



WE REMEMBER

“ ...when this whole ghastly war is over... every one of us will have the satisfaction of having done his bit... with the grit, determination and patience bred in our northern hills. ”

A.W. Wakefield. 1915

WE REMEMBER

In recognition of the members of
The Fell & Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District
who fought in The Great War, 1914 - 1918.

Created in August 2014

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Great Gable beyond Kirk Fell



INTRODUCTION

by FRCC President,
John M Barrett

It is a sobering thought to realise that we no longer have anyone alive in our country who fought in the First World War. All we are left with are their histories as recounted in letters, official reports and family memories. Often I have visited the FRCC memorial plaque on Great Gable, read the names and quietly reflected as to what sort of men these were; their lives before the horrors of war and what their lives might have been had they been spared. So many promising young lives cut short; so many dreams and hopes of future exploration in the mountains and on the crags destroyed. Their legacy is in the freedom we have to follow our dreams and the opportunity to fulfil our hopes.

The Fell and Rock Climbing Club is unique in the world of mountaineering in the scale and poignancy of commemorating the lives of past members. As part of that tradition it was thought fitting that the Club should produce this booklet as part of the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the 'Great War'.

The Club owes a debt of gratitude to everyone who has contributed in any way to the production of this book.

PREFACE: 11.11.1906

The date 11th November, has a very special meaning for our Club for it was on that day in the year 1906 that, at an informal meeting in the Sun Hotel, Coniston a decision was made to form a Lake District Climbing Club. A few years later that date was to acquire a much wider and a very different significance.

Club records show that 78 of our members “served the colours” at a time when the membership was a little over 300 men and women. Of these servicemen, 20 were either killed in action or died of their wounds. This booklet is a tribute to all of them including those members whose technical skills required them to contribute their expertise to the War Effort at home. It also acknowledges the foresight shown in the planning of our War Memorial. This not only commemorated those who lost their lives in the conflict but also ensured that, before the creation of any National Parks, future generations could enjoy the mountain freedom which had been denied to those named on the Great Gable plaque.

RECORD OF WAR SERVICE

The list below is taken from Journal No. 13 (1919) with amendments and additions from Journals 1914; 1917/18 and 1920. It is possible that there may have been other names which were not listed in any of these sources.

In the early days, the Club did not issue a Handbook, as we know it, but a List of Members was produced annually. The dates below were obtained from these lists, however no such list was produced between 1916-18. The symbol 1915> indicates that the member joined the Club after the publication of the 1915 list.

The * shows Original Member as listed in the Preliminary List of Members 1906. Those members who were killed in action (KIA) or who died of their wounds (D/W) are written about in more detail later.

RECORD OF WAR SERVICE

Listed as Member	Member Rank	Regiment	
1912	Adam, A.	Lieut.	Royal Engineers
1913	Aldous, F.C.	Lt-Col.	Machine Gun Corps
1910	Allsup, W.	Lieut.	Loyal North Lancs. Regt.
1907	Arnold, N.A.	2nd Lieut.	19th Manchester Regt. B.E.F.
1912	Ascroft, W.F.	Capt.	Loyal North Lancs. Regt.
1906*	Audus, A.	Rank and Regt. not known	
1915 KIA	Bainbridge, J.S.	Lieut.	4th Batt. Yorkshire Regt.
1911	Balfour, G.B.	Lt-Col. (D.S.O.)	4th King's Own Royal Lancs Regt.
1912 KIA	Bean, J.G.	Lt/Cpl.	King's (Liverpool) Regt.
1912	Beyts, L.S.	(Rank and Regt. not known)	
1913 D/W	Blair, H.S.P.	Lieut.	3rd Batt. Duke of Cornwall L.I.
1911	Bodell, G.W.	Engineers Lt-Com.	Royal Navy
1909	Boden, G.	Sick-berth Attendant.	Royal Navy
1909	Bowdler, W.A.	Major	Royal Field Artillery (T.F.)
1911	Boyd, A.W.	Capt. (M.C.)	1/7th Lancs. Fusiliers
1909	Cain, H.P.	Capt.	5th East Lancs. Regt.
1915	Campbell, J.	Corporal	Royal Engineers
1915>	Carr, H.R.	Lieut.	R.N.V.R.
1915>	Chorley, R.S.T.	Cadet	R.A.S.C. (Mechanical Transport.)
1913 D/W	Clay, A.J.	Capt.	Territorial Army
1911	Cowburn, A.B.	Capt.	5th Border Regt.
1915>	Cowley, J.C.	2nd Lieut.	Machine Gun Corps.
1912	Diss, H.C.	Lieut.	8th London Regt.
1915>	Doughty, A.H.	Rank and Regt. not known	
1915 D/W	Fletcher, J.N	Corporal	Northumberland Fusiliers
1911	France, W.H.	Capt.	Regt. not known
1915	Gourlay, W.B.	Capt.	R.A.M.C.
1915 KIA	Gross, W.H.B	2nd Lieut.	Queen's Royal West Surrey Regt.
1911	Hardy, L.	Lt/Cpl.	R.A.S.C. (Mechanical Transport)
1915 KIA	Hartley, E.	Lieut.	2nd Lancs. Fusiliers
1910	Heelis, R.L.	Pte.	R.A.S.C., (Mechanical Transport)
1912 KIA	Herford, S.W	Pte.	24th Royal Fusiliers
1915>	Higgs, S.L.	Surgeon	Royal Navy
1913	Holland, C.F.	Lieut. (M.C.)	Gloucestershire Regt.
1910	Hopley, C.F.C.	Corporal	Special Brigade Royal Engineers
1915>	Huntbach, W.M.	Major	4th King's Shropshire L.I.
1906* KIA	Jeffcoat, S.F	2nd Lieut.	Royal Fusiliers
1912	Laycock, J.	Rank and Regt. not known	
1909 KIA	Lees, E.B.	Major	Westm. & Cumb. Yeomanry
1915 KIA	Linzell, S.J.	Capt. (M.C & Croix de Guerre)	R.A.M.C.
1906*	Lyon, H.B.	2nd Lieut.	5th Cokes' Rifles

RECORD OF WAR SERVICE (CONTINUED)

Listed as	Member	Rank	Regiment
1915>	Martin, B.L.	Pte.	Artists' Rifles, O.T.C.
1915>	Masson, P.R.	Ft-Sub-Lieut.	Royal Navy
1915>	McCullagh, A.B.	Lt-Commander	Royal Navy
1912	Milligan, G.	Pte.	Tank Corps
1909	Morrison-Bell, A.C.	Major	Scots Guards
1913	Murray, D.G.	Ft.-Lieut.	Royal Flying Corps/R.A.F
1911	Norman, R.E.	Lieut.	Oxford and Bucks. L.I.
1906* D/gas	Oppenheimer, L.J.	2nd Lieut.	2/23rd London Regt.
1906*	Ormiston-Chant, T.C.	Rank not known	16th Royal Irish Rifles
1911	Parker, T.H.G.	Rank and Regt. not known	
1912	Prescott, J.L.	Rank and Regt. not known	
1915> KIA	Prichard, A.J.	Pte.	London Regt.(PoW.O.C.S.R).
1912	Purkis, G.C.L.	Capt.	Yorks.and Lancs.Regt. & M.G.C.
1912	Quick, H.	Engineers Lieut.	Royal Navy
1913 D/W	Rimer, A.W..	Pte.	Royal Fusiliers
1913	Rowland, S.C.	L/Cpl.	2nd Batt.Artists' Rifles
1910 D/W	Sanderson, R.B.	Lieut.	Royal Garrison Artillery
1909	Sansom, G.S.	Major (M.C., D.F.C.)	Royal Flying Corps /R.A.F
1915>	Simpson, H.	Major	Royal Field Artillery
1915 KIA	Slingsby, H.L.	Lieut. (M.C.)	King's Own Yorks.L.I.
1911	Smith, Rev, J.H.	Pte.	Inns of Court O.T.C.
1915	Somervell, T. H	Capt.	R.A.M.C. (Territorial Force.)
1909	Stables, J.	Pte.	Regt. not known
1908	Thompson, P.S.	Capt.	130th (St. John) Ambulance
1906* KIA	Turner, G.C.	Capt.	West Yorks. Regt.
1906*	Wakefield, A.W.	Capt.	Royal Army Medical Corps
1912	Walker-Jones, E.W.	Rank and Regt. not known	
1913	Watts, G.H.	Lieut.	Motor Machine Gun Corps
1911 KIA	Whitley, B.H.	2nd Lieut.	Royal Scots
1911 D/W	Whitworth, J.H.	Major (D.S.O., M.C.)	2/6 Batt. Manchester Regt.
1915>	Wilson, G.	Sub-Lieut	R.N.V.R
1915	Wingfield, C.R.	Major	3rd Shropshire L.I.
1909	Witty, B.H.	Lieut.	Royal Engineers
1906*	Woodhouse, G.F.	Capt.	Territorial Force(Unattached list)
1909	Woodsend, J.C.	Pte.	R.A.S.C.,(Mechanical Transport)
1909	Woodsend, W.A.	Pte	R.A.S.C.,(Mechanical Transport)
1912 D/W	Worthington, C.S.	Lt-Col. (D.S.O., M.C.)	Manchester Regt.

