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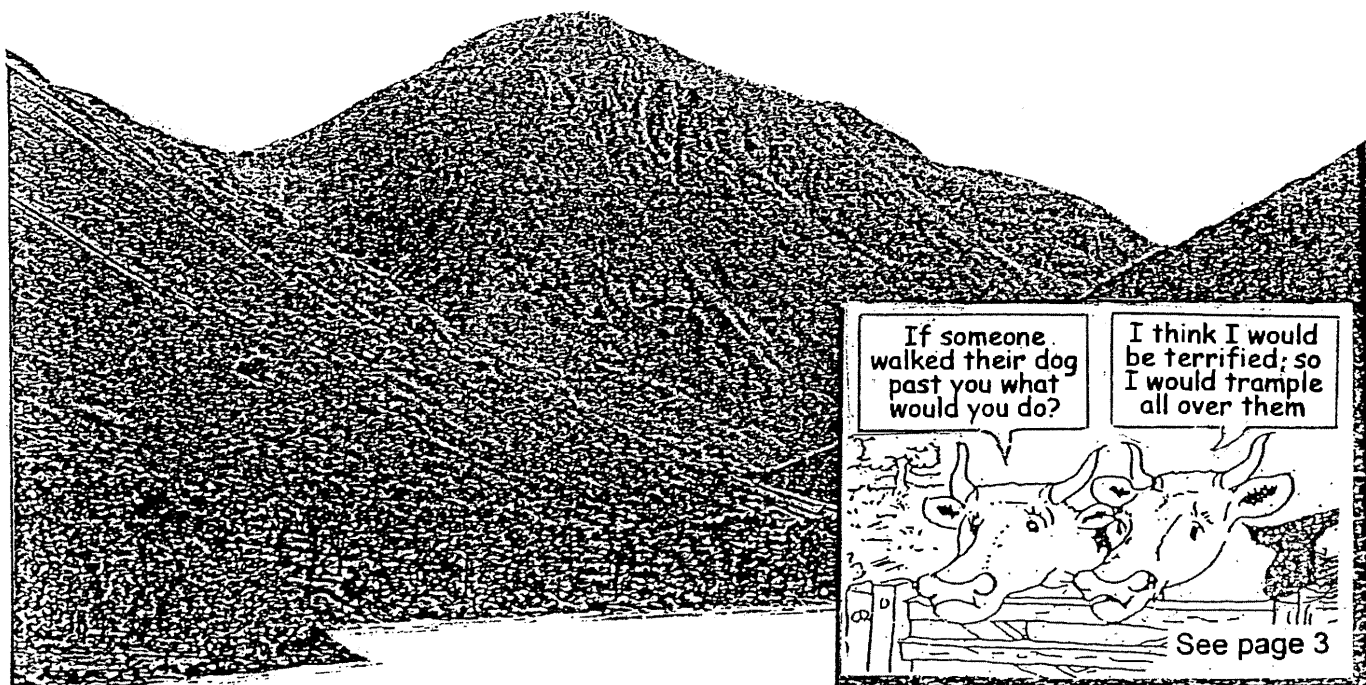
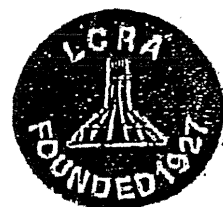
Men with an exciting  
mission on Great Gable  
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# Liverpool Catholic Ramblers' Association

# NEWSLETTER

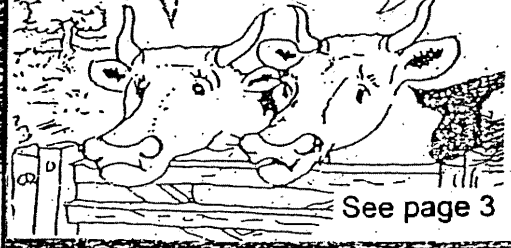
## July/August 2009

Issue No.75 Seventh series



If someone walked their dog past you what would you do?

