

White Maiden Cumbria



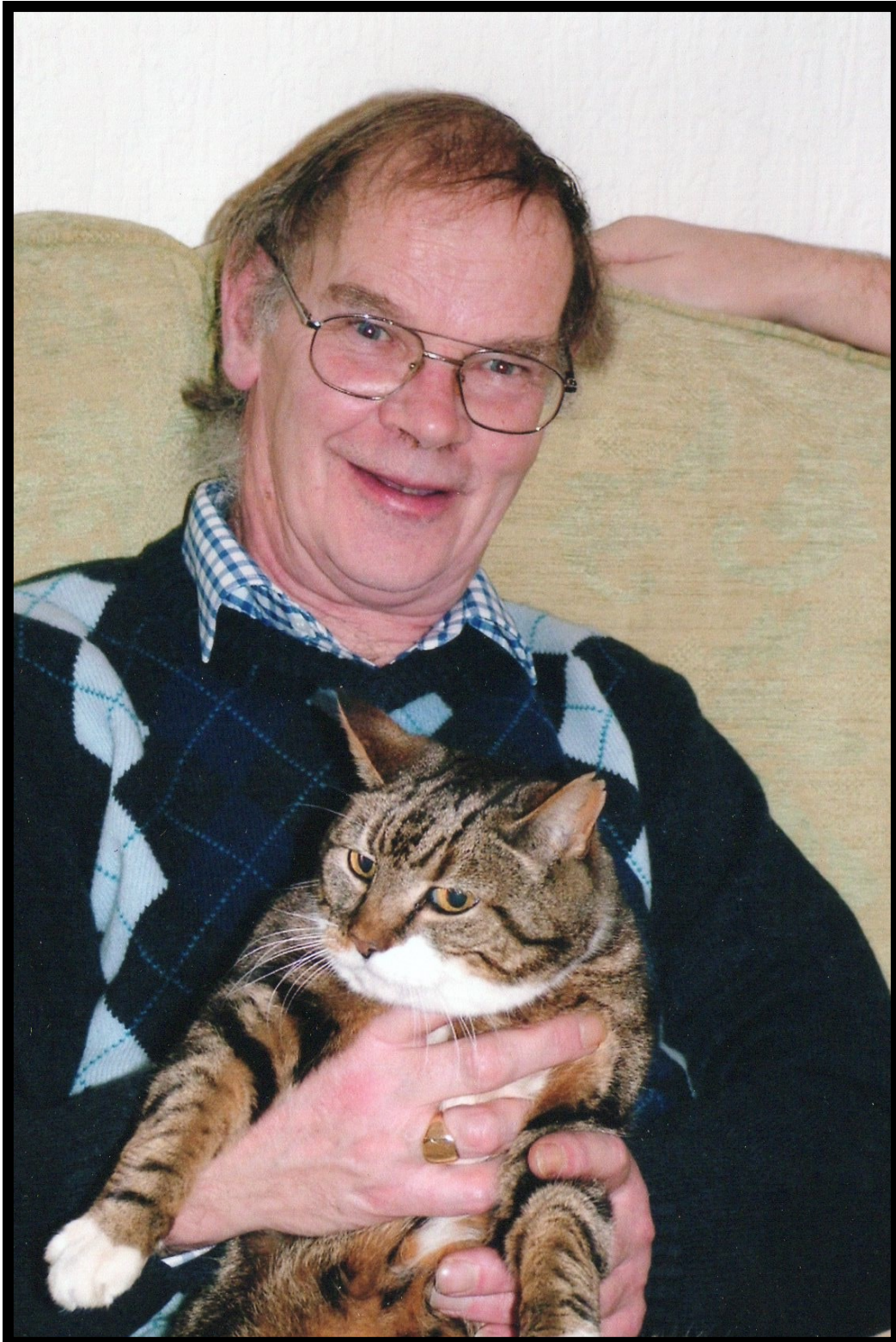
February 7, 2018

Bob Hillery

Roy had lived in Cumbria for over half of his life and loved the fells of the English Lake District.

He had walked virtually the entire county and covered the rest on one of his motor bikes. This beautiful part of the North of England, together with his home county of Yorkshire, were his home, his life and his passion.

It seemed fitting that his last journey should be in this familiar land and that he should rest atop one of those wonderful hills with magnificent views in all directions.