KEY

L.I. Light Infantry M.G.C. Machine Gun Corps R.A.M.C Royal Army Medical Corps
 R.A.S.C. Royal Army Service Corps. O.T.C Officers' Training Corps. T.F. Territorial Force.
 PoW.O.C.S.R. Prince of Wales Own Civil Service Rifles

DECORATIONS

The following members were awarded decorations for their actions. Unfortunately we do not have full details in every case but those marked ** are described later in the section 'IN REMEMBRANCE'.

BALFOUR, G.B.

Lt-Col in King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment was awarded the D.S.O.

BOYD, A.W.

Capt. in the Lancashire Fusiliers was awarded the M.C.

HOLLAND, C.F.

Lieut. in the Gloucester Regt. was awarded the M.C.

LINZELL, S.J. **

Capt. in the R.A.M.C. was awarded the M.C. and the French Croix de Guerre.

SANSOM, G.S.

Major in the Royal Flying Corps.(later the RAF) was awarded the M.C. and the D.F.C. He commanded a unit of observation balloons and was shot down in flames on three occasions.

SLINGSBY, H.L. **

Lieut. in the King's Own Yorks L/I. was awarded the M.C.

WHITWORTH, J.H. **

Major in the Manchester Regt. was awarded the M.C. and D.S.O.

WORTHINGTON, C.S. **

Lt-Col. in the Manchester Regt. was awarded the M.C; D.S.O. and Bar.



The Distinguished
Service Order
DSO



Distinguished
Service Order
DSO with Bar



Croix de Guerre
(1939)
CG



Distinguished
Flying Cross
DFC



Military Cross
MC

ROLL OF HONOUR

Listed as		Killed in action (KIA)		
Member	Name	Died of wounds (D/W)		Journal
1915	BAINBRIDGE, J.S.	22nd March '18	KIA	-
1912	BEAN, J.G.	31st July '17	KIA	No 11 (1917/18), pg 151
1913	BLAIR, H.S.P.	31st Oct '16	D/W	-
1913	CLAY, A.J.	18th Feb '15	D/W	-
1915	FLETCHER J.N.	26th April '15	D/W	No 9 (1915), pg 15
1915	GROSS, W.H.B.	3rd Nov '16	KIA	-
1915	HARTLEY, E.	18th May '18	KIA	No 11 (1917/18), pg 149
1912	HERFORD, S.W.	28th Jan '16	KIA	No 10 (1916), pg 72
1906	JEFFCOAT, S.F.	29th April '17	KIA	No 11 (1917/18), pg 152
1909	LEES, E.B.	31st July '18	KIA	No 12 (1918), pg 234
1915	LINZELL S.J. (M.C. and Croix de Guerre)	3rd April '17	KIA	-
1906	OPPENHEIMER, L.J.	8th Nov '16	result of gas	No 10 (1916), pg 64
1915>	PRICHARD, A.I.	21st May '16	KIA	-
1913	RIMER, A.W.	23rd July '16	D/W	-
1910	SANDERSON, R.B.	17th April '18	D/W	No 11 (1917/18), pg 155
1915	SLINGSBY, H.L. (M.C.)	11th Aug '17	KIA	No 11 (1917/18), pg 147
1906	TURNER, G.C.	13th Sept '17	KIA	-
1911	WHITLEY, B.H.	9th July '16	KIA	No 10 (1916), pg 75
1911	WHITWORTH, J.H. (D.S.O; M.C.)	31st March '18	D/W	No 11 (1917/18), pg 156
1912	WORTHINGTON, C.S. (D.S.O; M.C and Bar)	4th Oct '18	D/W	No 13 (1919), pg 91

NOT ON PLAQUE

SMILEY, J.W. Lost on the 'Leinster' Oct 1918 No 11, pg 154

FELL & ROCK CLIMBING CLUB



IN GLORIOUS & HAPPY MEMORY OF THOSE
WHOSE NAMES ARE INSCRIBED BELOW—
MEMBERS OF THIS CLUB—WHO DIED FOR
THEIR COUNTRY IN THE EUROPEAN WAR
1914-1918 THESE FELLS WERE ACQUIRED
BY THEIR FELLOW-MEMBERS & BY THEM
VESTED IN THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR
THE USE & ENJOYMENT OF THE PEOPLE
OF OUR LAND FOR ALL TIME:—

J.S. BAINBRIDGE: J.G. BEAN: H.S.P. BLAIR:
A.J. CLAY: J.N. FLETCHER: W.H.B. GROSS:
E. HARTLEY: S.W. HERFORD: S.F. JEFFCOAT:
E.B. LEES: S.J. LINZELL: L.J. OPPENHEIMER:
A.J. PRICHARD: A.M. RIMER: R.B. SANDERSON:
H.L. SLINGSBY: G.C. TURNER: B.H. WITTY:
J.H. WHITWORTH: C.S. WORTHINGTON.

RESTING PLACES

Name	BURIAL PLACE
Bainbridge J.S.	<i>British Cemetery inside Pozieres Memorial, Somme, France</i>
Bean J.G.	<i>Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium</i>
Blair H.S.P.	<i>Pieta Military Cemetery, Malta</i>
Clay A.J.	<i>All Saints Churchyard, Newborough, Staffordshire</i>
Fletcher J.N.	<i>St Nicholas Churchyard, Gosforth, Northumberland</i>
Gross W.H.B.	<i>Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France</i>
Hartley E.	<i>Mont Bernanchon British Cemetery, Gonnehem, Pas de Calais</i>
Herford S.W.	<i>Brown's Road Military Cemetery, Festubert, Pas de Calais</i>
Jeffcoat S.F.	<i>Roclincourt Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais</i>
Lees E.B.	<i>Harponville Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France</i>
Linzell S.J.	<i>Foreste Communal Cemetery, Aisne, France</i>
Oppenheimer L.J.	<i>Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, Pas de Calais</i>
Prichard A.I.	<i>Arras Memorial, Arras, France</i>
Rimer A.M.	<i>St Mary Churchyard, Stoke d'Abernon, Surrey</i>
Sanderson R.B.	<i>Haringhe Military cemetery, Poperinghe, Belgium</i>
Slingsby H.L.	<i>Adinkerke Military cemetery, De Panne, Belgium</i>
Turner G.C.	<i>Favreuil British Cemetery, Pas de Calais</i>
Whitley B.H.	<i>Quarry Cemetery, Montauban, Somme, France</i>
Whitworth J.H.	<i>St Sever Cemetery, Rouen, Seine Maritime</i>
Worthington C.S.	<i>Mont Huon Military Cemetery, Le Treport, Seine Maritime</i>

IN REMEMBRANCE

In preparing notes on the members named on the Gable plaque, it was felt appropriate to use, as far as possible, the words used by writers who had known personally the members concerned. Many of these notes therefore are taken from Obituaries which were written for the Club Journals between the years 1915-1919 while all concentrate on each member's mountain activities and his service record. The Journals used have been indicated so that the full Obituary may be read if so desired.