I think I would be terrified; so I would trample all over them



See page 3

## Great Gable

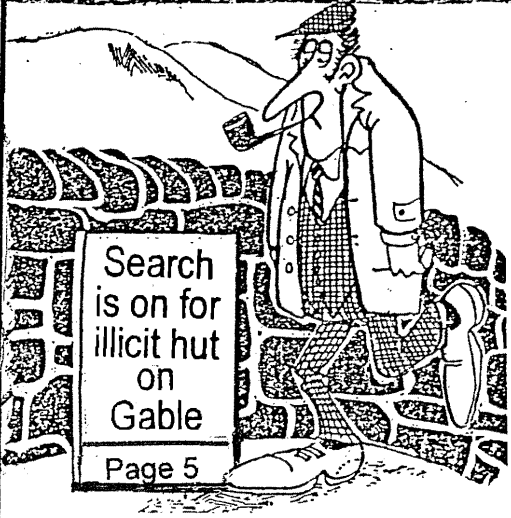
Viewed from Wastwater

A smugglers' hut or den was built high up in the crags on the far side of Great Gable (the Honister Pass side). It was constructed probably over 200 years ago. Over recent years it could not be found. So, had it been vandalised, swept away by the weather, or what?

• Read about the quest to find it – in this newsletter

Search is on for illicit hut on Gable

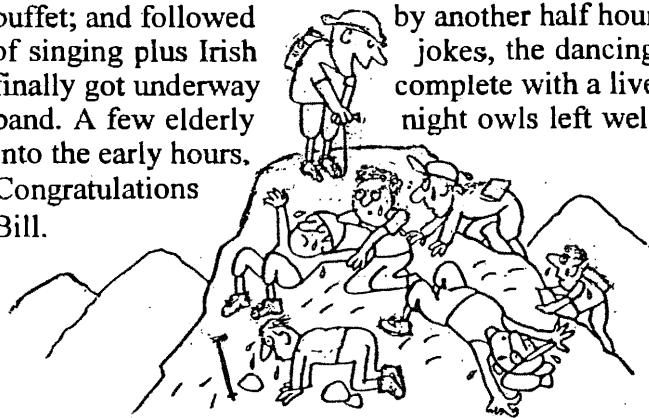
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## Ogtogenarian night owls

BILL POTTER'S big 80th birthday bash at Maghull, on Sat, June 6th, surprisingly (at least to me) saw the 20-strong Aughton Male voice choir kicking off, entertaining us with many popular songs. They were all smartly dressed in their beige suits.

Bill is also a member of that choir. Their conductor also told several Irish jokes between songs. I should apologise to anyone with Irish immigrant extraction – well, that's most of us, including me! There was a laptop screen by the bar (cleverly set up by Bill's daughter) automatically flicking up many snapshots, on a continuous loop, of Bill's extensive rambling years and of his train-driving past, plus family photos. By the time the 70 guests plus about 20 in the choir had finished a superb hot and cold buffet; and followed by another half hour of singing plus Irish jokes, the dancing finally got underway complete with a live band. A few elderly night owls left well into the early hours. Congratulations Bill.



"I just can't make out why you octogenarians are so knackered. You have had many years of practice!"

On Sun June 28, a multiple 80th birthday party took place at the Skillicorn's abode – half of the Seniors' Section attain that milestone this year!

### Dolomites holiday memories

The big photographic highlight at Bill's do were of a Dolomites holiday of some 50 years ago, when Bill was roped up with two or three other members plus a special guide on the Marmalada permanent glacier. It had a flattish summit, but one walked over dangerous snow-covered ravines. It brought back personal memories to me of when I was on a fortnight's holiday there about 15 years later with Kevin O'Keefe, just before Kevin got married.

