



*Fell & Rock Climbing Club
of the English Lake District*

Chronicle

FRCC, Ashtree Cottages, 15-17 Lane Top, Winewall, Colne, Lancashire BB8 8BU

Brackenclose Restoration Special Issue **The story of the rebuilding of our hut in Wasdale** **(2019 - 2022)**



Brackenclose, photographed on a late February evening in 2008

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**Welcome to this special edition Chronicle:
Brackenclose from the ashes – a three year roller coaster ride.**

5 April 2019

From the shock as the initial news broke, to relief when we heard the main part of the building was not badly damaged.

A slow and crucial period of discussions, deciding if we let the insurance company handle the project or take the money (and risk) but have scope to do something different.

The review of proposed plans and lengthy consultation about the best option.

The launch of the fundraising appeal to support the building extension.

Tenders, awarding the contract and engaging a quantity surveyor to oversee matters.

The promising start to building work, then endless delays due to Covid, which impacted on builders' availability and supplies.

8 April 2022

The end is in sight – building work completed and signed off by the QS.

Now we need bunks, curtains and storage ...

17 June 2022: The official opening

A huge *Thank You* to everyone who helped. All contributions, however big or small, were valued.

Thanks to everyone, including:

- those involved in the immediate aftermath of the fire, removing valuables;
- those who have been involved in making and implementing decisions, mostly Club officers with technical input from others;
- the fund raising team including administration, making or providing items for sale;
- those making site visits and monitoring building work;
- those involved in the work redecorating and furnishing the hut;
- all those who made a donation

The official opening was primarily an opportunity to thank those Club members and external contractors who had been heavily involved in the rebuild project.

We welcomed Mike Darwell & Will Norris from John Howard Architects, Stephen Jackson from Baker Mallett (QS) and Billy Mitchell from Roland Hill Builders. Martin Young also joined us from Wasdale MRT, who had recommended the contractors. We were joined by a few members who had been involved in the rebuild project, some ex Presidents, Honorary Members and Andrew Hall who first visited Brackenclose in 1945.

As Presidents at the time of the fire and re-opening, Hatty and Wendy presided over the ribbon cutting; then, accompanied by Andrew who had overseen the whole rebuild project, the cake was cut.

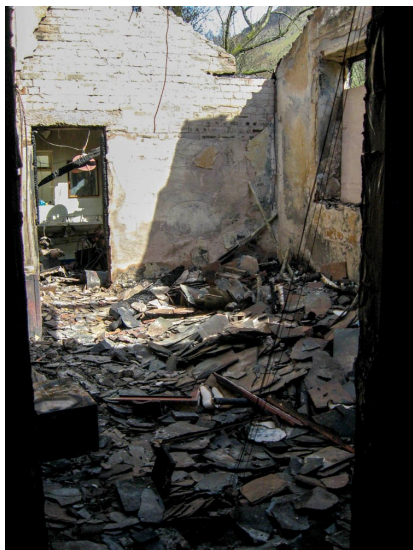
Wendy Stirrup

Summer 2019 Chronicle: After the awful news broke

The President's Viewpoint: April 2019

A phone call at 8.30 am on Friday 5th April from Richard Tait, Warden, broke the news of the Brackenclose fire to me; poor Richard had been phoned at 2 am and must have been awake most of the night. You've probably heard the basic story: fire broke out in the wood store and the wind whipped it up through the ladies' dormitory windows. A particularly gruesome photo that quickly circulated suggested that the whole hut interior had gone up in smoke.

Well, it's not quite as bad as that. Ian Grace's amazing aerial photo (p4) shows clearly that while the 'dormitory' wing is gutted, with the roof gone, the roof over the living room and kitchen is almost intact. Mark Scott gave me a guided tour the day after; the photos show the same information from inside: a dormitory interior, denuded of roof and bunks, a blackened hall, but a surprisingly clean and unsullied living room (with pictures removed for safe keeping). So much of the essential atmosphere of Brackenclose can be recreated.

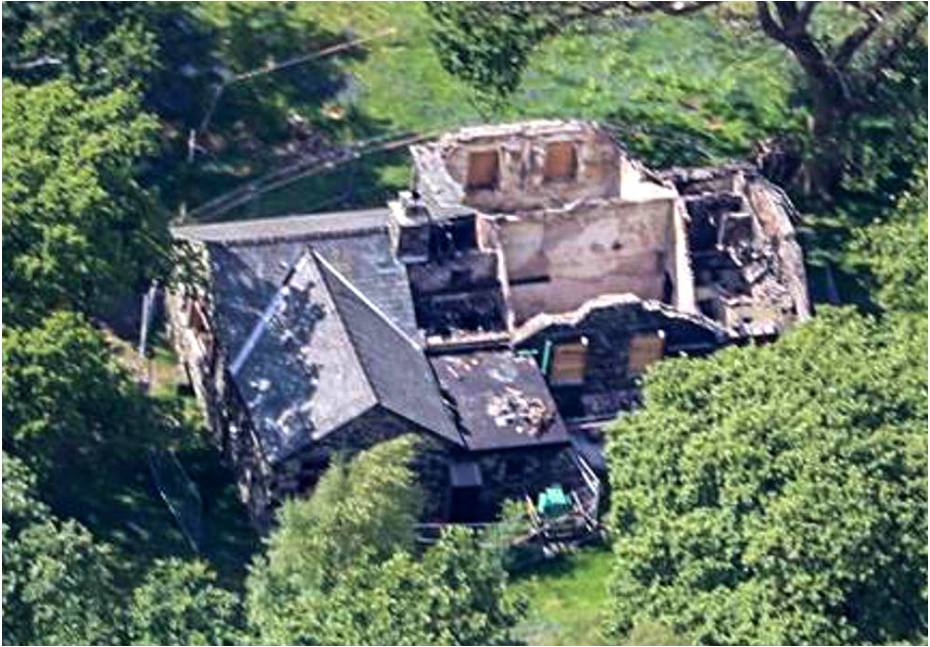


Damage at Brackenclose following the fire on 5th April 2019 (photos: Hatty Harris):

Left: The dormitory area;

Right: All that remains of the hall, looking through the former ladies' dormitory door

We have never doubted that we will rebuild our flagship hut. Furthermore, our expectation is that the restored Brackenclose will look much the same from the southwest (the lake end) and front as did the original, although there may be some modification round the back entrance, subject to planning and financial constraints. I hope this will reassure the numerous members, especially those of



Above: Aerial view of the destruction at Brackenclose, showing the common room and kitchen roofs (L) almost intact but the dormitories (R) utterly destroyed (photo: Ian Grace)

Below right: The interior of the common room, emptied of valuables and essentially intact (photo: Hatty Harris)

long standing, who have been particularly hard hit by the loss of a building carrying so many poignant memories.

The restoration will have to comply with current building regulations, notably higher quality insulation which should be good news for most of you. We would also like to explore the introduction of modifications to the sleeping and toilet arrangements to bring them more into line with modern expectations. However, we can't undertake any serious planning until we are confident of funding, and, in the first instance, that means the size of payment we will receive from the insurers. This is likely to mean a long delay, perhaps months.

If you hear nothing for a long time, please have confidence that the processes are in hand and that you will be kept informed as progress is made.



The response of the Club to this emergency has been very moving, and I owe a big debt of gratitude to very many of you. In the early days after the fire I was almost overwhelmed with messages of support and sympathy. Practical help has flowed in in a sensible, well co-ordinated manner. Special mention of Mike and Paula Carter, undertaking the unpleasant job of an inventory of Brackenclose's contents and thanks to Peter and Hilary Moffat who have accommodated boxes of smoky books in their workshop. Peter Moffat's Brackenclose connection runs very deep, as, when a lad, he helped his father with the original carpentry. I feel we owe it to Peter, and to all those other members whose foresight and generosity gave us Brackenclose in the 1930s, to make every effort to restore a great hut in a supremely beautiful location.

Footnote: I highly recommend a re-reading of Maureen Linton-Lee's booklet 'The Huts' on the early history of Brackenclose. Thank you Maureen.

Hatty Harris

The Huts Secretary

My thanks to Hatty for her eloquent summary of the effect of the fire and the steps which we will be taking to restore and improve Brackenclose. I shall now attempt to put a little more flesh on those bones ...

