

Red Rope Socialist Walking and Climbing Club
bulletin 42, autumn 2021

(Squadron of spooky rucksacks courtesy of Borrowdale PH)

The industrial mill towns in south east Lancashire have two things in common. Their character and histories have been shaped by their location below the various West Pennine hills and moorlands. Within that environment all have developed deep-rooted traditions of radicalism which, unlike the mainly urban & industrial radicalism of Manchester, strongly reflected the spatial integrity of their rural-cum-urban geographies.

In the case of Bolton, the town is dominated by the massive expanse of the Winter Hill moorland. By the late 19th century Bolton was full of groups proclaiming the causes of secularism, socialism, republicanism, trade unionism, women's suffrage and so forth; for some obscure reason, Bolton had also developed a cultural affinity with the radical humanism/ naturalism of the American poet Walt Whitman. What the socialists, secularists and Whitmanites couldn't do in 1896 was walk up and across Winter Hill as they had previously done. The landowner, Colonel Ainsworth, had erected a gate and blocked the ancient right of way.

The resulting 1896 mass trespasses were a remarkable piece of community direct action by the people of Bolton to rectify that situation. On the first weekend in September, a handful of members of the local branch of the Social Democratic Federation (a forerunner of the 20th century Communist Party) walked up from the town towards Winter Hill, passing the mansion of the landowner. To their amazement, the people of Bolton flocked in their thousands to follow them. When they reached the gate on to open moorland, they duly broke it and walked across Winter Hill.

This had been so successful that they did it all over again the following weekend with an even larger number of trespassers, and again for a third time shortly after that. By which time, the landlord had got his act together; arrests were made followed by trials, injunctions and heavy fines. Neither a right of way nor open access across the moor were gained / conceded for many years. And the Winter Hill Mass Trespasses were lost from the folk memory until Paul Salveson did a bit of local history in the early 1980s. The trespasses pre-dated the more widely known Kinder Scout Mass trespass by 35 years and, as Paul often points out, they vastly exceeded the number of trespassers the CP led from Hayfield to Kinder (between 400 and 600 is the usual number given).

On Sunday 5 September 2021, over a thousand of us met in Bolton to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the Winter Hill trespass. We assembled where they had started in 1896. We were addressed by the Mayor of Bolton, followed by Guy Shrubsole (the author of *Who Owns Britain?* and co-founder of the current *Right to Roam* campaign <https://www.righttoroam.org.uk> and Kate Ashbrook of the Open Spaces Society, Ramblers Association and leading access/ conservation campaigner and long-time Red Rope member. They reminded us of the shortcomings of the 2002 Countryside Rights of Way Act; it simply does not cover about 90% of the open countryside, rivers and woodlands where people would like to walk. Amongst those at Bolton were about 16 Red Rope members, some of whom looked very fetching in their new Red Rope 'Groovy Socialism' vests.

In the spirit of both celebration and commitment to the continuing struggle for access we re-traced the 1896 trespassers' route up to and across Winter Hill. It was a lovely day, all sorts of banners and placards attesting to the continued radicalism of Bolton and the surrounding area, a few paper sellers and leaflets from various radical groups – and a flyer advertising Paul's latest book. The drums of a samba band kept us marching onwards through the longish road climb out of Bolton. We passed the now open gate and continued across the open moorland – beneath the huge telecommunications masts which now adorn Winter Hill. The Diamond Bus company generously provided free buses for us to return to Bolton; we are obviously not as hardy as our 1896 forebears!

For all sorts of reasons, mass trespassing and direct action is urgently called for in the 2020s. Battles over countryside access must be articulated with the wider struggle for climate and environmental justice. We must continue to draw our inspiration from those who went before. . . So, onwards to Kinder 90, when we will celebrate the 90th Anniversary of Winter Hill's successor, the Kinder Scout Mass Trespass. See you all in Hayfield, 23 – 24 April 2022!

Julian Batsleer

Paul Salveson gave a talk about the Winter Hill Mass Trespass at the Working Class Movement Library in mid-September.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7SMIXphk>

A recent OSS symposium entitled *Whose Landscapes?* includes pieces about the Epping Forest, Winter Hill, Kinder Scout and Range West trespasses <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-scrPdmont8>

The contributions on the trespasses are in the second half.



