

JULY 2024



# LAKES AREA NEWSLETTER

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Summer has now come with its varied conditions - crags and fells are drying out and days (and nights) out are contemplated.

In April, we held a meeting at Kendal Wall to discuss and debate the proposed ideas behind possible changes to the Right to Roam legislation. This brought a mixture of opinions. The general election is with us and whoever is in government will be pressed to address this issue which concerns not just increasing access, but also the responsibilities which follow.

I am amazed at the breadth of issues which come up with the BMC and our love for these fells and crags which we often take for granted, but I feel we need the BMC to protect what we take for granted. 100 years ago the FRCC bought 12 summits, including Great Gable, and this was given to the nation and the National Trust - see article about The Great Gift.

Since the Covid pandemic, there has been a huge increase in people visiting the Lakes, which is good to see from a health point of view and likely shop and café keepers' points of view. However, many visitors do not have a feeling for the fells and often see the Lake District as a theme park. There is much more pressure on the "system" with:

- more needless accidents and increase in the call outs for the mountain rescue teams (remember they are all volunteers);
- more pressure on the paths and the work of Fix the Fells;
- pressures on the roads with more vehicles (and inconsiderate drivers); and
- lack of respect on the fells, with inconsiderate behaviour in many places.

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Nationally the BMC has been through a bad period, but seems now to be ready for the future with:

- A breath of fresh air with new CEO Paul Ratcliffe
- The new website
- Summit magazine publication platform
- etc.

Look to the future – it's only just begun!

Please contact Ron Kenyon - email [ron@jaggedlakes.plus.com](mailto:ron@jaggedlakes.plus.com) – if you have any comments or suitable information and articles accordingly.

## FORTHCOMING BMC LAKES AREA MEETING

*Note for your diary*

Thursday 25th July 2024 - from 6.30pm

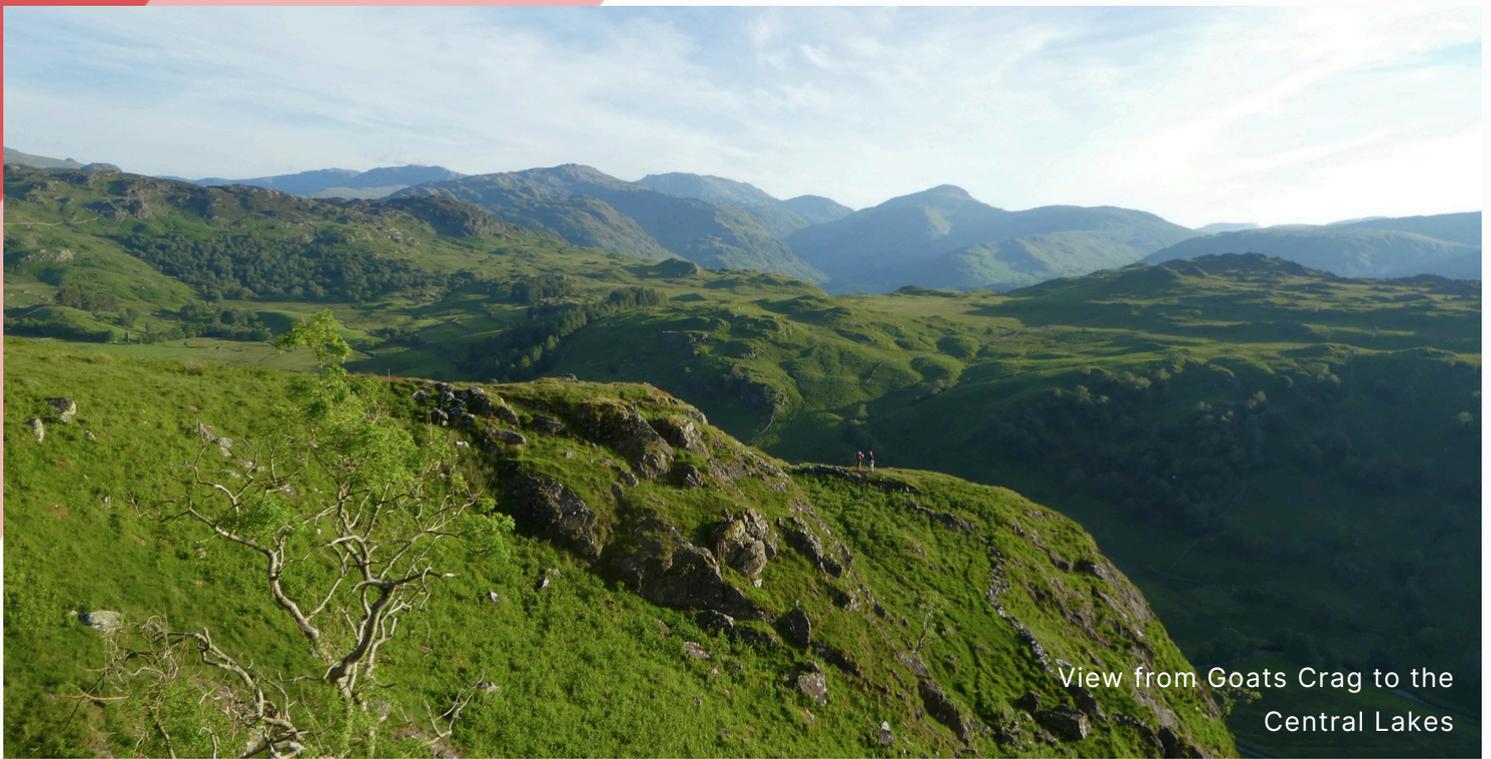
Venue - The Old Water View, Patterdale, CA11 0NW