It was a beautiful winter morning in the north of England: a few degrees below freezing, blue skies, no strong winds and snow capping the green fields of the Yorkshire Dales. It was the type of day on which we could imagine Roy sitting in his conservatory, mug of instant coffee in hand, looking out over his lovely garden (perhaps overlooking his yet-to-be-finished patio) and focusing on the 2400 feet high white top of Ingleborough some 30 miles to the east. Perhaps there would have been memories of a past climb or a walk covering the Three Peaks or the entire length of the Dalesway; maybe a tentative plan to do it again and a mental note to ask a few of his walking companions.

But on this morning – Wednesday February 7, 2018 – if Roy had this view and these thoughts, they would be from an entirely different place and with a totally different perspective. Today it was left to a few of his friends and family to take in the views and to recall the walks as Roy’s ashes were being taken to their final resting place on a high peak in the South Lakes, only 15 miles as the crow flies from “Rimdene”, his home of the past 35 years. They were being taken to the 2000 feet high peak of White Maiden – Hill Number 2645 on the British and Irish Hill Bagging Database. Probably not many know of its “formal” identification but somehow we feel that Roy did. Certainly he had “bagged” it on a number of occasions, perhaps the last of which was when he was the bearer of his friend’s ashes just a few years ago.

Steve from Harrogate and Bob from Ilkey met at Keith’s home in Skipton a little before 9 am and shortly thereafter were joined by Ian and Steve from Bradford and Leeds. Together with Roy’s ashes, safely encased in the post-cremation container and stowed in the boot, we took two cars and headed northwest to Cumbria.

The drive of about 2 hours took us along a route that Roy must have traveled hundreds of times over the years: from Skipton to Settle (now by-passed but once famous for its 12% grade car-defeating Buckhaw Brow), through Ingleton (in the shadow of its neighboring Ingleborough mountain) to Kirkby Lonsdale (site of a number of cousin reunions in recent years) and thence to the South Lakes region of Cumbria.



Ingleborough

The Sun Inn, Kirkby Lonsdale

Quintessential Lakes Country



Now on our left was the sand bank that is Morecambe Bay at low tide and to our right the magnificent hills of the Lake District, with its most frequented tourist attraction of Lake Windermere tucked away just a few miles to the north. Roy certainly would have been quick to indicate the error in that last sentence, stating quite emphatically, and correctly, that England’s Lake District contains only one lake – that being Bassenthwaite Lake. To be sure, there are over thirty bodies of water here, sixteen of them being of “lake” size, but apart from Bassenthwaite, all others should be referred to as “Water” or “Mere”.

Bassenthwaite, at the northern edge of The Lakes, was not on our route today, nor indeed was Roy’s home of many years in Lindal in Furness. Instead, we left the A590 before Ulverston (birthplace of Stan Laurel of Laurel and Hardy fame, and still home to the eclectic Laurel and Hardy Museum) and headed a little further west along the top of the Furness

(Peninsula) to Broughton in Furness. We were still barely above sea level but a right turn northwards would begin the climb towards our destination – or at least to the spot where we could park our cars and begin the main task of the day on foot.

We passed the hamlet of Seathwaite and the Newfield Inn (that would have to wait until later) and followed a narrow, winding road for another mile or so to arrive at a convenient parking area directly across the road from our walking trail. To be fair to the village we passed (population 129) we should not confuse it with its neighbor ten miles to the north, Seathwaite in Borrowdale. This latter metropolis has a population of 400 and also the distinction of being the wettest inhabited place in England.

At our rendezvous point we were now at 500 feet elevation and the surrounding snow covered ridges seemed to tower above us and for some of us seemed like an impossible climb. The degree of uncertainty amongst our ranks as to exactly which peak was the White Maiden only added to the trepidation with which the least experienced walker (Bob, your writer) surveyed the scene and deliberated the decision to join this band of friends.



The “Car Park” for the White Maiden walk.

Above: as we prepared to start

Below: as seen by our Reconnaissance Team two weeks earlier



At “base camp”, the five of us from Yorkshire were joined by another long-time friend of Roy who had traveled south from Scotland earlier that morning and had been picked up in Broughton by car one of our convoy. Perhaps now would be a good time to identify the whole group and their relationship to Roy as it not only puts “names to the faces” but also underscores the degree to which Roy was part of our lives and the level of respect (dare I say “love”?) that he secured in each of us.

