



the Fellfarer



October 1998

Number 11

Most children, when they walk up hills go 200 feet and then get bored. But two children, age 7 and 4, climbed Snowdon. The one age 7 is called Rosie, the other is evie.



inside...

**Blackrock Meet
Kirkby Stephen Walk
Corris Meet
Snowdon Climbers
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Competition
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More from 19444**

Editor's bit:

Every time I attend a committee meeting and everytime I start on a new edition of the Fellfarer I ask myself, "What sort of club are we?". The answer is always the same: "Jiggered if I know."

What is a club, and are we one? The turn-outs on some meets suggest that we ain't.

Are the events badly organised, or badly publicised, or just wrong? Do we not enjoy each other's company? Are we missing something here?

The committee is elected by you to manage the club's affairs and to provide a range of activities for your enjoyment. They work hard to do that. If they are getting it wrong they need to know.

The A.G.M. provides the best opportunity for us to come together to discuss the future of the club.

The committee needs your **help**, your **ideas**, and your **support**.

Please come and discuss **what you want from the club** and **what you can contribute** to it. Free food too!

Fellfarers Meet, Blackrock 28th.-31st. August 1998.

By 10 a.m. on Friday we had parked at Bridge of Orchy station to wait for the train which was to take us across Rannoch Moor.

The 'Sprinter' picked us up and then trundled slowly across the Moorland miles, allowing us to savour the isolation of the place we were heading to, Corroir Halt.

We were soon standing on that lonely little platform watching our link with civilisation head northwards and out of sight.....

The track took us down to Loch Ossian, past the delightful Youth Hostel, set amongst Caledonian Pines on its own little peninsula, and on to Corroir Lodge, inhabited by the shooting set, clad in tweeds and plus-fours.

The cloud base was at about 2500 feet so we reached our first top, Sgur Choinnich, in mist. A cold breeze was blowing and we pressed on to the Munro summit, Sgur Gaibhre, where we found shelter on the lee slope for a lunch stop.

We descended on a compass bearing to the col, Mam Ban, which was wet and dreary, and followed an intermittent track up the broad ridge ahead to the second Munro, Carn Dearg. A little rock wall here gave enough protection for us to sit and finish our tea.

We rushed down the north-east slopes and dropped quickly out of the clouds to see the dark and melancholy landscape of Rannoch once more. We gained the Loch Ossian track near the Youth Hostel again and we arrived at the Halt with half an hour to spare before the train returned. We were the first to arrive at Blackrock and were soon drinking *lashings* of tea and toasting our toes before a blazing fire.

The Chairman arrived followed by Krysia, Hughie and Alan, who all arrived *after* chucking-out time.

Saturday dawned cloudy but much brighter and promised to improve later. Alan, Rod and Hughie set off to scramble up Creise and Meall a'Bhuiridh, Krysia headed for Buchaille Etive Beag and we drove to Lagangarbh. We squeezed the car in amongst the dozens of others and strode off towards the Buchaille. Many others were on our path and I feared that we would have to queue for climbing routes on Rannoch Wall. Most were bound for Curved Ridge, however, and we arrived at the wall, hot and panting, to find Agag's Groove empty in its lower reaches. This glorious combination of corners and chimneys and grooves and ledges provides a soaring line up the full height of the seemingly vertical and blank Rannoch Wall. I'd looked at it some time ago, from Curved Ridge, and thought it looked impossible.

The climbing was a delight and I romped up the first steep pitch to perch comfortably on a ledge. Margaret passed me and moved on up to the big block belay below the crux. My next pitch took me some time as I dithered, sent the wrong way by a Scotsman giving directions from below. Eventually I ignored him and picked my own way

to a safe ledge. I had to share this stance with an *enormous* ginger beard. The beard had a friendly Scotsman behind it who confirmed that I had come the right way.

The fourth pitch was marred by the realisation, too late, that the little ledge that the rope had collected on contained a rather large 'jobby' and our rope-handling after that was perhaps more circumspect than safe. I wish I'd had gloves. I coiled the rope, *carefully*, on the ridge and then I had to sling it on my back. But the sun shone and the views across Rannoch Moor to the distant blue hills in the East were stunning. We couldn't linger, we had things to do and so we walked and scrambled up Crowberry Ridge to descend by Curved Ridge.

We arrived at the bottom of the crag, just beaten to January Jigsaw (Severe ***) by another party. We drank tea and waited. Curved Ridge was now busy; party after party clambered up by diverse routes.

When the pair above us were out of sight we set off. The climbing was again delightful.

We arrived on Crowberry Ridge again as the sun slipped gently down the western sky and the great wedge of shadow from the Buchaille drove perceptibly across the moor over 3,000 feet below us.

We scrambled into the sunshine again on the summit. We basked in the heat for a while, watching the hills turn dark and shadowy below the infinite sky, its brightness now cluttered with inky clouds moving in from the west.

We turned away reluctantly and descended Curved Ridge to collect our gear and dropped to the path that took us back to Lagangarbh as darkness fell.

Sunday started with another treat. In the pale pre-dawn light Rannoch Moor was covered into the far distance with a silvery ground-mist. The sky in the east brightened and glowed and then that magical spark lit on the horizon and quickly grew and climbed, incandescent in the blue, blue sky. Its light struck across the top of the mist and for a little while the silver was turned to burnished gold. But the heat began its destructive work and soon the mist was writhing and curling to vanish into the air.

Suddenly it was daylight and time to be away to Tower Ridge.

The Tourist Path was already busy with the traditional assortment of folk in inappropriate clothing and footwear heading for The Ben.

We pushed onwards to the Red Burn and traversed wetly above the Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe to drop into the Allt a Mhuilinn and the C.I.C hut for a spot of tea.

The ridge loomed over us and its challenge could not be resisted for long so we hurried up to the foot of the rocks. We thought that the East Ridge of the Douglas Boulder, a 200 foot Diff., would be a suitable approach for us, being unroped and in Walshes. We were wrong. After considerable difficulty on the ascent we arrived at the top to find it equipped with abseil slings for the descent. Perfect for climbers with a rope.....which we weren't!

We had to force a way down the broken rock and steep vegetation on our right, and traverse into the gap where we climbed the 60 foot chimney onto the crest of Tower Ridge. The scenery just got better and better as we

climbed and the whole day took on a dream-like quality. It just seemed so unlikely that we should have such a glorious time in this awful summer.

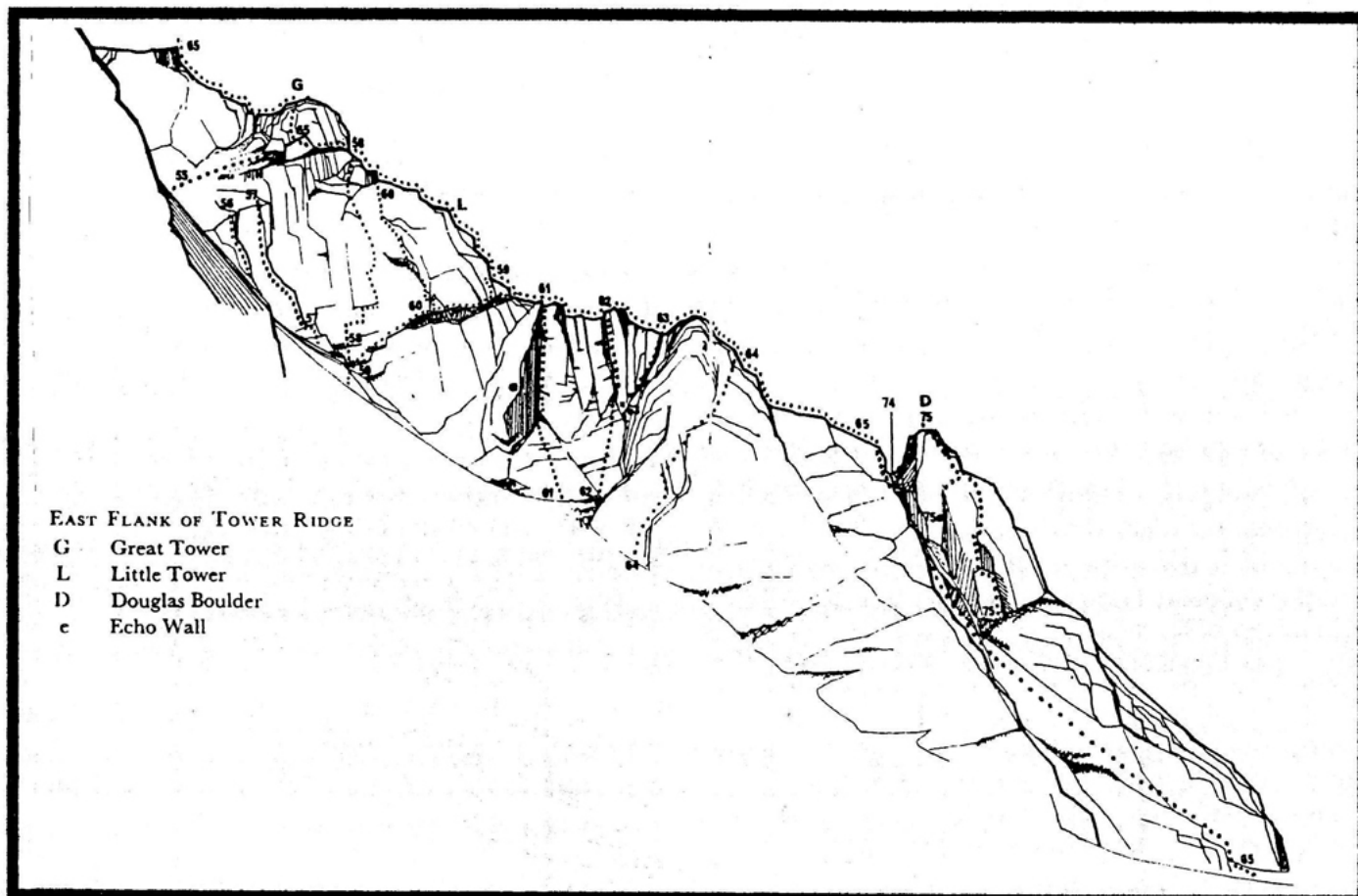
Our attention kept getting drawn to the left where the massive North East Buttress reared up, apparently vertical on this face. We could here sounds of distant climbers but they were at first lost on the vast wall of naked rock. We eventually spotted one or two parties. The positions looked fantastic.