But our glacier guide disappointingly called off our day trip due to bad weather conditions at the last minute. However, the weather improved and later we did get halfway to the summit by chairlift, and had a good view of the many trekkers up there through a coin-operated telescope. We then walked down past a colossal new dam. That Dolomite holiday (organised by the HF) was one of the best I have experienced (skiing holidays excepted). Incidentally, I think that the High Tatra Mountain range (Zakopane) is quite similar to the Dolomites, minus, of course, the Marmalada glacier. *Dave N.*

## Monkey business in Malaya

STEPPING on board our coach en-route to Ingleton on May 24, there was a rendition of 'Happy Birthday to me,' complete with balloons.

A big number 70 was on them. That can't be right! If I had another zero I could change that 70 to read 007! Well, some of you know that I did actually meet 007's real brother, Corporal Neil Connery, in Germany, during part of my National Service days.

We are short of tales in this edition, so here is mine: Did you know that I was one of the last National Servicemen before call-up finished in Nov 1960? Normally a two-year thing, but the last few intakes had an extra 6 months added on because they could not get enough regulars to fill the vacuum. My extra 6 months was done in Germany, as a medical clerk. Second-in-command was a surgeon, a Major Butcher!! You couldn't make it up, could you?

Before then, I was in a camp near virgin jungle in Malaya at 39 Field Ambulance (Ghurkha Division).

There were about 200 men there. Fifty per cent were Ghurkha soldiers. However, there were only about 5% British regulars out there (few wanted to be a medic!). That left 45% of us conscripts; mostly 21-year-old deferred apprentice bricklayers, plumbers, etc. We all thought we may just miss the call-up, but now that we were all stuck out there we were determined to stick two fingers up to the Army! ✌

Our camp was just 6 miles from Kuala Lumpur – so one attraction was air-conditioned midnight movies. But we had to be back at the camp by 24.00hrs (*officially!*). So, when our mates were on guard duty they would falsely sign us back into camp by midnight! We returned the favour. One lad even got a job as an occasional nightclub singer in that city!

When we taxied back to camp in the early hours we sometimes spotted the sergeant (with pet monkey) at the entrance, but no guard was at the tall steel gates at the back. Well, we were all as fit as Major Butcher's dog; so climbing those gates: no problem!

We started at 7.00 and finished at 2.00 every day as it got so hot. So we sometimes booked a lorry to take us on afternoon trips to a quiet beach. Yes, it was just one long holiday for us in Malaya.

There was the downside of early morning parades on the tarmac square, occasional jungle campaigns and mosquito bites... Hey! We could live with that. I didn't think that I would still be climbing over gates 49 years later, on that occasional ramble!

### Finally, back to Ingleton

You made my day with your cards and birthday cake, plus liquid gifts – now long drank. Thanks.

By the way, the proceeds of your generous coach whip-round got me a fancy 6ft high wrought iron garden gate. I don't climb that one! I can now see my Lamborghini through it from my back window.

I could fill a newsletter with past incidents. But I also want YOUR reports or stories! Thanks, Gerry, for sending in the smugglers' hut article.

23816290 Private Newns (RAMC)

## Welcome to new members

We give a hearty welcome to all new members who have joined our ranks during the past few months, namely: Chris Whyte, Kevin Walker, Ronald Strandberg, Hannah and Julia Sutcliffe.

### Just a few recent rambles

**Ingleton** was well attended, and was a beautiful day but not too hot. We had three walks, with the 'A' starting from Clapham for Gaping Ghyll and Ingleborough. The 'C' started from Chapel Stile. All three walks finished by doing at least some of the very scenic waterfalls. It was Dave's big day out. (Birthday was actually 4 days before). *Pecca*

**The Stiperstones** are near Shrewsbury and run parallel with the Long Mynd. It is a beautiful rural part of England to live in, with the Stiperstones Inn very popular for meals. It is a very distinctive 5-mile long summit ridge (quartzite) formed some 480 million years ago. The 'A' walk alighted first and promptly headed for a forest that must have been planted by the same person who designed Hampton Court Maze. It took them a considerable time to find their way out, and finally on their way up, they passed the 'C' party in the opposite direction on their way down. The 'C' had already done part of the famous ridge and other distinctive rock formations up there.