Unfortunately, some of those named did not have a Journal Obituary and, where other sources of information have not been available, it has been possible to give only brief details. This does not detract from the fact that these members too endured the same terrible conditions and were equally denied the right to return home afterwards to the peace of the hills and to the companionship of our Club.

BAINBRIDGE, J.S. Lieut., 4th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment

James Scott Bainbridge was elected to membership of the Club in 1915. Unfortunately we have no record of his activities in the mountains but he was known to be a keen and competent climber and contemporaries spoke of his "sustained interest" on a rock climb. He enlisted in 1915, rose from the ranks and was later commissioned. In 1917 he was gassed during action at Arras but on recovery, he returned to duty and was killed at St Quentin in March 1918.

IN REMEMBRANCE (CONTD.)

BEAN, J.G. L/Cpl., King's (Liverpool) Regiment

John Gordon Bean was elected to the Club in 1912. His career on the mountains was relatively short but he was felt to show great promise on his climbs in Wales and Cumbria. His notebooks show that on his last holiday he led Walker's Gully and climbed Scafell Pinnacle solo. He was also a member of the Wayfarer's Club and was the first Editor of their Journal.

He was amongst the first to volunteer for active service in August 1914 but was repeatedly rejected on account of defective eyesight. However he persevered and in June 1915 he enlisted in the King's Liverpool Regiment and served in France from October 1915 with the exception of a short leave in January 1917 when he was married. He was killed in action near Ypres a few months later on 31st July 1917.

Ref: Journal 11 (1917) Pg 151

BLAIR, H.S.P. Lieut., 3rd Batt, Duke of Cornwall's Lt. Infantry

Herbert Samuel Penny Blair's name first appears on the Club Membership list in 1913 but, sadly, we have no record of his mountain activities. He joined the army as 2nd Lieutenant in the 3rd Battalion of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. While on active service on the Salonika front, he was wounded and died from his wounds on Oct 31st 1916, aged 26

CLAY, A.J. Capt., Territorial Army

Arthur Joseph Clay was elected to the Club in 1913 but no further details of his activities have been found. At 43 years old, he was too old for active service but he joined up as a Territorial and served as Captain. Records show that he died in February 1915 and, although no details are available, it is believed that he died of wounds.



IN REMEMBRANCE (CONTD.)

FLETCHER, J.N. Cpl., Northumberland Fusiliers

James Neville Fletcher was the first Club member to lose his life in this war. Named on the List of Members for 1915 he was a comparatively new member who was an enthusiastic lover of the mountains and was seen as a "young fellow of great keenness". At the outbreak of the war he joined the Northumberland Fusiliers and rapidly gained promotion. Severely injured by machine gun fire at the 2nd Battle of Ypres on 16th April 1915, he was brought to a home hospital but, a month later, he died of his wounds aged 29.

Ref: Journal 9 (1915) pg 15

GROSS, W.H.B. 2nd Lieut., Queen's Royal West Surrey Rgt.

William Henry Bright Gross was elected a member of the Club in 1915 but no information regarding his mountain activities has been available. He served as 2nd Lieutenant in the Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment. Little is known of his war record but it is understood that he was killed in action on 3rd November 1916 somewhere on the Somme. He was the elder brother of member Herbert Gross who later wrote the rock climbing Gable Guide in Series I of our FRCC Guides.

HARTLEY, E. Lieut., 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers

Edmund Hartley was elected a member of the Club in March 1914. The nephew of the Club's third President W.C. Slingsby, he had grown up with an inherited love of the hills and his first visit to the Alps, as a boy, had inspired him to take up mountaineering in earnest. He had accompanied Herford and other leading mountaineers of the time on very difficult rock climbs and his Obituarist records that "he had all the makings of a great mountaineer". (continued over)

IN REMEMBRANCE (CONTD.)

HARTLEY, E. (continued) His military record was no less memorable.

On the outbreak of war he followed a short course at Sandhurst at the end of which he was commissioned in the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers. He went to France on 1st April 1915 and just a few weeks later on 2nd May he was severely wounded at the second battle of Ypres. After a long convalescence and special training he returned to France in September 1916. Soon afterwards, on 10th October, during the battle of the Somme, he was again wounded. After convalescence, he returned to France early in 1917 and on April 10th, during the battle for Arras, he was wounded for the third time.

Part of his convalescence and sick leave this time was spent at Windermere from where, as his health improved, he managed some good climbs on Pavey, Dow and the North-West climb Pillar Rock. At his own request, he returned to active service in France in February 1918 where his division was mentioned in dispatches.

On May 18th, whilst in command of a Brigade working party at night, he was killed by a shell.

Ref: Journal 11 (1917-18) pg 149

HERFORD, S.W. Pte. 24th Royal Fusiliers

Siegfried Wedgwood Herford first appears in the List of Members for 1912 by which time he had earned the reputation of being “the greatest rock climber that England has yet produced”. In 1907, at the age of sixteen he climbed in the Gross Glockner group and followed this with some rock climbing in England and Wales but his real climbing career took off at Easter in 1911 in the Ogwen area of North Wales where he climbed the classic routes of the time.

The following year he went with George Sansom to the Dolomites where they made guideless ascents of many of the major peaks in the area. In 1914, together with Sansom and Charles Holland he made the first ascent of the Central Buttress of Scafell which is still considered to be one of the most famous rock climbs in the country. When war threatened he applied for a commission which surprisingly he did not receive. He then accompanied Geoffrey Winthrop Young to France as a war correspondent and in November 1914 he served as a driver in the Red Cross. In February 1915 he enlisted as a private in the 24th Royal Fusiliers (Sportsmen’s Battalion) and on 28th January 1916, while still a private, he was killed by a rifle grenade.

Ref: Journal 10(1916) pg 72

IN REMEMBRANCE (CONTD.)

JEFFCOAT, S.F. 2nd Lieut., Royal Fusiliers

Stanley Ferns Jeffcoat, known affectionately to his friends as “Jeff” was one of our Original Members being named on the Preliminary List of Members for 1906. He was a keen Gritstone climber in his native Derbyshire but also climbed in the Alps and was best known for his climbs in Cumbria with Herford and Sansom. He served as 2nd Lieutenant with the Royal Fusiliers and was very badly wounded with shrapnel during April 1916. The injuries were so severe that it looked as if he would not return to active service, however, in March 1917, he rejoined his regiment in France. A few weeks later on 29th April, during an attack on the “Oppy” line, when most of the other officers were casualties, he gathered together the remaining men and led them in taking a German trench and re-establishing communication with HQ but he sustained fatal injuries and died of his wounds.

Ref: Journal 11 (1917-18) pg 152

LEES, E.B Major, Cumberland & Westmorland Yeomanry

Eric Brown Lees was elected to Membership of the Club in 1908 and was thus one of the Club's longest serving members. No record has been found of his activities with the Club but as he lived at Kirkby Lonsdale it may be assumed that he was active on the Lakeland Fells. In 1909 he was commissioned in the Cumberland & Westmorland Yeomanry and was mobilised at the outbreak of war.