Firstly we went through, at the instigation of the Insurance Company, a process of securing the site. There was initial concern about the safety of the gable ends of the dormitories; these have now been taken down, and the site surrounded with Heras fencing. The contractors were also charged with removing the debris from the fire.

In the light of our desire to reorganise the sleeping and wash-room facilities, we searched for an architect who would be willing to take on the job. The essence of the brief was to locate the wash-rooms so that they are accessible from the rest of the hut, and for campers, without having to walk through the dormitories, and secondly, to retain the sleeping capacity of the hut, but with a greater number of smaller dorms, in order to increase the flexibility of the accommodation.

We have had discussions with two local architects, both recommended, with an extensive portfolio of work completed in Cumbria, and, most importantly, experience of working with the national park authorities, and have received a comprehensive proposal from one. We suspect that the second already has too much work to take this on.

As Hatty indicated, before we can engage an architect we need to be clear about our funding. If we were just to replace like with like then we could just let contractors employed by the insurance company get on with it, but that would be to waste the opportunity presented to us. However we need to agree a figure

which they would pay us if we were replacing like with like, which can then be a starting point for improvements. We anticipate the need to employ a Quantity Surveyor to act on our behalf, and a Structural Engineer will be required to verify that the remaining walls are safe. We will have had our first meeting with the Managing Agents appointed by the Insurance Company by the time this Chronicle is published, but this process will take time, so please bear with us.

*Andrew Paul
Huts Secretary*

Alternative Arrangements for Brackenclose Meets 2019

This is a re-statement of the information in FRCC eNews 427 about the relocation of meets from Brackenclose during the rest of this year.

18 - 22 July: Re-dedication of the original Great Gable Plaque meet. This will still be held in Wasdale. Please contact Mark Scott or Iain and Brenda Whitmey about arrangements and locating alternative accommodation etc.

26 - 27 July: The Wasdale Skyline meet will be at Birkness and become the Buttermere Skyline 2019 meet. Co-ordinator is Ian Charters.

08 - 09 November: Bonfire meet now at Birkness. Co-ordinator Mark Wilkinson.

Where the meet is transferred to another of our huts, existing bed bookings are being transferred.

*Dave Wilkinson
Meets Secretary*

Brackenclose access

Members will all be aware that Brackenclose is closed until further notice following the devastating fire in early April.

May I re-state the Club's position regarding access to the grounds, which is that there is now no access for vehicles, whether for camping, parking of cars or motorhomes. The only exceptions would be in the case of FRCC Officers with a specific need to be there, and of course building contractors.

The building has now been secured, and it is effectively a working site with access required at any time for large vehicles and equipment. We also wish to discourage members of the public from being tempted to use our grounds as an impromptu campsite or meeting point. There has been some recent evidence of this taking place.

Further information on progress more generally will be the subject of further bulletins as appropriate.

Richard Tait, Warden

Brackenclose: a personal reflection ...

I remember the days of oil lamps and later Calor gas which brought the luxury of hot water for washing up and for showers. The arrival of electricity in 1977 made a tremendous difference.

Maureen Linton-Lee

Autumn 2019 Chronicle

Though the summer of 2019 passed, several officers busily sifted through the ruins of the dormitories, arranged for the site to be made safe and closed off, and liaised with insurers and other relevant bodies. There was never any doubt that Brackenclose would be restored to its former glory; it was simply a question of how comfortable we could make it ...

Club members were invited to comment on the various possible proposals, and as always it was hoped to keep within budget!

Hut Secretary's Report

Well I am pleased to say that a lot has happened since the summer report. Firstly the site has been cleared and the skips removed, which means that, as there will be no further workmen appearing intermittently on site, we can lock the front door and close up the Heras fencing.

We have been busy employing building professionals. A detailed measured survey of the site has been undertaken, and this information fed back to the architect. A structural engineer has conducted a detailed assessment of the integrity of the remaining structure; the results are quite encouraging, in that the walls, up to guttering level but excluding the gable ends, are deemed to be structurally sound. So it's not a case of knock it down and start again. Our architect (John Coward Architects, Cartmel) has produced four concept designs, taking our brief as a starting point; these have been reviewed in detail by the steering group, and, having fed our views to the architect, we look forward to agreeing a design, and moving on to detailed design for submission to the planning authorities. We anticipate being able to share the agreed concept design at the AGM.

Finally, we have employed a Quantity Surveyor, who has costed the project, based on the concept designs. I am not going to quote any figures as yet, since we are not dealing with an agreed design. By the time the September Chronicle goes to print we have received a further costing for re-instatement as was, which will then a) give us an idea of the gap which we will need to fund ourselves, and b) start negotiations with the insurance company regarding what will be paid for, and when. I expect that, somewhere down the line there may have to be a trade-off between what we would like to build, what we can afford to fund ourselves, and also what the planning authorities will allow us to build.

Andrew Paul

Brackenclose: a personal reflection ...

To me, Brackenclose means Scafell. I have been fortunate to be the author of three of the FRCC climbing guidebooks to Scafell over a 26-year period, so this association is deep-rooted in me.

Al Phizacklea

Secretary's Report (extract)

The period since May has been busy. There are many programmes of work being progressed in particular to ensure the work on Brackenclose takes place. Lots of information on the plans for Brackenclose will be on display at the AGM weekend.

Brenda Fullard, Secretary

The question of how to fund the restoration of Brackenclose was uppermost in everyone's minds. We were told by our insurers that the club would receive a significant payout, though this would amount only to the basic rebuilding and refitting costs. The committee took the view that we should aim high and try to construct a modern and even more comfortable facility for our members and guests. As the Huts Secretary remarked, we looked forward to plenty of feedback and to agreeing a suitable design plan through our consultant architects.

It was accepted that the club itself would be required to fund much of the work. The Treasurer earmarked a substantial amount from club funds; the remainder would have to be raised by the membership. If the club was to ask for voluntary contributions, this would have to be done on a formally co-ordinated basis. The committee decided to appoint a co-ordinator to take charge of the fundraising appeal; Chris Wales generously offered his time to being the fund 'Treasurer'.

Funding the restoration of Brackenclose

Funding for the rebuild will be drawn from three major sources. Firstly there will be a payout from the insurance company: how much is not yet known. Secondly, there will be a component from Club funds: the Treasurer is estimating how much we can spare, while leaving enough in reserves to cover contingencies at our other properties. Thirdly, there will need to be a major contribution from fundraising: perhaps a third or more of the total rebuild cost.

The reasons for a need for donated funds are principally (1) that there will be a reduction in the insurance income because we are not proposing to reinstate the building according to the original plans and (2) because it would be foolish not to undertake some uninsured works as part of the rebuild: septic tank, water supply and rewiring, for example.

The plan approved by the committee is to make donations of money from members the main target for fundraising. Donations from members were used to build the original Brackenclose and contributed to the start up of other huts. Seeking money from members is thus an accepted practice in the Club although infrequently used recently.

Principles of requesting donations:

- 1. Brackenclose belongs to all members, whatever their means, and no one should be felt to be excluded, whether or not they contribute and however small their contribution.**
- 2. The giving of money will be entirely voluntary.**
- 3. It is not the custom of the Club to name donors.**

The 'Launch' of the fundraising campaign will be a direct request to all members for pledges of money, which might be paid as a single sum or in instalments over a number of years. It is proposed to open a dedicated Unity Bank account for a ring-fenced Brackenclose Restoration Fund. Chris Wales has generously offered to be 'Brackenclose treasurer' for fundraising, to work closely with John Pulford. Chris has also volunteered to be overall administrator for fundraising.

Fundraising Events. A few events to raise money and/or to keep the profile of Brackenclose fundraising high are creeping on to the Meets List for 2020. In particular, Richard Tait and Karen Goodyear are generously organising a trail run on April 4th.

When will we ask for money? If all goes according to plan, January 2020.

Hatty Harris, President

National Trust Wasdale Annexe

When the National Trust, Wasdale heard that there had been a fire at Brackenclose and that it would be closed until further notice they very kindly offered the use of the 'Annexe' at Wasdale to FRCC members.

The Annexe, situated at the foot of Wastwater is an extension of the Youth Hostel. It sleeps 9 people in 4 bedrooms. Facilities include showers, kitchen, lounge with wood burning stove and drying room. If you have any questions, please ask.