With the modesty that comes from one who wields the pen, I’ll start with Bob – me, the writer. My dad and Roy’s mother were brother and sister, making us cousins and, together with other cousins, Roy’s nearest living kin when he died in October 2017. Some of my earliest memories are of visits to Roy’s childhood home to visit Uncle Sam and Auntie Dorothy (almost every Sunday it seems but presumably less frequently than that) and, until she died, our grandmother who lived in the same home on Mandale Road. Surely Roy and I must have played together but at that period of our childhood a four year age difference was immense and visits were accepted as the norm rather than as a treat. Hence there are few memories of Roy from this period and, I regret, even fewer of the “growing up” years. Certainly there were family gatherings, Holiday parties, weddings and anniversaries at which we would meet but these were few and far between – and, regrettably, Roy and I could not be classified as close cousins.



My abandonment of Yorkshire and the Greater Bradford area in favor of Manchester (University) and then the United States (employment) did nothing to help us become closer and my knowledge of Roy, his work and his life, became even more shallow, and restricted primarily to reports via other family members. Thankfully that did change and my wife Molly and I were pleased to welcome Roy to our adopted country on three occasions.

The first of these was in 1974 (only eight years after our emigration) when Roy came to our home in Ohio and we paid visits to Chicago and St Louis amongst others. How that trip was arranged and what prompted it at that time is now lost but we believe that it was combined with a trip to Toronto to meet up with another friend, Ken, who was today one of the six starting the hike. Whatever the underlying reasons for the visit, it is clear that it made an impression on Roy (and on us) and his recollection of events, places we visited and other such details were as sharp as any photographs taken there when we saw him for the last time in late July 2017.

Thirty years on – in 2004 and again in 2008 – Roy joined us for driving trips across the Western United States. In those two visits (about six weeks in all) we visited most of the famous National Parks (from Yellowstone to the Grand Canyon) in ten states, covering probably 6000 miles in all. The latter is pertinent only in the sense that it meant being together much of every day (in the car, in the parks, breakfast, lunch and dinner) – with no cross words or tense moments! His interest and “involvement” in everything that we saw and did not only etched themselves in his memory (as in 1974) but significantly enhanced the enjoyment that Molly and I experienced. It was a pleasure that we often recall with great fondness.





Next is my Cousin Keith. His dad, my dad and Roy's mum were siblings and Keith and I share the same surname. Keith was born just a year before Roy and lived in Bradford throughout his childhood so the two of them would have been closer than Roy and me and, indeed, that remained the case throughout Roy's life. Keith married Eileen and they have two children, one of whom has lived in Australia for a number of years.

Roy never married. Career and family obligations for Keith, as well as Roy's geographical movement throughout his career, undoubtedly made for less frequent meetings between the two but it is certain that Roy and Keith were very close over the 72 years of Roy's life. It would appear that the bond between them grew stronger with time and they joined together in shared interests, particularly exploring the great outdoors.

It is probably fair to say that Roy was the more adventurous hiker of the two (probably a true statement for comparison between Roy and almost anyone else) and there were occasions when Roy's spirit of adventure extended some beyond Keith's desires and/or capabilities. Keith has talked "fondly" of one walk around Malham Cove and Gordale Scar where Roy's exuberance exceeded Keith's climbing abilities to the point where Keith found new epithets and language to describe his cousin's choice for a weekend stroll. Unfortunately, when Keith finally emerged from his scramble up the Scar, he was greeted not only by Roy but by several families out for a walk – all of whom had heard the diatribe. To say that the embarrassing experience caused a rift between the cousins is an exaggeration but the days of following Roy's choice for exercise were certainly limited from that time.

Nevertheless, Roy and Keith remained very close through the years and the bond became stronger if anything when Keith suffered two serious bouts of ill health. First a stroke, in 2011, and then treatment for prostate cancer over the past year have obviously caused Keith and Eileen much distress and anxiety. Roy, too, was deeply affected and worried for his cousin through both of these traumas. On the occasions when Roy and I met or communicated by e-mail or telephone, he would always express his concern for Keith - and his relief when good news came through. It is therefore somewhat ironic that it was Keith who first received the news of Roy's death and had to deal with his affairs late last year in a situation that neither they nor any of us could have predicted or expected.



Keith's health issues of the past years made a walk to the top of White Maiden an unlikely possibility but he wanted to make the car trip and thought that "I might join you for the first bit of the walk", despite the rather forbidding photographs we had received from our reconnaissance team. However, in the cold light of day and with an up-close look at the proposed path and the terrain we would be following, he was quickly brought to his senses and decided to settle for a short walk on paved ground followed by a catch-up on his reading in the relative warmth and comfort of the car. So it was that five of us took to the trail and set out for the chosen spot to scatter Roy's ashes and say farewell on behalf of all who knew him.