Many of us had a meal at the end of the walk and sat in glorious hot sunshine in the delightful beer garden there. *Snailbeach*

### Editor once had a rare lottery win

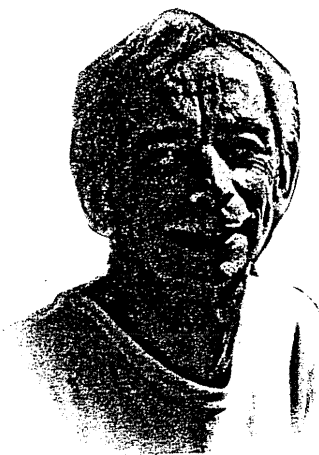
You have to read the Malaya story on page two before you read this one

Some of you may question the 7 till 2 working day in the Army. Shouldn't the Army be on 24-7 alert? True, in a war, or on manoeuvres – and they were not actually in a jungle. We held Army exercises in large rubber plantations, with care not to damage the trees – 'tapped' daily by lorry-loads of plantation workers!

Back in camp we also trained for action. Field Ambulance units are front-line first-aid medics who would carry casualties off the battlefield. Our weapon? A commando-style Sterling sub-machine gun – to protect our soldier patient!

Clerks did various jobs and mine was to type and print the daily orders out, and then I would jump onto a bike to deliver them around the large camp – the camp's newsletter! 

Back in civvy street my hours were long, often 8 till 8, on newspaper production but with a 3-day weekend. Oh, that rare lottery win: I got, elatedly, the thunderball number and one other number. The prize: just £5 – a rare win indeed!



## Richie Cannon

1947-2009

Sadly, Richie died peacefully at home, after a short illness at the end of May, aged 62. Our sincere sympathy and condolences are extended to his wife Colette, daughter Lauren and relatives. May he rest in peace.

In fact Richie was (and I quote): "A loving husband, devoted father, much-loved son, brother, uncle, great uncle and Godfather." He was also a rambler, musician, linguist and a good friend to many.

At his packed funeral, on June 10, he was certainly well represented by many rambles and friends, which included the Inland Revenue people (that is where he worked before retirement two years ago).

Richie joined the LCRA about 35 years ago. He was quite active and on the committee for several years until he married Colette and the resultant birth of Lauren. Then he was off the scene for a while (as many young fathers are) but he bounced back again. He then got involved not only with the rambles and weekends away, but also with the Ramblers' music group on a Thursday night, and more recently, playing the organ at our annual retreats. He will be sadly missed.

The priest at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Church put it in a nutshell by saying that when Richie played the keyboard at Mass he used to spend some while tuning up his instruments. (It was the same on a Thursday club night). "Now, Richie will be up there . . . probably tuning up his own harp!"

Donations were requested for support for the work of Woodlands Hospice, and so club members had a collection for that worthy cause, and a cheque for £80 has just recently been sent off from the club.

### Cows attack and kill a dog walker

It happened the other month, as some of you will have heard. The lady vet was holding her dogs on a lead near Hawes, on the Pennine Way. Then the cows, protecting their calf, attacked her and trampled on her.

A farmers' union spokesman said that cows are normally docile 99 per cent of the time unless a calf is in the field. Then they will get agitated and become protective for their calf.



The correct thing to do if you are attacked is to immediately let the dog or dogs off their lead. Then both cows and dogs will run safely away from you.

Incidentally, my young sister knew that the vet was really good with dogs and she took her own sick West Highland Terrier to that caring lady a few years ago in Warrington. By the way, that dedicated lady was trained as a vet at Liverpool University. *Dave N*

## EDGE OF WALES WALK

Last Summer, Tony and I (Seniors' Section) had a holiday with the Edge of Wales organisation.