After a long spell of active service he was invalided home with heart trouble and was then sent to Ireland to be in command of the Curragh near Dublin. In July 1918 he was ordered back to the Western Front and was killed in action some three weeks later on 31st July 1918.

Ref: Journal 12 (1918) pg 234

IN REMEMBRANCE (CONTD.)

LINZELL, S.J. Capt., (M.C. and Croix de Guerre) R.A.M.C.

Dr Stanley James Linzell first appears in the List of Members for 1915.

He was a qualified doctor and, at the outbreak of war, was posted to France with the Royal Engineers. Some six months later he was wounded and returned to England from where he made many requests to return to the front. In May 1916 he was posted back to France and was commissioned Captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps. For his courageous work in evacuating the wounded while under fire he was awarded the Military Cross. He was also awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French for the help he gave to civilians and particularly to sick children. On the evening of April 2nd 1917 he went out on patrol but did not return. His body was found some days later on April 10th, he had been killed by a shot in the head.

OPPENHEIMER, L.J. Lieut., 2/23rd London Regiment

Lehmann J. Oppenheimer, affectionately known to his friends as “Opp”, was an Original Member of the Club. His name appears in the Preliminary List of Members for 1906. A regular attender at Club Meets, he served on the Committee from 1910 to 1912 and was Vice-President in 1915. His eye for detail and his minute knowledge of the crags was invaluable in the discovery of new routes and he is recorded as having shared in several first ascents. He pioneered routes in many parts of the Lakes on Bowfell, on Pillar, in the Wasdale area and amongst the fells on the west side of Buttermere. He also spent several seasons in the Alps where he climbed a great number of difficult peaks.

Although he was over the age for enlistment he lied about his age and in January 1915 he joined the Inns of Court O.T.C. where, as a private, he found himself having to salute his son who was an officer. He later enlisted in the Artists' Rifles.

In August 1915 he was gazetted 2nd Lieutenant in the 2/ 23 London Regiment. Then in June 1916, after being gazetted 1st Lieutenant, he went as Machine Gun Officer with his Battalion to France where he served with distinction. After four months in the trenches he suffered gas poisoning from a shell which burst nearby. This led to bronchitis and pneumonia from which he died, aged 48.

Ref: Journal 10 (1916) p 64

IN REMEMBRANCE (CONTD.)

PRICHARD, A.I. Pte., London Regiment

Arthur Illyd Prichard joined the Club in 1915 but no records have been found as to his activity as a member. He served as a private in the London Regiment of the Prince of Wales Own Civil Service Rifles. Again, we have no details of his active service but he was killed in action on 21st May 1916 somewhere in the region of Arras.

RIMER, A.M. Pte., Royal Fusiliers

Arthur Mitchell Rimer's name first appears in the List of Members in 1913 but unfortunately we have no record of his activities with the Club. He served as a private in the Royal Fusiliers. While in action, he was injured and died, believed to be from his wounds, on July 23rd 1916, aged 29

SANDERSON R.B. Lieut., Royal Garrison Artillery

Roy Broughton Sanderson became a member of the Club in 1910. Coming from a climbing family, he climbed regularly with his father and brother on visits to Wasdale Head and it is recorded that rock climbing remained one of his favourite pastimes. A qualified engineer, he was appointed on the Staff of the Royal Naval College but was granted leave of absence by the Admiralty to join the army and was gazetted 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Garrison Artillery. While serving in France he was badly wounded and was invalided home for a year during which time he married. He returned to the trenches in December 1917. A few months later he was again wounded and on April 17th 1918 he died of his wounds.

Ref: Journal 11 (1917-18) pg155

SLINGSBY, H.L. Lieut., (M.C.) K.O.Y.L.I

Henry Lawrence Slingsby, son of W.C.Slingsby (Club President 1910-12) is first named in the List of Members for 1915 although he had already enjoyed much climbing at home and abroad, both in Norway and the High Alps and "bade fair to be a worthy son of his father" In 1912 he obtained a commission in the Special Reserve Battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and when war broke joined the 2/K.O.Y.L.I. (continued over)

IN REMEMBRANCE (CONTD.)

SLINGSBY, H.L. *(continued)* In October 1914 he was gazetted 2nd Lieutenant and was present at the battle for Mons where his regiment suffered great losses. He acted as Captain during the retreat and the ensuing battle of the Marne, where he was mentioned in dispatches. He was severely wounded in the head in February 1915, near Ypres from which he suffered violent headaches from then on. When recovered, he rejoined a reserve battalion and in May 1916 he was appointed adjutant to a Pioneer Service Battalion in 10th Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. He returned with them to the front in June 1916, was present at the battle of the Somme and later actions and was awarded an M.C. for "general good service in the field" On Saturday August 11th 1917, aged 24, he was killed by a chance shell hitting the headquarters mess.

Ref: Journal 11 (1917-18) pg 147

TURNER, G.C. Capt., West Yorkshire Regiment

George Corral Turner was an Original Member of the Club, his name appearing on the Preliminary Members' List for 1906. There is no record of his achievements on the crags but he appears on a Club photo taken on a meet in 1907 which would indicate a keen participation in Club activities.

At the outbreak of war he enlisted in the 62nd Division of the West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales Own) where he held the rank of Captain. In 1917 during a heavy bombardment near Bapaume and disregarding his own safety he walked along the trench parapet from post to post to ensure that all the fire steps were manned until he was struck by a trench mortar which killed him.

WHITLEY, B.H. 2ND Lieut., Royal Scots

Benjamin Heywood Whitley was elected a member of the Club in 1910. He was one of the Ulverston members and a keen fell walker. He joined the O.T.C. long before the war, gained his commission in the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Scots Lothian Regiment in 1915 and was sent to France in March 1916 where he expressed the wish that he "might serve at least three months". Just four months later, on July 19th 1916, he was killed in action on the Somme near Longueval.

Ref: Journal 10 (1916) pg 75

IN REMEMBRANCE (CONTD.)

WHITWORTH J.H. Major (M.C. and D.S.O) Manchester Regt.

John Haworth Whitworth joined the Club in 1911 but again we have no record of his mountaineering activities. He joined the army in 1914 and served with the 2/6 Battalion Manchester Regiment.

In 1917 while in action near Nieuport he received the M.C. for “presence of mind and gallantry”. The following year, in March 1918, while in command of his battalion during fierce fighting, he was awarded the D.S.O. At the end of the month he was badly wounded and died of his wounds on 31st March 1918.

WORTHINGTON, C.S. Lt-Col., (M.C., D.S.O. and Bar) Manchester Regt.

Claude Swanwick Worthington was first named in the List of Members for 1911, although he had started serious rock climbing earlier. His obituary records that he “ascended or descended nearly all of the routes on Scafell, Pillar and Gable and in Langdale, Borrowdale and Buttermere.” He led the first recorded winter ascent of Engineer’s Chimney on Gable and he also climbed in the Alps where his achievements would probably have secured him qualifications for membership of the Alpine Club at that time.