We crossed the road and took immediately to a rocky track that paralleled a rushing stream for several hundred feet before it veered to the north as the water above our level followed a steeper descent from the hilltop. Not that the trail was anything close to flat; indeed, even at this point I recall thinking that this was as steep as any path that I had taken up onto Ilkley Moor and I could see that it wasn't going to get easier as we progressed. Amongst the group membership there was much waving of walking poles in the general direction of distant slopes and even more distant hill tops – all indicating a suspicious ignorance of both our route and our destination.

What had given me the impression that all of my companions had walked this way dozens of times in the past? Was it the confidence with which Keith had been told to anticipate our return in three hours; 3 ½ tops? Was it the assumption that our recce team of Steve and Ian had trodden every step on their earlier visit and had, in effect, mapped our journey to White Maiden summit? Certainly the photographs they had taken and forwarded to the rest of us gave a sense that they, at least, knew the ground and could proceed without even a glance at an Ordnance Survey map.

The answer to all these questions and concerns became clear only a few hundred yards into the climb when I overheard Steve tell Ian that he thought we were now at the point where they had turned round two weeks earlier – to which Ian responded: “no, that was further down; we didn’t come this far”. So, not one of us had “bagged” White Maiden and the pointing and identification of the trail were as much conjecture in their minds as they were trepidation in mine. So, onward we went in blissful ignorance but with the knowledge that the sun was shining and there would be many hours of daylight in which we could find our way there – and, hopefully, back.

This gave plenty of time to get to know my companions and to learn of their friendship with Roy; how and where they had met, how long had it been, what had told them that they should be here today? These men were just names to me, perhaps mentioned in conversations with Roy but with little context, or at least none that I remembered. Over the past several weeks some degree of e-mail correspondence had filled in some of the blanks but none of it was complete and all of it was new.



I had met Steve Corker for the first time earlier in the week when he and his wife had very kindly come to Ilkley and introduced themselves over a drink. Steve had worked with Roy very early in their careers when both were employees at the Rolls Royce aero engine facility in Barnoldswick. They had indeed shared a flat in those early days and did so again when both moved to Barrow-in-Furness after significant cutbacks at Rolls Royce. Both had joined Vickers in Barrow and worked in their Shipbuilding and Engineering facility. Steve had married Margaret early in this period and it must have been shortly thereafter that Roy purchased Rimdene, his home in Lindal in Furness for the next 35 years.

Steve and Roy maintained their friendship throughout their working careers together and even when both retired from Vickers. Roy started commuting to Harrogate for work and Steve returned to Yorkshire but their common interests in walking and motor cycles brought them together frequently. In later years, Roy took responsibility for the care of an ageing aunt who lived in Bradford, a two hour drive (even at Roy’s speed) from his home in Lindal. As an indication of the bond between these two friends it is worth noting that Steve (living much closer to Auntie Sheila) eased the burden and the traveling by supplementing Roy’s visits with many of his own. Sadly, both had to deal with Sheila’s death just two weeks before Roy’s sudden demise and it was Steve’s lot to attend the funeral of both.



Ian Smith – who with chronic back problems and walking with the aid of poles was my companion as rearguard on our journey today – had known Roy since they were “nippers”. They had lived in adjoining streets, attended the same schools in their formative years and had developed a lifelong friendship. The two year age difference meant that they didn’t attend the same classes but it is clear that much of the time outside the classroom was spent in each other’s company.

As we have said, Roy’s career in Engineering took him away from Bradford whereas Ian remained in the city but that was no roadblock to their continued friendship and to their frequent meetings in both Yorkshire and Cumbria. In

more recent times, Ian had visited Roy and stayed at Rimdene on a more or less regular fall holiday. Lifelong friends indeed and, as it evolved, together to the end.

On October 11, 2017, Roy had visited the Bereavement Services personnel at the hospital where Aunt Sheila had died. This was one of several visits that he had paid to Bradford in the weeks leading up to her death and, as was his custom, he had

called Ian to say that he would “pop round” in about 30 minutes. Some 45 or more minutes later Ian took another call from Roy’s mobile – but it was not Roy’s voice that he heard. It was instead a hospital employee who had found Roy collapsed near the hospital gates, found the phone and hit “redial”. She gave Ian the news that she had called for help and would stay put until Ian could get there – only a 15 minutes’ walk away. One can only imagine the fear and trepidation for Ian as he rushed those few hundred yards to Roy’s side.