Anti-clockwise from top: Pete Watson in RR vest + banner by kids at the St Paul's Youth Club / samba band / marchers in the countryside / site of a gate destroyed by the original trespassers where the Clarion Choir sang, 'Will Yo' Come on Sunday Morning?'"



The Kinder Trespass @ 90, April 23-24, 2022

Dave Toft, one of the organisers of the 90th anniversary celebrations of the 1932 mass trespass on Kinder Scout, wrote an article about it in 2012 for 'Red Pepper' which they kindly allowed us to reproduce in RR 34, the spring 2018 bulletin. I spoke to him at this year's Winter Hill event and asked if he could keep us informed about plans for next year's Kinder celebrations, which he duly did in October. I have prefaced that information with a reminder of the opening of the Red Pepper article. David Symonds

The very idea of trespass, and the implied concept of ownership, goes to the heart of all class struggle, and there is still much we can learn from the 1932 action – not least because it was spectacularly effective. On the 75th anniversary Roy (Lord) Hattersley described it as 'the most successful act of direct action in British history'. It is widely seen as having given a crucial impetus to the creation of the national parks and still acts as a rallying point for the whole right to roam movement...

The mass trespass was part of a long campaign to gain access to open moorland appropriated by the landed gentry during the enclosures. The main target for generations of campaigners was Kinder Scout, the dark, brooding plateau of rugged moorland lying between the industrial conurbations of Manchester and Sheffield. It was this proximity to large populations of young and politically aware factory workers that made Kinder the symbolic battleground for the struggle between the feudal landed gentry and a militant working class, a struggle that began in earnest in the late 19th century.

Individuals had long trespassed on the moors, often walking long distances from Stockport and the outskirts of Manchester just to get to the hills, where they faced constant harassment and often violence from the gamekeepers. Lengthy negotiations had been taking place between the Ramblers Association and the landowners, but many were becoming impatient with this process. The Communist "British Workers' Sports Federation" in Manchester decided to force the issue. Benny Rothman organised the event and a young Ewan McColl, who was later to immortalise the struggle in his song "The Manchester Rambler", acted as the self-proclaimed press officer, with full coverage in the Manchester Evening News and Guardian.

This is what Dave told me when I asked if the plans for 2022 had been finalised:

We have a clearer picture of what will be happening. It is actually very similar to our original sketch but has now been confirmed. On Saturday 23rd of April, from around midday, there will be stalls and speakers, mainly in the Royal Hotel, together with exhibitions in the village hall in

Hayfield and a marquee attached to The Royal.

Confirmed speakers include Kate Ashbrook, RR member, the Open Spaces Society and Ramblers, with...

- Hilary Grady, Director General, National Trust
- Guy Shrubsole, author of 'Who Owns England?'
- Interval – music from Brian Peters
- Yvonne Witter (Mosaic and PDNPA member)
- Keith Warrender, publisher and author of 'Forbidden Kinder', a new book on the mass trespass. Keith will host a Q&A session after the speeches and hold a book launch in the marquee after the main session.

In the evening there will be an excellent rock band called 'Recover' in The Royal.

On Sunday the 24th we are expecting a big turnout for the walks, assembling at about 10.00 am. There will be a parade from Hayfield to Bowden Bridge car park and then on to William Clough, where various organised routes will be available. Some will take at least 5 hours, other perhaps 2 at the most (from Bowden Bridge). There will be a short rally at Bowden Bridge and possibly again at William Clough - both should be really good days.

It was good to have 16 Red Ropers at the Winter Hill anniversary but we hope to double that at Hayfield! Becky Bates, National Trips person, has booked a pair of converted barns at Thorpe Farm near Hathersage as a base for RRs who want to make the most of a long weekend - from the Friday, leaving Monday morning. (See photos opposite.) They are about a 30 minute drive from Hayfield. There wasn't anywhere closer available but hopefully that won't be too much of an issue. See the MIS for details. You could just come for the day, of course.