It was run by Peter Hewlett and colleagues. We stayed six nights at the Ship Hotel in Aberdaron which had a friendly welcome and lovely food

Each morning, one of the Edge of Wales team came to the hotel and we drove to a destination on the Llyn Peninsula coast. They took us in their car, to the start of our route and we walked back to where our car was parked. In this way we were able to walk much of the southern coast too. It is a beautiful area with amazing coastal paths and views and lots of historical interest too.

The organisers are very flexible and will either plan routes for you or help you to access the areas you want. This enables you to do linear walks. They now have purpose-built accommodation for groups but will also transport luggage and book a series of hotels for you if you want to do the walk in that way. All standards and types of accommodation are available. It's a great way to walk in this area with friendly and helpful assistance and advice. They even provide maps and a GPS!

The websites are [www.edgeofwaleswalk.co.uk](http://www.edgeofwaleswalk.co.uk) and [www.aberdaronbandb.co.uk](http://www.aberdaronbandb.co.uk) *Marcia Thompson*

*Apologies for not putting this holiday info in earlier. – Editor*



## Eskdale Weekend

**Friday to Sunday 4/6 September**

We will be staying at the hostel on the Friday and Saturday nights for £41.20 total, bed and breakfast with the option of purchasing the other meals at either the hostel or the pub down the road. Hostel meal costs vary depending on your menu choice, starting from approx £4.50. Obviously they need to know a few hours in advance for ordering meals.

We have been there before so don't forget that it is dormitory accommodation and no 2-bedded rooms but you won't be in them much as you will be either out walking or in the pub nearby. Own transport.

Bookings must be secured by July 25 and paid for by then (£41.20). Deposits not accepted, so no payment – no booking! See the person with the book on the coach or send a cheque to Will Harris (made out to LCRA) 57 Higher Road, L26 1TA.

**STAVELEY (6 Sept) is now moved to 13 Sept.** – So write the change in your programmes NOW.

**SNOWDON 23 Sept.** There will be provision for a 'C' walk on this day, but the 'C' party won't be going to the summit. Check who is leading the 'C' nearer that date. 'A' and 'B' will go to the summit.

## Seniors' Section report

## The Chalet – 6.5.09

**DESPITE reduced occupancy, our welcome was as warm as warm, and as gentle as ever – mugs of tea and coffee being pressed into appreciative hands along with wedges of the fruitiest of fruit cakes made by Harry's firm hands.**

After the exchange of news, gossip and walk details, five of us left for our walk, leaving Maria and Pat Murray for a trip to Mold to replenish or supplement supplies for the rest of the week.

At the start, the route was the same as our previous visit in May 2008 which had us slipping and sliding over felled logs and tripping over a tangle of branches. Happily this time the path was easier to follow and the tree-fellers (not three lads from Dublin, but tree . . . oh, forget it!) had moved further into the forest, leaving this area less log-jammed, though still scarred by tractor tyre tracks full of mud, water and tree branches.

Once clear of the forest, we descended by a series of cultivated fields, pastures set aside for winter feed, stepping carefully, so as to do as little damage as possible to the new season's growth.

It was nearing lunch time and not having found a suitably sheltered spot from the cold brisk wind, Bill suggested that we repair to a pub. This meant descending the steepish lane into which we had just entered; his idea was greeted with acclamation. On the way down a cyclist was making his way up and asked for information about the route ahead – a Canadian, staying in the area for a while. With a wave and thanks, he vigorously continued his climb, leaving us to wonder if he was more used to longer and steeper hills in his homeland.

Arriving at Nerquis, the pub was disappointingly closed, but we found an inviting bench upon which to rest and feed. Locals maybe were wondering if another episode of "Last of the Summer Wine" was being filmed!

