



Looking forward to our 20th season

As we head into the winter our programme gets rather less busy, and we mark the end of the main walking season at our **END-OF-SEASON DINNER** in November. We need you to book straight away if you haven't already done so, as we'll finalise numbers on 16th November.

Our 20th Anniversary plan to walk the whole of the **CAPITAL RING** starts in January and you can read more about this route and its attractions inside. Other plans for 2010 are shaping up nicely. We kick off in the **SOUTH DOWNS** in February, based in a comfortable hotel where we can walk straight from the door: this event is now open for booking and we need to relinquish any unbooked rooms soon, so seize your chance. Because of the need to book the hostel so far in advance we are also asking for expressions of interest for **MEVAGISSEY** (May). Details inside, too, for our week in the **JULIAN ALPS** (June/July): there is just time to join our party if you act soon. We are also planning weekends in **EXMOOR** (July) and the **BRECON BEACONS** (August): more about these as plans firm up. Our other big event of the year will be a week walking part of **OFFA'S DYKE** (in September). Logistics for planning walks and the transport of people and luggage will be complicated: if you are willing to help with this please do contact Dee as we need to get initial plans under way soon.

Renew your sub!

We hope you want to stay with us next season, and so it's time to pay your subscription. This remains at the same rate as for the past four years: £14 for a single or £22 for two at the same address. Send your cheque to Bryan, with a note that it's for your 2010 membership. We like to keep our list of personal details up to date, so please complete the Contact Update form and return to Angela (even if your details are unchanged).

First Aid Course

In the last newsletter we asked you to express an interest, but so far numbers have been too low to allow us to go ahead. If we more recruits we hope to run a course early next year. We are currently checking the availability of the hall and the first aider and will then be able to give a better idea of timing. It will be an all-day event on a Saturday. There will be a small fee (to cover the cost of the hall and first aider) but free lunch will be provided. If you've never been on a course before, or want to brush up your skills, do come along. These skills may prove useful not only as a

rambler but also in everyday life. Contact Pat & Ray on 01727 865855.

These boots were made for ...

Do we need boots for our walks? Or are we OK in walking shoes, sandals, or even flipflops? What about waterproofs, extra layer, bivvy bag etc? Well, if it's a warm-weather stroll in Herts, then pretty much anything goes. But in more demanding terrain we do think boots are essential. They protect the wearer against damage to the soles of the feet from sharp stones, and shield ankles from turning on rough going.

We also have to think of others in the party. You may be prepared to risk injury but any accident, however minor, can ruin plans for the day, and therefore ruin the event for others.

Finally, we must consider the position of the event leader. Our liability insurance demands that leaders take appropriate safety measures. We don't want any members of our trips to be hurt, and we especially don't want to lay St Albans Rambler, or those who lead events on our behalf, open to charges of negligence in the event of an accident.

If the event leader thinks boots or other specific outdoor gear essential for a walk, the briefing notes will record this and we expect your cooperation in everyone's interests.

Slippery slope

Conservationists say Ben Nevis is littered with banana skins and other fruit peelings, which account for more than half the rubbish collected by the John Muir Trust. There are up to 1000 such skins on the summit at any time, and in cold weather peel can take up to two years to degrade.

Keep swinging!

The mystery of why we swing our arms when walking may have been solved. Researcher discovered that not only does it take 12% more energy to keep one's arms straight when walking, but swinging one's arms makes the work done by the legs easier. So next time your legs are feeling a bit tired, just swing your arms a bit more!

Walking in circles?

Of course SAR members would never do this, but scientists (from no less an organisation than the Max Planck Institute for Biological Cybernetics) have found that when deprived of a compass or reference points, walkers find it impossible to walk in a straight line, and tend to come back to the place where they started. Fortunately, we are never, ever, 'temporarily uncertain of our position', are we?

Job vacancies

Natural England has advertised for 12 'Health Walk Delivery Officers', with a starting salary 'up to £32,000'. These officers will be offering walks 'from beginner level' - so presumably potty training too?

Unfortunately you may be too late to apply - the ads went out in August and Bryan has already applied (but, for some strange reason, Natural England is not beating a path to his door). Pity - he thinks £32K could be quite helpful.

Forthcoming Programme

All events in January, February and March

Express interest!

Helps us get a handle on likely numbers. It does NOT constitute a firm booking.

Book now!

To secure a place you need to confirm your participation with the named contact and send them a deposit cheque payable to St Albans Rambler.