This is how Dave's article finishes:

The Countryside Rights of Way Act (2000) has boosted gains in access and helped extend it, but overall progress towards a 'right to roam' in England and Wales has been patchy (there are different, far more extensive rights in Scotland). There still remain significant areas of the country where access is restricted, threatened or resisted, with landowners such as the Duke of Westminster fighting every inch of the way. The trespass was a crucial event that must not be forgotten, but neither should it be remembered as simply an isolated historical event. Rather we should celebrate it as an inspirational moment in a continuing struggle that we cannot afford to lose.

The Kinder Trespass Archive Project, Hayfield, intends to establish a permanent archive and exhibition to mark the mass trespass and link it to the continuing struggle for access to our countryside. www.kindertrespass.com



The 'Pondside' barn has a car park, campfire & BBQ space, a kitchen with two cookers, fridge/freezer, bathroom, two toilets, two showers, two sinks and a sitting/dining area. Upstairs: 14 spaces in 2 dorms, small drying space. Bring your own sleeping bag. The 'Old Stables' barn is very similar.

Climbing at the Hathersage National Gathering

20 people had a great time in late September at the above, although reservations were expressed about the bunks - again! On the Saturday Ben Mayor, Steve Wright and myself ventured up to High Neb (458m) on Stanage Edge. It's the highest point on Stanage with stunning views across to Kinder and much of the Peak District. Rock climbing generally allows time to admire the view and Steve was kind enough to identify many of the hills including Mam Tor, Lose Hill and much else. Ben can be seen below in Tarzan mode!

We'd managed to find a less popular part of Stanage. Climbers are notorious for not being prepared to walk any distance and our walk in was at least 30 feet! Others there included a very well behaved group of young people under instruction and a couple of groups practising how to teach climbing. There were also some show-offs doing **hard stuff!**

We found two good climbs to test our abilities: Mantelshelf climb D* & Tango Crack VD*. We also got some abseil practice in. I thought that the climbing deserved a bit better than the single star and was a tad more strenuous and technical than indicated. Ben definitely had the edge on the older folks for climbing (and dressing!) in style. I very much hope we might have set a trend and next time we'll see more Red Ropers heading along to the crags to sample the delights. I joined David Doody on the Sunday for a walk to Eyam. This turned out to be an excellent choice which included a visit to a memorable pub .

Robert Manby, RR Training person



The High House tripsters! See pages 6 - 9. Photo by Sean Ashton. Photo left by Barbara Segal.

Red Rope trips in late 2021 and early 2022

We are delighted that national trips are up and running again, with measures in place to minimise Covid risks. A small group enjoyed lovely weather, great walks, cycling and swimming on a very successful trip to the Cairngorms in August and, as has been mentioned, twenty Red Ropers had a great time at September's RR jaunt in Hathersage. It was a shame that Humphrey Southall, who had done much of the organising, was unable to go because of poor health. Three consecutive trips to Borrowdale, one at High House, Seathwaite, the other two at a cottage near the YH, went very well. Two new adventures have already been booked for 2022!

In February there is an opportunity to practise winter skills near Aviemore - flyer by John Aldous. In April you could spend a weekend celebrating the Kinder Trespass. If you haven't been on a trip why not give it go? You might enjoy yourself! Rifle through the MIS for more info.

Sarah and Becky Bates, RR National Trips persons

High Spy (653m) Borrowdale, 21/10/2021 - photo Barbara Segal



SCOTLAND

Badaguish Centre, Aviemore

26 Feb - 5 Mar 2022

**Red
Rope**

Contact: sj.bates@yahoo.co.uk

7 nights in a Forest Lodge (up to 4 in a room)

www.badaguishoutdoorcentre.org

A rare opportunity for winter mountaineering but with direct access to lower levels and forest trails from the lodge. Please see details and the banded nightly charges for this trip in the MIS, and contact the organiser as usual to take advantage of the early booking discount.

Muir Cottage, August 2021:

No Time to...Rest

Who would have thought that our wonderful 'welcome back' national trip would have been blessed throughout by sunshine's Golden Eye.

The nine day trip to this Hut Royale gave All the Time in the World for the Cairngorms National Park's Licence to Thrill.