There will be a barbeque first - please bring along food for barbeque followed by the meeting later.

Parking is 200m further north, towards Glenridding, in front of The Starkey Hut.

Agenda on BMC Website.

Please come along!



View from Goats Crag to the  
Central Lakes



Evening climb on Goats Crag

## THE BMC LAKES AREA NEEDS YOU!

The BMC is the national body for climbing, walking and mountaineering for England and Wales. There is a diverse membership with a wide spread of activities, including:

- rock climbing: trad, sport and bouldering;
- indoor climbing: recreation through to international competitions
- walking on fells and mountains
- mountaineering on foot and ski and various means throughout the world

The BMC and connected organisations are involved in:

- access and conservation
- lobbying and communications with Government on related matters
- mountaineering and climbing clubs
- mountaineering and climbing insurance
- climbing competitions
- climbing walls
- owning and looking after crags
- mountain heritage - with Mountain Heritage Trust
- mountain and climbing training - with Mountain Training
- personal protective equipment technical standards - Technical Committee
- and much more.

**THE BMC LAKES AREA  
NEEDS YOU!**

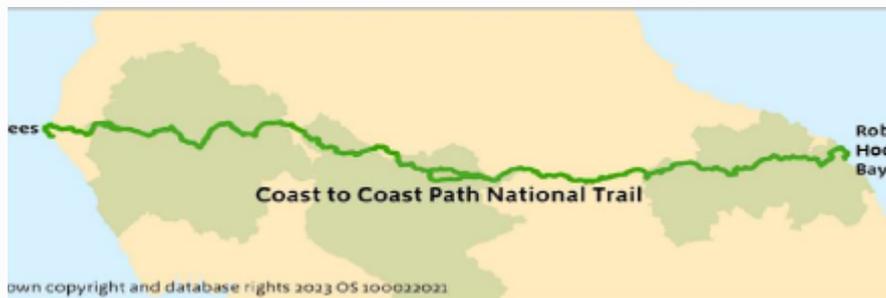
**Vacant positions:  
Chair and Secretary**

**Please contact Ron  
Kenyon if you are  
interested in helping.**

**BMC**

# WAINWRIGHT'S COAST TO COAST (C2C) ROUTE

It was 1973 when Wainwright published his book in which he set out a route from England's west to its east coast (A Coast to Coast Walk – A Pictorial Guide). This came hot on the heels of his series of 7 pictorial guides to the Lake District, and adopted a similar style. It takes the walker through three National Parks (Lakes, Dales and North York Moors). Running from St Bees Head in Cumbria to Robin Hood's Bay in North Yorkshire, it covers about 195 miles and is usually done (west to east) in around 2 weeks.