Meanwhile this wonderful day continued and we walked

We dropped steeply down the boulder slope to the Carn Mor Dearg arete with the visual feast of the Mamores before us

We took the arete at a running, jumping scrambling sort of pace, enjoying the freedom to move over rough ground quickly. As we moved round the cirque the crags we had been amongst revealed themselves and we had difficulty moving forward when the best views were over our left shoulders.

We were moving into hazy evening as we climbed the



and climbed upwards in the sun. We met a party from the C.I.C. hut, and chatted for a while below the Little Tower. We pushed on and were soon below the Great Tower. We strolled along the Eastern Traverse and vanished into the dank interior of the boulder cave.

Then we were overtaking another party to arrive back in the sun on top of the Great Tower. The crux of the route lay only a few yards away now. We picnicked and just *stared* at this overwhelming rock scenery bathed in brilliant sunlight. A party in front of us were struggling with the Tower Gap for ages and I closed my eyes, relaxed and half-dozed.

Eventually they appeared on the far side of the gap and we moved over the crest to get a closer look.

We lowered ourselves cautiously down the polished block, stepped across, and started climbing upwards again.

Then suddenly we were on the summit plateau. There were hundreds of people gathered on the summit, eating chatting and just enjoying being there. It felt like a bouldery sea-side beach.

slopes of Carn Mor Dearg and the Ben was starting to cast it's long shadow across the valley below us. From the summit we descended the steep grass and scree to the Allt a Mhuilín as the North Face became immersed in shadow and a chill crept into the air.

The gentle climb back up to the Halfway Lochan followed and the sun was turning red on the western horizon as we contoured across to the Tourist Path. We trotted down the track into the darkening glen.

Monday was going-home day for some of us. A strong wind blew and we felt unenthusiastic about getting high on the hills. We decided to have a look at the Poldubh Crags in Glen Nevis.

Pine Wall Buttress was sunlit and there was no wind. A perfect choice!

We climbed Pine Wall (V.Diff), me with the rope knotted around my waist - I'd left my harness behind.

And then time had run out and we had to start the long haul home

Ed.

**TYPICAL ISN'T IT ? YOU WAIT ALL MONTH FOR AN ARTICLE AND THEN TWO COME ALONG TOGETHER !
THE QUESTION IS : WHICH ONE DO I PUBLISH?.....WHAT THE HELL, I'LL PUT 'EM BOTH IN:
HERE THEN ARE TWO ACCOUNTS OF THE LAST WALK - MEAL.
THANKS TO CHARLIE BIRKETT AND ROGER ATKINSON FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS.**

Kirkby Stephen to Orton Saturday 26th. September

After catching the coach to Kirkby Stephen twelve Fellfarers and one dog set off on the back lane leading to Greenriggs farm on an overcast but dry day with a few sunny periods. Continuing on a good waymarked path over several stiles and under the railways we soon reached the minor road near Smardale Fell.

At this point the leader wanting to follow the coast to coast route, went alone over the top to Smardale Bridge, on a good track with fine views, while the rest of the party went along the road to Smardale Hall and followed the old railway track through Smardale Gill (a popular nature walk) to the impressive Smardale Viaduct, where they were re-united with their leader, and all stopped for a leisurely lunch at the disused limestone quarries nearby.

After lunch we continued up over Begin Hill past the ancient settlement site and on following the coast to coast route past Ewefell mire to Rayseat Pike, Long cairn (ancient burial site), then hard going through heather to the road past Sunbiggin tarn. at this point the character of the walk changed as we followed a good bridleway onto the escarpment of Orton Scar and then following the excellent limestone pavement west to the highest point 412M. near Castlefolds, another settlement. Continuing in the same direction after crossing a wall or two we came at last to the Jubilee Monument Cross on Beacon Hill for a short stop before following the wall down to the B6260 road summit and so down to Orton village via the pleasant bridleway southward, then into the pub for a bar meal and a few drinks, waiting for the coach to take us home.

Charlie

A sunny Saturday saw a small but high quality team board the bus bound for Kirkby Stephen. As we near our destination the weather worsens, another grey day. Our arrival at K.S. throws the navigators into panic mode; the signposts give distances in miles and furlongs. How do you relate that to the new Howgill fells map?

Despite this we leave K.S., and it's horse fair, and start to walk towards Orton along a back lane which leads to open country and Greenriggs farm. Beyond here the majority of the party divert from the coast-to-coast path to visit Smardale Gill with its magnificent restored viaduct and nature reserve, passing on the way Smardale Hall, a large building with a round tower at each corner, giving it a very Scottish appearance.

After a lunch stop at a twin limekiln at the head of Smardale Gill we continued over more open country heading for the prehistoric Long Barrow on Rayseat Pike. Then skirting Sunbiggin Tarn and its fishermen we took the slowly ascending track to Great Asby Scar, continuing over High Pike and Castle Folds to the monument on Beacon Hill commemorating Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1827. This section of the day's route proved to be not only the High Point in altitude but also in classic limestone scenery.

On leaving the monument the thirsty took off for Orton at a creditable Gallop, whilst the rest of the party descended past Broadfell Farm into Orton and the George. Here Whitby Cod took very much less time to catch than Cumberland sausage! The team eventually all left for the return journey to Kendal on the right coach despite a 'near miss' for some involving a coach of young ladies heading for the high life of Penrith. The return to Kendal was easily achieved, in what seemed like no time at all, and lit by a fine new moon. A good walk, a good crack and good company.

Roger

Corris

(Or a Short Walk in Wales)

September 18th. - 20th.

by Krysia Niepokojczycka and Cheryl Wilkinson

KRYSIA...A small and very select band of Felfarers (me, Cheryl, Goffy) set off for Wales on Friday with vague plans for climbing and walking, and definite plans for carousing in the Slater's Arms.

Having arrived at the hut, we parked up and dashed off to the pub without unpacking the car or unlocking the door - it being dangerously close to closing time, you understand - well..... after nine o'clock anyway.

CHERYL... WE RAISED OUR SPIRITS BY HEADING OFF TO THE SLATERS ARMS TO MAKE PLANS FOR THE FOLLOWING DAY. WHICH MOUNTAIN? WHICH CLIMB? THE CHOICE WAS ENDLESS! WE LEFT FEELING OPTIMISTIC, FULL OF ANTICIPATION FOR THE EVENTS OF THE NEXT DAY.

K...Having spent a couple of hours absorbing the ambience of the Slater's we toddled back down the hill and spent a good half-hour trying to solve the mysteries of the door locks on the hut, gaining entry at last, we assumed the horizontal with high hopes of the morrow.