The National Trust has offered the use of the building to the FRCC free of charge. A small group of members stayed there for the Great Gable Plaque Re-dedication meet in July and thought that the building was excellent. It was decided that we would pay £10.00 per night per person, the guest fee in our huts; it is hoped that any member wishing to use the Annexe will pay the same.

Mark Scott

Winter 2019 Chronicle

Brackenclose Restoration Fund

All members will be aware of the disastrous fire which so badly damaged the club's iconic hut in Wasdale in April 2019. Since then, Andrew Paul and Richard Tait have worked tirelessly with the architects and others to design a new Brackenclose – one which will not only bring the restored hut up to date with modern standards but will make it fit for the *next* 80 years!

As with the construction of the original hut, the Club is launching a campaign to help fund the restoration through donations from members and friends. A leaflet from the officers of the club, explaining the project and the need for funding, is included with this mailing of the Chronicle and is available on the website. We hope to raise the money substantially through personal donations and have already received some generous gifts.

However, as well as giving directly, we hope members will create and support other opportunities for fundraising. For instance, there are two meets in 2020 designed specifically as fundraisers for Brackenclose – the April in Ambleside Event on 3 - 4 April and the Hut-to-Hut on 16 - 18 July.

Already, members have organised raffles, sold surplus walking and climbing kit, collected surplus payment for communal meals, and the Committee members have paid for their bed nights in the hut at the Committee Meets, with the proceeds from all of these initiatives going towards the Restoration Fund.

The simplest way to donate is online to:

Fell & Rock Climbing Club – Brackenclose
Sort Code: 60-83-01 Account: 20416098

Of course, there is no compulsion to give but please consider making as generous a donation as you are able and supporting the other activities when you can. All donations great and small are very much appreciated and will be kept confidential, but acknowledged wherever possible.

Thank you on behalf of all members of the Club for your support in rebuilding this great hut.

Chris Wales
Brackenclose Fundraising Administrator
fundraising@frc.co.uk

Brackenclose: a personal reflection ...

The bunks were canvas hammocks. No car, no shop, no fridge, no mobile phones, so deposited by our lift with a good stock of tins for a few days out, regardless of weather, on the nearest available hills. Plenty of those.

Hatty Harris

Brackenclose Update

Following on from the display of the proposed design for Brackenclose at the AGM/ Dinner some further tweaks have been made so that the sanitary facilities are consistent throughout – they are all enclosed within cubicles which can be designated male/ female or unisex according to the needs of the moment – it is a highly flexible design. The final agreed design is on the website. Initial discussions with the planning authorities proved very positive, no substantial obstacles were envisaged, and, by the time that this report goes to print, the request for planning permission should have been submitted. The request will include seeking permission to upgrade the sewage processing unit.



*Andrew Paul
2 December 2019*

April in Ambleside - Raw Head

3 - 4 April 2020

A 24 mile run/walk event sponsored by FRCC as fund raiser for the Brackenclose rebuild

The more alert readers of next year's Meets list will have noticed the above meet on 3 - 4 April ...

With New Year upon us, and everyone making plans, it's now time to explain what this is all about, and how it fits in with Brackenclose fundraising. How do members get involved and how can you help?

The story starts with our past involvement in organising the (broadly similar) "Spring in Lakeland" event on behalf of Lakeland LDWA (Long Distance Walkers Association). For reasons too involved to go into just here, "Spring in Lakeland" with an Ambleside start venue isn't taking place in 2020, and (with the LDWA's backing) we now have the opportunity to utilise this event as a fundraiser.

It may well raise awareness of FRCC too, amongst ... outdoor enthusiasts. Lakeland LDWA have already generously made a donation to our rebuild fund.

Richard Tait and Karen Goodyear

Spring 2020 Chronicle

Within three months of the appeal being launched there were already generous offers of financial support pouring in. Unfortunately world events were becoming dominated by a different news item that was to affect us all; the old cliché 'Fire and Pestilence' took on an entirely new meaning for our club!

What did not change was the commitment shown by committee and members to driving forward the restoration of our Wasdale hut. Not simply the giving of money, but a number of other initiatives too ...

President's Winter of Discontent

It has been a dismal quarter since the last Chronicle: appalling weather in England and Wales and a dearth of winter in Scotland have kept the mountaineering aspects of our activities at a low. The prudent fled to sunshine or snow elsewhere. The laggards trying to escape now are being turned back at airports by coronavirus pandemic precautions.

It's a pleasure therefore to report on a success story: thanks to your immense generosity, fundraising for Brackenclough has taken off brilliantly. Money poured in from the moment members received Chris Sherwin's compelling fundraising leaflet. Fundraising activities are burgeoning. Chris Wales reports below on the status of the campaign.

However, as a very venerable member, with privileged access to the [confidential] names of donors, I have made some interesting observations. I have been touched and humbled to note the wide breadth of members who have chosen to donate. There are members I recall at Brackenclough in the '60s, and there are new Associates. There are members who were regular walking companions in the '80s, but have slipped out of sight. There are 'well-heeled' members and some modest but most welcome donations. The restoration of Brackenclough has engaged the interest of a broader membership than any of us is normally aware of through meets, the Dinner or even the AGM.

Andrew Paul, Huts Secretary, reports below on the rebuilding progress and clarifies why it seems to be taking a long time. This is a large and complex project: it cannot move fast. However, it is a finite project and one that I have confidence we can do well. Rebuilding Brackenclough does more for the Club than replace a hut. It is an opportunity for the Club to explore the reconfiguration of a hut in keeping with present and (we hope) future demands. It has also united a high proportion of the membership with common enthusiasms: for Brackenclough and for Wasdale. Surely this is what a 'club' is about?

Hatty Harris, President

Brackenclose Restoration Fund

Thank you to all members of the club who have contributed so generously to the Restoration Fund for Brackenclose. At the time of writing the fund stands at **£90,000** – a fantastic achievement in such a short time. The first milestone we set ourselves was £100,000, and so we are nearly there, but we don't want to stop at that as we know there will be unforeseen expenses.

Around 300 members have made personal donations; members have also organised raffles, sold surplus walking and climbing kit, collected surplus payment for communal meals and some have generously seen this as an opportunity to leave a legacy for the club in a very tangible way.

We have also received donations from Kindred Clubs and from their individual members, who have recognised the iconic status of Brackenclose in the heart of the Lake District and the use they have made of it in the past.

Chris Wales

Hut Secretary's Report - Progress to date, Spring 2020

In February we gained planning permission for the redevelopment of the hut. Since then we have had detailed discussions with the architect about the detailed design of the hut, in order to gain building regulations approval, and, after a number of iterations and meetings, we are near the end of that process.

During this process we have had to balance what we ideally would like against what we believe to be feasible in terms of access to the site, and what we think the insurance company would reasonably pay for. For instance the floor before the fire consisted of a concrete slab, with wooden flooring laid directly on top of it. Needless to say the wooden flooring has gone. We will need to lay new, linear foundations for supporting walls, as the roof configuration will change. We suspect a builder would be more inclined to grub the whole floor up, and start from scratch. But that would require more concrete, and access for a concrete wagon may be problematical. So do we remove all the old floor and lay suspended timber throughout? But then what would the insurance company pay for? I'm not seeking an answer to this dilemma, just citing this as an example.

It ain't easy folks!

Timeline

Once we have Building Regulations approval the we have to drill to another level of detail, in order to go out to tender. The current plan is that the architect will have finished his work by the end of May, after which it will go to our Quantity Surveyor for a couple of weeks, and then out to tender. We hope that we will be in receipt of tenders by early August.

Costs

Firstly, our thanks to all those who have given so generously to the Brackenclose fund. We are well aware that, in parallel with this generosity, some members have been asking when we will be clearer about costs. The short answer is – not soon.

When we first engaged with Aviva, we could have settled early, but that would have been on the basis of scant, and probably incorrect, information. We have agreed that we will settle with Aviva once we have tenders in. We have detailed estimates from our QS now, but they contain a huge amount of risk contingency, particularly around the access, both to the location, and specifically to the site, and until these are realised (or even better, not realised!) in a tender, then we would not expect Aviva to settle.

Another question has been – why don't we use more of our current reserves to rebuild the hut? There are funds earmarked for the project, but we have to bear in mind that we have a portfolio of nine other properties, most of which are aged, and where the unexpected has a habit of occurring. Think of the Salving House chimney, and the recent problems with the Birkness roof and heating system, not to mention the potential access problems at Birkness, which thankfully have not come to pass.