It soon gained popularity. It is estimated that around 6,000 people walk the route each year. People come from all over the world to do it. Yet, it has never been recognised as a National Trail, and in some places it doesn't actually follow public rights of way... until now!

But what is a National Trail? After all, there are literally hundreds of long-distance routes (just check out the Long Distance Walkers Association website (<https://ldwa.org.uk/clubs/walksdatabasemap.php>)).

The concept of a National Trail was introduced in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, which covers England and Wales only. Such trails carry a legal status beyond 'just' that of a public right of way. There are 16 National Trails at present. Walkers can enjoy them all, cyclists and horse riders can use the Pennine Bridleway and the South Downs Way, as well as sections of the other trails. The King Charles III England Coast Path is also being established under that Act and will become the newest and longest National Trail. In August 2022, the government announced a package of £5.6m to 'upgrade' the C2C to National Trail standard. This has two implications:

- The route has to follow what is referred to as 'the legal line'. In other words, the route must go along a legally defined way, marked as such on the Definitive Map, throughout its length. This ensures it exists in perpetuity and so public money can be invested in it. But – important point – this usually does NOT involving anything changing on the ground;
- Improvements to the route to make it easier to follow and use. So, there will be clearer signage (see photo below), improved gates/stiles/bridges and, where necessary, a more durable surface.



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Work is well underway with both aspects of the upgrades. Diversions of the legal line around Black Sill and close to Angletarn Pikes are going through the appropriate process. Physical works have been completed around Greenup Edge (involving taking a digger in bits by helicopter and assembled on site); collapsed revetments in Borrowdale are being repaired. Also in the Lakes, work is underway to repair the old toll road in Honister where heavy rain has overwhelmed old box drains on this historic route (see left hand photo below).

Although the funding is to achieve a National Trail for walkers, wherever reasonably possible, it will be made (physically and/or legally) useable by people with mobility problems, cyclists and horse riders. All work is expected to be complete by late 2025 (hopefully with no HS2 like U-turn in policy, post 4th July).

Hot off the press (mid-June): The establishment of the Coast-to-Coast National trail is currently delayed waiting for instruction from Natural England regarding the alignment in the Cleator / Dent Fell area. Work continues on some of the legal orders required for the trail elsewhere on the route.

Ken Taylor  
17th June, 2024

For further information, see:

Natural England Proposals: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4767226069778432>

Natural England Proposals – maps: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6670666510893056>

National Trails: [https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en\\_GB/trails/](https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/)



# ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN TO HELP REDUCE ACCIDENTS IN PIERS GILL



Looking down Piers Gill from the Corridor Route

At the May 2024 meeting, the BMC Lakes Area discussed proposals in relation to signage and mitigation of accidents on Scafell Pike and in particular in relation to Piers Gill. Our conclusions were passed to Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team (MRT). The following is from the press release issued by the Wasdale MRT, National Trust and Fix the Fell.

Work to help walkers avoid a dangerous path at the Lake District's highest mountain will be carried out after several people had to be rescued from Piers Gill.

Piers Gill, on Scafell Pike, has been the scene of numerous serious rescues by Wasdale MRT and other Lake District teams – the terrain means evacuating casualties is tricky for the volunteers. Wasdale team members met with the National Trust and Fix the Fells representatives to discuss what interventions could be put in place to help people inadvertently heading down Piers Gill. Signs will also be installed lower down the fell to help lower the risk of visitors mistakenly taking a wrong turn into the dangerous ravine.