All monies paid to SAR are accepted on the understanding that members agree the terms in the Finance Policy.

Fully booked!

If you're interested in an event flagged fully booked, do ring the event contact. Participants drop out sometimes, especially for events planned a long way in advance. We may still be able to find you a space.

And apologies if you find many events fully booked. We have to work well in advance to secure the accommodation we want, especially at peak times.

Your ideas?

Please ring one of the Events Co-ordination Team if you have an idea for a walk or event or have seen a good place to stay. Even if you don't want to organise or lead, we can pass ideas on for further investigation.

SUNDAY 8TH NOVEMBER 2009

November Day Walk: Great and Little Hornead

Still part of Hertfordshire but the countryside looks different in this area to the east of Buntingford. We'll cover around 9 miles, part of it on the Hertfordshire Way, and as this is Remembrance Sunday we'll be observing the 2 minutes' silence at 11.00.

TUESDAY 17TH NOVEMBER 2009

November Weekday Walk: Kew and Richmond

Meet at West Hampstead and take the overground to Kew where we start our 9 mile circuit. Over East Sheen Common and into Richmond Park for stunning views across London. Spot local bird life and perhaps deer at Penn Ponds, and on to Richmond Gate and Ham House via a splendid avenue of trees. Pub lunch or picnic overlooking the Thames before a 'yomp' back along the towpath passing Isleworth and Kew Gardens.

SATURDAY 21ST NOVEMBER 2009

End-of-Season Party

We're repeating our DIY celebration to mark the end of another season of walking which we hope you've enjoyed. We will again be at the St Michael's Parish Centre from 7.30 till 10.45. Besides the gourmet treats provided by our volunteer cooks there will be a table quiz with a modest prize.

If you are able to volunteer to cook a dish please let Dee know. We will have a list of the kind of things we need to ensure that we don't end up with six shepherd's pies and no puddings! All costs will be reimbursed.

Cost for the evening £8 per head; bring your own alcohol. Please send a cheque for £8 to Dee now to confirm your place.

TUESDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2009

December Weekday Walk: Ware

An easy 6 miles or so on footpaths and towpaths through Ware and Hertford.

SUNDAY 13 DECEMBER 2009

December Day Walk: Windsor

Start at Bishop's Gate and stroll through the deer park, passing the Copper horse, through Ringer's Gate and Saville Gardens. About 8 miles of easy going.

SATURDAY 26TH DECEMBER 2009

Boxing Day Reviver: Around Heartwood Forest

Most of you will have heard about the new forest being planned near the village of Sandridge, so this walk will take us through parts of the area that were previously 'off limits' to rambles, making use of the new kissing gates and seeing 'vistas' that were previously unseen.

Approximately 5 miles, starting at 10.15 for 10.30 (to allow you an extra lie-in after all the activities of the previous day). Some may wish to visit one or more of the local hostellers after we finish, others may prefer to get home quickly to devour yesterday's left-overs!

NB: On 5th December the Woodland Trust will be attempting to enter the Guinness Book of records with the largest number of trees planting in a single session, so if you want to feature watch out for details in the press later this month.

Joining a day walk

Please ring the contact a few days in advance for full details: start time, directions, car sharing, etc. They will look out for you, especially if you are a new member.

If you're unable to come please try to let the organiser know, so we don't keep the whole party waiting. Most organisers can give you a mobile phone number.

Your safety

Our leaders take all reasonable care for the safety of the party. But it's your responsibility to see that you are properly equipped, to take responsibility for your own safety and that of others. SAR has appropriate Public Liability Insurance but you should have your own personal accident cover.

Our next

Our next committee meeting will be 10th December. If you have items for consideration please send to Angela by 4th December. The next newsletter will be on 1st January 2010. If you have anything for inclusion, please send to Dee by 7th December.

FRIDAY 1ST JANUARY 2010 New Year's Day Outing

After the festivities, why not clear your head with this 8-mile walk that starts in Whippendell Woods and takes us through attractive and varied terrain, including a winding stretch beside the Grand Union Canal, through ancient woodland and open fields. Should take about 4 hours, so no need for a really early start.

SATURDAY 9TH AND SUNDAY 10TH JANUARY 2010 Capital Ring Stage 1

THE CAPITAL RING threads its way through London's parks and green spaces for 78 miles. We'll be tackling the whole thing in sections to celebrate our 20th walking season. Liz has produced a 'Passport' for participants which you can have stamped with every section you complete. Walked the whole route? Then you'll receive our special certificate at the end of the year. The guide book, **The Capital Ring Path Guide**, by Colin Saunders, is highly recommended if you want to make the most of this route.