C...WE AROSE TO A GLOOMY DAY, THE MOUNTAINS SHROUDED IN MIST, THE WINDOWS SHOWING THE TELLTALE SIGNS WITH BEADS OF WATER RUNNING DOWN.

ENTHUSIASM PACKED HER BAGS AND DECIDED TO GO ON VACATION! WE WERE LEFT WONDERING WHAT TO DO WITH THE DAY.

K...The misty, moisty morning had us poring over the map and taking a leisurely breakfast...

C... A HUGE BREAKFAST. WE DECIDED NOT TO BE DOWN HEARTED AND DECIDED TO EXPLORE THE NEARBY FOREST WITH IT'S MYRIAD OF PATHS AND TRACKS, WE EVEN PLANNED A ROUTE, ABOUT EIGHT MILES OR SO, A NICE LITTLE SAUNTER, TAKING IN NATURE'S OFFERINGS. WE WOULD CASUALLY TOOTLE ALONG WITH NO NEED FOR SANDWICHES OR THE COMPLICATIONS THAT A FULL, SERIOUS DAY ON THE FELS BRINGS - NO THE DAY WOULD BE RELAXED WITH NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT GOOD BELAYS OR

THE CONCENTRATION NECESSARY ON THE NARROW MOUNTAIN RIDGES - NO TODAY WOULD BE CASUAL AND RELAXING. WITH THE SLUSHING OF TEA WE LEFT THE COSY MINERS COTTAGE. IT WAS ABOUT 11 O'CLOCK (WELL IT WAS TO BE A RELAXING DAY!) AND WE FOLLOWED THE STREAM THAT PASSES THE COTTAGE - IT LED US INTO THE HEART OF THE FOREST, BIRDS SANG, THE RAIN STOPPED AND ALL WAS WELL.

K...We hadn't a care in the world. We knew where we were going and how long it was going to take. Talk revolved around the curry we would make on our return - plenty of time to eat it and digest it before sauntering up to the Slater's for an evening of nostalgia with Denzel (or was it Shadwell ?) on the piano.

The day brightened as we walked and fag stops were numerous and unhurried. After all, we didn't have far to go.

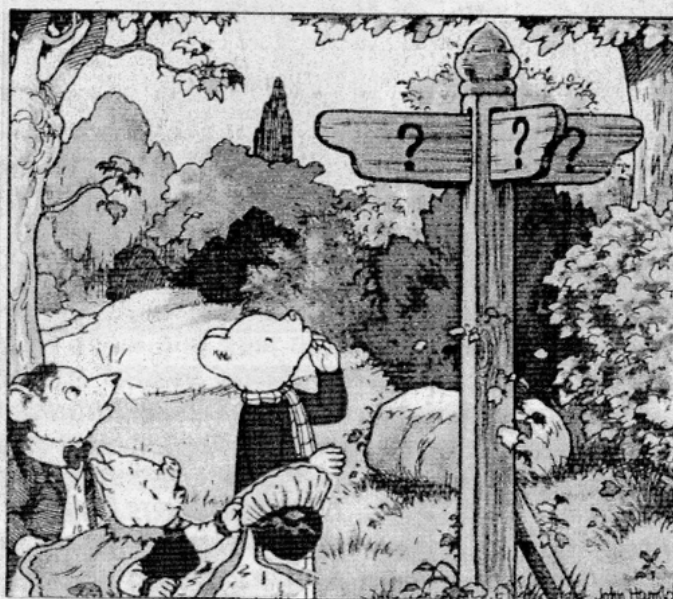
Having entered a forestry plantation, crossed a beck and found ourselves on a broad track the decision to go left seemed innocent enough. We were bound to come out somewhere.

We did but it was onto a metalled road which didn't appear to be on our map.

Hmmmm.....

We'd better go right then, as this would seem to be in line with our circular route, which after all, was only a few miles round. (Remember this refrain !) This was the original 'long and winding road' and after breasting the fifth rise we came upon a sign ! Cheryl lay down in the road at this point.

C... LOST, WE WERE BLOODY LOST!! HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN, WITH YEARS OF EXPERIENCE BETWEEN US, THREE WELL ESTABLISHED FELL WALKERS WHO HAVE ENDURED THE MOST EXTREMES OF CONDITIONS IN THE MOST REMOTE, MOST DIFFICULT WILDERNESSES IN SCOTLAND, THE PYRENEES, THE ALPS, AND WE WERE LOST IN WHAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS A LARGE AREA OF TREES, MORE COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS A



FOREST.

K...The sign was not particularly helpful as we still could not find the road on our map and the village it signified was in a region totally unknown to anyone in the group. HmMMM.....

A forestry track led off to the right and a feeling for things westward took hold of me - I think it was the sinking sun and the fact that we didn't know where the hell we were that made us get down to basics - like, which direction ought we to be going in to get back to Corris?

C...I FUMBLER FOR THE A COMPASS, PETER TRIED TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE FLAPPING MAP, KRYSIA LIT A FAG AND ASKED IN AN OMINOUS TONE, "HOW MUCH WATER DO WE HAVE?" AFTER A SHORT DISCUSSION, CONCLUDING IN DIFFERING SUGGESTIONS, THE GIRLS ASSERTIVENESS HAD US HEADING TO WHAT APPEARED TO BE A GAP IN THE SKYLINE OF TREES, AND THENCE OVER THE RIDGE AND HOPEFULLY BACK ON TRACK FOR THE RIGHT WAY HOME.

K...The forest track proved to be as 'tricksy' as all forestry tracks are; i.e. it switchbacked round ridges and over shoulders with the greatest of ease and the longest of miles. Trees! Trees! everywhere we looked - with now and then a glimpse of a faraway valley, with more trees in it!

C..."NEVER MIND HAVE A PEANUT" I SAID. "JUST LET ME HAVE A LOOK AT THE MAP" PETER SAID. "CAN I HAVE SOME MORE WATER?" SAID KRYSIA. I HANDED HER THE NOW DWINDLING WATER BOTTLE. ANOTHER DISCUSSION/ ARGUMENT AND WE HAD A CUNNING PLAN; IF WE COULDN'T GO OVER THE RIDGE, WE'D GO ROUND IT! I LOOKED AT MY COMPASS, PETER LOOKED QUIZZICALLY AT THE MAP, KRYSIA LOOKED UP TO THE SKIES.

K...I think it was about this time that Cheryl and I began to fantasise about the newspaper headlines when they finally found us, years later - true children of the forest - living on nuts and berries - "They never lost hope in all the years of their wandering"....."It was a novel way to spend the Millenium"....."They buried Peter under a Sitka spruce"....."The child was born in spring, in a makeshift shelter of pine branches and bracken"....

Hysteria had set in; high pitched giggling and bursts

of song rang through the empty stillness..... Goffy tramped doggedly on.

C...WE PASSED ABANDONED FORESTRY MACHINERY, AND TOYED WITH THE IDEA OF CUTTING OUR WAY OUT THROUGH THE WALL OF DENSE TREES. THE PACE BECAME INCREASINGLY MORE URGENT AS WE GLANCED AT OUR WATCHES, TIME WAS DEFINITELY PRESSING ON.

JUST AS DESPAIR STARTED TO TAP US ON OUR SHOULDERS, A PATCH OF LIGHT AHEAD INDICATED A CLEARING IN THE TREES - WE HURRIED TOWARDS IT, STUMBLING, PUSHING EACH OTHER ASIDE, BRANCHES PULLING US BACK BY OUR CLOTHES, WE WERE FRANTICALLY RACING TOWARDS THE FREEDOM OF THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE- HURRAY, HURRAY! WE WERE OUT, AND IT WAS GREAT!

"OH LOOK, A RIVER" I SAID. "WATER! WATER!" SAID KRYSIA. "WE'RE IN THE WRONG VALLEY" SAID PETER! SHIT! - WE WERE MILES AWAY! MY HEART SANK, I'D ALREADY HAD ENOUGH, I WANTED TO CRY, BUT I SNEAKED ANOTHER PEANUT INSTEAD!

K...Still, we thought, a determined effort and firmness of purpose should see us home by 7 o'clock. Best foot forward etc.

C... WE STARTED OUT AGAIN, TRAVERSING FARMERS' FIELDS, OVER PRIVATE LAND, BATTLING THROUGH HEDGES, ANYTHING TO GET US HOME. MILES AND MILES OF COUNTRY LANES - FOOTPATHS THAT PULLED AT OUR NERVES WHEN THEY SUDDENLY FADED AWAY! OUR LEGS WERE HEAVY, OUR HEARTS WERE LOW, AND NOW WE WERE STARVING! THE PREVIOUS BONDING AND "LET'S KEEP EACH OTHER'S SPIRITS UP" HAD LONG SINCE DEPARTED. WE NOW WALKED YARDS APART IN OUR OWN PRIVATE MISERY.

