

## FMCC ACTIVITY REPORT

LAKE DISTRICT - 1<sup>st</sup> to 3rd March 2002

### Attendees:

John (sherpa) Edwards  
 Ian (old boy) Narracott  
 Neil (the orc) Lattimer  
 Richard (the elf) Crisp  
 Keith (cave troll) Zetter  
 Dave (Bilbo) Brown  
 Paddy (Hillary) Rowley



### Friday 1 March 2002

The week-end commenced with a prompt Friday afternoon start from London. Transportation was courtesy of Messrs Lattimer and Rowley. A six hour journey ended before closing time at base camp, The Twa Dogs Public House, Keswick (OSGR NY 27543 23830) at which a 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday party was in full swing. Forsaking the allure of a 1960's kareoke and a 12lb. salmon our intrepid party ventured into the town centre for drinks only to be accosted by a blonde geordie lass with a lot of lip and a rather emaciated male companion. Escaping the literal clutches of this siren (John bore her imprint on his arse) our group adjourned to the local Chinese restaurant for a truly excellent meal (and more drinks) and proceeded to debate the merits of inviting the north-east totty to join us for a meal. John, who's buttocks were up for another grope was keen but others more wise (or less drunk) could foresee the dangers this could pose the expedition and sanity prevailed. We returned to base camp before the witching hour for a couple more pints just as the birthday party was winding up. This was followed by a lock-in but alas the evenings exertions proved too much for some of our party who retired to their beds.

However, upholding the traditions set more than twenty years previous, Messrs Lattimer, Narracott, Rowley and Zetter settled down in the bar for a nightcap or four. The scotch flowed freely tempered only by the disappointing trickle of Baileys and ice in the direction of Mr Rowley. A drunken banjo player and a guitarist provided the entertainment with occasional vocal accompaniment by the even more drunken FMCC barber shop quartet. Finally retiring at 4.00am the prospects of an early start for the ascent to Red Pike over Buttermere that morning looked slim.



Saturday 2 March 2002

9.00am on Saturday found all but Mr Rowley tucking into a full english breakfast which managed a moderate score of only 5 out of 10 on the 'fat man filler' scale. Paddy strolled down for breakfast some 20 minutes later looking decidedly worse for wear. However, showing fortitude that befits the mountain leader he mustered the group for the drive to the start of our climb at Gatesgarth Farm (NY 19486 14981 - Altitude 109 AOD) on the B5289 at the eastern end of Lake Buttermere.

This trip was to prove to be something of a technological first for the FMCC as Mr Edwards placed his faith in the electronic wizardry of his hand held GPS black box. Could this be any match for the compass bearing and map reading skills of our experienced leader?

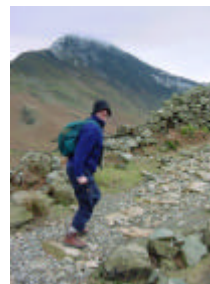
Parking the cars adjacent to Gatesgarthdale Beck the group proceeded south-east along the footpath across the eastern end of the lake and crossed Warnscale Beck (NY 18692 14788). It has to be said that at this stage confidence in the GPS was fairly low as John insisted that we should be walking on a bearing precisely 180 degrees to the direction that we were going!



Rising up Buttermere Fell and leaving Low Crag on the right the path diverted at NY 18786 14654 and we proceeded south past Warnscale to the left and between Low Wax Knot and High Wax Knot. By now the previous evenings indulgence was beginning to become evident across the countenance of our intrepid band. Paddy in particular was looking decidedly green about the gills. Even 'old man of the mountain' Lattimer paused for a thoughtful moment contemplating whether or not he should be doing this.



As we rose Scarth Gap Pass the snow line was reached and spirits lifted slightly. Richard swapped his stupid black floppy hat for a much more fetching sky blue woolly number.



Climbing to Scarth Gap (NY 18919 13341) pulses were racing and legs beginning to feel the strain of long neglected exertion. Paddy suggested that the group may like to take an excursion to ascend Hay Stacks to the east before continuing over Ennerdale Fell to the west. This proposal was met with something less than enthusiasm and the consensus prevailed to proceed westwards.

However, the GPS again indicated that the route over Ennerdale Fell was in the direction of Hay Stacks at which point a dispute arose between Messrs Crisp and Edwards as to the legitimacy of the co-ordinates being provided by Mr Crisp. Following various utterances such as 'garbage in and garbage out' the technological

'hiccup' was resolved and the electronic gadget seemed to perform satisfactorily from thereon.



Scrambling up the crags the path was followed north-west rising along the snow capped ridge of Gambling End above High Crag. John dons a pair of red knickers over his head and proceeded to show us several permutations of how such lingerie will prove to be the 2002 headwear fashion statement for all aspiring mountaineers.



Proceeding in a north-west direction past White Cove and over Comb Crag and Eagle Crag Mr Zetter has momentary doubts on the advisability of continuing on the planned route. Even Mr Lattimer was looking decidedly uncomfortable due to a leg injury that he had picked up on a recent skiing holiday and had been grimacing with the pain for some time. Mr Brown looking like Nanook of the north was still up for it but climbing through the, then deep, snow was

heavy going. Surely it would be prudent to return the way we came rather than attempt to climb higher into the, now, low cloud? The disposition of our leader had now improved as the previous alcohol induced



lethargy had dissipated. His spirits were raised and there could be no turning back.



Messrs Zetter and Lattimer gritted their teeth and showed typical fatman resolve to follow our rejuvenated leader past Barn Door, High Stile and the Chapel Craggs to reach Red Pike, the summit of our climb (NY 16020 15435).