Our Saturday route (9 miles) starts at Highgate, where the underground station is supposed to be the deepest in the network. We walk along the path of an abandoned railway track to Finsbury Park and Clissold Park. The original north London reservoirs and filter beds are here and the pumping station is now a museum. The 'New river', neither a river nor new, flows here. Abney Park Cemetery has the grave of William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army. We finish on Hackney Marshes. On Sunday some of the walk is along the canal towpath. We cross rivers and move towards the Thames and the Olympic village. Later we explore the dock area of Woolwich and cross on the Woolwich Ferry to journey's end.

www.walklondon.org.uk/walk

Liz and Malcolm 01727 851420



Advance dates for your diary

Book now!

19TH TO 21ST FEBRUARY 2010 South Downs

Findon Manor Hotel is actually the old rectory, the oldest parts of the building dating to 1584. Findon village appears in Domesday book and was once an important crossroads between the Lewes/Chichester coach road and the London/Worthing turnpike. The hotel is also home to the Snooty Fox bar, which functions as the local pub and features in the Good Beer Guide. Early risers may see the race horses from the village's stable exercising nearby.



Close by are the impressive ramparts of Cissbury hillfort (over a mile round), site of a giant flint mining operation in the Iron Age. We will certainly walk there, and to nearby Chanctonbury fort and on Church Hill. Both Saturday and Sunday we shall be able to walk straight from the door, taking in parts of the South Downs Way and the Monarch's Way.

Cost for two nights B&B plus dinner with drinks on Saturday and tea on Sunday afternoon will be just £120. NO single rooms, so there a £50 surcharge for single occupancy of a double. To book please send a cheque for £50 to Dee now.

www.findonmanor.com www.findon.info

Dee 01727 868765

Express interest!

FRIDAY 14TH TO MONDAY 17TH MAY 2010 South-West Coast Path 5: Mevagissey

Our next stretch of the SWCP will be based in the beautiful area around Mevagissey in Cornwall. We will be staying at Boswinger YHA for three nights and intend to do two circular walks that take in long stretches of the coastal path. On the Monday morning, before coming home, we have the option to visit either the Eden Project or The Lost Gardens of Heligan. Group ticket price to Eden Project is about £10. As this is such a popular Youth Hostel we have to book early, we require 'expressions of interest' now and a deposit in the new year.

Cost around £80 for three nights B&B and packed lunches. Travel using own transport. Evening meals will be extra (either self catering or at local pubs).

Last chance!

26TH JUNE TO 3RD JULY 2010
Julian Alps, Slovenia

The Julian Alps are the most south-easterly part of the central European Alps, and Bohinj is in the south-east on the borders of the Triglav National Park, named for Mount Triglav ('three-headed') at 2864 metres. We will be staying in the Hotel Jezero (*right*) centrally located in Bohinj right by the lake. Beside the fantastic local walking and scenery it has a swimming pool, fitness centre, sauna, mini-golf and garden. There are boat trips on the lake and the possibility of a day trip to Bled Castle, as well as to other historical and cultural sites. Excellent, well-marked walks at both high and low level, supported by cable car.



Cost per person half-board in a twin 462 euros or 532 euros in a single. Flights from Stanstead to Ljubiana are currently available at £125 (non-refundable) and we will be booking them in December, so this is your last chance to be sure of a place. You will also need to allow for airport transfers at both ends, lunches and incidental costs. To confirm your place please send a cheque for £200 to Meg.

www.bohinj.si/alpinum/jezero

Meg 01895 672621

Recent local outings

SEPTEMBER DAY WALK: SANDRIDGE. A small group set out on 11th September to take part in the final evening walk of the season. With the evenings getting longer it was necessary to shorten the walk to make sure we returned before darkness fell. An easy 3 - 4 miles through the fields around Sandridge and a pleasant drink at the end.