The National Trust said: “Considerations were made with regards to the prior report made by the Visitor Safety Group in 2019 and it was accepted that overt signs on the fell might set a concerning precedent and more discrete signs could easily be missed in adverse weather conditions.”

“The decision was made to build a memorable cairn on the left side of the junction on the way down from the summit, opposite Lingmell Col. This is at the point where it meets the path towards the Corridor Route to help with wayfinding where a choice has to be made between descending left to Wasdale or right to Borrowdale.

“In case anyone was to still take the wrong turn into Piers Gill, a sign will be placed at the point of no return advising to turn back. So as not to encourage people to go down towards it, this sign will be out of sight from the Corridor Route. Large stones will also be placed where the route crosses the head of the gill to ensure that the safe Corridor Route path across the head of the gill is clear, even in low visibility conditions.

“Lower in the valley, more information relating to safety on the fells and signs with OS mapping will be placed at the exit points of the major car parks and areas from which visitors tend to begin their ascent including Lake Head, Wasdale Green and Seathwaite in the Borrowdale Valley.

“Information, leaflets, compasses and maps will continue to be available from the welcome team at Lake Head car park.”

Neil Thirkell, Lead Ranger for the National Trust: “We had a very positive and constructive site meeting looking at issues around safety on the route down Scafell Pike and around Piers Gill. We also learned more on the effort and emotion that goes into some of the rescues to this particular site. We came away having agreed on a few measures to help visitors have a safe day in the fells – and hopefully fewer callouts for the rescue team.”

John Bamforth, Chairman of Wasdale MRT, said: “The site visit was extremely helpful demonstrating strong inter agency cooperation in showing the issues that are continuing to cause confusion to the visitors in the vicinity of Lingmell Col and Piers Gill. More worryingly is the increasing numbers of rescues our volunteer team members are having to respond to in an extremely dangerous location and for some of our visitors, tragic outcomes from simple navigation errors.”

# THE GREAT GIFT CENTENARY



FRCC members around the Summit of Great Gable

Many people will have visited the summit of Great Gable in the Lake District and looked at the bronze plaque close to the summit commemorating FRCC members killed in World War One. This plaque was unveiled 100 years ago this year.



Napes Needle. Dave Dixon and Ron Kenyon climbing

The Fell and Rock Climbing Club (FRCC) was founded in 1906 and during the First World War sadly 20 members were either killed in action or died of their wounds. After the war, there were discussions as to how these brave men could be best commemorated by the Club. There were several ideas, but by 1920 the favourite was to buy a fell upon which to build a memorial to those fallen in the war. Initial plans to buy Pillar (for £50), and then Napes Needle were unsuccessful. A Mr Herbert Walker of Seascale subsequently bought the farm at Wasdale Head which included Great Gable and Napes Needle. This new owner was approached by representatives of FRCC in 1923 with an offer to buy the Needle, and as negotiations were going well they discussed the possibility of extending the offer to include Great Gable. When Mr Walker and his solicitor asked for a more precise statement of what was wanted, club member Herbert Cain pointed to a map of the central part of Lakeland and said "all of this over 1,500 feet".

Herbert Walker, who was an old climber and a previous member of FRCC, was sympathetic to the idea and requested £400 for the deal. This was to include all land above the 1,500 foot contour, but dropping to include Kern Knotts, and rising to exclude Sty Head Summit. Nearly £600 was raised from 450 members and the sale was agreed. Then at the Annual FRCC Dinner in Coniston in October 1923 the title deeds to 3,000 acres of high fells in central Lakeland including Lingmell, Broad Crag, Great End, Seathwaite Fell, Allen Crag, Glaramara, Kirk Fell, Great Gable, Green Gable, Base Brown, Brandreth and Grey Knotts were donated to the National Trust for "the use and enjoyment of the people of our land for all time".