When Ian arrived at the scene, Roy had been lifted into an ambulance and he and Ian were able to have a conversation during which Roy dictated his instructions: “Call the solicitor and tell him I’ll be late; call Jack and tell him to feed the cats; and pick up my car and take it to your house”. As Ian puts it, these were not things to do when he got a chance but were to be done NOW! It is a measure of their longtime bond that not only did Ian abide by what were to be Roy’s last wishes but he was able to stay with Roy, talk with him and – as far as men of that generation were able – to hold him and comfort him until the medics took over.

Roy was taken from Bradford to Leeds General Infirmary where he was to be given treatment. Ian – on consultation with Roy – had told Cousin Keith by phone that this had happened after a mild heart attack and that Keith could call the hospital later for an update. The medical profession did what they could but it was Keith who was the first to be told that a second, more massive attack had occurred before Roy succumbed. Meanwhile, Ian had called others who needed to know before he too received the sad news and began dealing with his own grief at the loss – the sudden, inexplicable loss – of his friend since he was a nipper.

There was another Steve on our trek up White Maiden. Steve Dodds lives in Harrogate and worked with Roy during the time after Vickers that Roy commuted to a job at the Central Electricity Generating Board – or the “National Grid” as it was referred to by Roy. I don’t know the specifics of Roy’s work there but I do know that he traveled quite widely in the North of England inspecting various aspects of the electric power system of the country. I also know that on Roy’s last two visits to America while he was with CEGB, our travels to the National Parks and other venues of outstanding beauty and grandeur were often momentarily – and suddenly – interrupted by the chance sighting of an electricity sub-station. Roy was, amongst so many other talents, an engineer and at that time it was electrical engineering that was running through his veins so a sub-station was as important a sighting as a Rocky Mountain peak.

Whether Steve had known Roy before their time together in Harrogate I don’t know but it is clear that a friendship formed beyond that of co-workers. Similarly, I don’t know whether Roy introduced Steve to hill walking or whether that had been a passion before they met but it seems that they discovered a number of walks together as well as a kinship that lasted to the end. I have had a number of bosses in my career and many more co-workers but I would be hard pressed to name any that would undertake this final walk with me.



Last to be mentioned, but generally first in line up the hill, is Ken Donaghy who, as the name might suggest, hails from Scotland and who had driven south from Dumfermline that morning. Ken had worked at Vickers in Barrow during Roy’s tenure and it is clear that they had been keen walkers in this part of the world as well as others. At the pub lunch following our walk I believe it was Ken that produced a photo album that had belonged to Roy (it might have been Steve Dodds; if so, apologies) and contained dozens of pictures of Roy and friends in places as far flung as the Alps and mountains in Germany. Judging by the attire and the hairstyles, many of these expeditions took place in the sixties so were probably the Rolls Royce days but whoever was there and wherever they were, climbing snow covered peaks somewhat higher than those of today were on the agenda.

What I can say with certainty about Ken is that, following our mission to White Maiden, he has produced a short but moving movie tribute to Roy which he has labeled “Roy’s Last Hill”. It depicts, via still shots and some moving video, the

climb, the participants, the cairn where the ashes were left and the views in all directions that are now Roy’s. It is well worth a look at https://youtu.be/-v44z_5VXEU for anyone who knew Roy.

I trust that I will be forgiven for any factual errors in my summary of the friends and family who said farewell to Roy on this day. I think it is sufficient and noteworthy that the six of us include his two closest relatives, his oldest friend (in the sense of longevity, Ian) and three co-workers representing his three major employers: Rolls Royce in Barnoldswick, Vickers in Barrow and CEGB in Harrogate.



I also feel obliged as a Yorkshireman to point out that all three locations resided at one point in the great County of Yorkshire. Harrogate still does, of course; Barnoldswick was subsumed under Lancashire in one of many boundary realignments (still contested by many); and Barrow was a part of Yorkshire in the 1800s, eventually entering Lancashire on its way to the new (or is it very old) County of Cumbria. In the interest of full disclosure I will state that for this latter fact about Barrow's lineage, I rely on information provided by Roy with the aid of an old yellowed map as evidence. We have all experienced that Roy was educated far beyond that of his formal schooling so I for one am not prepared to challenge the veracity of this claim. Is anyone?

Back to the path, where the rough rock surface was now covered with an inch or two of snow and still heading in a roughly vertical inclination. We started by going approximately east, perhaps then even southeasterly, before turning through a right angle after about a mile. This took about one hour so it was clear that my complete lack of fell walking experience was not



only setting the pace (from the rear) but crimping the style of my fellow walkers. Not that anyone complained and this one hour marker was used as a convenient stop for coffee, Mars bars, granola bars or whatever each had brought to carry and provide a little sustenance en route.



