian guitar duo Los Indios Tabajaras reached the top 10 in 1962 (but Los is *the* in Portuguese) and Herman's Hermits (originally Herman & the Hermits) began charting in 1964.

The first act to break the mould was Them [Van Morrison's vehicle] in February 1965 (and some might argue that "Them" was 75% The), followed the next month by Unit 4+2 with "*The Concrete and the Clay*" and later in the year Hedgehoppers Anonymous with "*It's Good News Week*." Then the floodgates opened and bands with abstract names - Procol Harum, Traffic, Pink Floyd, Cream - started to become the fashion. As Philip Larkin might have observed (had we not un-platformed him for his outrageous racism)

"Abstract names for pop groups began in 1965,

Between the death of Winston Churchill

And The Hollies' *I'm Alive*."

The Path complete, our new Thursday project is the 150 mile London Loop (or strictly speaking the London OOP - Outer Orbital Path - in the same way as PIN number should really be PI number, but if we called it PI number we'd all go with 3142 and no-one's finances would be secure.) But we're doing it backwards (anti-clockwise), so every instruction from the guide book must be reversed - up means down, left means right, Brexit means Remain, etc. Onwards and Upwards! (or Offwards and Downwards.)

Mike Shearing

On completing this excellent article I imagine Mike may well have had a hard earned cup of cocoa and then slept for several weeks! Ed.

Drawing by Pete Betts

nationaltrips@redrope.org.uk

The snow is starting to fall on the hills so it's a good time to plan for winter walking. We may still have spaces on two week-long winter trips - February 15th to 22nd at Stair Cottage, Keswick and March 16th to 23rd at the Alex Mac, Onich, Glencoe - check with me asap if interested.

Both huts are warm and comfortable with good facilities including separate male/female dorms, hot showers and efficient drying rooms.

2019 trips include October 12th to 17th, Cae Ysgubor, Beddgelert, with a free day's optional scrambling training, and Clapham, N. Yorks at New Year. See MIS for details.

We are aware that bunk beds do not suit everyone. If you have stayed in a cottage with twin rooms, sleeping 6 to 12 people, please let me know so that we can keep a list of possibilities for our national trips. **Becky Bates**

Electronic key fobs for Cae Ysgubor cost £20. The LMC own the hut and recently changed their rules to allow key-holders to take friends who are not RR or LMC members, primarily mid-week. See RR website > club hut for info.

Barbara Segal bednight@redrope.org.uk

the bmc and hill walking

I have always seen the BMC as a climbing orientated organisation, like most RR members I suspect, but they are now keen to be seen as the natural home for hill walkers. I recently attended a weekend on this topic. Newly elected BMC president Lynn Robinson addressed one meeting. She is very keen that the BMC does more for walkers.

On the Saturday about 50 people discussed access and conservation. Sunday gave us an opportunity to see this in action with walks to look at conservation work following a talk by 'Moors for the Future'. The Peak District have a very active BMC volunteer in Peter Judd and they hope to replicate this in other areas. They did sign up more volunteers as walking group reps as a result of this event.

The BMC are encouraging walkers to attend their area meets. However, I expect you could turn up and still find it dominated by climbers' issues, but with perseverance and by waving the Hill Walking Strategy this could change!

I am going to start attending my area meets in London and the South East and I am keen to see if Red Rope would be prepared to get involved in some conservation work. The BMC website has a whole section for walkers - check it out!

Malcolm Donne BMC@redrope.org.uk

bulletin@redrope.org.uk

Many thanks to all contributors, Linda Goss and particularly Gill Platt for address labels and membership cards, not forgetting the envelope stuffers! I designed the front and back covers. Next deadline July 14. **David Symonds**



red rope socialist walking and climbing club



red rope rocks!

'Red Rope Socialist Walking and Climbing Club is a national club for walkers and climbers with socialist and green ethics. Membership and trip charges are scaled according to income. We have around 320 members in over a dozen regions and run lots of events each year including day walks and climbs, weekend and longer trips to beautiful locations.'

I would say that sounds like 'a good offer', to use some business speak! In the current decade Merseyside RR has more than doubled its membership to over 50, the biggest regional membership after London. During that time we have progressed from organising one walk a month to two - one being more demanding than the other to cater for the range of tastes in the group. We have also established a programme of four annual weekend trips. We have two meetings a year when we draw up a six monthly walks programme and discuss an agenda based on members' concerns. Suggestions are sent by email from members who cannot attend.

Younger members have helped by publicising the group via the RR website and Facebook. Walks are led by far more individuals than in the past. The longer serving members have been able to bring their experience into play in providing advice and a sound organisational framework, whilst remembering that the basic point of the club is to have a good time in the British countryside!

This specific set up won't suit all regions but as the new National Secretary I would encourage regions to be ambitious in expanding their membership - particularly at the start of the year, when resolutions are made! What has happened on Merseyside has shown that there are a fair number of middle-aged/older people on the left who want to enjoy the countryside and make new friends. If they feel welcome and are convinced that groups are well organised there is no reason why they shouldn't stay - an invitation to join a walk could make a very nice new year present! BW, David Symonds

www.redrope.org.uk