A bronze plaque was then made as a permanent memorial. The plaque was unveiled on Sunday June 8th 1924 attended by a “nearly silent throng of some 500 climbers, hillwalkers and dales folk assembled in soft rain and rolling mist, the gloom and gentle wind sounds added to the impressiveness of the occasion. There was no effort at pageantry or emotion”. One of those to speak was Geoffrey Winthrop Young, a well known climber, poet and educator who had lost a leg in the war. Young subsequently climbed the Matterhorn in 1928, later becoming President of the Alpine Club and it was through his efforts that the British Mountaineering Council was created in 1945.

The date of the 8th June 1924 was also the day that George Mallory (a friend of many on the summit that day) and Andrew Irvine were last seen before going missing on Mount Everest.

Subsequently, every November on the Sunday closest to the 11th the FRCC holds an Act of Remembrance: all are welcomed whatever their beliefs. It is not uncommon for over 500 people to attend in all weathers! Alterations were made to the original plaque due to incorrect spelling and a wrong initial, and then the plaque was re-cast in 2013, having been carried down off Great Gable, and then replaced by a team of Royal Engineers. The original plaque has been placed in St Olav’s churchyard at Wasdale Head.



Summit of Great Gable. Richard Hargreaves and John Holden unveiling the plaque.

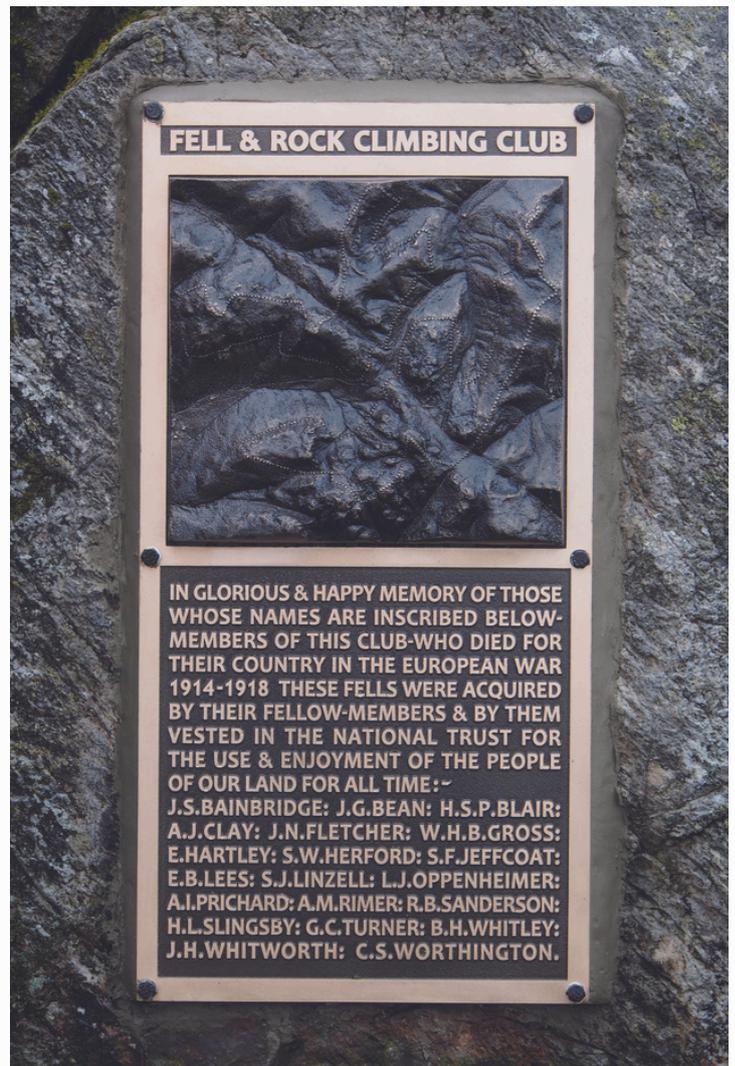
This year marked the 100th anniversary of the unveiling of the plaque on the summit of Great Gable and the FRCC had a special commemorative meet with members staying at their huts in Wasdale, Borrowdale and Buttermere and on Saturday 8th June making ascents of all the 12 summits, which were part of the Great Gift. One member made ascents of all the summits himself and two members climbed the iconic Napes Needle. They all then gathered on the summit of Great Gable for 4.00pm where the President (John Holden) and Richard Hargreaves (FRCC member and Great Nephew of Geoffrey Winthrop Young) led a short service of rededication of the plaque. The plaque was draped in the flag which had been flown on HMS Barham at the Battle of Jutland - the same flag as used in 1924. Richard told of the life of Young and he read the first poignant paragraph read by Young in 1924:

*Upon this mountain summit we are met to-day to dedicate this space of hills to freedom.*

*Upon this rock are set the names of men - our brothers, and our comrades upon these cliffs -who held, with us, that there is no freedom of the soil where the spirit of man is in bondage; and who surrendered their part in the fellowship of hill and wind, and sunshine, that the freedom of this land, the freedom of our spirit, should endure.*

The President read the names of the 20 members commemorated on the plaque and a two minutes silence observed.

The Great Gift was a milestone in commemorating casualties of conflict by giving freedom to roam in the mountains for future generations, which we now enjoy. However, with that freedom comes a responsibility to look after these same hills and mountains for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.



The Commemorative plaque at the summit of Great Gable

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# HILL WALKING EVENTS AREA COORDINATOR



Group on Corridor route to Scafell Pike



Walkers on Jenkins Hill on ascent of Skiddaw

My name is Rose. I am a volunteer with the BMC and the previous Nationally Elected Councillor for Hillwalking. I have since stood down from my role on Members Council but remain passionate about the BMC and Hillwalking and so I have been working with Paul Ratcliff to support the work of the BMC and to increase the BMC presence and offering for hillwalking.

I am currently working with BMC staff to create an inspiring and sustainable programme of events, starting with hillwalking events across each area.

We hope to achieve a BMC hill walking event programme which sees one walk each month in each region, led by volunteers, and overseen by an area event coordinator.

As an initial start point, I am reaching out to all areas to ascertain who would like to take on the role of the event coordinator for each area? I have emailed each area chair and each area hill walking rep. As the event coordinator, we would welcome support to oversee and coordinate events in your area, initially committing to one hillwalking event per month. You would not be expected to lead all or any walks as coordinator, although we would welcome this and we would like to see as many members getting involved as possible!

We would like the event coordinator to attend an initial zoom meeting (date TBC) where we will further discuss this role, the process of organising and hosting BMC events and our wider future vision of BMC area events.

Rose Gare-Simmons

E. [rgaresimmons@gmail.com](mailto:rgaresimmons@gmail.com)

T. 07496973118

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## ROAD ON THE WEST SIDE OF THIRLMERE



The road on the west side of Thirlmere was closed some years ago due to the instability of the land around part of the road following the storms, in particular around Rough Crag, which is right next to the road.

There were initial plans to stop access along the length of the road by car and have a special cycleway and open the footpath by the lake. Following protests from the general public, work was undertaken to reopen the road for use by all and this has now been completed.

# LAKELAND CLIMBING CENTRE - NEW BOULDERING WALL

The new bouldering wall at Kendal has been very popular and currently work on the leading walls is in progress. Latest forecast is that the main wall will re-open in early July.



## WITH THANKS TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED

*We hope you enjoyed this edition, which was put together by Ron Kenyon and Marjolein Thickett.*

If you would like to submit any articles for the next edition of the BMC Lakes Area Newsletter, please email to Ron Kenyon.

[ron@jaggedlakes.plus.com](mailto:ron@jaggedlakes.plus.com)