With lunch behind us, the height we had surrendered in search of comfort had to be reclaimed. As luck would have it, the path took us through fields of lush grass and as every walker knows, thick grass is similar to walking through deep snow, this straight after lunch caused our tiring limbs to complain and all conversation ceased until more reasonable terrain was reached.

The early evening, after a series of lanes, paths and stiles, saw us back at the chalet welcomed by the tantalising smell of food cooking, which was soon on the table to be savoured and demolished.

For afters, Maria produced, made by her own fair hands, a beautifully iced and decorated birthday cake, topped by three appropriate figures, celebrating three recent and future eightieth birthdays. What better way to end a beautiful day?

All our thanks to Bill for leading our walk and also to Rosemary, Maria and Harry for their hospitality.

*J & G*

# Intriguing quest to find an elusive smugglers' den



WHISKY (8,000-11,000 gallons a week) was smuggled over the border in the 1820s. Wadd, an ultra-pure and highly valuable graphite (black lead) was mined just one mile from Great Gable, at Seathwaite. It was also a thriving smugglers' trade in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, in spite of tight security. A den was hidden up Great Gable. Where?

It is actually more than 50 years since I first read about the smugglers' hut on Gable, in a book about rock climbs in the Lakes.

From my failing memory, I wrongfully recall it being on the Ennerdale flank of Great Gable and could only be approached by abseiling. Thinking if that were so, why go to all the trouble, when any contraband could easily be hidden on the open fell? So interest waned, except for my desultory queries at slide shows or talks, one of which was in Keswick's Moot Hall where I was given short shrift by the presenter. Perhaps he thought I was putting his vast Lakeland knowledge into question; and not being a dedicated Wainwright follower, I am pretty sure he wasn't aware of its presence; otherwise it would have been widely known.

And so, it was only last year on an HF holiday at Derwent Bank, Portinscale (near Keswick) when it was confirmed by one of their leaders. He duly sent the story from a March 2005 Trail magazine herewith. – *Gerry McDonald* (Seniors' Section).

*First half of story heavily abridged by your editor*

**THREE men set off for the Lakes on a mission and on the way up they called at Kendal Library to get, perhaps, some new light on the secluded smugglers' hut on Great Gable.**

They were soon disillusioned by an old newspaper cutting (1983) saying that the last remains of the smugglers' hut, near the top of Gable Crag on the north face of Great Gable, seem to have disappeared. Oh no! However, that weekend, staying the night at Ambleside Youth Hostel, they decided they weren't going to give up the search so easily.

Next day they started walking from the top of the Honister Pass, allowing them to pick up the spidery Moses' Trod path. A few hills later and they tried to get a GPS fix in the thick mist near Central Gully but the batteries failed at the crucial moment. Was this an omen? Were they on a wild goose chase?

They now descended the grassy rake that went down to Central Gully and then soon found the grassy path that was sifting to a plateau at the top.

Our narrator's companions were Tom and Jeremy (*cartoon characters?*). Jeremy was now getting a bit long in the tooth but he was sole possessor of vague memories of a den near Central Gully. He now instructed them to get out the climbing gear.

I've cut about 500 words out of this lengthy story. It was too long, like the epic 'Gone With The Wind' when most of the action took part in the second half. And now our valiant explorer will take over with his own words . . .

"... Old man Jeremy was now anchor man for my 30-metre scramble down (but I was not a true rock climber). The rope gave me that extra confidence.

I landed on a deck of grass and unclipped the rope then knelt on a rock, looking down. Instead of seeing the all-swallowing death-dealing void I expected to see, I was struck with wonderment – I saw order. There were four walls, perpendicular, and a flat, square floor. This, without a shadow of doubt, was IT! That newspaper statement was definitely wrong.