This stop was actually only marginally longer than many others that had already been called and which were often labeled in honor of Roy as “fag breaks”. Roy had been a consistent – some might say heavy – smoker all his adult life and the need to “light up” was never more than a few minutes away. I recall that one of his main deterrents for visits to us in the United States; the thought of going without a cigarette for eight or nine hours was difficult to accept, certainly on his last two trips when virtually all airlines had a strict no smoking rule.

Even when he had arrived and we were driving for extended periods across the vast Western States, the no smoking policy of rental car companies demanded frequent stops to take in the scenery – and a few drags. It wasn’t that he was the one to request a smoke stop necessarily but any offer to get a better view for a photograph, stretch our legs, get a cup of coffee or simply pull in at a “rest area” (the American euphemism for Toilets) was quickly endorsed. Then, of course, there were the sub-stations that often demanded a closer look.

Roy’s smoking habit – indeed his demeanor, build, looks and mannerisms – mimicked those of my dad to a T, so visits with Roy always had an added value for me and indeed for Molly. It’s often said that human traits don’t necessarily follow a direct line as they are replicated in later generations and, in fact, often seem to move to the side before dropping to the next level. Hence, a nephew often duplicates the characteristics of his uncle more so than those of his father. This was Roy and my dad, for which I am grateful as my father has been gone for forty years and Roy has provided a continuing connection. Whether my nephew, who it is claimed has inherited similar patterns as mine, will ever feel the same way about the relationship is a point for me to ponder – and him to decide!

I suppose that the fag breaks were tempered in recent years as Roy switched to “vaping”, although there is no reason why this too couldn’t demand a stop to stoke up. I find it interesting that it was economics, rather than the health benefits, that eventually got Roy to quit buying cigarettes and his claims of “Thousands a year” in savings were probably not an exaggeration. As most of this cost was going directly to the government in the form of tax, his joy was presumably enhanced – and his motor bike collection and lathe additions in “Building 12” were undoubtedly the beneficiaries.

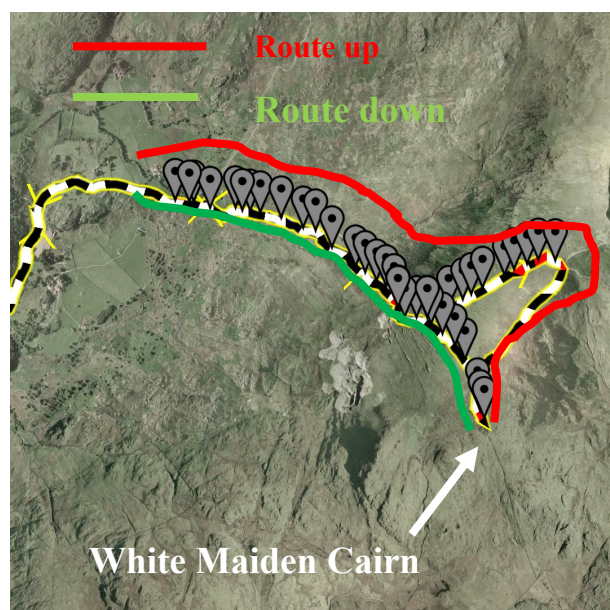


Building 12 and some of Roy’s prized possessions

Everyone who knew Roy was aware of his engineering prowess and his vast knowledge of everything mechanical. Hence it was probably no real surprise when he replaced the old garage at his home with an attached, purpose-built extension for his tools and equipment. The amount of work involved in its design and construction was immense but the resultant 150 square feet (?) was a showplace for his machinery and talent. Every piece of equipment (some of museum vintage) was lovingly restored and painted in its original livery and not a drop of oil soiled the immaculate flooring. Comparisons between the cleanliness of his workshop and that of his living room are certainly exaggerated but there is little doubt as to where his passion lay. The connecting door between shop and home came courtesy of the dismantling of certain facilities at his former employee, Vickers. Hence the house was safely protected by a fireproof door; or was it Building 12 that was being safeguarded?

The left turn after our first hour on the trail took us along what had appeared from below as a gentler slope in a generally northerly direction for perhaps another $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the ridge of the hill itself. As we know, however, reality often makes a mockery of perceptions (or wishes) and that 45 minute was anything but gentle and was covered by snow varying in depth from almost nothing to over six inches, as the winds had dictated. Not that wind was an issue at the time for us, and calm and bright conditions only caused us (me, anyway) to sweat more freely and wonder about the necessity for two thick shirts and a heavy jacket.