Let's hope we do not have any more major issues in the near future!

Andrew Paul, Huts Secretary

Brackenclose Restoration Fund: Online sales

It has been proposed that there should be a dedicated sale of members' good quality walking and climbing equipment in aid of the Brackenclose Restoration Fund on the FRCC website.

The details have yet to be arranged. There will be a dedicated link to the page and members will be informed when the site goes live. Mark Scott, Chris Wales, Philip Powell and Tony Halliwell will be co-ordinating the sale.

Please do not offer any items for sale yet; you will be informed how to do this nearer the time of the webpage going live.

Mark Scott

Extract from the Langdale Rock Meet Report, May 2020:

There will from an opportunity to acquire a limited edition wooden 'rock' keyring.

Nine keyrings, handcrafted by Marc Stirrup, will be available in exchange for a minimum donation of £5 to the Brackenclose Fund.



Wendy Stirrup

Brackenclose Restoration: Why are members asked to donate money?

Some members have questioned why they are asked to contribute towards the cost of rebuilding Brackenclose while the club retains an *apparently* healthy bank balance of about £200K. May I explain? For sound management of the club finances and properties it is essential to retain an overall minimum bank balance of at least this size so that we have enough reserves to be able to pay for *any* unexpected expenditures which may be needed. The ages of our ten properties make unforeseen repairs and renovations inevitable. The Birkness septic tank was a prime example of this (costing £34K). A more recent one is the replacement of the chimney at the Salving House (cost £10K)*.

As well as having contingency funds for such unplanned eventualities, funds are needed for hut updating that is beyond the scope of normal maintenance. The recent Future of the Huts Working Party recommended improvements to hut heating and insulation. This has been done successfully at the Cottage and Coach House at Birkness. However, if similar improvements are to be rolled out to other huts, funds will soon be needed.

I have looked at the club's predicted finances over the next few years. *I have advised that the club can contribute about £50k towards the cost of rebuilding Brackenclose, without jeopardizing the club's ability to maintain and, where timely, improve its other properties.* The current healthy state of the club's finances owes much to my predecessor's proposals to increase subs and hut fees in 2013 and 2014. These proposals were needed because the high cost of replacing the septic tank at Birkness left the club's finances in an unsatisfactory state. It would be highly irresponsible to allow the rebuilding of Brackenclose to drain the Fell and Rock's reserves below the threshold required to secure the continued smooth functioning of all our properties.

John Pulford, Treasurer

**And now we face reduced hut income in the wake of the coronavirus epidemic.
H.H.*

Extract from Meets Secretary's Report, Spring 2020:

We are losing some fantastic meets this year as a result of the coronavirus, including our Easter Meet and the April in Ambleside fundraiser for Brackenclose. The new C-word may be with us for some time, but when it's not, it would be great to see members new and old supporting our varied meets programme.

I would like to thank meet coordinators for their ... assistance with the moving target that is the Meets List.

Hazel Jonas

Summer 2020 Chronicle

Plans are now well under way, and the main news comes from Andrew and those arranging sales activities. Meanwhile Hazel Jonas worked tirelessly against the shifting sands of the coronavirus crisis to try to bring us a coherent meets list for 2021:

... We will also have a stargazing meet at Birkness in January to raise money for Brackenclose ...

These two paintings by George Harris are being raffled for the Brackenclose Rebuilding Fund:

“The Langdale Pikes”: Acrylic on board, 81cm x 59cm. The sketch for this was done in April 2009, shortly before dropping into Raw Head for a cup of tea.

“The Corridor Route”: Acrylic on board, 41cm x 30cm. The sketch for this was done in September 2011. I had recently retired, and had a few days at Brackenclose.

Raffle tickets are £5.00 each. All monies go to the Brackenclose fund. The draw will take place at the AGM weekend, on Saturday 31st October.

If the AGM is postponed for any reason the draw will still take place on October 31st; George will find a neutral friend to make the draw.

Brackenclose Restoration Fund

Thank you to all members of the club who have contributed so generously to the Restoration Fund for Brackenclose.

As of **2 June 2020** the Restoration Fund stands at **£122,137.09**.

Donations to the fund have slowed down recently, partly no doubt because of the Coronavirus outbreak and lockdown. However, we still receive generous donations each week and there are several monthly standing orders, which keep the fund moving. We have also had a very welcome injection of funds from Copeland Council - £10,000 from the Small Business Relief Fund for Coronavirus. The unpaid rates for Brackenclose amounting to £718 have also been paid into the account. Thanks are due to John Pulford for pursuing these funds.

Unfortunately, of course, the meets designed specifically as fundraisers for Brackenclose – the April in Ambleside Event on 3 - 4 April and the Hut-to-Hut on 16 - 18 July – have had to be cancelled; it is hoped that both will run again in 2021.

Thank you on behalf of all members of the Club for your support in rebuilding this great hut.

Chris Wales

Hut Secretary's Report: Brackenclose update

This project is moving apace, and pretty much in line with the plan constructed by the architect back in July 2019. Following on from gaining planning permission at the end of January, on May 26th Copeland DC gave us Building Regulations approval. Between these two events there has been a lot of, at times quite lively, debate about the details of the build – e.g. should the roof be held up by a structural steel frame, or internal blockwork walls; should we have false ceilings throughout, or just in the corridors and wash rooms. These are just two of many detailed subjects discussed, and these discussions could not be avoided, which is why it has taken time.

Following on from the Building Regulations approval, the architect has now completed the Invitation to Tender (ITT) documents, and the team are reviewing them prior to them being released to our Quantity Surveyor for costing, and then sent out around week 3 of July. Review is a major exercise in its own right, as the specification runs to 250 pages, plus 13 detailed drawings. We currently have a list of six builders, some of whom we have already spoken to, who will be approached by the architect, and will receive the ITT should they still be interested in the project. We would hope to be in receipt of tender responses by the end of August, and make our decision / sign contracts in September.

*Andrew Paul
June 2020*

Brackenclose Restoration Fund: Online sales

The Club is very grateful to the many members who have already donated money to the Brackenclose Restoration Fund. Many thanks to those who have done so.

We are now creating an on-line sales forum on the FRCC website, the aim of which is to allow members to sell unwanted, good quality items, but donating the money they receive for the items into the fund and thus contribute further to the restoration.

If the scheme is successful, once the funding for Brackenclose has reached its target, it may become a regular forum on the Club website for member-to-member sales.

The benefits are threefold:

- The Club member raises money for the Brackenclose Fund;
- The member sells items they no longer need;
- The buyer purchases something they want.

The Club, via the website, is only acting as a facilitator for the sale of items. It is not responsible for any transaction between members or for the description of items sold.

Suggestions of what may be offered for sale include: good quality clothing, boots, books, paintings, photographs, guidebooks, camping gear, rucksacks etc; in fact anything which may appeal to members relating to the 'Great Outdoors' [For safety reasons, no sales of **any** technical climbing equipment.]

How will it work?

Once the system is up and running, the seller posts the item on the FRCC website dedicated forum in the members' section, with a brief and accurate description of size, colour, condition etc, plus price and contact details. If the buyer requires more information (description or image), they ask the seller.

Both parties decide on the best way to dispatch the item ... and the buyer sends the money to the seller ... then the item will be dispatched ...

On receipt of the item, the buyer confirms to the seller that they are happy with what they have bought ... If the buyer is happy, the seller will then deduct relevant expenses (P&P) and pay the balance to the Brackenclose account.

We are aiming for the page to go live on the 31st July [2020] – a Friday, so you can spend all of Saturday and Sunday gear shopping on the FRCC sales page.

Please send details [of items] as soon as possible, but before MONDAY 20th July.

Tony Halliwell

Plenty happening, but activity surrounding all the huts (not only Brackenclose) soon ground to a complete halt:

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Closure of Huts

Regrettably the FRCC Committee must continue the closure of all FRCC huts. Although we know it is tempting, please do not enter the huts for any purpose, including use of the toilets. The huts have not been checked and prepared by the wardens and this process will need to be completed once the government guidance allows us to open safely.

Any person known to have accessed any hut before restrictions are lifted will be referred to the committee.

Use of Hut Car Parks

In line with other car parks in the Lake District, we are opening the Lake District hut car parks from the 1st June. FRCC members can now use the car parks for day time use only i.e. no overnight stays in cars, campervans or motorhomes please.