K...We ate our last chocolate bar in an air of quiet determination. Onward, onward, towards the west. We crested another ridge, descended again to a farm by a beck - the farmer was very friendly - "To Corris, you say? Aaah, you've got a long way to go. Over the top, is it?" Fear gnawed at our entrails. Indeed he was right. Over the top it was - yet another ridge and the light failing fast and the path petering out. Decision time.

At this point we looked to our most trusted member for guidance and solace. Goff's comment: "It'll be bloody dark in a minute! We'd better piss off!"

C...THE LIGHT WAS FADING. "OH! LOOK, I'VE GOT A MINIATURE



BOTTLE OF WHISKY" I SAID. "JOBS BUGGERED" SAID PETER. "PASS ME THAT BOTTLE", SAID KRYSIA. THE NIGHT CAME DOWN UPON US.

K...And then.....a twinkling light blinked on in the cwm below. A solitary lonely beacon which drew us onward and downward - to ask for sanctuary. Eventually we found ourselves knocking on the door of the lonliest farmhouse in the universe (or so it seemed to us) which, of course, was inhabited by the most hospitable lady in the cosmos (or so it seemed to us). Cheryl and I were just bargaining for a cup of tea when Goffy hove into view, looking like the Ancient Mariner and wreathed in clouds of smoke. The good lady took it all in her stride, and offered us tea and a lift.

C..."WE LOVE YOU" WE SAID, "DID SOMEONE MENTION TEA?" SAID PETER. IN THE COSINESS OF THE KITCHEN, WE LAUGHED AND JOKED AS WE TOLD OUR STORY. OH HOW WE LAUGHED!

K...However, a certain agitation in her demeanour and references to the fact that she was just about to take a bath alerted us to the realisation that she was expecting a suitor - and sure enough he duly arrived and accompanied us in the back of the 4 wheel drive as far as the main road

C...PACKED INTO THE BACK OF THE FARMER'S DIATSU, WE RATTLED OUR WAY DOWN THE LANE IN THE DARKNESS. WE TALKED OF BEER AND PLATES OF CHIPS SMOTHERED IN VINEGAR, WHEN SUDDENLY THE PICKUP CAME TO AN ABRUPT HALT "NOT FAR FROM HERE" SHE SAID

K...where - passion obviously getting the better of their Samaritan leanings - they left us with assurances that "you're not far from Corris now" and "I've left something in the oven!"

So we started walking again - it was pitch black now - but after a couple of miles and no sign of habitation I began to fear the worst. We still had no idea where we were, and we were losing valuable drinking time. Denzel would be tuning up the piano and we were still in no-man's land! Time to stick out the thumb and shake the hair out of the ponytail.

C...KRYSIA'S THUMB WAS VERY CONSPICUOUS AS WE DRAGGED HER FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD - BUT IT DID PAY OFF, IT WAS NOT LONG BEFORE A MINI BUS STOPPED AND KINDLY PICKED US UP - "WHERE TO?" THEY SAID - "CORRIS" WE SAID IN UNISON - "HOP IN".

K...Off we go! Goff now assumes command, thinking himself safe. "There's a big pub on the

left. You can drop us there. Aye that's it - thanks very much." Doors bang, the bus pulls away....

C..."WELL WHO'S FOR A PINT?" I SAID. "YOU CAN COUNT ME IN," SAID KRYSIA. "I DON'T THINK THIS IS THE RIGHT PUB" SAID PETER.

THE WHITES OF KRYSIA'S EYES FLASHED AS I DESPERATELY DRAGGED HER AWAY FROM PETER'S NECK. WE HAD FINALLY BEEN PUSHED OVER THE EDGE!

K...There are no words to describe..... baleful glares from the girlies silence Goff's protests. We start to walk.

C...IT WAS ALL TOO MUCH TO STAND. IT WAS NOW 10 O'CLOCK - 26 MILES OF TORTURE. WE WALKED DESPONDENTLY INTO THE NIGHT BEFORE REALISING IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO ASK AT THE PUB HOW FAR WAS IT WAS TO CORRIS

K..."Corris? Oh, the junction's just 50 yards from here." smiled the barmaid.

C..."MINE'S A PINT", SAID KRYSIA. "SHALL I PUT THE MAP AWAY?" SAID PETER.

K...After that it was a breeze. We sauntered down to the Slater's - Denzel was in full flow, the valley was ringing, Goffy ended up crying in his beer, and the curry was eventually made after midnight to the strains of Catatonia and Planxty and consumed with real gusto and bemused comments like "I still don't know where we've been!"

Needless to say, the next day we got up late and visited some craft shops. Funny.... nobody felt like a walk, and the weather was glorious.

Still, six or seven miles - give or take twenty.....



Working Weekend. 11 - 13th September

About a dozen people turned up to labour for the benefit of us all. the weather wasn't good and the work was limited to cleaning and painting

meltonian marathon
No report received.

Kendal Beer Festival Drinking Meet 23rd. October 1998

O.K., I'm sorry, right? It wasn't advertised in the last newsletter (*Sack the Editor!*) but you should have guessed we'd be there. In fact ten of us found ourselves in the Brewery Malt Room on Friday night, (making it one of our more successful meets), clutching our newly-purchased commemorative glasses (with the exception of one economically-minded member who had brought last year's glass with him).

On the first round Clare asked for a glass of white wine and when the place calmed down again I explained to her that the basis of a BEER festival is that the organisers provide BEER and people go along to drink BEER. She compromised with a half of mild, and we began in a civilised manner by purchasing halves, swapping glasses for a taste and generally appreciating the differences between the brews.

We couldn't keep this up, of course, and as the evening wore on we found ourselves unable to tell the difference between a glass of Quintessence (the festival beer) and a wellington boot full of sumo sweat (*that's* what I was drinking - it's all coming back to me now) and we just pointed and said, "pint...that".

Clare asked if she could have a half of "one of those nice yellow ones". The barman didn't bat an eyelid and did indeed serve her a glass of nice yellow beer.

Many of the brews ran out during the course of the evening, leaving just the less popular liquors, usually concocted by brewers with twisted senses of humour and no concern for public safety (or the state of the pavements, come to that).

Good job they close on time at the Brewery, I say.

Attendance Record : Cheryl and Jason, Richard, Peter B., Hughie, Krysia, the Brothers Birkett, Clare and Mick.

ON VAGRANCY

From "Notes on Vagrancy" by Isabelle Eberhardt

To the one who understands the value and the delectable flavour of solitary freedom (for no one is free who is not alone) leaving is the bravest and finest act of all.

The healthy wayfarer sitting beside the road scanning the horizon open before him, is he not the absolute master of the earth, the waters, and even the sky? What house-dweller can vie with him in power and wealth? His estate has no limits, his empire no law. No work bends him towards the ground, for the bounty and beauty of the earth are already his.

There are limits to every domain, and laws to govern every organised power. But the vagrant owns the whole earth that ends only at the nonexistent horizon, and his empire is an intangible one, for his domination and enjoyment of it are things of the spirit.

ON WAYSIDE FIRES

From "Lament for the Roadside Fire" by Showell Styles

There was a time, not so very long ago, when the fire by the wayside was the chief sign and emblem of the hardier traveller-on-foot. The term 'backpacker' was unknown in Britain then, and this sort of journeying was generally called 'tramping'; but the trumper answered the backpacker definition well enough, carrying all the means of existence - including a box of matches - on his back and travelling by sequestered lanes and wilder hill-tracks. For him the end of the day's journey, the proof that he was at home wherever he went, was the wayside fire.

'It is part of the very poetry of the tramping life'.

A winter's wandering across Europe and back glows in my memory with the light of 51 campfires straggling across France and Italy and Switzerland, for though there were nights in barns and hovels and even in a tavern or two these were unmemorable lapses from the independence of the roadside fire. A bramble-grown ruin on a hilltop in Auvergne still glimmers with firelight across the years. The gale 'plies the saplings double', rain drives horizontally out of the November night, but I am at home there with my tent slung cunningly from the briars and my little fire blazing hearteningly in the one corner still standing. No doubt a stove would have heated my Maggi soup as speedily and less smokily; but it would not have warmed my heart as well as my belly, or pleased the lizards that peeped from the crannies with their eyes glinting like tiny rubies in the fireglow.