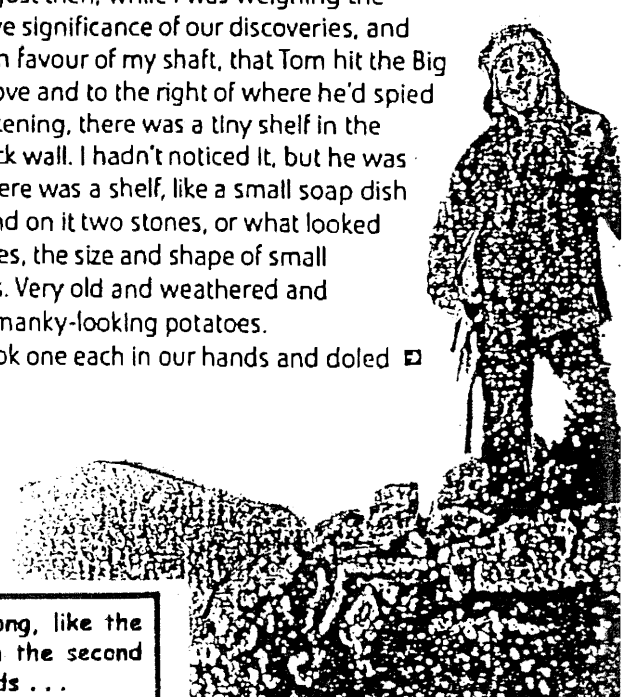
"This is it!" I shouted upwards.

I clambered over the near wall, made almost entirely of one natural slab of rock, and plonked down on the moss-covered stone floor below. The walls around me ranged from between a metre and two metres tall. I felt immediately protected, calm – this would be a good shelter. The floor was totally clear, with just a small hole in one corner. I spent a few minutes' sketching and feeling excited. Then I called for Tom the photographer to come down and share my moment of glory.

Once installed in the hut we both continued our learned-from-TV Gentle Archaeological-Type Investigations – in the hope of finding something (What? Bottles? Corks? Labels? We didn't have a clue) that would somehow link this place to the excitements of illegal whisky distillation. I probed the hole, which by the dim light of my LED torchlight I could see was actually a deep shaft (this could definitely be still-related, I speculated), while Tom sniffed around some dark patches on the rocks in the bottom of one corner – 'potential fire blackening' we thought.

It was just then, while I was weighing the respective significance of our discoveries, and finding in favour of my shaft, that Tom hit the Big One. Above and to the right of where he'd spied the blackening, there was a tiny shelf in the hut's back wall. I hadn't noticed it, but he was right. There was a shelf, like a small soap dish really, and on it two stones, or what looked like stones, the size and shape of small potatoes. Very old and weathered and slightly manky-looking potatoes.

We took one each in our hands and doled ☐



out a little more softly-softly Tony-Robinson-style inspection. A scrape with a thumbnail, and a small section of the mossy muck came off mine, and then off Tom's, revealing underneath a silky gleam. I felt my giddy heart rate step up another notch as I gently rubbed my sample on the corner of my notepad. The soft black smudge said it all: this was graphite, black lead, WADD.

Dusk was falling as we scrambled gleefully back up to Jeremy, who was wearing an expression that said: "I am Gandalf. How foolish you were to question me!" We were reluctant to leave the scene of our splendid find and begin

the walk back over Green Gable, Brandreth and Grey Knotts, back to Honister. But with each step away, our mouths watered at the prospect of popping the lid on this party-pack of a story, and sharing it with our friends, colleagues and (more shyly, with less exaggeration) interested experts. Never mind if it would need 2,000 words of context before it would impress anyone. Wainwright had been right: a walk, like a life, without ambition, is just aimless wandering. What he'd failed to say was just how awesome a walk with a mission can be. Another 0.1 per cent of the Lake District surveyed, then – just another 79.9 per cent for you to go at.

**Mission accomplished! ”**

### What happened next?

Not without a certain amount of childish excitement, I emailed the story and photographs of our find to the Lake District Historic Environmental Record, the definitive record of sites of archaeological interest in the National Park.