Please note the car park at Brackenclose must not be used under any circumstances ...

*Brenda Fullard, Secretary
June 2020*

Autumn 2020 Chronicle

By the autumn of 2020, plans for Brackenclose already well established, and members were working hard to raise funds for the rebuilding in many ways, including gear sales, sales of photographs ... and an online raffle:



You are invited to:

Zoom in to an online party,
in place of the Annual Dinner 2020
7 p.m. on Saturday October 31st

In the comfort of your own home!

Bring your own nibbles, bring your own drinks, bring the cat, bring your family – young people welcome.

Outline programme:

Peter Sterling, Guidebook Author, illustrated talk on 'Sport and Slate'
Raffle draw in aid of Brackenclose (etc, etc)

Brackenclose Restoration Fund

Thank you to all members of the club who have contributed so generously to the Restoration Fund for Brackenclose. As of 14 September 2020 the Restoration Fund stands at **£142,073.30**.

Please support the two excellent fundraising initiatives which have already been established: the Online Equipment Sales being organised by Mark Scott, Tony Halliwell and Philip Powell and the raffle of original paintings by George Harris.

In this edition of the Chronicle you will also read about the sale of prints of his brilliant mountain photographs by Eric Shaw in aid of the Brackenclose Fund. Thank you on behalf of all members of the Club for your support in rebuilding this great hut.

Chris Wales
Brackenclose Fundraising Administrator

Brackenclose: a personal reflection ...

What a day on the fells to remember!

And Brackenclose, what a place to come home to!

Stephen Reid

Hut Secretary's Report

Brackenclose

Since the May meeting the project has proceeded pretty much to plan. The architect (JCA) has produced a detailed specification (250 pages), plus detailed drawings, which we (Richard, Peter and myself) reviewed and fed back our comments to JCA. The amended documents were sent to our Quantity Surveyor, Ed Bushell for costing, to provide a baseline against which tenders would be measured. Six builders were contacted and expressed an interest in tendering. Four actually replied; these were:

Roland Hill (Parsonby) Ltd
Pinnington Ltd
Carr Construction and Restoration Ltd
Leck Construction Ltd

The closing date for receipt of tenders was 21st August. Subsequent to the closing date the tenders were analysed by Ed Bushell, and a recommendation made on the basis of cost. We are waiting confirmation of timescale before we can confirm that we have selected a builder. The costs ranged between £389K and £524K.

In addition to the above Ed has analysed the lowest tender, splitting the amount between the cost of reinstatement, and the extension, and has provided the former figure to Aviva as a proposed settlement cost. I am sure that there will be some negotiation over this figure; at this stage I have no idea how long that might take. We need this figure before we can commit to a contract with a builder, as the funds for the project are currently seen as coming from three sources – the Brackenclose fund, funds committed from club reserves, and the Aviva payout.

Finally we will also need to decide who will be responsible for monitoring the project once we have signed the contract with a builder. The use of the term monitoring was chosen with care – the management of the project will reside with the builder, and the specification is extremely detailed, so there is not a lot of wiggle room – it is pretty clear what has to be delivered. The architect has bid for this work, but is considerably more expensive than two third parties who also proposed to do the work. However the architect is proposing to monitor weekly, whereas the third parties are talking about monthly site visits, so we are not comparing apples with apples.

I would love to be able to add a little more detail on to this report, but we are the cusp of resolving who we place the contract with, for how much, and how the project is controlled – all issues around which we have to maintain confidentiality at the moment, to avoid compromising pending financial negotiations with all parties concerned. I had a grand vision whereby all the ducks would be in a row for the September committee meeting, but we are not quite there yet!

Andrew Paul

Photographs by Eric Shaw - to help with Brackenclose Fundraising

Eric is an excellent photographer who has a stunning collection of photographs and wants to use these to help with the fundraising for Brackenclose. He has therefore offered to sell copies of some of these photographs.

He has put together a selection of 30 photographs with 10 Lakeland, 10 Scotland and 10 Alpine photographs which are on the Members Section of the FRCC website - each having a caption and a number.

The cost of the photographs will be £10 for A4 size and £15 for A3 size, which covers cost of postage and are unframed - these will make perfect Christmas presents as well as helping the fundraising!

Ron Kenyon is helping Eric with these and if you want copies of the photographs please contact Ron (email – ron@jaggedlakes.plus.com) accordingly with details of what you want.

Payment should be made ... [as for fundraising appeal]
The photographs will then be posted out.

Thanks to Eric for doing this!!

Eric Shaw / Ron Kenyon



Don't forget to buy Raffle tickets for the two paintings by George Harris.
All monies to the Brackenclose appeal.

First prize is one framed painting of Harrison Stickle. Second prize is one framed painting of the Corridor Route.

The draw is during the October 31st On-Line Party.

Send £5.00 a ticket by Bank Transfer to the FRCC Dinner Account:
Sort Code 204528, Account Number 43272583

George Harris
[\(\[georgeharris@hotmail.com\]\(mailto:georgeharris@hotmail.com\)\)](mailto:georgeharris@hotmail.com)

Online sales of kit in aid of Brackenclose Fundraising

We have created an online sales forum on the FRCC website, the aim of which is to allow members to sell unwanted, good quality items, but donating the money they receive for the items into the fund and thus contributing further to the restoration.

You can find the items by logging into the members' section of the FRCC website and following links from "Forums" or from "Brackenclose Fundraising".
<https://www.frcc.co.uk/forums/forum/fund-raising/>

The items we have are good, sometimes exceptional quality and are very reasonably priced. On the right is a picture of a very small selection of them.

We are excluding technical climbing kit.

Don't miss out. Grab a bargain.

And if you have anything you are happy to sell and donate the proceedings to Brackenclose, then you too can upload your item and offer it to members. All you have to do is log in, go to the forum and click on "Create a new topic". If it sells, then simply mark it as "sold" in the reply box.

Items that are for sale (or have been for sale, because a number have been snapped up) include:



Buffalo shirt and salopette Matching dark blue, small, chest 38" inside leg 29"

Black Buffalo salopette 29" inside leg almost new: soft lower legs

Buffalo Bivouac jacket Light blue (roughly knee length - with overlapping double zip at front) and matching over-trousers 34" waist 29" inside leg.

Point Five Duvet. Large. Purple Vintage 1970s

Buffalo High Altitude salopettes. Light blue (with reinforced crampon patches) 40" chest

Pair Mountain Equipment Guide gloves – Small.

Patagonia Softshell Jacket. XL. Hooded. Egg yoke yellow.

Montane Softshell Jacket Size Large. Lime colour. Hooded.

Marmot windstopper fleece gilet. Red. Medium.

Dachstein grey wool gloves. Size 8

Mountain Equipment crew neck fleece pullover. Red. Medium

Marmot weatherproof winter gloves. Mainly black. Grey leather fingers and palm. Light fleece lining. Finger loops. Size small.

Buffalo Pertex wind shirt (not insulated). Hooded. Light blue; 42" chest.

Mountain Hardwear Black Windstopper fleece gilet Medium

Black Diamond casual/climbing trousers Dark grey. 70% cotton/30 % nylon; 32" waist and 31" inseam

Julbo mirrored sunglasses. Silver frame

The Northface Apex softshell pullover Black, Large

Jack Wolfskin Primaloft Overtrousers Black. Size medium. Full length side zips.

KIMM Kamleika hooded smock. Black Size Large

Calange windproof/showerproof polyamide cycle top. Teal. Size Large

Marmot climbing trousers. Taupe. Medium.

Hilleberg Nallo tent

Inov8 X-Talon 230s size 5

Wasdale Cimbing Book

By Mike Cocker (signed) 2006. Excellent condition

Everest 1933 by Hugh Ruttledge. Reprinted 1934.

Everest 1921: The Reconnaissance by Howard Bury. Published 1922. First Edition

Mountain Equipment sleeping bag 5 season plus

How it works:

The buyer contacts the seller for photos or more details and pays before the item is dispatched, but the seller confirms that the purchaser is happy with the goods before paying the proceeds into the Restoration Fund.

Please bear in mind that we are hoping that members will be willing to sell decent quality items and at a fair price. Please don't offer items which are no longer really serviceable.

For safety reasons, it has been decided that there will be no sales of **any** technical climbing equipment, either new or used, on the website. So, no ropes, slings, harnesses, nuts, ice axes, crampons and helmets etc; no technical equipment that you would use either climbing or scrambling in summer or winter.