Michael

**OCTOBER DAY WALK:
BERKHAMSEAD AND
ASHRIDGE.**

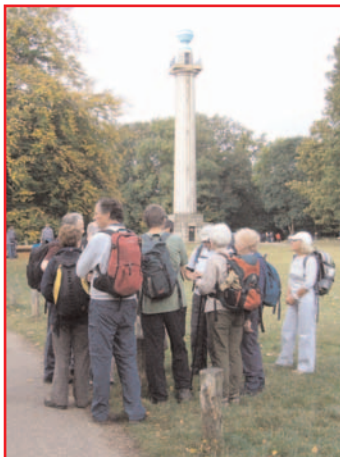
I was at the back of the pack tying my boot laces when our leader Mike issued his orders for the day. I thought he was asking for a volunteer to be back marker but found to much merriment that I had instead volunteered to do the write up! Moral is never volunteer for anything!

So on a glorious sunny Sunday and with heads held high we set off from Berkhamsted Castle. Shortly into a gentle incline towards Ashridge two small deer raced past us. We passed luscious looking red mushrooms and enjoyed the early autumn wooded scenery with leaves slowly turning red and gently tumbling down. The invigorating air and good company was reason enough not to be at home.

It was a delightful walk through woodlands and on soft springy soil. We arrived for an early lunch at the Monument in Ashridge

and all - bar one! - managed to avoid the temptations of giant jam and cream filled scones in the tea room.

The return leg of the walk was down hill (always pleasant after lunch). Having emerged from the woods we passed a group of alpacas who looked at us with quizzical eyes. We wandered down towards the canal and along the canal bank, passing



Berkhamstead: at the Monument



Sandridge: Easy going on the footpath

fishermen with rods which somehow covered the entire width of the canal but the fish were sensibly keeping a low profile!

Julian had planned this walk but was not able to lead on the day so Mike nobly took up the cause. We had all savoured perhaps the last sunny walking day before the clocks go back. **Tony and Yvonne**

A week in the Lakes

Our group of 19 set off on Saturday to travel to Coniston in two hired minibuses plus Mike's Discovery. We were staying in Shepherds Villas, a four-storey stone house with nine bedrooms and fantastic facilities (including a pool table, well used by the more competitive male members). Meg and Ann were nearby in Meg's campervan and Brian and Allison in a local B&B. making 23.

Those in the Villa shared self catering breakfasts and packed lunches; those outside joined us for self-catered dinners. On Friday we went out to a local pub to celebrate a terrific holiday. With two walks, red and blue, most days, this report can only give a flavour of this fantastic trip/

Sunday: Elterwater to Loughrigg Fell

Sunday dawned bright and sunny. We all set off for Elterwater, where we split into two groups, setting off at 10-minute intervals. We climbed gently out of Elterwater passing Walthwaite Bottom and Huntingstile Crag until we started to descend towards Grasmere. Near the lake we turned east along Loughrigg Terrace where we met the first group having a welcome coffee stop. We took their vacated seats and enjoyed the stunning view over the lake. We then climbed up over Loughrigg Fell, eventually descending past Ivy Crag and Loughrigg Tarn to Skelwith Bridge and Chester's tea shop, where we stopped to savour the delights of afternoon tea with outsize portions of homemade cake. Fortified, we followed the Cumbria Way back to Elterwater, admiring Skelwith Force waterfall on the way. A good first day to walk us all in. **Pat**

Monday: Old Man of Coniston from Walna Scar (Red Walk)

The day started with the 'Old Man' shrouded in mist but this soon cleared to give a fine day. The red group set off at a good pace to climb past Goat's Water, with the spectacular sheer cliffs of Dow Crag to our left; no one was tempted to join two intrepid young ladies who headed off to scale these heights! After morning tea overlooking Goat's Water (and the blue group's steady advance along the water's edge) we set off on the challenging climb to the top of the peak where we were rewarded with clear views over 360°

over Windermere and Morecambe Bay to Scafell and Fairfield, with even a distant glimpse of the Isle of Man. After photo-sessions around the cairn, to prove we'd made it, the group set off towards the distant Swirl How Crag on the awe-inspiring track along the cliff edge, stopping at Levers Hawse for lunch in the sun overlooking Seathwaite Tarn. We finally descended via Swirl Hawse towards Levers Water. On the 'relentless'



Sunday. Above, stunning views over Elterwater. Right, Ann and Ray at Skelwith Force

descent back towards Coniston we took some local advice to take a detour using an old aqueduct round to Coppermines Valley, the site of old mine shafts and workings. Some time was spent analysing the remains of engineering works, concluding they were water-driven and designed to provide access or ventilation to the mine shafts. Several rocks seemed to take ages to find the bottom of shafts but the lack of a calculator prevented any estimate of actual depth! The path then descended on a gentle slope (a