Rod's bit
the social calendar
for more info., or to book,
please call Rod (the earlier the better)
on 01539 733362

Armistice weekend meet



6th. - 8th. November 1998
For the observation of the two minute
silence at the eleventh hour on
Sunday morning
on the summit of Great Gable.
If you have not attended before, why
not join the regulars for this moving
moment in the year.

Social Evening
with Darts and Dominos competition
for Prizes !

at the Rifleman's Arms, Kendal
13th. November 1998
7.00. for 7.30 p.m.

Sandwiches provided
Guests very welcome, bring as many as you like!

Discount Evening

24th. November 1998 (note: this is a Tuesday)

Kentdale Rambler

Kendal Marketplace

7.00 p.m.

followed by the partaking of refreshments in Burgundy's wine bar, Lowther Street

A.G.M.

At the Cock and Dolphin

Thursday 10th. December 1998

7.30 p.m.

If you come to no other event in the year you should come to this - see the editors comment on the front page.

Formal papers are enclosed.

Buffet provided

Clachaig Meet, Glencoe.

One of our most popular meets, this has been over-subscribed in the past so we have booked 3 chalets this year. 18 bedspaces available. Let's fill 'em!

Good weather guaranteed!

Friday 8th - Sunday 10th. January

No excuses - if you haven't got an axe and crampons go to the discount evening and buy them!

Cost approximately £5.00 per night

Booking in advance essential - ring Rod.

For more information ring Rod or the Editor

next edition

First, thank you to all contributors to this newsletter.

I *hope* to bring out the next newsletter before Christmas. If you have anything to contribute (of course you have) please let me have it by **December 13th**. It would be nice if it were a bumper edition with contributions from everyone, wouldn't it? Whether it's just a Christmas greeting to your friends to save the cost of sending cards, or a long boring account like the editor writes, I need your help to fill these pages. Don't delay, start writing now! On disc, typed, or handwritten, I don't care, just send it to:

the Editor,
50, Gillinggate,
Kendal,
LA9 4JB.

THE FUTURE

*What can we do in the fag-end of this cold and miserable year? - I know
let's go to the hut! But when is it free? I hear you ask.*

Here's the answer:

High house is available mid-week for the following weeks:

November 1-6

November 8-12

November 15-2

November 22-27

December 6-11

December 13-18

December 21-New Year

ALL WEEKENDS ARE BOOKED BY OTHER PARTIES

The Last Year of this Century-What's On A glimpse into 1999

January 8 - 10 Glencoe Meet

January 22 - 24 Hut weekend and walk to Buttermere

February 19 - 21 Hut weekend

March 12 - 14 Working Weekend

April 1 - 5 Easter - Hut weekend

April 16 - 18 Derbyshire (pronounced Darbisha) Meet, Oread Hut

April 30 - May 3 Hut weekend

May 15 Walk-meal

May 28 - Jun 6 Hut week plus

May 28 - 31 Camping meet at Strontian, Ardgour

June 18 - 20 Hut weekend plus

Welsh Meet, Nant peris, Ceunant M.C. hut

June 25 - July 9 National Trust have High House.

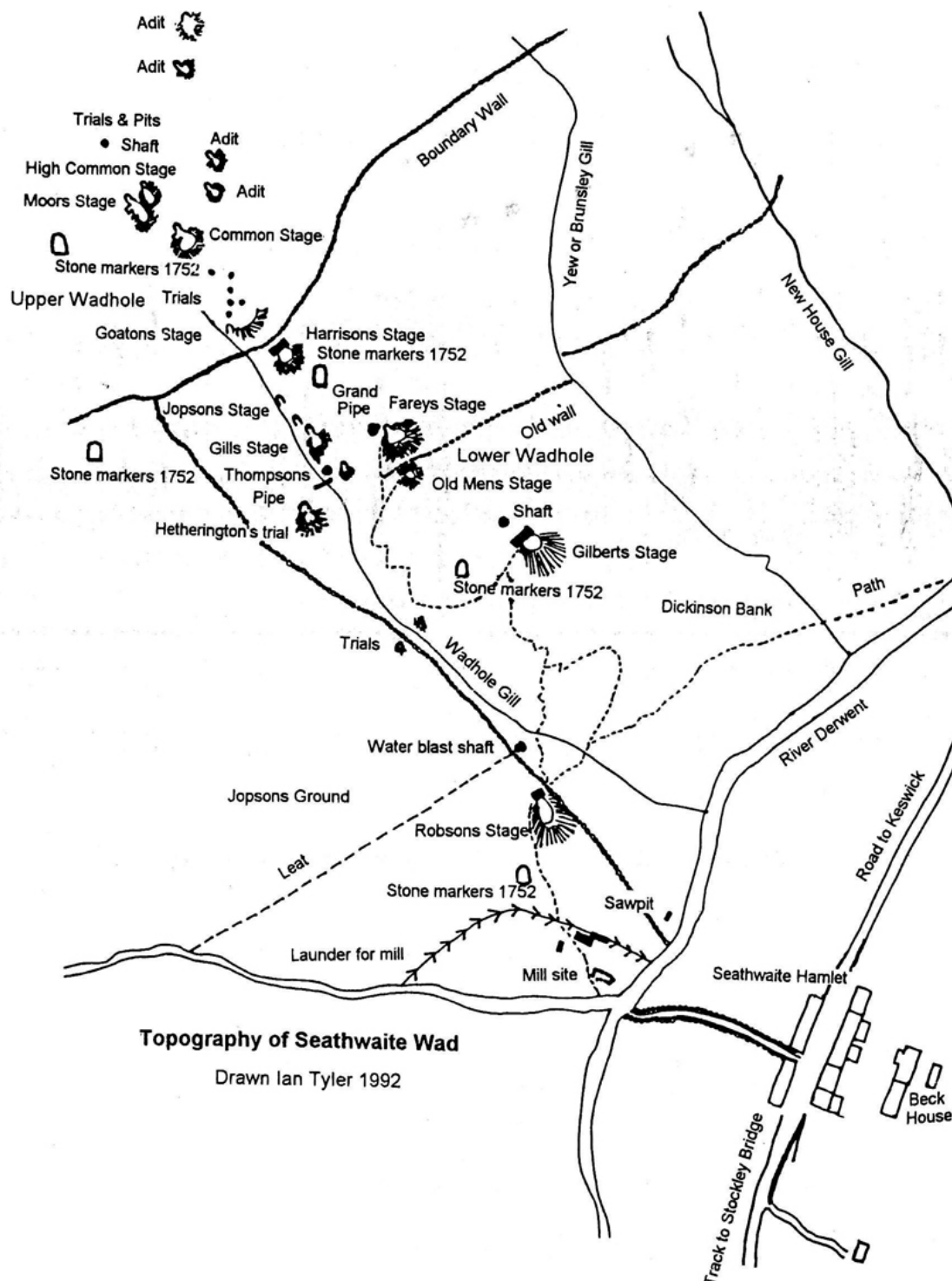
More details in your Christmas Newsletter !