Suggestions of what may be offered for sale include: good quality clothing, boots, books, paintings, photographs, guidebooks, camping gear, rucksacks etc; in fact anything which may appeal to members relating to the 'Great Outdoors'.

Tony Halliwell

Winter 2020 Chronicle

President's Report (extract)

The service at St Olaf's was replaced with an outdoor Act of Remembrance. Unfortunately lockdown restrictions meant there was no Club representation.

The disappointment following hut closures was offset in part by the positive news that building work was starting at Brackenclose. Thanks to the processes developed during the summer we are confident that huts can be quickly re-opened once restrictions are lifted.

Wendy Stirrup

Brackenclose Restoration Fund

Thank you to all members of the club who have contributed so generously to the Restoration Fund for Brackenclose. As of 27 November 2020 the Restoration Fund stands at **£148,747.10**.

As you will no doubt read elsewhere in this Chronicle, the Brackenclose re-building is now moving into the construction phase but there are certain to be unexpected costs so please don't stop donating yet.

Please continue to support the Online Equipment Sales being organised by Mark Scott, Tony Halliwell and Philip Powell.

The raffle of original paintings by George Harris raised the wonderful sum of £635, so thank you to George and to all those who bought tickets. George's grandsons picked the winning tickets out of the hat, with Ian Lowe and Janet Stanley winning "The Langdale Pikes" and Mark Scott winning "The Corridor Route".

The sale of prints of his brilliant mountain photographs by Eric Shaw in aid of the Brackenclose Fund continues and is making a great contribution.

Thank you on behalf of all members of the Club for your support in rebuilding this great hut.

Chris Wales
Brackenclose Fundraising Administrator

As 2020 drew to a close, Covid restrictions (a third lockdown commencing on 4th January 2021) continued to enforce irksome limits on where we could go, what - in practical terms - could be done at Brackenclose, and how quickly any problems arising could be overcome. On the ground, however, there were encouraging signs of progress:

Hut Secretary's Report

Brackenclose update

The report which I supplied to the AGM contained a number of large holes, which some of you may have spotted - namely, who we planned to employ to do the work, and whether we could afford it! I can now confirm that we are employing Roland Hills, of Aspatria, to rebuild Brackenclose, and Baker Mallett, of Whitehaven, to administer the contract for us.

Roland Hills come with the major recommendation that they have worked in the valley, having built the new base for Wasdale MRT in Gosforth, which is how they came to be recommended to us, and also they have done work at Wasdale Hall Farm, further along the track to Brackenclose. So they have no problems with the Brackenclose site! Also, being local, they use primarily their own staff, rather than making major use of sub-contractors, as some of the other bidders did. The costs will be largely covered by the amount raised to date from Brackenclose fund-raising, and the amount received from our insurance payout.

Roland Hills took possession of the site on 23rd November, and work has definitely commenced - see below!

Andrew Paul



Reconstruction work is now in progress at Brackenclose. Andrew Paul will keep us informed over the coming months as we eagerly await our return to Wasdale.

Spring 2021 Chronicle

Good progress was being made on the rebuilding of Brackenclose, any additional news being centred mainly around the foundations:

Huts Secretary's Report (extracts)

Brackenclose

After a strange winter, during which very little happened, our builders have sprung into action. Since then the concrete foundations have been laid, and the photos [of this work] will follow our next visit. In parallel with the practical work, the contract has been issued, and will be agreed in the next few weeks (it was a revelation to me that the builders were prepared to start work without a contract – effectively they were working on a 'letter of intent'). Agreement of the contract will however mean that we have to start paying for the work done!

Hut Opening

The following are the bare bones of the hut re-opening plan, subject of course to whatever changes the government may choose to impose in the intervening period.

Lakes Huts [Brackenclose apart]: open for one household from April 12th, and for two households from May 17th. Car parks open for day visitors, with the caveats about not using the hut, as previously. After June 21st everything could, if we are to believe the government, revert to how things were pre-Covid.

*Andrew Paul
18th March 2021*

Brackenclose Restoration Fund

Thank you to all members of the club who have contributed so generously to the Restoration Fund for Brackenclose. As of 9 March 2020 the Restoration Fund stands at **£156,218.76**.

The Brackenclose re-building is now moving into the construction phase but there are certain to be unexpected costs so please don't stop donating yet.

*Chris Wales
fundraising@frc.co.uk*

Brackenclose: a personal reflection ...

At one time I liked to go on New Year's Day, staying for a few days after the 'revellers' had left, often having the hut to myself. I would rise early and weather permitting return just before dark after a day on the hills, then an early night and repeat.

Wendy Dodds

Summer 2021 Chronicle

President's Report (extract)

It was great to be able to reopen the huts again and after a really useful meeting we agreed to a reduced gap between bookings which will increase availability. To comply with legal restrictions we had to revert to bookings via the Wardens. A big thank you to the wardens and their assistants for getting the huts ready and managing the booking process.

The walls are rising at Brackenclose and Karn is expected to reopen next month.

Wendy Stirrup

Brackenclose Restoration Fund

Thank you to all members of the club who have contributed so generously to the Restoration Fund for Brackenclose. As of 12 June 2021 the Restoration Fund stands at **£157,653.74**.

The April in Ambleside Meet which took place on 10th April, having been delayed from last year, raised a wonderful sum of £2,800 (less expenses). Many thanks are due to Richard Tait and Karen Goodyear for all their hard work and perseverance in making this event happen.

*Chris Wales
Brackenclose Fundraising Administrator
fundraising@frcc.co.uk*

By early summer 2021, meets were again taking place — hut-based meets as well as day meets. At least one of the major planned events went ahead, reported in Chronicle from both organiser's and participant's viewpoints:

"April in Ambleside" event

10 April 2021

Organised by Richard Tait and Karen Goodyear

This story began back in April 2020 (as described in the Chronicle Dec-Jan 2020) as a result of our past involvement in organising the long established "Spring in Lakeland" 24 mile running/ walking event on behalf of Lakeland LDWA (Long Distance Walkers Association).

For reasons too involved to go into just here, "Spring in Lakeland", with an Ambleside start venue, wasn't due to happen in 2020, and so (with the LDWA's backing) FRCC had the opportunity to utilise the event as a "one off" fundraiser, but with a different title. We felt it could also raise awareness of FRCC too, amongst a different cohort of outdoor enthusiasts.

The plan for 2020 was to combine this with a Meet based at Raw Head, allowing the many FRCC members who volunteered to help as marshals, catering assistants etc to enjoy a social weekend. A warm welcome was also extended to FRCC members who were interested in entering the event – either as runners or walkers. Then, with minimal time for us to organise a hasty cancellation, Covid-19 struck and the rest is history!

Fast forward to April 2021, and with the backing of the FRCC Committee, at very short notice we took the decision to get the event “off the ground” following the Government announcement that, from 21 March onwards, formally organised sports events could go ahead, subject to stringent conditions.

A limit on numbers, staggered starts, no catering, social distancing, immediate dispersal of all competitors at the finish - it all made for a very different type of event! But perfect weather and the evident enthusiasm from the competitors (who had been unable to enter any events for over 12 months) made for a highly successful day. We also had the distinction (and responsibility) of being amongst the very first events of this type to actually take place in 2021.

The route starts from Ambleside Parish Centre, with 4400ft of ascent, via Loughrigg Tarn, Skelwith Bridge, High Tilberthwaite, Coniston and Tarn Hows then the Cumbria Way back to Ambleside. It’s attractive to fell runners (particularly as a training event), trail runners and committed walkers who enjoy long distances. First runner home recorded a time of 3hrs 38mins, but many were there just for a great day out.

Net contribution to the Brackenclose fund from the event exceeded £2000. Lakeland LDWA also very generously made a donation to the fund.

Sincere thanks are due to our marshals - Mike and Paula Carter at Coniston, Stu Shuttleworth and Martin Scrowston at Elterwater/Skelwith, Andrew and Chris Paul who assisted us at Ambleside, and Trevor Symonds who acted as Course Sweeper on the day. The offers of help from members who came forward for the 2020 event were much appreciated, but Covid restrictions this year meant that, sadly, we could only involve a very small number of people.