008 Red Ropers summited Munros, managed to avoid punctures cycling along rocky tracks (certainly shaken not stirred), climbed crags, forded streams, swam in rivers, tried out forest bathing and relaxed in waterfall-fed jacuzzis. We learned to check boots for toads each morning and narrowly avoided sharing the Ballochbuie Bridge swimming spot with a royal party (its fleet of black Range Rovers arriving just as we left). We witnessed the emptying of the midge-eater (photo right) by the hut warden and escaped a zillion more midges at Derry Lodge. What a relief to be beyond the D of E camping stage of life! We ate too much food which was, as always, delicious and, other than the odd Quantum of Whisky, drank less than we used to. We were high on the Highlands and so very grateful to be back. Sadly, no broken Spectre but what a week. Highlands are Forever!

From Braemar with Love (Red Ropers will return...)

K Fellfarers Acquire High House

In March 1931 a general meeting was held at the factory of Somervell Bros in Kendal (later known as K shoes) to present to interested employees the idea of a hostel in the Lake District for the use of those workers who wished to enjoy climbing and walking the Lakeland countryside. About 80 people attended and support for the idea was "very strong". Locations were discussed and Borrowdale was the final choice.

After much research someone suggested the derelict house on the left of the Sty Head Pass as it leaves Seathwaite Farm, known as High House. The building was inspected, but proved to be merely a ruin, a large tree having fallen across the house, bringing down the entire roof and most of the front and back walls.

The owner, Mr. Walker of Seascale, was "favourably disposed to the venture, and was willing for us to rebuild the ruin should we wish. At the same time he discouraged us from undertaking such a task." An alternative building was seen as too expensive, and so commenced the re-building of High House, and its eventual opening on May 5th, 1934. **K Fellfarers website**



bulletin@redrope / Nat. Sec. ship!

Many thanks to all contributors. Unfortunately there was only enough material for a 12 side edition on this occasion. It would be good to see submissions from first-timers in the next incarnation, deadline 20 March!

I am standing down as National Secretary at the April AGM, when I will have been in post for three and a half years. I have found the position engaging, bamboozling and almost satisfying at times! Julian Batsleer was Nat. Sec. in the early 80s. We recently agreed that the process of being appointed was possibly less clear than the election of a Pope!

However, in 2018 I did write an A4 side on what I would try to do in the role. I can't claim to have referred to it much subsequently but if there had been another candidate the statements would have been a way of contrasting approaches. In the past as many as 3 people have shared the role which, in any case, necessitates working closely with the NC. Please give it some thought, your club needs you! Drop me a line for further details.

David Symonds, bulletin@redrope.org.uk

'High House' by Debbie Singer

High House

has a history

of workers making shoes, K shoes,

in a factory in Kendal

the K is for Kendal

The workers came out in all weathers

to enjoy the fells

keen for a break at Seathwaite

the wettest place in England

walking, climbing, scrambling

over seventy five years

Last month

Red Rope came to High House

eating our sumptuous dinners

under the gaze of those Fellfarers

their black and white photos on the stone walls

with a library of mountain books surrounding us

We walked in the drizzle

scrambled in the rain

along paths transformed into streams

which we shared with Herdwick sheep

and a rainbow above Castle Crag

The hills disappeared into mist

green and stony against the orange bracken

waterfalls like long white scars on the hillsides

flanked by rowan trees -

from Great Gable to Glaramara

from Langstrath to Watendlath

all along the Allerton Ramble

we quickly found our pace.

The A-team and the B-team

the fast walkers and the mini-breakers

no competition

just teamwork and mutual support

The Fell and Rock Climbing Club



Sean Ashton was on the trip evoked in Debbie's poem opposite and took this striking photograph on the summit of Great Gable. The Fell and Rock Climbing Club is the premier mountaineering club in the Lake District. They were responsible for the installation of the plaque, a memorial to their 20 members killed in World War 1. Their first meet was at the Wastwater Hotel in March 1907. The hotel was said to appeal to those with 'a taste for companionable chaos' - not unlike Red Rope trips!