SEATHWAITE WAD

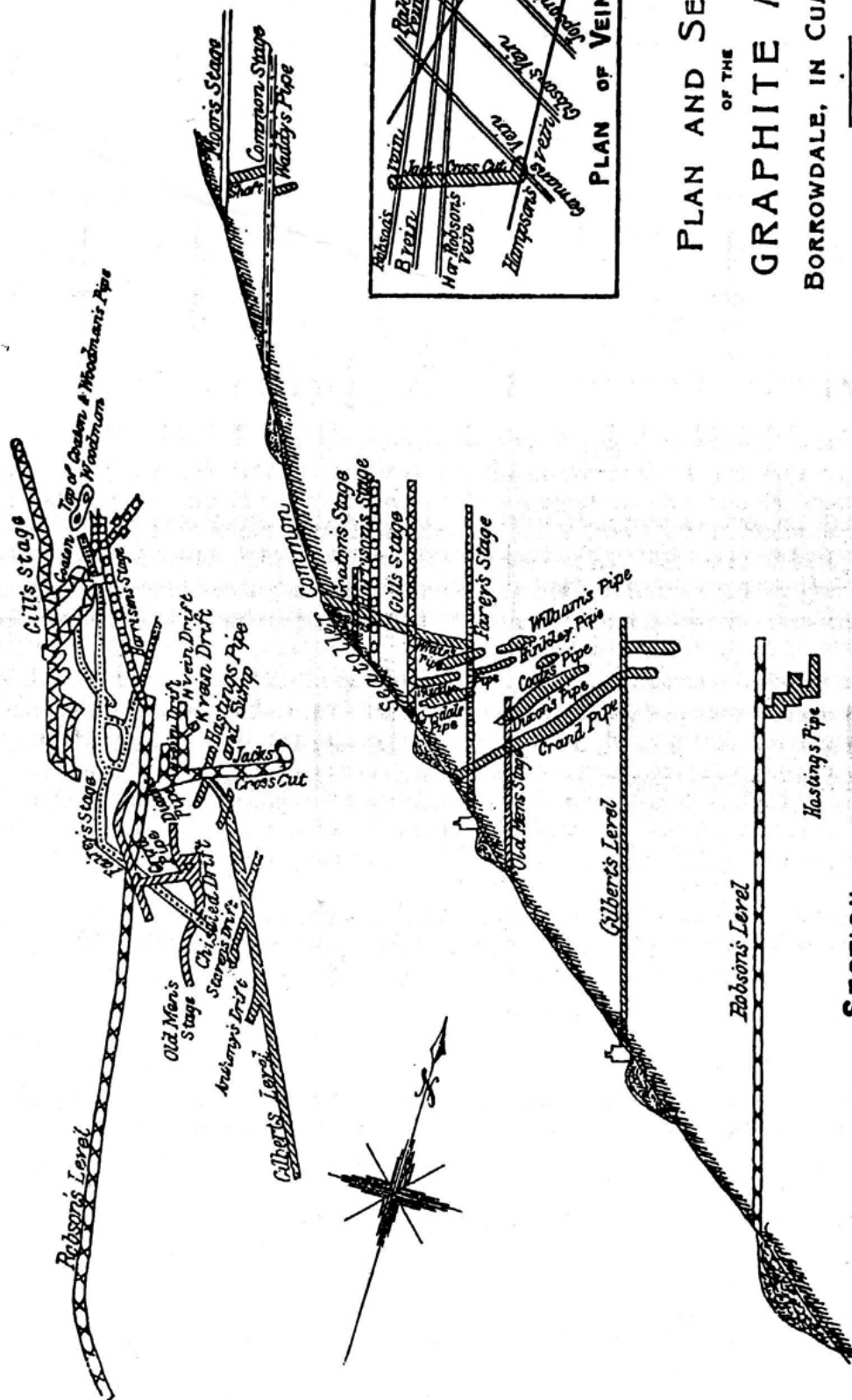
Have you ever wondered what's underground at those old mines across the valley from High House? This is the first installment of two giving details of the workings.

Note that these are historical records for interest only, and should not be used for anything more than above ground exploration.

These mines are dangerous. Do not enter.



PLAN OF WORKINGS.



From the Memoir of the Geology of the Northern part of the English Lake District by J. C. Ward, Esq., F.G.S.

Scale 60 fms. to 1 inch.



Competition Corner

The answers to the last issue's competition were:

Ratty Arms, Ravenglass

Wasdale Head Inn, Wasdale

Old Dungeon Ghyll, Great Langdale

but you all knew that anyway didn't you? You just didn't know what you would do with a free bottle of plonk. Well if you don't like wine you could have had chocolates, or biscuits, or anything really.....

laptop, using the "Digital Ineluctable Choice of Entries" software (acronym:D.I.C.E.). The winners were John and Ann Peat. A bottle of rouge is on it's way.

Thank you to the people who *did* enter.

Here's a very simple puzzle for this issues competition (And I must confess to stealing this from a Radio 4 programme a few weeks ago):

A Number Of Fingers: /

A bottle of something warming for Christmas to the winner. Entries to the Editor,
50, Gillinggate,
Kendal,
LA9 4JB

(before 1st December please)

In fact there were six correct entries. The quickest (almost instantaneous) was from Mr. & Mrs. Peat and the furthest was from the Mr. Atkinson in the Med. (well actually it was from Kendal but on a Mediterranean postcard- I'm very easily impressed).

The Chairman forgot his hat at the last committee meeting to we had to select the winner on his

HANDY TIPS FOR MOUNTAINEERS No 6 and probably the last. Belays



A N C H O R



S H O U L D E R B E L A Y



A N C H O R A N D B E L A Y



A S P I K E A N D S H O U L D E R
B E L A Y



A K N O B B E L A Y

Readers with good memories will remember that in issue number 5 Richard Mercer took the Editor to Northumberland for a canoe trip to the Farne Islands (Wooler Camping Meet March 1997) but that the canoes were never taken off the car because the sea got a bit wild. Well they went back in September this year. This is their story:

Well actually it's the editor's story.

FARNE ISLANDS

29TH. SEPTEMBER 1998

This golden surprise of a day dawns in a seemingly infinite summer of greyness and gloom.

At 6 a.m. the sky is a clear pale blue and the dew will soon be gone. I enjoy the hours of silence before the others rise. I sit out in the early sun, read, write a letter to my daughter in Romania, and intermittently climb on the stone walls of the house.

Eventually there is noise and bustle inside and breakfast beckons. Richard thinks this is the day to visit the islands because a strong easterly wind is predicted to come roaring upon us tonight and after that, who knows?

I have to decide. I pause, torn between hills and sea, but the sea, being the bigger adventure, wins.

We don wet suits and take the car and canoes down to the harbour. I fumble with the straps, always a few seconds behind Richard's practiced moves as we get boats and gear onto the slipway. It's two years, I think, since we canoed together and I've lost the ability to stay with him. He patiently instructs me and corrects my mistakes. Then it's all unloaded and he takes the car away.

I stand alone amongst our motley gear. The air is hot and trickles of sweat run down inside my wetsuit. Sunlight gleams on the water gently lapping on the tiny sandy beach here "where the green swell is in the havens dumb and out of the swing of the sea".

I breathe in and sigh with satisfaction. Yes, the world *is* good!

We are soon skimming across the water towards the harbour mouth and the noise and bustle of the sea on the Tumblers.

People watch from the high harbour wall; curious, perhaps envious? Probably not. This moment is the faintest brushing together of our separate lives, without significance for any of us, and our existences diverge in great curving paths out into the void.

The two boats emerge into the swell and, still tense, I accustom myself to the new motion and pull hard on the paddle. The first destination looks impossibly far away, the white lighthouse on Inner Farne, just under 2.5 miles from the harbour.

I build up a rhythm of sorts, conscious that I can't match Richard's relaxed comfortable style. The boat rocks gently back and forth as I cruise over the softly swelling billows. The bow wave tells me that I'm moving quickly but the islands seem to move no closer. Richard tells me it will take about 30 minutes.

I become hypnotised by the surface patterns on the water. All around me the sea is marbled, lenticular shapes in indigo, misty grey, deep blue and silver flicker briefly into existence and then are gone, to be replaced by more and yet more. Lines and circles and networks of gorgeous curves appear, merge, drift and vanish on the black undulating surface all around me. The rhythmic splash of the paddle, the falling quicksilver-white beads of water from the blades flashing in the sun, the streaming bow-wave all disturb the pattern for a moment and then are absorbed back into the whole and the sea takes control again.

I am entranced by this display and fall behind Richard.