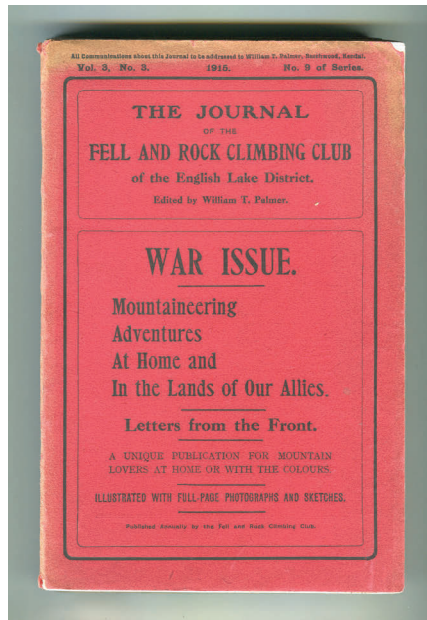
He had an outstanding military career from being gazetted as 2nd Lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion of the Manchester Regiment in 1900 and rising to becoming Major in 1914 and Lieutenant-Colonel in 1917. From September 1914 to February 1917 he commanded the 6th Battalion of the Manchester Regiment in Egypt, Gallipoli and Sinai during which time he was awarded the M.C. and D.S.O. He then returned to France where, while in action at Oisy le Verger, he was awarded a Bar to the D.S.O. During his service, he was mentioned in dispatches three times, was wounded three times and took home leave on only three occasions. In 1918 he took command of the 5th Battalion of the Dorset Regiment and was in action with them when he was wounded on 3rd October. He died of his wounds a few days later on 14th, October 1918, the last of our members to die in this war.

Ref: Journal 13 (1919) pg 91

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

When the War Issue Journal (1915) was being prepared, the Committee requested that a letter be written to all those members who were known to be already “with the Colours”. The replies were printed in the resulting Journal and although some of the writers were still in training at home, others were already on active service and were able to give first hand accounts of the action at the Front. The following are extracts from some of the letters sent to the Journal Editor W.T. Palmer.

With the limited space available full justice cannot be done to the longer letters but all these letters can be read in full in Journal No 9 (1915).



LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

From J.S.Bainbridge:

December 5th 1915

"...when we first came out there were several stiff pitches but we managed to surmount them. Whit Monday was the stiffest time. Whit Monday used to be reserved for a really good climb. On many occasions we have been in tight corners on that day but this year surpassed all others for "sustained interest." Recently we have held trenches in a quiet part of the line and life gets monotonous. I am looking forward to the time when I have promised myself a jolly good holiday which will include a fortnight in Lakeland. What a treat it will be after the dreary stretches of this water-logged country."

(Killed in action, 22nd March 1918)

From H.S.D.Blair

November 19th 1915

"...I've been in a fairly uneventful part of the line lately, and just missed the Halluch show. At one time I was at the very right flank - the last platoon - of the English line. The French who joined on to me were the most curious old devils, about 50 years old. We are now just off to the Near East, where excitement will probably be not quite so rare..." Remember me to any of the old Wastwater crowd you happen to run across.

(Died of wounds, France, 16th Oct 1916)

From Denis Murray

Wieriekerschans

October 23rd 1915

Flight Lt Murray sent diary notes :-

Feb 11th To Ostend dropping bombs and back to Dunkirk

Feb 16th To Zeebrugge. Hit at 6,800 feet and engine smashed. Got into water and was picked up 5 hours later (10.30pm) by a Dutch torpedo boat whilst trying to attract the attention of an English destroyer. *(It would seem that he was interned in Holland for his letter continues:-)*

"Here there is nothing to tell except that the guard grows stricter as each new attempt at escape is frustrated. I and another were caught two yards from the other side of the moat and a few days after they discovered our tunnel, the result of many months of hard labour, just as we were finishing it. I suppose there will be success in the end."

Unfortunately nothing further known

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

From L.J.Oppenheimer

H.Q. Braintree, Essex

November 7th 1915

“...I don’t know when we shall be sent to the front – I hope that it won’t be very long before we go. My son’s battalion has sent most of its men to the Dardanelles, but he was kept back on account of being Brigade Musketry Instructor. He is a Captain now, but I don’t need to salute him as I had to 3 or 4 months ago, when he was 1st Lieut. and I was a private...”

(Died in France following gas attack 8th Nov 1916)

From H.L. Quick (R.N.Engineer) H.M.S. “Manzanita”

November 27th 1915

“The above is my present “regiment”. Suffice it to say that this is my fifth job since war started and is far and away the hardest one, perhaps also the most useful, if least spectacular.

I have had no climbing since Aug 4th, 1914 and have little chance of getting any here. On clear days we can just see the _____ (*censored*) mountains. ’Tis fine but they are 60 miles away across the sea.

Sorry I can’t spin any hair-raising yarns, but I shall have to hunt out some for future New Year meets at Wasdale Head”

From H.L.Slingsby

December 2nd 1915

Lieut Slingsby wrote a long and very detailed letter in which he describes his “Baptism of Fire” at the Battle of Mons on 23rd August 1914. He contrasted his Battalion’s approach march towards Mons during which they were “enthusiastically welcomed by the French and Belgians” with the retreat when they marched and fought for fourteen days with just intermittent snatches of sleep, the only eatables being “biscuits in tins which had been thrown out for us along the roadside”.

On 6th Sept they engaged in the Battle of the Marne and he wrote that...“I have seldom enjoyed myself more as the change was so great after all the marching we had been through. Walking up Rossett Ghyll with a heavy rucksack on your back on a boiling hot day is bad enough, but marching on cobbled roads with Germans hard after you is the limit”

(Killed in action 11th Aug. 1917).

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

From A.W.Wakefield

“Somewhere in France”

November 17th 1915

Captain Wakefield wrote that he was attached to the 29th Casualty Clearing Station a few miles behind the firing line where they were busy digging themselves in for the winter. This involved...“making cinder paths through the quagmires, digging drains, building camp ovens, improvising a drying tent, water works, baths (hot and cold) etc. and generally making ourselves snug for the coming winter... but I had better add that all this work is done in intervals of attending to the casualties brought in to us. These come mostly in rushes, sometimes big rushes”...

He explains that the function of the Unit was to move the wounded on as quickly as possible...“so as to keep the station clear all the time to deal with any overwhelming rush that may come unexpectedly upon us at any moment... Big guns boom in the distance, more or less all the time. Occasionally the periodical booms increase until they grow into one continual unbroken roar. Sometimes we see a hostile aeroplane high up in the sky with little puffs of cloud bursting all round it..”

The letter ends; “May every one of us, when this whole ghastly war is over, and when right has triumphed over wrong, have the deep inward satisfaction - a far greater satisfaction than that bred of V.C's or D.S.O's - of knowing that he has not only done “his bit” but that he has done the biggest bit in his power, and has strained every ounce with the grit, determination and patience bred in our northern hills.”

President 1923-25, and gave the oration at the unveiling of the Plaque.

WAR MEMORIAL: First Ideas

The idea of a FRCC memorial to the members who fell in WWI was first discussed at the Annual General Meeting in 1918. At least six separate proposals were discussed, the main one being for the erection of shelters or 'dugouts' to be sited at all the major crags in Lakeland. This proposal was accepted although no further details were worked out. However, once this proposal became known to the general membership a veritable storm of letters was written to the Club secretary and even The Manchester Guardian. Although a few were in favour the vast majority were against, mainly due to a misunderstanding that these shelters would be on top of the crags and thus be "unsightly excrescences" on the landscape. In fact the original plan was for them to be built at the foot and thus mainly hidden. In view of the overwhelming feeling against this idea the committee decided to take no further action on the proposal.

Around January 1919 T.C. Ormiston-Chant suggested another idea in a very detailed and well-thought-out letter to the Journal editor, published in Journal No. 12. He suggested that as a memorial the Club should publish a series of six books, one for each of the main climbing areas. Each book would give the names of all members who had lost their lives and would include a list of climbs with details and information on access to the valleys, hotels, bed-and-breakfast accommodation, farmhouses, livery stables and camp sites etc. They would also include general information on paths, bridges, high-level springs, flora, fauna and meteorological information. Reading through all the items that he suggested should be covered it is difficult to see how so much information could be included and yet have a book that could be carried out onto the fells.