Next day I received a call from senior archaeologist at the National Park, John Hodgson, saying just what we wanted to hear:

"You're right to be excited. There's nothing on the records about this. It is a very interesting discovery. We'll make a site visit to confirm identification, and record the information you gave us in the Historic Environmental Record (your names will go down with it too), which means it will be protected from now on. – Result!

### There's more to be found!

Only 20% of the Lake District has been archeologically surveyed! New finds are being made all the time.

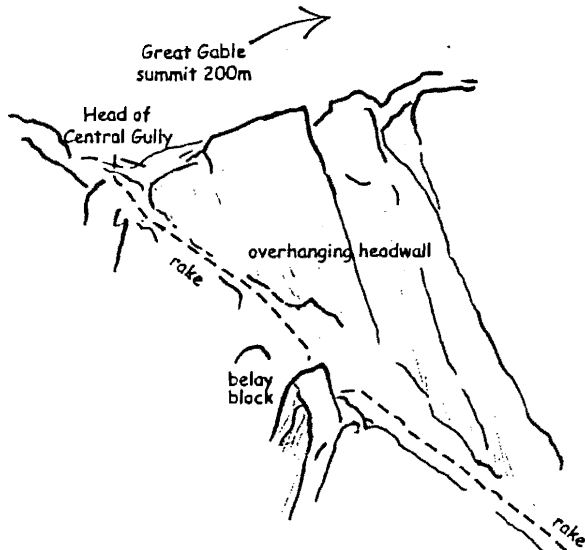
Recent discoveries have included Bronze Age ring cairns and Neolithic rock art – all completely unknown and just spotted by people with a digital camera or a mobile phone camera.

"We rely on the public finding and telling us about sites of potential interest," says John Hodgson, senior archaeologist. "If you find something, simply email photos to us. We are always happy to advise on what you may have discovered," he says.

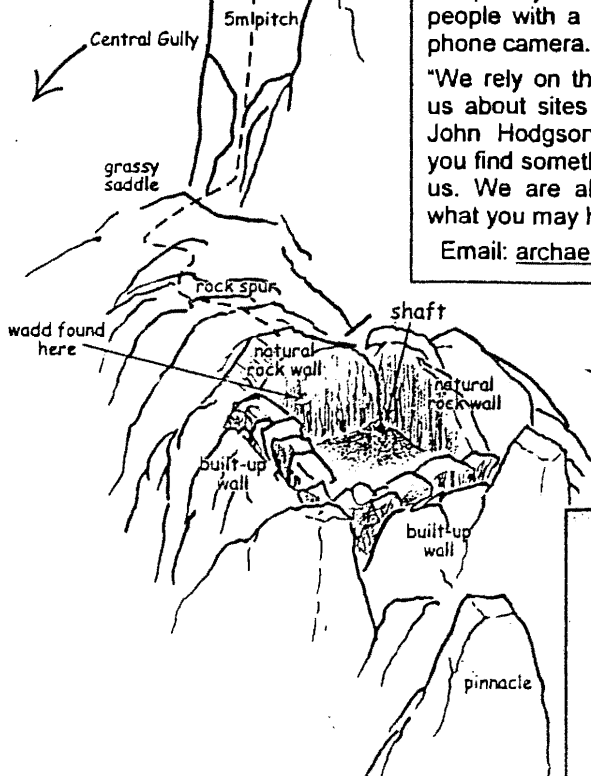
Email: [archaeology@lake-district.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@lake-district.gov.uk)

### FIND IT YOURSELF

Park at the top of the Honister Pass. Moses' Trod is hard to positively identify but just keep heading for Windy Gap, from where you can pick up the path under Gable Crag. At the crag's end a scrambly path leads to the summit. The top of Central Gully, and the hut fall within **NY212105**. Do not attempt an investigation without a rope. You will need OS Explorer (1:25,000) OL4.



Wadd: Not much to see, but it made our day!



Its obscure location confirms the hut's illicit use

Don't try this at home, without a 30-metre rope! - Editor