This stretch too was marked by frequent breaks – labeled or not – and a glance at my phone app graphically told the story. This particular application (which I had only recently loaded) is GPS driven and, amongst its many features, lays down an electronic marker on a digital map any time that the carrier stops for any reason. I believe I have since read that these “waypoints” can be adjusted so that stops of, for example, less than a minute are not captured. I think the attached screenshot clearly defines why I need to read further and adjust the timing of my rests – not only for less clutter on the map but to minimize further embarrassment. To be fair, waypoints depicted are for both up and down portions of the trek (much of which were the same) but the resultant picture suggests a long period of standing with just a few minutes of actual movement.



Nevertheless, the ridge was attained, at which point it was announced by one of our paper or digital map carrying team that we should turn south for only another 0.89 miles (or was that kilometers?) of “mostly flat terrain. We were now at a crossroads of sorts where paths running along the ridge between White Maiden and its near neighbors and a significantly more difficult east-west route between Lake Coniston (below us) and the Scafell Peaks (to our west). It is a testament to fell walkers in general, and to the dozen or more that we could see today from this vantage point, that the tracks were well used by what must be a very fit segment of the British population.



Of course, we were in Wainwright country!

Alfred Wainwright MBE (17 January 1907 – 20 January 1991) was a British fell walker, guidebook author and illustrator. His seven-volume Pictorial Guide to the Lakeland Fells, published between 1955 and 1966 and consisting entirely of reproductions of his manuscript, has become the standard reference work to 214 of the fells of the English Lake District. Among his 40-odd other books is the first guide to the Coast to Coast Walk, a 192-mile long-distance footpath devised by Wainwright which remains popular today.

All seven books consist entirely of reproductions of Wainwright's manuscript, beautifully hand-produced in pen and ink with no typeset material, an example of which is shown here. The series has been in print almost continuously since it was first published. It is still regarded by many walkers as the definitive guide to the Lakeland mountains. The 214 fells described in the seven volumes have become known as the Wainwrights.



We were not on one of Alfred Wainwright's 214 Fell Walks but we were now at an elevation that would qualify in the bottom 100 or so. It was said that Roy had completed (bagged) all but one of these famous walks and one of the original suggestions for the scattering of his ashes was to complete the set on his behalf. Since Roy had left no instructions or wishes for his remains, the "Full Wainwright" seemed a very logical conclusion to his fell walking days. However, one of the current team (Ian, I believe) remembered that Roy had resisted this last Wainwright (Bakestall, 2189 feet, near Skiddaw, in Wainwright's Northern Fells, Book 5) despite many opportunities to bag the ultimate. So why leave him in a place that, for whatever reason, he clearly had no desire to spend a day, let alone eternity?

A more suitable alternative was conceived when it was learned of Roy having ascended White Maiden carrying the ashes of another dear friend (Keith) and scattering them at some rocky outcrop near the summit. Indeed, someone came up with photographs of the event, probably taken by Roy himself. So, White Maiden it was to be (a much easier walk I had been assured!) and now we were within striking distance of the selected spot.

Indeed, this last stretch (of the two mile climb) was relatively flat – I recall even a short but welcome downhill few yards – and then it was a gentle climb to find the exact rocky outcrop.



Almost there.....



....and there's a rocky outcrop!



This is where Keith's ashes were scattered



is this the same spot?

Steve Corker had brought a photograph of the place where Keith's ashes had been scattered. Unfortunately, there were a number of rocky collections and the snow covering today made the terrain look just a little different. We did find what we thought was the place but then noticed that there was now a rock cairn a few feet further along the ridge but definitely at a higher elevation. The consensus was that, although Roy might appreciate being with his old friend, his competitiveness and sense of achievement would be better satisfied by being left at the very highest point on this mountain. Close to his friend but just that bit more....



So it was to be. A few of the stones were removed from the cairn to form a hollow in which it was my privilege to scatter Roy's remains before the ashes were protected once again by the replaced slabs. There were no speeches, no fanfare – just five guys saying farewell to a very good friend, knowing that Roy was in a place that he loved and one where he could rest in peace. What we could see, and hopefully what Roy would have appreciated, was that White Maiden had tremendous views in all directions and we knew that Roy could have identified all the landmarks to the north, south, east and west.





Farewell, Roy

I think Ian summed up well the feelings we all had in a note sent after the walk: “regrettable that it had to be under these circumstances but a challenge that would have made Roy proud.” We all would agree that, whether he would have admitted his pride overtly, Roy must feel "right" at the summit surrounded by his beloved hill country.