Other proposals were for the Club to purchase a suitable building for a headquarters at either Coniston or Wasdale Head (this being 17 years before the building of Brackenclose), or that the names of the fallen should be inscribed onto a rock on one of the big crags.

The minutes of a meeting in February 1919 record a suggestion, almost as an aside, from the Treasurer H.P. Cain that the Club should “buy a fell” as a memorial and present the land to the National Trust to perpetuate the memory of those who had given their lives during the war. Although the idea did not appear to raise much interest at first, it must have been discussed at length; while several prominent members were enthusiastic, the plan was the subject of a very critical letter published in Journal No. 14 by George Seatree, an ex-president, who seemed to think that if the purchase of a fell was to go ahead then the FRCC might restrict access and create a precedent for other landowners to do the same. He then suggested that a bronze tablet be erected on a suitable structure at Wasdale Head.

So, it is clear that there was a lively debate on how to honour those who fell in the war: ultimately several ideas melded to create the memorial we have today.

**‘the use and enjoyment of the
people of our land for all time.’**

HOW WE CAME TO OWN A FELL

In an article in the 1923 Journal R.S.T. Chorley summed up what must have been the feeling of many members when he wrote, “A war memorial at last... it is impossible to repress the feeling of exultation mingled with awe at the wonder of it that to us should have been granted the privilege of honouring our dead in this way”.

We can only guess at the lobbying that must have ensued as members argued for their favourite plan, but by 1920 H.P. Cain's idea - that the Club should buy a fell upon which to build a memorial to those FRCC members who perished in the Great War - had become the favourite and a plan to buy Pillar Rock was pursued. The owner was approached but turned down the offer of £50. Attention then turned to Napes Needle whose owner, the Trustees of the Musgrave Estate, wouldn't sell the Needle separately as they wanted to sell the whole estate in one piece. A year or so later the Club decided to achieve its aim by negotiating to buy Row Head Farm at Wasdale Head which included Great Gable and Napes Needle. Finally, in 1923, the Musgrave Estate decided to dispose of all its holdings by auction in separate lots. An informal group of Committee members authorised Richard Hall to bid £1100 for the farm but the bid was unsuccessful as the price went too high. The whole estate was bought by Mr. Herbert Walker of Seascale.

On hearing this news the FRCC President Darwin Leighton contacted Herbert Walker with an offer to buy the Needle, which was received with “cordiality”. Encouraged by the friendliness shown by the vendor, a ‘sub-committee’ of Darwin Leighton, Herbert Cain and Wilson Butler (a solicitor, and at the time the Honorary Treasurer and later a Vice President), discussed the possibility of extending the offer to include the whole of Great Gable. When Herbert Walker and his solicitor requested a more precise statement of what the Club wanted, Cain unfolded a map of Lakeland pointed to the central portion and said “All of this over 1500 feet.”

Confronted by a request much bigger than had been proposed Walker would not give a firm answer, but being an old climber himself and a one-time member he did not disguise his sympathy for the project. It was not long before Walker came back with an asking price of £400 subject to certain conditions concerning mineral and sporting rights: this offer was accepted. The sale was to include all the land above the 1500 feet contour but dropping to include Kern Knotts and raising to exclude Sty Head summit. According to reports at the time the strip of land running through the pass was not included as it had been reserved in case a motor road was ever built over the pass.

Armed with details of Lord Leconfield's earlier transfer of Sca Fell to the National Trust, Cain and Chorley met with the Secretary of the National Trust to propose a similar arrangement for Great Gable and its surrounding fells.

It was decided to raise the money from the membership and nearly £600 was raised from 450 members. At the Annual Dinner at Coniston in October 1923 the title deeds to 3000 acres of high fells, 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 to hold for "the use and enjoyment of the people of our land for all time". At last the club could proceed with its plans to place a memorial on Great Gable.

A document in the archive dated 1946 gives the following information. "In 1944 when the National Trust bought Seathwaite Farm the curious fact emerged that apparently some of the land purchased by the Club and believed to be freehold was actually part of Borrowdale Common. As far as the public is concerned this makes no practical difference but legally the freehold given by the Club now appears to consist of 1184 acres instead of 3000". If this is true it seems that the Club bought 1816 acres of land that belonged to the Nation and then gave it back via the National Trust.

The following is a circular letter which was sent out to all members of the club:-

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
The Fell and Rock Climbing Club
Of the English Lake District.
Not to be communicated to the Press.

Dear Sir or Madam,

The time has now come when it is the privilege of the Committee to put before you the War Memorial Scheme.

After much delay, which they think that you will consider to have been not without its compensation, they have negotiated for the purchase of a very large portion of the centre of climbing and walking in the district.

This comprises the tops of twelve mountains, viz.: Kirk Fell, Great Gable, Green Gable, Brandreth, Grey Knots, Base Brown, Seathwaite Fell, Glaramara, Allen Crag, Great End, Broad Crag and Lingmell together with almost all the land over 1500 ft, bounding them on the sides facing the Seathwaite to Wasdale track. The Committee have been most cordially met in their dealings with the owner Herbert W. Walker, Esq., of Seascale.

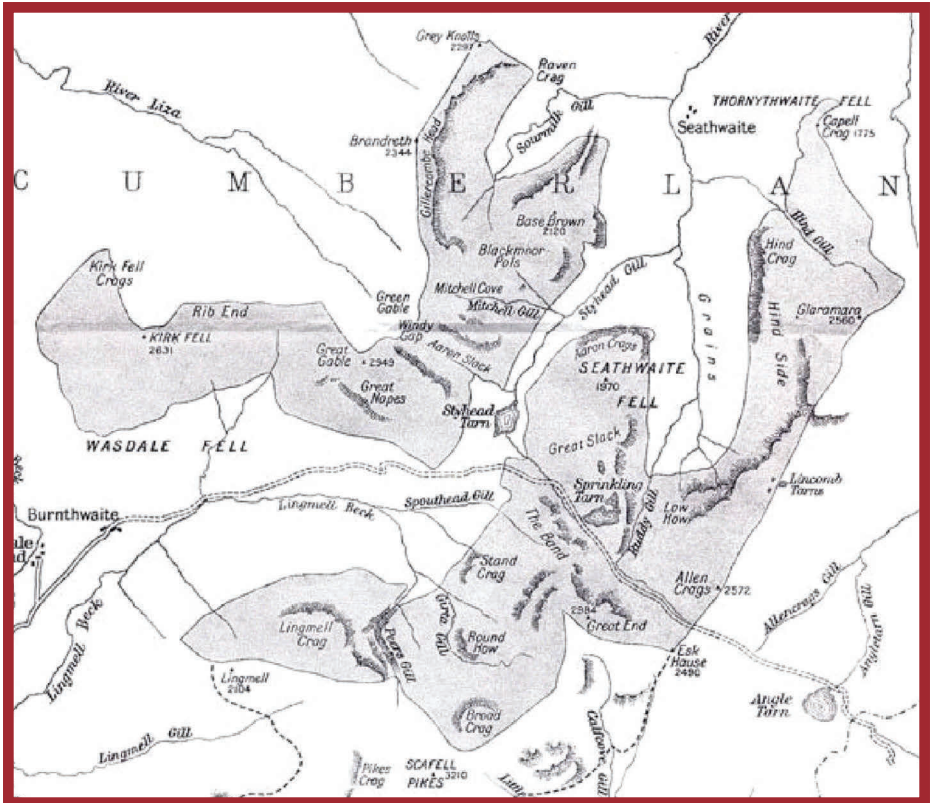
Arrangements are being made to hand this whole area over to the National Trust who will comply with the conditions laid down by the club, and safeguard its interests in perpetuity.

It has been considered desirable definitely to associate with this most appropriate memorial the names of those members who gave their lives in the war and for this purpose a bronze tablet on, or near the summit of Great Gable.