Edward Whymper led the first successful attempt on the Matterhorn in 1865, described in "Unjustifiable Risk? The Story of British Climbing" as both the crowning achievement and the end of the 'Golden Age' in the Alps, which suggests that British climbers were concentrating on the Continent, and the Alps, in particular, was *the* place to be for the very wealthy or very driven.

J. Wilson Robinson had the idea for the FRCC in 1887, when rock climbing was in its infancy in England. He climbed with Walter Haskett Smith, generally thought of as the father of climbing in Great Britain. One of the Abraham brothers, pioneers of mountain photography, was elected president. Their aim was, 'To encourage and

foster under the safest and most helpful of conditions the exhilarating exercise and sport of Rambling and Rock Climbing in the Lake District'.

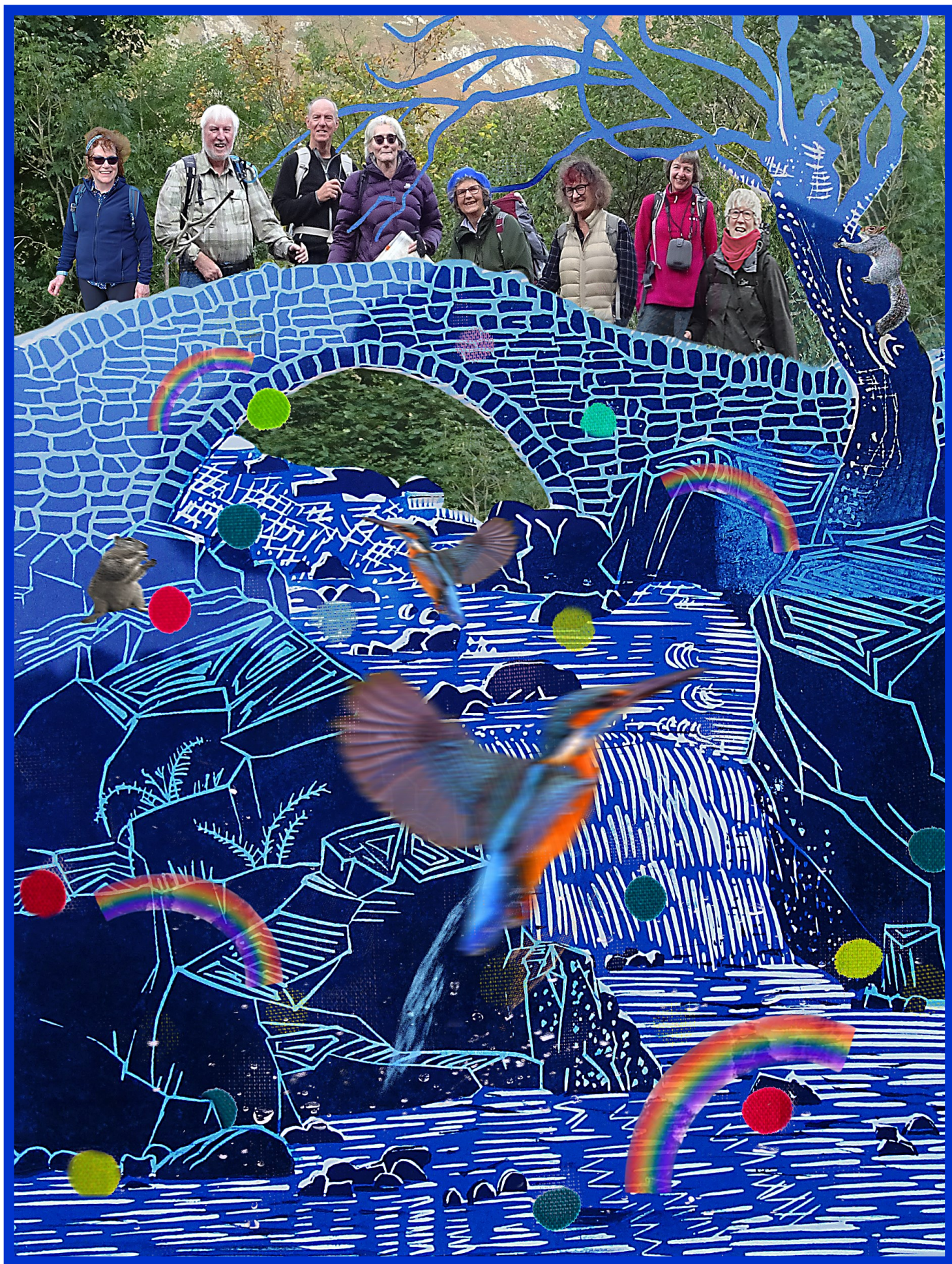
Mountaineering then was generally considered an upper class pursuit. 'Unjustifiable Risk?' mentions this in a chapter headed 'Gentleman and Gymnasts' - were you an aesthetic amateur or a crass athlete? The Abrahams were closely associated with Owen Glynne Jones, the leading British climber at the end of the 19th century. His detractors claimed, 'The soul of mountaineering did not appeal to him as much as its physical charms'. He could be loosely said to be the Don Whillans of his day!