At around 2pm this hill country had suddenly turned very cold. There was a breeze here that we had not felt on the ascent and there was some high cloud cover over White Maiden. Admittedly we had removed gloves to manipulate cameras, etc and we were essentially motionless for ten to fifteen minutes, but there was for the first time today, a definite chill in the air. I had left my home in Cincinnati three weeks earlier with early morning temperatures around -20C but had not felt as cold as I did now as we turned to start back down.

Ironically, or perhaps appropriately, the Scafell peaks to our west were bathed in sunlight and the snow caps were a dazzling white. This sunlight was traveling eastward and we too were soon feeling the warmth as the skies cleared and would imminently allow the sun's rays to highlight the cairn.



A glance at the map and a keen sense of direction by our leaders suggested that we could cut off quite a sizeable corner from our route if we were prepared to leave the trodden path and head directly west for a while. This seemed like a good idea and it did indeed shorten our return by perhaps $\frac{3}{4}$ mile but it was a steep and at times slippery slope across open moorland of tufted grasses and deep snow. We all made it safely back to the main path which we had followed on the ascent and were soon on the wider, rocky trail that led back to the car. In many ways, this final half mile was the toughest – certainly on the knees – as we stumbled over ice and snow covered stones that themselves were not the most forgiving of surfaces. But, again, five of us survived (with just one man down briefly and with no apparent damage) and were re-united with our vehicles and with Keith.



*On our
way
down*

It was now about 3pm (3 1/2 hours and 3 1/2 miles after our tart) and Keith, who for reasons we can't fathom had not seen our descent until we were almost back to the road, was beginning to wonder about the remaining daylight and our ability to return before the sunlight faded. He claims that he was prepared to give us another 30 minutes before sounding the alarm and bringing in the Mountain Rescue Team, although his sense of drama – not to mention his oblique sense of humor – may have played significantly into his stated plans.

It was a short drive to the Nesfield Arms where a drink and hot meal were soon made available. Our recce team had done a good job in sussing out what must have been the only eating place on this 15 mile stretch of road, so they may be forgiven for giving the walk itself only the most cursory of reviews.

In addition, I would like to thank all who contributed pictures and other information that went into this journal but — more importantly — for being an integral part of this day and our tribute to Roy.



Lunch and a recap of the day's events over and with necessary e-mail addresses exchanged, we once again took to the road. This time, Steve Corker and Ian Smith accompanied Ken as far as his hostelry for the night (before returning to Scotland the next day) and then to their respective homes. Meanwhile Keith and I took Steve Dodds as far as Skipton where he picked up his car for the 45 minute drive to Harrogate. Keith was now home and I had a short ride back to Ilkley to complete my day and reflect on the journey and its mission.

For all of us, I believe, it was a unique experience in that we had never taken part in an ashes scattering ceremony of any kind. Our lack of prior knowledge, however, made it simply a mission to be accomplished for someone who we greatly admired and had been proud to call friend and family for many, many years. It is usually easy at the time of the death of a friend to find any number of good things to say about his life and the way he lived it but the words are often chosen from a standard selection of niceties and are transitory – forgotten almost as soon as uttered.

Not so for any of the words I heard on our 3 ½ miles (could it be that that was all it was??) on White Maiden about Roy Lorraine Edgley. There were many comments about his idiosyncrasies (at least as we perceived them) and a number could have been considered as poking a little fun. There was a level of incredulity (perhaps tinged with a little envy) at some of his undertakings and admiration for the results. Building 12 and its contents and his beautiful garden are just two that I shall always remember. We were impressed by his generosity of time, talent and care-giving to those that needed it – from his Aunt Sheila to his own and adopted cats.

Those who worked with him and certainly those who saw the products of his hobbies witnessed the consummate engineer; not in the form of a BS Degree or a string of patents but in his ability to understand the problem and find the right answer. Again, I am reminded of my father who could shape a piece of any metal into any form you might need and knew the right one to select just by feel – whereas his son, who eventually obtained a degree in metallurgy, could differentiate aluminum and stainless steel only after looking through a microscope at 500 X magnification. Roy would have associated with my dad and probably quietly shaken his head in disbelief at the son.

Finally, in a very quiet and unassuming way, Roy was passionate in everything he did. From motor bikes to cameras; lathes to flowers, trees and shrubs; fell walking to his more distant travels, he immersed himself with the intent of not only doing a good job but of learning, absorbing and improving everything he experienced. We can all be grateful because we all were beneficiaries. Thank you, Roy.