Richard Tait

“April in Ambleside”: A Participant’s Perspective 10 April 2021

An 8am start in Ambleside meant a 5:30 start from West Yorkshire – a shock to the system after months of more relaxed starts in lockdown – but for a chance to go walking in the previously forbidden lands of the Lake District it must be worth it. And it was!

After much deliberation the club decided to go ahead with this event, delayed from last year, in aid of the Brackenclose Restoration Fund, and what a great decision.

The sun was already shining as we joined the socially-distanced line for the start at the Parish Centre, with familiar faces hidden behind masks. The route ahead is 36km with 1,375m of ascent, which looked quite a challenge after nearly a year of walks from home with few excursions into anything considered “big hills”.



Out through Rothay Park we were straight into the climb up Miller Brow and onto the shoulder of Loughrigg Fell before dropping down, round Loughrigg Tarn and into Skelwith Bridge. The short, steep climb was compensated by perfect, clear blue skies and wonderful views.



The Cumbria Way took us along the valley to Elterwater, from where we climbed again through the quarries and Sawrey’s Wood over into Little Langdale to cross the beautiful old Slater Bridge and pass round Cathedral Quarry hidden away in Moss Rigg Wood. (An interesting route choice for the next running of the event might be to go through the quarry and out through the tunnel!)

Through Tilberthwaite Farm, Wendy Dodds passed by with a cheery “hello” - the only Fell and Rock member I recognised on the route so apologies to anyone else I missed. Wendy disappeared quickly up Tilberthwaite Gill. I followed at a more sedate pace, with the lockdown legs and lungs really feeling the climb. The traverse from the top of the Gill through the low hills south east of Wetherlam is a lovely route into the Coppermines valley, though, and we then descended into Coniston village.



At Coniston we turned for home as we joined the Cumbria Way once again on a fairly direct line towards Tarn Hows. Direct that is until we emerged on the Tarn Hows road and then immediately turned downhill away from the lake. The course planner's sanity was questioned roundly at this point it has to be admitted but all was revealed with the beautiful climb back up through Glen Mary and its waterfalls – previously unknown to me at least. The diversion did also provide a little light relief as we caught up with three lads from Manchester involved in a face-off with two large Belted Galloway cows which were standing firm in front of a gate. The lads were starting to climb a rotten crag to get away which handily allowed space for a bit of gentle shoo-ing to move the cows away from the gate.

"Where we come from we only see those things wrapped in plastic in supermarkets," they said as they scuttled gratefully through the gate!

The route from Tarn Hows took quiet ways through Iron Keld and High Park before popping out at Skelwith Bridge again and then the final climb, reversing the outward route, but with snow showers coming down the valley now, back over to Ambleside and the finish.

What a fantastic day out! A super route and wonderful weather, what more could we have asked for?

Thanks to all the volunteers who marshalled the start and the check points and particular thanks to Richard and Karen for organising the whole thing and persisting with it through all the problems and uncertainties of the last year. And for arranging the weather of course.

Chris Wales

(Photos courtesy of Chris Wales and Wendy Dodds)

Huts Secretary's Report: Brackenclose



The Brackenclose development is proceeding to the schedule the builder presented us with at the beginning of March. The foundations are laid, the block-work walls are up, both internal and external. A couple of weeks ago these were up to window lintel level, but the gable ends are rising, and, in parallel, the stone external walls are now taking shape. All looks good!

Andrew Paul



Autumn 2021 Chronicle

The Brackenclose Fund has now reached £159K which is fantastic, especially as we are incurring some unexpected costs. Prints are still available to purchase from Eric Shaw, with proceeds going into the Brackenclose fund. You can find further information on the website under Members - Brackenclose Fundraising Gallery. These could make perfect Christmas gifts.

Wendy Stirrup

There was not much else to report at this stage, given the understanding that Brackenclose would not be reopening until at least the spring of 2022. However, a big celebration was being planned for September 2022, not only at Brackenclose but all the huts ...

Winter 2021 Chronicle

As of 26 November 2021 the Restoration Fund stands at **£160,524** ...

Brackenclose Meets

Until Brackenclose is back on stream, please register your interest for any Brackenclose meets with the meet coordinators. These will be transferred to hut bookings at a later date (hopefully!)

Brackenclose Celebratory Meet

30 Sept - 01 Oct 2022

Plans are underfoot! We might be celebrating the official re-opening of Brackenclose, but this will not be a purely Wasdale-centric event. A celebratory meet will be held at every hut (Lake District and Scotland). Stephen Reid is putting together some 'themed' climbs and Nick and Clare Harris will be taking their Lake District maps to Spain to finalise their fell running event(s). As for the walking ... stay tuned until 2022! Put the date in the diary.

Climb, run, walk ... or not.

We will be looking not just for climbers, runners and walkers, but volunteers as well. From logistics to driving to catering to IT and communications, don't hold back in your offers. As this will be quite a 'complicated' event, details for booking bed space will also be provided in the new year.

Finally, if anyone ever hears me say 'I have an idea ... ' over a glass of wine, feel free to kick me in the shin.

Hazel Jonas

Auction of signed, limited edition Jill Aldersley print



Continuing the theme of outstanding generosity from members in raising funds for the rebuild of Brackenclose, Anne Townsend and Val Hawksworth have offered a beautifully framed, signed, limited edition print of a painting by Jill

Aldersley of a view looking NW from Wetherlam in winter, which belonged to their parents, Ron and Madge Townsend. Seen "in the flesh", members have commented on how it gives a real feel of "being there".

The frame is 77 x 62cms and the picture is 57 x 35cms.

The picture will be offered by auction, via sealed bids, after publication of the Chronicle. The deadline for bids will be midnight on Sunday 16th January.

Please send bids to tonyhalliwellmic@yahoo.co.uk

Tony will send out occasional notifications through Facebook and via eNews about the numbers of bids that have been received, plus ballpark amounts.

Revised bids from members will be acceptable.

Tony Halliwell

Brackenclose Update: to end 2021

I find myself in the curious position of feeling quite optimistic about progress, even though the slating of the roof is running late. The flat roof at the back is now complete (it proved a little problematical, as the architect's drawings weren't quite right, so we had to demolish the old concrete flat roof and build a new, larger one).



As a consequence the whole building is now weathertight, so contractors have started to work inside. The new roof areas have been insulated between the rafters, the suspended ceiling structures have been built, the frames defining the wash areas are being erected, the wiring is going in, and plumbing work starts next week. Pictures of progress are on the website and the Facebook page. The old wiring (primarily the kitchen) will all be replaced as part of the job, so the whole hut will be up to the same standard.

More good news outside is that [Storm] Arwen didn't demolish the woodland – there are only two trees down, neither of them large, and both at the periphery of the site. Even more remarkable, the temporary covering of all the pitched roofs survived pretty well intact.

The builder's forecast completion date of the end of February is, I think, a little optimistic, but if the level of activity which I saw today is maintained then March is looking distinctly probable. But ... before you get carried away and navigate to the hut booking page, please remember that we have to fit the building out once it has been handed over. The bunks have been ordered, but there will be lots of other jobs to do before we once again have a working hut, and I am sure that Richard will be looking for volunteers.

Andrew Paul

2 December 2021

(photograph shows construction of dormitory wall, June 2021)

Spring 2022 Chronicle

By the early spring of 2022, the rebuild was moving towards its finishing stages and plans were being made for the long-awaited reopening:

I was delighted to visit Brackenclose recently and see such good progress had been made in recent weeks. The new layout looks really good but we continue to have concerns about the water situation, not least the safety risk of trying to re-connect the pipe in the beck, as demonstrated by Richard whilst I was there. You will see details of plans for the grand opening celebration across all huts. Many people have been involved so far but thanks in particular to Hazel and Nick Harris. John Leigh meanwhile has been keeping busy by producing a baton that will be carried around all the Lakes huts on its way to Brackenclose. The hut will reopen soon, and in addition to the all-huts celebration, we hope to have an official opening event at Brackenclose; the provisional date is **17th June 2022**.

I am looking forward to Brackenclose being finished and hoping for good weather in west Scotland during May.

Wendy Stirrup

Brackenclose Restoration Fund

Thank you to all members of the club who have contributed so generously to the Restoration Fund for Brackenclose. As of 11 March 2022 the Restoration Fund has received **£162,099.05** in donations and £70,000 of this money has now been transferred to the rebuilding programme. As you will read elsewhere in this Chronicle, the Brackenclose re-building is now moving on but there are certain to be unexpected costs so please don't stop donating yet.