The title of Margaret MacMillan's epic book about the First World War, 'The War That Ended Peace,' suggests a comparatively prosperous period preceding that great calamity. Whilst there were conscientious objectors and deserters, it seems remarkable that there was so little resistance from the troops or populations on both sides of the slaughter. It shows the power of patriotism, 'my country right or wrong', at the time.

After the war the Fell and Rock Club decided to make a fitting memorial to their comrades who had died in the fighting. They raised a huge sum from their members, members' families and well wishers to be able to buy 3,000 acres of the most scenic land in the Lakes, which was then donated to the National Trust. A plaque, with a relief map of the area above a tribute to the fallen, was dedicated in 1924 by Geoffrey Winthrop Young in front of 500 people on Great Gable. The bronze plaque, weighing 70 kg, was removed because of wear and tear in July 2013 and a replacement installed by the Royal Engineers in October 2013, again in front of a very big crowd, indicating the club's continued link with the military.

This suggests a different set of values to that of many Red Ropers, but there can be no doubting the benefits of the FRCC's magnanimous gesture in ensuring public access to such a remarkable area, in perpetuity. **David Symonds**

Thanks to the FRCC website, which I recommend, and Wikipedia for source material.



After only a couple of days of vigorous exercise
the endorphins were already running riot !

Several Go Bonkers in Borrowdale

There were two consecutive six night trips in October to the 17th century Longthwaite Cottage, near the Youth Hostel in beautiful Borrowdale, about six miles south of Keswick. Rosthwaite is nearby, with the pleasant Riverside Bar of the Scafell Hotel a convenient spot to catch up on those pressing emails - it was even rumoured that some people went there to drink beer!

The owners had made no bones about the fact that the cottage was occasionally visited by mice, and was also flooded every now and then, although they assured us that neither were worth worrying about! Fortunately we weren't affected, although that would probably not have been the case in the last week of October, when travel in the area was difficult due to some roads being flooded - the Derwent flows about 40 metres from the cottage.

The Awesome Eight on the left were the first group, arriving on October 9. The lino-cut of the bridge near the cottage was by 'B. Davis', who I think is a member of the owner's family. S/he also did the painting of the cottage on the back page. These were part of an excellent set of images on display there. (I confess to making some 'tasteful' digital additions to the original!) Some of that same eight also put together a trip report which follows, unlike the idle bunch I was with!

They left quite a lot of food, which cut down on our group's expenditure by about £30. Both groups had a good time and enjoyed sleeping in beds, as opposed to bunks - luxury! **David Symonds**

Pat: It's a long time since I've been on a RR trip so what could be more welcome after a pandemic and missing the mountains for months? It did not disappoint! Arriving in the Lake District by public transport, you find yourself in a world of rucksacks, boots and walking sticks. All the shops seem to be either outdoor gear outlets or cafes. Our group of 8 settled down quickly in the farmhouse for a week of no rain but lots of autumnal colour. The first day we set off in separate groups with great enthusiasm. Ann and I were determined to do Glaramara. We later had to accept that our ambition was beyond our ability. After a few attempts at navigation (very tiring!) and some scary views of the ridge, we retraced our steps. We did wonder whether to fib but decided that would be unworthy of Red Rope and owned up!