The Committee confidently invite all members to support this memorial as generously as they can, realising that in so doing they do honour to their comrades, while preserving to their successors for all time the finest area of fell and rock in England. In order that this memorial may be truly representative of our club it is hoped that some contribution will be received from every single member.

Yours faithfully,

Darwin Leighton, President. Wilson Butler, Vice-President.
Herbert P. Cain, Librarian. L. W. Somervell, Secretary.
Borrowdale 19/ 5/ 23



The land purchased by FRCC in 1923 (the shaded area) is the actual War Memorial. Contained therein are twelve mountains that form a majestic heartland for walkers and climbers. The freedom to venture amongst those mountains is ours; acquired to honour our members who died fighting for freedom. The location of the Memorial Plaque was always destined to be on the summit of Great Gable.

DESIGN and CONSTRUCTION of the War Memorial

Having acquired the site for the memorial, attention turned to its design and construction.

Several designs were submitted and it was soon decided that the memorial should incorporate a relief map of the area purchased and a list of those members who had fallen in the war.

The Edinburgh map makers Bartholomew's were approached to produce the map but they replied that they were unable to undertake the work. W.G. Collingwood a Club member was asked to design the whole plaque. W.G. Collingwood was an accomplished artist, author of many books on Lakeland life and a keen walker and swimmer. He had been, for a time, secretary to John Ruskin the art critic and philanthropist at Brantwood on Coniston. Towards the beginning of the 1920s Collingwood earned a reputation as a designer of memorials, which were mostly in the form of stone Scandinavian crosses: examples of his work can be seen all over Lakeland including Grasmere, Coniston and Ulverston.

Collingwood estimated the cost of the design work would be £20 and suggested that a further £10 be paid to his daughter to model the relief map in plasticine. Interestingly, this was the first, but not the last, time that plasticine would feature in the story of the plaque.

(see the article "*Alterations*").

In keeping with the idea that when possible the work of producing the memorial should be kept in the Club, B.S.Harlow was asked to cast the relief map and tablet at his foundry in Stockport. On completion he presented several members who were involved in the project with bronze ashtrays as a memento.

Two days before the day of the unveiling, the completed tablet was carried to the summit. The team started from Thorneythwaite Farm and went via Seathwaite to Sty Head and up to the summit. Initially the bronze was carried on a stretcher but further up it was strapped to a rucksack and carried in turn by the members each of whom only managed about 200 yards at a time.



The plaque leaves Seathwaite with (l to r)
J C Appleyard, Mrs L W Somervell, B S Harlow,
L W Somervell and B Hadfield.

Nearing the summit.

Messrs. Benson Walker of Cockermouth were employed to fix the tablet onsite.

UNVEILING the War Memorial Plaque

Sunday June 8th 1924, Great Gable

Very little has been written about the actual unveiling of the Great Gable memorial. The only record seems to be a short article written by W.T. Palmer in Journal No. 18 of 1924.

Palmer had edited the FRCC journals from 1910 to 1918 and during that time he was the Army Recruiting Officer for Kendal; it appears that the strain of having both jobs weighed very heavily on him. In an editorial in Journal No. 10 of 1916 he started to write an apology for the lateness of the publication but halfway through his wife finished the article on his behalf, explaining that Palmer had broken down in tears and was unable to continue.

In the article describing the unveiling he gives a wonderful description of the scene. Anybody who has attended the annual Act of Remembrance will know the feelings that Palmer describes.

He wrote, "The nearly silent throng of some 500 climbers, hill walkers and dales folk assembled in the 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. "He noted that in contrast to the sombre weather and the well-worn greys and browns of the clothing worn by the gathering, the only splash of colour was the Union Jack which at the outset covered the bronze plaque". This flag had been flown on H.M.S. Barham at the battle of Jutland.

The Prince of Wales had been invited to unveil the plaque but he was not able to accept the invitation and the new President (Dr. Arthur Wakefield who had taken part in the previous years Everest expedition) was asked and accepted.

Arthur Wakefield opened the ceremony by speaking of the climbers who had paid the last great sacrifice and spoke of the love of freedom which had impelled them to make its defence from incursion and domination a high and solemn duty.



The tablet was then unveiled.

Geoffrey Winthrop Young gave the following tribute to the fallen:

“Upon this mountain summit we are met today 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.

This bronze stands, high upon the crowning glory of our free land, as a sign between us and them; our covenant that those to whom in the time to come we, too, shall be but as these names.”

The names of those on the plaque were then read out followed by one minute’s silence.

The silence was broken by the hymns “Lead Kindly Light” and “O God our Help in Ages past” followed by the first and third verses of the National Anthem. Godfrey Solly read the appropriately worded Psalm 121; “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help”.

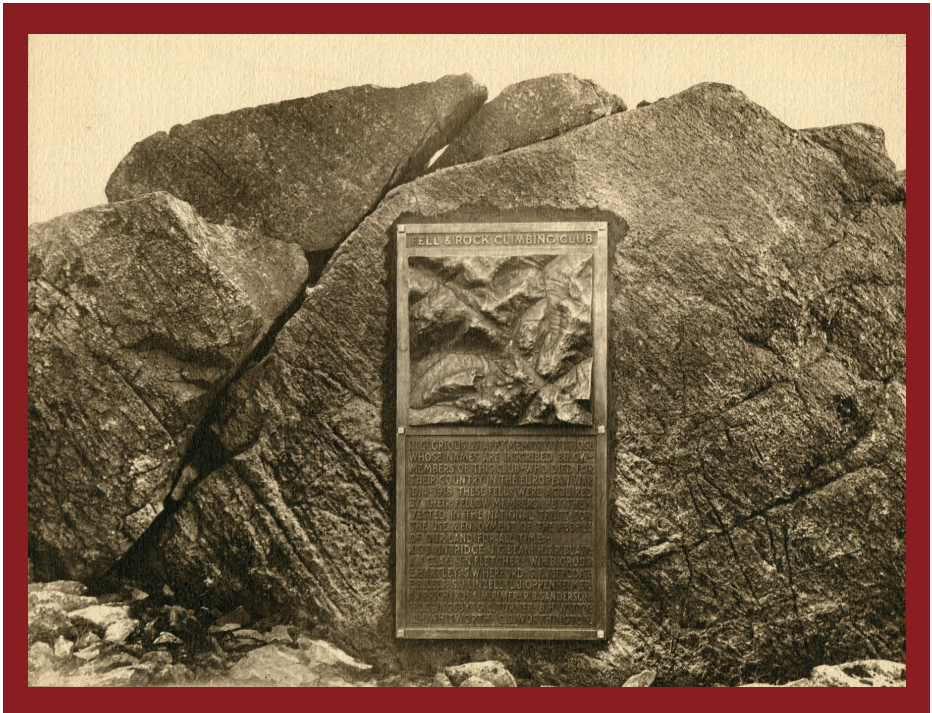


H.P. Cain read aloud the inscription on the plaque:

“In glorious and happy memory of those whose names are inscribed below, members of this club, who died for their country in the European War 1914-1918, these fells were acquired by their fellow-members and by them invested in the National Trust for the use and enjoyment of the people of our land for all time.”

The service concluded with the Last Post, sounded by two buglers of the St. Bees' School Cadets.

Photographs of the plaque were taken and later in the year copies were sent to the next-of-kin of all those whose names are inscribed on the memorial. Thus the Club completed its task of creating a fitting memorial to its fallen members.



...they have found an eternal monument
among the everlasting hills.

RST Chorley, Journal No. 17 , 1923

THE ANNUAL ACT of REMEMBRANCE

Every November on the Sunday nearest to the 11th the Club holds its Act of Remembrance on the summit of Great Gable. This pilgrimage was started by two friends, Ralph Mayson and Lionel Glaister, shortly after the plaque was unveiled. It is recorded that both these members had been wounded in the war but their names do not appear in the list of members who served.