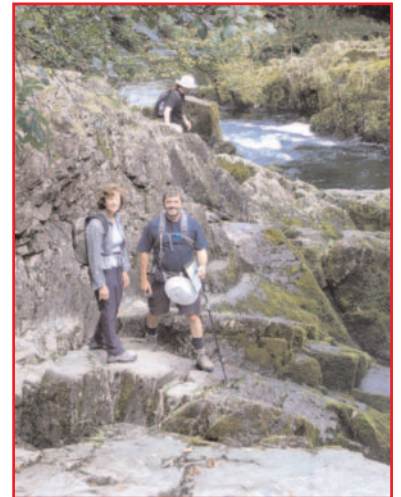


Monday. On top of the 'Old Man'

much more pleasant descent than the scheduled route) and there was time for well-earned refreshments at the Sun before returning, well ahead of schedule. An excellent walk, well worth the extra miles. **Brian**

Monday: Old Man of Coniston from Walna Scar (Blue Walk)

The ten Blue route walkers said a sad goodbye to Maggie who was very poorly and unable to walk, waved to Meg who stayed behind to prepare wonderful curries for our evening meal, and set off for Coniston Old Man. Our day was riotous in parts and challenging in others. The climb duplicated the red walk as far as the



peak and was a bit of a slog. Part way up the ladies in the group needed a 'comfort stop', starting an hilarious discussion about the pros and cons of the 'she-wee', a device for women to preserve their modesty! Personally I will stay immodest! The ladies were tempted to follow a very fit, hunky guy ahead but changed our minds when we realised he was going up a near vertical slope. We knew Mike and Peter would not manage the climb! As we neared the top of The Old Man Maria developed vertigo. In true SAR fashion we put her at the front and egged her on. What amazing views greeted us at the summit, it was well worth the climb. We ate our lunch and discussed the songs, singers and dance halls of the 50s and 60s. Oh how we showed our ages!!

The blue route then took a very steep, tricky and rocky descent. Maria was scared, however with gentle words and willing hands we helped her down the mountain. More of a red walk than blue but all of us eventually arrived at the bottom in one piece ready for the delights of Meg's cooking. **Helen**

Tuesday: Haystacks to Buttermere via Red Pike (Red Walk)

Our starting point was the car park at

Honister Hause, saving us quite a climb first thing in the morning. Even so, the first part of the walk was both long and steep but the effort was certainly worth it as the views from the top were fantastic. Our route took us past the Innominate Tarn and it's easy to understand why Alfred Wainwright wanted his ashes to be scattered at this peaceful location. A short distance away is Haystacks, another of Wainwright's favourite places. From the top we had the most wonderful view over the valley below and the surrounding mountains. We were lucky enough to have beautiful sunshine with clear blue skies and we could see for miles.

This was a perfect place to stop for lunch before we started our tricky descent across rocks and boulders down to Scarth Gap. Here we had two choices: to follow the Pass down towards Buttermere or to climb up Seat and High Crag, continuing via High Stile and Red Pike before descending to Buttermere.

Six of us decided to brave the high route. We found the climb up Seat very steep although the ascent was quite fast and we were soon up only to find we had another steep climb to the top of High Crag and an interesting bird's-eye view of Haystacks and the route we had followed. We now had to descend again only to find ourselves faced with another climb up High Stile. At the top we were again rewarded with amazing views: Buttermere on one side and on the other Crummock Water, the Solway Firth and the Scottish hills in the far distance. Following the path along the ridge we at last reached Red Pike, our last climb for the day. It was getting late in the afternoon and the sun was beginning to set giving a golden glow to the tops of the mountains around Buttermere, while the lower slopes and the valley were in the shade. The path leading from the summit of Red Pike down to Bleaberry Tarn proved a very steep and tricky descent on slippery red scree with no handhold. Quite daunting! We all made it down without any mishaps. From the Tarn, the path initially followed a small beck flowing down to Buttermere but the descent soon turned into a rocky, zigzag path that went on and on, making us wonder if we were really heading in the right direction. Eventually the path entered a larch wood on the lower



Tuesday. Above, Event Organiser Mike celebrates with Ginny at the top of Haystacks. Right, The ascent to High Crag



slopes of the mountainside and after using our last reserves of energy we reached the lake on wobbly legs!