Descent from Red Pike was north-eastwards to Bleaberry Tarn (NY 16615 15521) via The

Saddle. This path was snow covered and was descended in a variety of novel ways involving running, falling and sliding. All methods were painful but exhilarating. Beyond the Tarn the snow was left behind and the path continued north-east over Old Burtness where an awkward man-made steep meandering stone path led us into Burtness Wood to meet the Buttermere Lake perimeter path at the point when Sourmilk Gill enters the lake (NY 17269 16273).

With daylight fast fading and realising that injury was delaying the group, Messrs Rowley and Narracott descended the path from the Tarn in advance of the rest of the group. They proceeded south-east along the path on the south-west shore of Buttermere Lake (Winter water level 101m above Newlyn datum 1972) crossing Comb Beck at Horse Close (NY 18452 15269). The outward journey path was rejoined at the sheepfold (NY 18927 14762) at the south-east end of the lake. The path was then followed back to Gatesgarth Farm and the parked cars.

Meanwhile the rest of the group had descended to the Lake and taken the short path northwards to Buttermere. They then ensconced themselves in the pub (NY 17417 16920 – 119m AOD)

Messrs Rowley and Narracott had anticipated the remainder of the group would end up in the nearest pub and drove to Buttermere to search for them. However, it was a rather sad sight to behold when they came upon the group. All were drinking non-alcoholic beverages; tea, coffee or orange juice – not a pint of beer amongst them! (*Writers note: Has Mr Lattimer's influence made such inroads that tea-drinking is to become the norm?*)

The evening was spent at The Twa Dogs where the group ate drank and played pool. However, the previous evenings session had obviously provided a salutary lesson as the drinking was decidedly moderate and all members adjourned to their beds at closing time (11.00pm)!

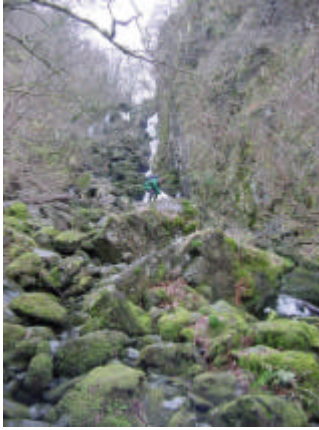
### Sunday 3 March 2002

Sunday started with full english breakfast at 9.30am. Discussions over breakfast favoured a less strenuous walking activity for that day. A number of ideas were put forward and it was finally decided that we would take the ferry from the northern end of Derwent Water to one of the landing stages at the southern end of the Lake. From there Mr Rowley would select a suitable hill walk back to Keswick. As it turned out on arriving at the ferry we were pipped at the post by 70 Chinese boat people which left no room on the vessel for us.

Some indecision followed as to how to proceed. Eventually it was agreed that a stroll for a few miles around the lake and a trip on the ferry back would suffice.

Mr Crisp took up the role of leader for the trip and the group proceeded south from the Keswick ferry landing stage along the western perimeter path of the lake. After a brief lunch stop at the side of the lake we proceeded to Lodore where the lure of a hotel on the B5289 once more enticed the majority of the group to stop for a *proper* lunch. This was almost missed since on entering the establishment it seemed devoid of human activity. Like the Marie Celeste the place had been abandoned. On





leaving the premises a distraught manager chased after them pleading for them to come back. Which, of course, they did.

Prior to this Messrs Rowley and Narracott manage to talk each other into the idea of doing something a little more challenging and decide to walk back to Keswick via the hill ridges to the east of Derwent Water. Leaving the group to their luncheon they took the path east from the B5289 (77m AOD) at Lodore Bridge Hotel to view the Lodore Falls on Watendlath Beck. From here a steeply winding path



through Lodore Wood took them past Gowder Crag to the left. Winding around Hogs Earth a minor road was reached at 249m AOD. At Ashness Wood they overlooked the hotel in which their fellow fatmen were satiating their hunger and thirst and viewed the enticingly close Lodore ferry landing stage. Would their team members press on around the lake or stay in the bar to catch the ferry at Lodore?



Dropping along the road Scree Coppice was passed at 214m AOD and a photo was taken of Paddy at passing place (NY 26908 18645). They continued their descent



along the road to Cross Cat Gill and thence to Ashness Bridge where it crosses Barrow Beck (altitude 155m). Forsaking the view of the Barrow Waterfalls above Barrow House (Derwent Water Youth Hostel) the two fatmen took once more to the mountain path, striking north-east and rising from the road (144m AOD) to Castlerigg Fell which provided fantastic views of Derwent Water. The clockwise Ferry was seen leaving Lodore landing stage and soon after they received a call from Mr Lattimer to say that the rest of the group were on board. (*such shame!*)





Messrs Rowley and Narracott made their way across the fells to the east of Great Wood to reach the viewing point of Ladys Rake. From here they struck out towards the television mast (NY 27876 22405). A path was followed down to Spring Wood and thence to the B5289 which was crossed to reach the woods above the Keswick ferry landing stage and thence to the awaiting car in the lakeside car park.



The weekend activity was completed by some late shopping in Keswick. Messrs Rowley and Crisp splashed out 40p each for sprung toggle cord retainers and Mr Zetter purchased a new day sack.

The highlight of the weekend occurred on the return car trip down the M6 where a diversion at junction 12, Cannock turn-off landed us at the No 1 fatman eating venue - The Hollies. The Big Breakfast with chips did not, perhaps, have the same amount of molten lard reminiscent of previous years but the amount and quality of the food was as good as ever. The tiled decor and faeces-carpeted toilets confirmed that this establishment had not materially changed over the past 30 years!