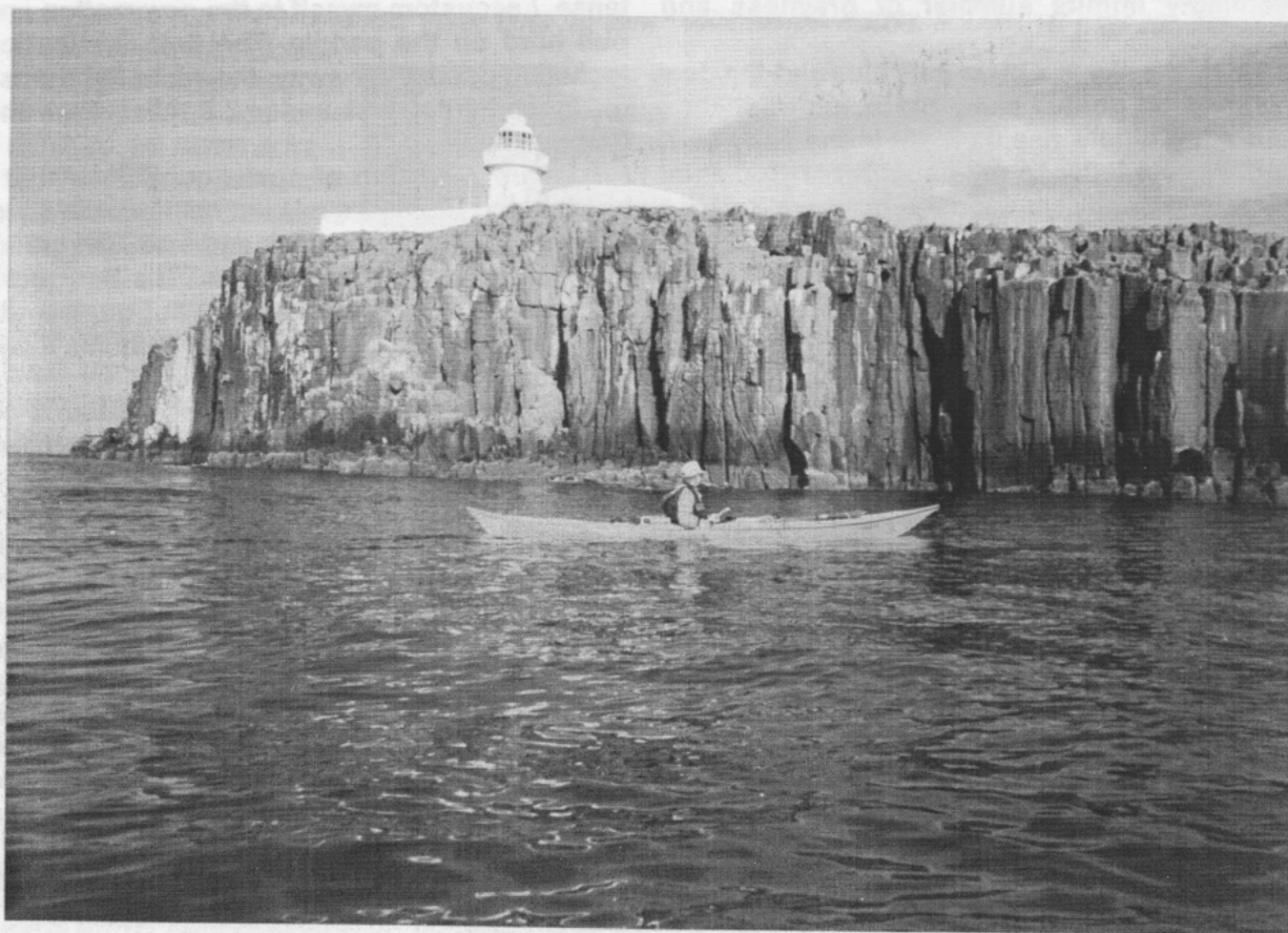
I wake from my reverie and, ahead of me Richard, in his splendid yellow and red craft is moving effortlessly through the water. He calls out, "A porpoise!" but I miss it.

A head pops out of the water before him and blinks, wide-eyed, looking astonished at this golden sunny above-the-water world. We down paddles and sit and stare back. With a gentle 'plop' the head vanishes and Richard tells me to wait and watch.

He powers away and the head re-appears between us, with it's back to me, watching Richard. It follows him below the surface, popping up occasionally to check on him. I

follow on slowly until the seal remembers me and dives. I wait and it re-appears behind me. I laugh at it's game and paddle on to catch Richard, now basking in the hot sun below the cliffs of the first island. His boat is reflected in myriad yellow and red ripples, moving like flames licking across the water beneath him. I take a photograph, knowing that it will never capture the magic of this moment. The cliffs below the lighthouse are crowded with cormorants, standing, stretching, and watching us, wings spread in the sun.

and rock as we pass through the turbulence and then we're back into the open sea, the water dark and deep below us, and the surf crashing on Knoxes Reef only a few yards to our right. It's decision time and Richard asks if I'm happy to continue to the Outer Farnes. I reply, "Yeah, Let's go for it.", while wondering if my arms and bum will stand the pace. We paddle on into the gulf of open water called Staple Sound. Canoe travel requires a particular kind of patience, particularly at sea, and the ability to believe that you really are moving when your



Richard relaxes in the sun, just off Inner Farne

We sit still for a while and as we gaze, the blank rock of the cliffs reveals itself to be a complex collection of stacks and coves and caves. With even more cormorants.

We paddle westward and turn the corner into 'The Kettle'. The sandy bottom is now almost close enough to touch and the water is a clear Caribbean green beneath us. Sunlight sparkles and dances on the tiny waves around us. One or two people are busy at the little jetty below the chapel to our left but we paddle on towards the low white wall of surf ahead of us. The boats bob

senses are telling you that you're somehow anchored in one place and you're going to stay there forever and that you're going to *die* there. We approach the Outer Farnes eventually, of course.

We avoid Staple Island, where you have to pay the National Trust to be allowed to land, and steer towards a rocky beach on nearby South Wamses which has big white signs saying that landing is prohibited. Richard, the rebel, plans to land there of course.

I relax, the prospect of a landfall, and a picnic,

and a chance to stretch my cramped limbs, being very welcome.

Then, as we're cruising into the shore, there is an almighty crash and splash behind me, almost overturning me in panic. It feels like the mother of all Sea-beasts is breathing down my neck and I am afraid, I am very afraid.

Richard looks back and laughs. A few yards to my left a big black bull seal is overtaking me, glowering and snorting, throwing up spray and obviously intent on 'seeing me off'. I paddle fast but he keeps diving and resurfacing to snort at me again. His intimidation technique is brilliant - well it works on me! I don't know which is worse; looking into his black baleful eyes, or wondering where, below my little boat, he is when he dives.

But we're in among rocks now and the big bully holds back. A little furry baby lies on the boulder beach and a couple of females swim out to us. They're happy to watch as we land and make the kayaks secure. The heat blasts us as we picnic and I savour the fresh tea.

Two more canoes appear in the distance and paddle towards us. The leader arrives and floats just off-shore, chatting to us and letting one of the seals sniff his boat as his companion struggles to catch up. She finally arrives looking weary, and he turns and paddles off, leaving her to struggle on in his wake. Richard watches, "Must be married," he comments.

We finish the picnic and embark once more, round the surf battered rocks of North Wamses and now heading across open water again towards Longstone Lighthouse, onetime residence of Grace Darling and her father.

We don't land on Longstone itself but steer northwards to where really big surf is battering the rocks of Northern Hares. I can't believe, as we ride the swell, how close we come to the crashing waves without getting caught in them. The adrenaline is really pumping as we turn around the far side of the island, always *just* out of reach of the big white rough stuff. We're now 5 miles out from the safe haven of Seahouses and the canoe feels very very small.

We pass around the back of the lighthouse and there at Brada is a whole colony of seals basking on the rocks. They burst into song! Well 'song' in the sense that dogs baying and cats caterwauling might be said to be in song. We sit and listen but I don't recognise the tune and eventually we tear ourselves away.

They serenade us with gusto and for a long time as I paddle away I think I'm standing still

because the sound doesn't diminish. Eventually I look back; the seals are now invisible, perhaps a mile away, and the sound seems as loud as ever.

I'm desperately tired by now and having to rest regularly. Richard is very patient and accepts the slow pace and frequent rests. We pass the impressive sea-stacks on Staple Island and then we're heading across the open water of Staple Sound once more.

When we're back at the Inner Farnes and looking at the still-distant mainland Richard suggests heading for a landing on the beach at Monks House, where a short stretch of sand breaks a mile-long barrier of rocks on the mainland coast between Seahouses and Bamburgh.

We take a sighting on what we think is the right place and set off on the last two miles. The sea has lost it's former glory and is now just a black billowing plane seeming to stretch infinitely and wearily away from me.

The rests are becoming more frequent now and I'm panting with dehydration. I think of giant mugs of tea and pints of beer and force myself on.

The coast draws near eventually and suddenly we're scanning the surf and the rocks.... Richard leads us towards the sandy beach. He steers close in by the right-hand rocks, looking for slack water behind them, and gets a battering as the waves force him onto the rock. He does manage to stay upright however.

I head straight for the centre intending to ride the surf in. For a while I'm managing well and feel exhilaration as the sea lifts me in a great powerful surge. I'm about to yell "Yeee-Haa!" when my back end starts to overtake my front end.

For a moment or two I use the paddle to keep me on top of the wave and then...Wipeout!

I'm tumbling, upside down in the surf, all is chaos, I'm swallowing brine and choking as I release the spray deck and lever myself out of the boat. Suddenly the wave recedes and I'm washed up on the beach, spluttering and laughing. We gather up all the stuff that's fallen out into the sea and then carry the boats up and away from the waves.

