

Langdales 10th September 2016

The “C” party, a select group of 6, had a Grand Day Out on the Langdale walk, as did all groups I think. Obviously the near perfect early autumn weather helped. The lower sun at this time of year certainly picks out the scenery details making it look at its best. There were no signs of trees turning to their beautiful autumn shades though. We were led ably by Joy.

Part of the route going towards Slater’s Bridge and then climbing away from it was pastures new, for me anyway, and the area was attractive with undulating hills, not to mention the fine views, rather than the more dramatic scenery in Langdale. We passed charming, tiny Lake District whitewashed cottages. The becks we waded through were in spate and tumbling down the fells after the previous day’s rain. Overlooking Slater’s Bridge, where we had lunch, is just lovely. It is a two part bridge, half being a packhorse bridge and the other half being a flat clapper bridge. We did see something of note whilst we were eating. A group of people seemed to be loitering around the bridge when we realised that a man was scattering ashes out of a small urn he was cradling.

We have to thank Tom for telling us all about the landscape structures we saw in front of us as we walked for a short way along the minor road towards Little Langdale. That was, for me, the best bit of the day. Tom is a mine of information on such things as meanings of place names, geology and landscape features. Walks with the club’s resident botanist, twitcher, landscape archaeologist or anyone with other specific knowledge always make the day more interesting, giving us brain as well as physical exercise.

As we walked along the lane we passed Castle Howe on our left. This prominent volcanic rock feature once had a Neolithic hill fort on its summit guarding Wrynose Pass. On the opposite side of the road in a field on Fell Foot Farm was a natural mound marked as **Ting Mound** on the map. Hot foot it to the key on your OS Explorer map and you will find that font depicts archaeological or historical information that is non **ROMAN**. Also there is a little grey star shape

indicating the site of earthworks. So what have we here? Nothing less than a Viking open air meeting place, a parliament, used in the 7th to 9th centuries by the Scandinavian settlers. (The prevalence of “Thwiat,” from old Scandinavian, in place names in the Lake District also indicates the presence of the settlers.) On the mound discussions took place and new laws were proclaimed. “Mound” is a corruption of the word “Moot,” (a meeting place,) and we have Moot Halls in villages to this day. This gathering place would have been similar to Tynwald on The Isle of Man or Dingwall in Scotland. The site was terraced - to the trained eye terraces are just discernible as you come down the hill towards the mound. They are well grassed over and are not prominent now. The site is at the junction of routes to Wrynose pass and the packhorse route to Slater’s Bridge, and would have been a conspicuous place. The site is now in the care of the National Trust and there is a small information board. You never know what you may come across on a day out with Springfield Fellwalking Club!

Pauline Bearcock



Some of the ‘C’ Party nearing the end of their Langdales Walk

Thanks to Tom Hine for the photo