The number of members attending these early meetings were small - 10 to 30 people and there is some suggestion that they attended by invitation only. Gradually as the years passed a good number of ex-servicemen started to attend to remember their fallen comrades and soon non-members exceeded members. There was no official format: someone would lead the Lord's Prayer and the singing of the National Anthem; a two minute silence was observed; some groups would lay small wreaths and poppies, then the gathering dispersed.

During WW2 the government put back the clocks by two hours instead of the usual one to save energy and on one occasion a group of women ascended with candles in jam jars to light the way before dawn. There are also reports of groups having to rope up in places to negotiate the ice. After WW2 many summit gatherings were lead by a non-member Eddie Cairns who would quietly lead the two minute silence. After his death Desmond (Des) Oliver took over and ran the ceremony for many years as there was no FRCC representation. It is on record the Club owes Des Oliver a debt of gratitude for his freely given time.

Since the 1980s the number attending has grown and the Club, represented by the President, now runs the Act of Remembrance which always includes a short speech welcoming everybody who attends for whatever reason and stresses that the gathering is non-denominational and non-commercial. This is then followed by a two minute silence. It is common for over 500 people to attend in all weathers and the meeting attracts much media attention.



Over the last few years a small number of members and some public who cannot make the summit, mainly due to advancing years, visit the small Wasdale church of St. Olaf's at I Lam for a short, informal meeting of remembrance.



The FRCC symbol and inscription on a window in St. Olaf's Church.

The War Memorial

A Mountaineer to those that expressed anxiety lest
he might have died in vain.

I changed my ice-axe for the bayonet,
Forsook the rocks and snow for Flanders mud
Remembering England, yet could not forget
The peace before the coming of the flood.

Make not my death the cause of further strife:
Peace I love dead no less than during life.

SUBSEQUENT ALTERATIONS TO THE PLAQUE

During the late 90s rumours began circulating around the Club that there was an error on the plaque but little attention was paid to these until March 2000 when a letter was received from the Lancashire and Cumbria Family History and Heraldry Society (LCFHHS) asking for information on the origin of the Great Gable memorial. This enquiry was part of their project recording memorials around Lakeland. All the relevant details we had were passed on to them.

In March 2004 a further letter was received from LCFHHS pointing out that as a result of their research it appeared there was an error in the list of members who had been killed in action. The name B.H.Witty was included in error and the name B.H.Whitley was omitted. Research by the Club's archivist showed that while both these members had served in the Army, Basil Witty had died in England in 1922 from pneumonia and Benjamin Whitley had been killed in action in 1916 and thus it should have been his name on the plaque. A letter in our archive at the Kendal Records Office may shed some light on how, but not why the error occurred; the letter, received when the list of names was being drawn up for inclusion on the plaque, is from a past President and says:

“Will you kindly alter the name B.H.Whitley to B.H.Witty and oblige”.

However we do not know why the request was made.

After some discussion in early 2005 the newly elected President, Eileen Clark, decided that we should correct the error.

It was agreed by the Committee that the best way to make this alteration was to have a new piece cast with the correct name to replace the wrong one. Several visits were made to the site and many photographs were taken to determine the size, spacing and the font used to see if the extra number of letters could be accommodated. Luckily there was room for the adjustment but the foundry couldn't identify the font or the size and depth of the lettering from the photos. After some headscratching, another visit was made to the memorial with a large amount of pink plasticine; this was hammered all over the bottom of the plaque and the imprint made was then sent to the foundry who cast the new name. Thus this was the second time that plasticine had featured in the history of our memorial.

In September 2006 a party of a dozen or so members went up to Gable summit armed with grinders, drills and assorted tools to make the alteration. The wrong name was carefully ground away and the new piece fixed in place using epoxy resin. It never ceases to amaze the writer that during all these visits none of the many passers-by queried what was being done even when we attacked a war memorial with an angle grinder.

A few years later another slight error was discovered which involved more use of a grinder, this time to alter an initial from a J to an I.



RENEWING THE MEMORIAL PLAQUE ON GREAT GABLE (2013)

On Remembrance Sunday, 11th November 2012, newly elected President John Barrett ended his delivery from Great Gable:

“I ask you to gather together and join me now in two minutes silence to honour those who have been denied the freedoms we enjoy.”

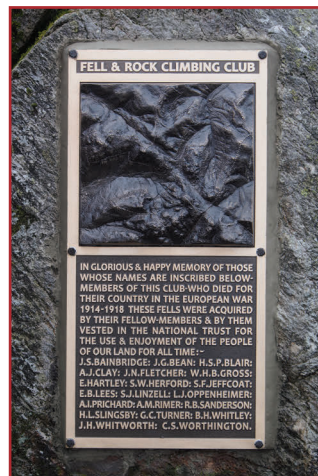
The reference was to the twenty FRCC members, named on the nearby plaque, who had died fighting for their country during the First World War. When the German Empire invaded Belgium in August 1914 it did so in violation of a treaty that guaranteed the independence and perpetual neutrality of Belgium. Britain, as one of the signatory powers guarding that neutrality, was duty-bound to declare war against the invading forces.

The centenary of that event, August 2014, was a mere twenty-one months hence and would undoubtedly generate a massive rekindling of memories and events. A memorial on a mountain top will surely attract much attention. If we care at all about our plaque, its meaning to our club and its place in history, then our plaque must look right. A new plaque was needed. The plaque, the mountain, and its neighbouring fells have acquired iconic status being treasured as the club's equivalent of the Crown Jewels. As well as great care prompt action was needed because the club had decreed that the plaque should be replaced as soon as possible but definitely before the Act of Remembrance on 11th November 2013; a blank rock face with an apologetic note was not acceptable.

The Royal Engineers, recently home from tours in Afghanistan, were recruited to remove the existing plaque which they accomplished with ease on a fine day in July 2013 having reconnoitred the safest route from Wasdale. Their busy operational schedule allowed only a brief opportunity to return to affix the replacement plaque – mid-September. Those eight weeks were the minimum required by the manufacturing foundry to re-cast the mountain detail and make a new plaque for the wording. We knew that our plaque was in good hands because the foundry had produced, for the exhibition marking the centenary of the sinking of RMS Titanic, a plinth thirty feet in length supporting five bronze plaques. On these were displayed the names of all 1,512 victims, passengers and crew, listed in alphabetical order. Everything now depended upon the exacting artwork by Chris Sherwin; modern day computer fonts cannot replicate the hand-crafted lettering of ninety years earlier nor could we trace an original template or drawing. His brilliant professional skills were tested to the utmost as he laboured until the new template was perfected ready for use by the foundry. With one day to spare our new plaque was ready. The manager had kept his promise; “you will be pleased”. We were delighted with the magnificent workmanship.

The Royal Engineers stretched the plaque that weighed as much as a middleweight boxer in ten-minute shifts from Wasdale Head to Sty Head and then up the SE ridge of Great Gable.

At the summit they applied their renowned experience and made an excellent job of securing the plaque to the original rock.



Remembrance Sunday, 10th November 2013, was destined to be one of those memorable days when all the varied efforts of the past twelve months came together perfectly. A covering of snow on the high ground, beneath clearing skies, was fitting as the President addressed some four hundred hill walkers before the Two Minute Silence: “Today we are sharing an historic event in the life of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club as we gather together around our newly cast plaque commemorating the lives of our members who died in the First World War. This year the original plaque was removed and replaced with the new by our friends in the Royal Engineers who are with us here today.”





This stained glass window, sited at Eskdale Outward Bound, is in memory of Siegfried Herford.

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Great Gable from Wasdale at 11am on 11 November 2013.