Unfortunately, one of the other groups, after a straightforward walk over Grange Fell to Watendlath, also had some difficulties on the route back, with all but Steve slipping over at one point or another on a protracted stony descent to Stonethwaite. Meanwhile Robert and Janey, who had set out to reconnoitre some crags on Combe Gill, had gone on much further and reached the top of Glaramara!

After our exploits on the Sunday, we all got more realistic and the next day decided to take the bus to Grange and walk clock-wise around Derwent Water. It seemed as if every dog and its owner were doing the same! We had planned to take the ferry across the top end of the lake so were disappointed to arrive at Nichol End's landing stage to discover that, due to a long-term dispute, the ferry wasn't calling there and we had to divert through Keswick. Having now added a couple of extra miles, and after negotiating the crowds on the north-east part of the lake, admiring Ruskin's monument and the extensive views to the west, most of us decided enough was enough and caught the next bus back to Longthwaite. Janey persevered as far as the Lodore Hotel, whilst Robert walked the whole way back – a total of 21 km.

Janey: On Tuesday seven enthusiastic Red Ropers joined Robert for an inspiring morning of navigation training in Borrowdale. The session began in the farmhouse with an overview of teaching approaches before we moved outside to demonstrate some of the basic skills required to enjoy hill walking safely. Once out in the hills we each had the opportunity to micro-navigate as leader. This involved using pacing, timing, anticipating and then identifying features up to 200m. ahead. We ticked off field boundaries and identified open access versus private land. Throughout the session Robert reminded us how important it is to 'thumb the map' so we knew where we were, and to 'set the map' - aligning it to landmarks such as a lake or road so we were following the map in the direction that we were walking. Robert's training session greatly increased our confidence in map reading.

Pat: We also had an enjoyable, but not always successful, navigation training session trying to find our way around our living-room and small garden. Most of us then went for a short walk to practise outdoors...

"It's right to the footbridge!" "No, that's just a landmark - it's left to the path!" We came back after at least two hours of effort - Robert very diplomatically praising our "assiduousness". The session was a real bonus and I recommend inviting Robert to all trips!

Wednesday was the best day of the week, going up Cat Bells and along Maiden Moor to High Spy at 653 m. How come it was so easy 20 years ago?? Some of the scrambles on the way were really slippery and a bit scary, but fortunately half the population of Keswick was going our way. So, when Sarojini and I were offered a helping hand, we accepted - well, it would have been rude to refuse! I returned the favour at the top when asked to photograph them with a camera the size of a match-box - I'm giving up trying to keep up with technology! The descent from High Spy was pretty tricky too, first through former mine workings on loose slate (at least this was mostly dry) then following a long stony path down, down, down. Nevertheless, a lovely day. Later that evening we witnessed the week's least delightful moment, when an aromatic aubergine parmigiana went crashing to the floor! It's one of those deliciously warming dishes that can feel more suited to a British winter than a Neapolitan August. Even though beans and cheese on toast tasted

good, it was definitely an anti-climax by comparison - parmigiana on a RR trip! Just shows how we've progressed...or aged! Our evenings were spent happily chatting and doing crosswords in front of the lovely wood-fired stove. Ann was the undisputed champion of the fire, but Robert had a go with several women observing and "helping" him from the comfort of their arm-chairs. This was all quite retro as there was no internet connection - we actually talked to each other!

Janey: Our last day was more eventful than expected. Whilst strolling in Grange we saw a woman trip on a stone, collapse and cry out in pain - she had fallen flat on her face! We tried to reassure her and lent her some warm clothing but Robert's foil survival bag worked best. It was light, cheap and packed down well - recommended for every hiker's rucksack, particularly as feeling cold is a common symptom of shock. When the ambulance arrived the crew praised us for helping. We then headed to a tea-shop feeling rather pleased with ourselves! So ended an otherwise extremely enjoyable six days. We left next morning on the finest day of the week with sunrise over a cloud inversion in the valley. We are now eagerly anticipating our next trip!

Pat Durrant & Janey Hewitt