We arrived later than expected at the Fish Inn, half expecting that the rest of the group would have given up waiting for us. However, we were pleasantly surprised to see them still there and happy to join them for a welcome drink or two after a long but very exciting day's walking. **Sonja**

After enjoying the top and Haystacks and Innominate Tarn, Dick and the B team decided that Red Pike was not for them and happily took the a gentler walk down to Buttermere and tea. The views over to Fleetwood in the sunshine were excellent, the walk round the lake a joy. The minibus was retrieved from Honister and we waited in The Fish Inn for the A team's arrival, Dick gainfully employed the time with a couple of excellent pints of Jennings. **Heather**

Tuesday: Cat Bells via Hawse Gate (Blue Walk)

Eight of us set off to take the launch from Keswick across Derwentwater to Cat Bells. After a couple of mishaps our group had dwindled to five and I was jokingly described as one of the most careless leaders known to SAR!

The walk up is a scramble at times and, as always in the Lakes, it fools you into thinking you're on top when there is one more rocky climb to the summit. The sun was shining and the view from the top was just lovely through 360° but particularly spectacular over Derwentwater with its scattered small islets. After our lunch on the top we descended to a very pleasant walk beside the lake to take us back to the launch. **Deborah**

Wednesday: Day Off

A chance to rest weary limbs, explore some of the more touristy attractions

of the Lakes and psych ourselves up for the walks to come.

Thursday: Fairfield to Rydal via Red Screes (Red Walk)

This red route challenge was taken up by nine walkers. This classic Fairfield Horseshoe was made less taxing by starting from the Kirkstone Hotel. Nevertheless we walked 12.2 km, climbed 873 metres and descended 1264 metres. It was a fantastic ridge walk with spectacular views. The weather was kind especially on the way down with lovely evening sunshine.

The start provided some amusement as the ladies in the party lined up behind a handy wall, the hotel facilities being closed. It was then uphill for 50 minutes continuous



Tuesday. On top again, this time on Cat Bells

steady climbing, including some easy scrambling and so to Red Screes. Next it was an 'off piste' trip to Raven Crag (viewpoint) then on to Dove Cragg the first of four peaks above 2500 feet. We continued on to the Horseshoe proper via Dove Crag and Hart Crag (with great views of Helvellyn and Striding Edge) and onto Great Rigg. Unfortunately Dick took a spectacular tumble (missed by all) whilst strolling along the ridge and trying to look at the views at the same time. Luckily despite a large bump on

his head, broken glasses and possibly a cracked rib, after a rest, he managed to carry on and complete the walk. A steady descent to Nab Scar and the final steep descent, now mostly 'stepped' following bad erosion, into Rydal. Needless to say, Dick got interesting comments in the Badger Bar pub! **Maggie**

Thursday: Holme Fell via Black Crag and Tarn Hows (Blue Walk)

Twelve members parked the minibus near Yew Tree farm, where we admired the Cottage which provided the set for Beatrix Potter's house in the recent film about her life. After a moderate climb, we proceeded across Holme Fell, with its wooded terrain mixed with a variety of ferns and beautiful views of Yew Tree tarn below. Our next stop was a steeply sloped, deep water-filled quarry. This was marked disused on the map, but there were signs of activity, with trucks coming and going with cargoes of stones. After proceeding across High Oxen Fell we were treated to the sight of a beautiful farmhouse with well-tended gardens. A public notice informed us that the farm was part of an environmentally sensitive scheme.

Stopping for lunch we enjoyed the stunning views of Langdale Pikes and the beautiful browns, reds and oranges of autumn beginning to become apparent in the landscape. At Tarn Hows we enjoyed a peaceful walk around the lake which is actually man-made, created less than 150 years ago by the Marshall family of Monk Coniston, who owned the estate. The area known as Tom Gill was dammed to create the tarn and hundreds of trees were planted to create a beautiful, peaceful spot for the public to enjoy. Finishing our circular walk with the treat of tea and cake at the Yew Tree Cottage Farm, we enjoyed watching the antics of dogs, a playful puppy and ducks. Very Beatrix Potter! A fitting end to a lovely day's walking. **Dianne**

Friday: Helvellyn via Striding Edge and Swirral Edge (Red Walk)

Just five of us set out from Glenridding to climb Helvellyn, the 'high' spot of our week, taking 4.5 hours to walk 7 km (4 miles) to the summit, an ascent of 964 m, to 950 m above sea level.