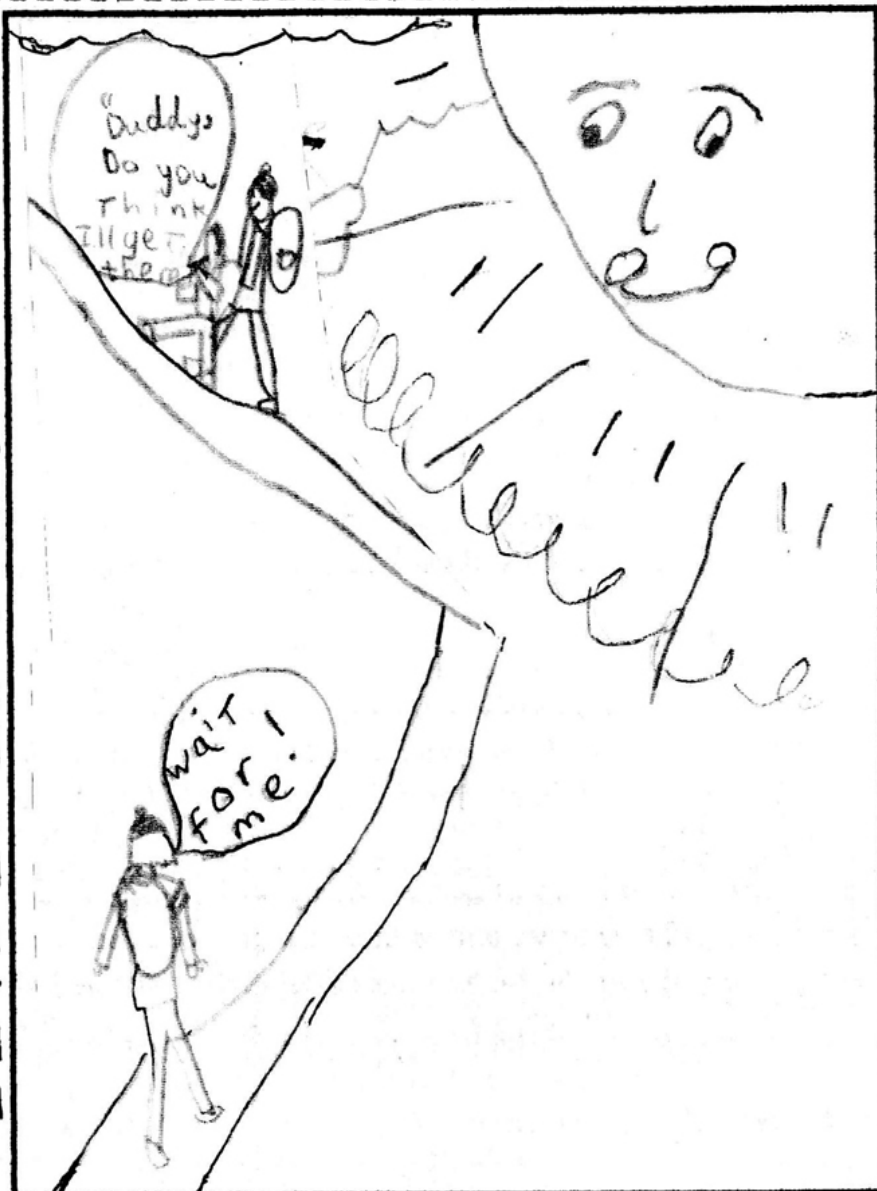
We're home! It is a comical and inelegant finish to a glorious day.

Richard goes off to fetch the car.

I lie on the hot sand, head pillowed on a canoe, and instantly I'm asleep.

Snowdon Climbers by Rosie Southwell

once, two children and their parents went on holiday to wales. They stayed in a climbing hut. It was called Tan y WyDDfa. When we arrived Dawn and Richard from Derbyshire (pronounced Darbisha) were there. Two days later dawn and Richard went home. Then Val and Steve came.



The next fine day

we went for a walk. Val and Steve set off a bit later. After a while Val and Steve caught us up. We started walking up with them. We said we were going to go up to the col and then down the other side and get a bus back.

"Why don't you come up the hill a little bit with us" Said Val. I went up a scrambly bit with them. Mummy, Daddy and Evelyn were far behind. Before long, we were near the top of Snowdon. We met some teenagers walking up. Why are they tired I thought because I'm not. "We're nearly there!" said Rosie. Soon, without noticing we were on top of Snowdon!

And, finally, another piece from the Journal of 1944:

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF HIGH HOUSE

I.F.Bowerbank

Whitsuntide, in the year one thousand, nine hundred and fourty four, was memorable to me for three things.

First, it was a weekend of really hot weather. being unaccustomed to heat waves in this country I was knocked sideways for six, so I spent most of my Whit. weekend in bed- that was the second. The third: it marked my first visit to the Hostel.

I had long looked forward to being there. Most people I knew at the Factory told me something about the Hostel which made me all the more keen to go.

The Hostel was situated in Borrowdale, and I had read of this beauty spot in books. Hugh Walpole was the author who made Keswick and the fells and hills alive to me. So when it was suggested, a few weeks before Whit., that I should go along to the Hostel too, I quite readily agreed.

The main problem was food. Wartime conditions necessitated taking all our own food. It was no good relying on bread and buns in Keswick! however this difficulty was overcome quite easily. We sent food, and such change of clothing we would need, by post, leaving the very minimum of necessities to carry in rucksacks.

All this preparation and planning was quite new to me. It was strangely exciting and not a little stimulating. It gave to the holiday something in the nature of an expedition.

This, I thought, would Scott have felt before his Arctic expedition. and I too, I said to myself, am also breaking new ground.

The idea of sleeping in bunks in sleeping bags, and preparing and cooking our own food was exciting.

And then, as the day came nearer and I heard of various other people who were joining the party, I looked forward to the weekend more than ever. In the beginning there were but two of us; now there were fifteen! It's going to be grand, I thought, I'm really going to get back amongst people again. Saturday came. It was dull and the rain poured. Not just a thin drizzling attempt at rain but a real honest-to-goodness downpour. It was misty and the hills were wrapped in clouds like so much dirty cotton wool.

However, I set off to catch the bus. I mused that if I got wet so would fourteen other people. And we did get wet!

By the time we reached Keswick the rain had stopped, the sun was shining, and there was all the promise of a lovely day. We lunched in Keswick and then began the last stage of our journey to High House.

I tried to conceal my impatience to get there. In my mind were all sorts of pictures of the Hostel itself. I hadn't the faintest idea of what to expect; but thus it will be, I told myself, and thus. However, my premeditations were all wrong. After we had passed Seatoller, somebody said "We won't be long now." I looked along the road but could see nothing. Then one of the party said "There's the farm. That's where we collect our parcels. The Hostel is just behind the farm."

The farm was whitewashed, with low straggling buildings. But still I could see no Hostel, just a clump of trees, and the hills rising up very high above them. There was the sound of running water everywhere.

When we turned in at the farm I looked up to

the hills, and there, sheltered amongst the clump of trees, was a building. A low weatherbeaten grey house. It was set there, firm and deep-rooted as if it had grown out of the very earth.

There it was, the Hostel - High House. This building of stone and slate with tiny windows: oak beams, concrete floors and whitewashed walls. On the door was a plain oak plaque, bearing the following inscription:

17 T.D.B. 47

HIGH HOUSE

Rebuilt by

K FELLFARERS

1934

Inside the place was very austere. I had not expected this. The bare clean room, with it's almost monk-like simplicity was something I had not even thought of.

There were lockers of ample room in which each one of us stored our food. Potatoes, bread, meat, etc. were kept in the larder, a room off the kitchen.

In the common room were two long tables covered with lino, with benches to sit on.

There was a big fireplace, (which was well supplied with wood from the back of the house) around which chairs were put so that we could sit o' nights, warm and cosy, with the black night shut out.

On the righthand side of the fireplace was a

plain oak bookcase and ambulance box combined. The books were many and varied. The case bore the initials of the founder of the Hostel, and a date. The year, I believe, though I stand to correction, when the Hostel was first opened.

In the kitchen there was everything one could possibly need for cooking and serving food. Pots and cutlery were more than we ever needed.

Before we had our evening meal I was instructed in the gentle art of making a bed on a bunk. Being new at the game someone else made it up for me, while I looked on and laughed, and made feeble jokes which no-one else appreciated.

Lighting fires, bringing wood in, hanging blankets to air, sweeping, cooking, washing an endless pile of pots and pans, peeling potatoes, opening tins, again cooking and washing up afterwards, gets monotonous when done at home. But here, in this House in the trees, it was strangely perfect.

There was always the sound of Sour Milk Gill and the small stream by the side of the Hostel, with the hills everywhere around us, calm and serene in a troubled world.

Some day I will go back again, and I hope to find, amongst the hills and trees and blue-grey stone, peacefulness and companionship again.