In particular, thanks to those who donated books and gear for sale at the AGM and for those who kindly purchased items in aid of the Brackenclose Fund. If I haven't been able to thank you personally please accept this note as an acknowledgement of your contribution.

Chris Wales

Brackenclose Update: 15 March 2022

It seems that the optimism which I expressed in December last year did have some foundation. The structure of the hut is complete – the roof is on, fully slated, the rooms are all plastered and painted. See the latest photos in the usual place on the website. The principal tasks outstanding are what the plan refers to as 2nd fix – the fittings (ceramics, lights and mirrors in the wash areas), lights, switches and heaters in the dorms.

Outside we now have written approval (required in the original planning consent) for the precise location of the new sewage treatment plant, so that can happen – the unit has been sitting on site for the last month. I anticipate that the builders will hand the property over to us sometime in April, but outside the property there is still work for them to do – making good the site so that the car parking areas are restored, and making good the approach track and the gates. etc, etc.

Once we have restored the drive and the parking then we can begin to fit the hut out. We have a joinery firm lined up to make the bunks, but we can't have them made too far in advance as we do not have anywhere to store them. There will be cleaning and painting of the kitchen and living area to be done, and restoration of all the equipment which is currently sat in a shipping container on-site. As I indicated in December, Richard will definitely be looking for volunteers.

Andrew Paul

... and then ...

Important Announcement!

We can confirm that Brackenclose will be re-opening by Friday 17th June. Details will follow in due course.

Andrew Paul, 20th March 2022

Brackenclose Celebratory Meet

30 Sept to 1 Oct 2022

In the space of a few years, we have lost our most symbolic hut to fire and our day-to-day life to a global pandemic. As we step into the spring of 2022, the final building work is being completed at Brackenclose, and we are once again able to plan our mountaineering activities with fewer umms and ahhs.

The re-emergence of Brackenclose on our Meets List is more than just a story of bricks and mortar. On 30 Sep - 1 Oct, we will be celebrating the reopening of Brackenclose and who we are as a club and individuals. To this end, Stephen Reid and Nick Harris have formulated a cunning programme of climbing, walking and running events from every hut in the Lake District and Scotland. While there might be a competitive edge between the huts, members are invited to attend and undertake their own activities (or just socialise!) We hope that members from near and far will come together to mark a 'memorable' period in our club history.

To register interest for the meet please complete the Google form which can be accessed from the following link;

Register your interest for Brackenclose Celebration Meet

You can copy and paste the following link address into your browser:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfJh-4hmOcpRex45A0kwKc1RveOVf1I7qmlNSZQdMjwbkZmw/viewform>

Summer 2022 Chronicle

By the time this issue of Chronicle appeared, in late June 2022, the work was fully complete and we could at last take delivery of the goods ...

It has been a roller coaster few months with us receiving the completion certificate for Brackenclose then realising there was still a lot of work required before the hut could be opened ...

We wanted to provide an opportunity for as many members as possible to celebrate the Brackenclose re-opening, hence the planned all-hut event in September. Our Club centenary was the last time we had a meet incorporating all Club huts. We are currently looking at ideas for a Club t-shirt to commemorate the event. I hope you can join the celebrations.

Finally I am delighted to announce that Brackenclose is now open for bookings. A huge thank you to everyone who has played a part, large or small, in making this happen, and to Andrew Paul for managing the rebuild project. The architect, builder and QS joined us on 17 June for the official opening, along with Club members who had been significantly involved in the project, plus a small number of other guests including Andrew Hall who first stayed in Brackenclose in 1945.

*Wendy Stirrup
President*

*Brackenclose meets were back, for the first time in over three years ...
and big thanks to all who have contributed so generously ...*

Brackenclose Restoration Fund

Thank you to all members of the club who have contributed so generously to the Restoration Fund for Brackenclose. By the time you read this the official opening of our new hut will have taken place. What a fantastic achievement to have raised the funds and completed this project through all the troubles of Covid.

As of 7 June 2022 the Restoration Fund has received **£165,000** of which **£164,000** has been transferred to the rebuilding programme. There are certain to be unexpected costs so the fund is being kept open - please don't stop donating yet. (As was stated when the fundraising started, any money donated but not used directly for Brackenclose will be used for other hut works. So everyone can be assured that any surplus will be used well).

Thank you on behalf of all members of the Club for your support in rebuilding this great hut.

Chris Wales
*Brackenclose Fundraising Administrator
fundraising@frcc.co.uk*

A Time Capsule for Brackenclose

The rebuild of Brackenclose is complete! This cherished hut is coming back to life and we celebrate the times past and those to come for this unique building. The club has created and placed a Time Capsule for members of future generations to re-discover.

A collection of suitable items which relate to both the club and the hut was locked in a fit-for-purpose, steel box and secured safe in the building.

It is hoped that in years to come this will also provide members with an insight into the times enjoyed at this hut and the amazing project which has taken place to reincarnate Brackenclose.

The contents will be made known to those attending the celebratory meets at all of our huts in September, together with a collection of members' own memories relating to Brackenclose.

Congratulations to the rebuild team!



Chris and Eleanor Sherwin

FRCC/Wayfarers Joint Meet, Brackenclose

9 - 10 September 2022

A general joint meet for members, guests and aspirants to share the re-opened Brackenclose Hut with one of our close Kindred Clubs and enjoy the famous views of West Water from the dining room, weather permitting.

Rock climbing, hill walking, running, mountain biking, just come along and join in. I will be providing a communal meal on the Saturday evening, two courses, main and pudding.

Please Note, the hut now sleeps 28 in mixed dorms, but as it's a joint meet only 14 places available for each club. I already have 14 names on my list from the Wayfarers' Club; it would be great to have the same amount of FRCC members.

Mark Baron

Brackenclose Celebratory Meet

30 September - 1 October 2022

Brackenclose has reopened but the *en masse* celebration is yet to occur across all seven of our huts with a host of activities planned.

Members from near and far are encouraged to sign up for a weekend of climbing, walking, running, socialising, eating and drinking with friends old and new. And, if your preference is to enjoy the buzz rather than the contour lines, that too is fine. It would be great to see as many members come together as possible. If you intend to camp or stay in your campervan, please book now. We have limited spaces available at the Wasdale NT campsite and the Robertson Lamb Hut.

These spaces will be released if members do not book sufficiently far in advance. More details of the climbing, walking, running events and booking forms are available on the website. Basically though, we are putting together teams of climbers, walkers and runners from every hut - plus, we will have a running relay team that will finish at Brackenclose. You do not have to know other members in advance of joining a team. You also don't need to be an Olympic athlete or join us for the whole weekend. If you live locally, you are welcome to join us just for the day and the celebrations.

If you are unable to access the details and booking forms on the website, please contact Nick Harris for walking and running, or Steve Woollard for climbing. If Nick and Steve have fled the country, then feel free to contact me your Meets Secretary. Don't blame me though if the conversation ends with you agreeing to run a meet in 2023!

Hazel Jonas

Brackenclose: a personal reflection ...

Evening was the favourite time of the day. What could be better than sitting on a bench at the front of the hut, cold beer in hand, watching the sun go down over Wastwater and the apenglow on the summit of Pikes Crag.

Mike Carter



*View down Wastwater, from the grounds of Brackenclose
(from a painting by Lesley Comstive)*



The Centenary bonfire, 2006 (photo: Bill Comstive)

Brackenclose: a personal reflection ...

I well remember my first visit to Brackenclose as a new member and was very impressed. There it stands in its own piece of land, surrounded by ancient woodland, on the lower slopes of Scafell with magnificent views all around. It has always been my favourite hut.

Bill Comstive



**Re-opening of Brackenclose
(17 June 2022)**

Above: Two Presidents who worked so hard to oversee the rebuild after the fateful fire of April 2019: Wendy, watched by Hatty, cuts the ribbon and Brackenclose is declared open to members once more

Below: Wendy, Hatty and VP, former Huts Secretary and project manager Andrew Paul cut the celebratory cake (📷 Christine Miller)



Above: On the steps of the hut, the President hosts a gathering of club officers and many others who worked tirelessly for three years to restore Brackenclose. Also present are a small number of invited guests, including the architect, the builder and the QS, who worked on the project from its early days. Member Andrew Hall first visited Brackenclose 77 years ago! (📷 Christine Miller)