Conditions were overcast and very windy as we made steady progress



Thursday. The final ascent to Fairfield, and safely arrived on the top



upwards. I knew that the climb would be strenuous which proved to be the case, especially as we approached Striding Edge and took a first tentative step on to a large flat rock with nothing but a sheer drop to Red Tarn on one side and valley on the other. Searching for footholds proved to be an arduous task. We then found ourselves confronted with the 'ladder' (a vertical notch in the rocks) immediately prior to the steep scree

route, led by Meg, took us on an undulating path through trees and along the lake affording us superb views of Ullswater eventually bringing us back to Glenridding where we had time to indulge in refreshments while waiting for the 'higher' route folk to rejoin us. **Leslie**

After splitting from the main group at Sandwick, nine of us left the lake and walked the rising path along Boredale and up to Place Fell via High Dodd.



Friday. 'Red' walkers grapple with Striding Edge and still face a tough descent via Swirral Edge



faced ascent of Helvellyn itself. The climb involved much scrambling and little opportunity to stop and admire the view. Notwithstanding we managed to capture some of the grandeur of the scenery on camera before tackling a steep drop down Swirral Edge (very similar to Striding Edge and no easier), another real accomplishment. Looking at my Certificate, confirming I had just climbed England's third highest mountain, I'm really pleased I made the effort. **Benita**

Friday: Ullswater Lake Walk (Blue Walk)

Our ultimate walk was around Ullswater. After a bracing steamer ride from Glenridding to Howtown, all the 'blue' route people set off along the shores of the lake separating a kilometre or so along the way into two further groups. The 'lower' blue

The day was clear but a cool wind heralded autumn. Lunch was in the shelter of a sheep fold, then up to the summit, with views all round of Ullswater, High Street and the Helvellyn range. Pausing only for Diane to adjust her underwear, we descended via Boredale Hause to the valley and the car park. A scenic drive and home to Coniston. **Dick**

Saturday: Back Home

Our return journey was rather eventful in that the rear tyre of the Discovery (driven by Ginny) blew to smithereens, thankfully, just before reaching the M6. A refit of tyres in nearby Kendal ensured a safe, but delayed arrival of the Discovery back to St Albans

Congratulations to Mike and Ginny Fitzpatrick and Peter Dear for all the effort they made to make it a great success.

SWCP4: Ilfracombe

We strike lucky again!! Nine of us plus Becky duly arrived at the Ocean Backpackers hostel in the centre of Ilfracombe with the prospect of good weather for the weekend, and we were not to be disappointed.



We pose for a group photo on the cliff with Ilfracombe harbour in the background (left) and again on the beach at Combe Martin (right)

Clear blue skies and calm seas greeted us as we started our Saturday walk from Trentishoe Down along undulating grassy tracks past Holdstone Down, down into Sherrycombe and then up the first steep climb of the day to Great Hangman and an ideal spot for coffee.

Next came Little Hangman before we descended to the beach at Combe Martin where we decided to have an early lunch, visit a recommended deli/coffee shop and snooze in the sun.

As the tide was out we were able to avoid some of the main road by going across the beach and rocks before joining various lanes and tracks which took us to the pretty inlet and harbour of Watermouth.

Here we came across the unusual sight of a bride, groom and bridesmaid walking over the fields in their wellie boots on their way to the reception at the local sailing club!

Again thanks to low tide we were able to walk along the foreshore before climbing steps into the woods on the western side of the harbour to reach Widmouth Head. A convenient bench made a good observation point to watch two groups of youngsters 'coasteering' and some open Canadian canoes battling

against a strong incoming tide.

After reaching Hele Bay more steps took us to the top of Hillsborough and a final descent into Ilfracombe.

Sunday again proved a lovely morning as the minibus took us to Woolacombe and dropped us off part way along Marine Drive so we started the walk by heading through the dunes and along this beautiful

where we had lunch. A small detour inland to the Grampus Inn provided welcome liquid refreshment.

After several more ups and downs and the inevitable steps we returned to Ilfracombe through back lanes and steeply sloping municipal gardens. On Monday morning when driving home I couldn't help feeling a bit smug when it started to rain. **Meg**



Making the most of the sunshine and splendid coastal scenery



beach.

The scenery around Morte Point towards Bull Point lighthouse was stunning, with jagged slate rocks glistening almost white against what had become a steely grey sky.

Several seals could be seen on the rocks below which gave us a good excuse for an extended coffee break. After this the path crossed another two steep valleys before descending into Lee

