

# Lake District Trip

## Autumn 2021

At the beginning of March 2020, Spring was in the air and members of the Kilbroney Ramblers were enthusiastically looking forward to the fully booked Spring Trip to Cahir in only a few short weeks time.

And then COVID 19 struck! Movement restrictions were imposed within days and not only was the Cahir Trip cancelled but the club's entire walking programme was suspended. This in turn also brought about the cancellation of the Autumn Trip to the Lake District which had been booked for September.

Such was the uncertainty that prevailed at that time, caused by the lockdown and movement restrictions that many believed that a return to normality in the foreseeable future was little more than wishful thinking. And so the decision in June 2021 by the committee of the Kilbroney Ramblers to explore a possible relaunch of the Keswick Trip was greeted by many with absolute delight. Such was the enthusiasm that the proposal moved from launch to departure in only a few short weeks.

And so at some ridiculous hour one Sunday morning in September our trip began. Despite setting off at five o'clock in the morning, spirits were high and the journey to Belfast, the crossing on the ferry and the journey South were all extremely comfortable and enjoyable, broken only by a brief stop outside Carlisle to enjoy a cup of tea and some exceedingly good scones.

On arrival at Keswick Country House Hotel we found the facilities to be everything we had hoped for and the welcome to be both warm and friendly. However it was our visit to the restaurant that evening which not only met but exceeded everyone's expectations. The number of choices offered on the menu, the presentation, quality and portion size of the dishes served along with the attentive professionalism of the staff ensured that all of the meals, both breakfast and dinner received the highest praise from everyone.

For an organised event such as this trip to be successful it not only requires that all of the constituent elements come together but it also requires a degree of good fortune on our side. And that was certainly true of this event. Throughout the four days of this trip, The Lake District enjoyed unbroken wall to wall sunshine with the temperatures on occasions reaching almost thirty degrees.

This was however a walking holiday for walkers and the person who took responsibility for this element of the trip was none other than the club chairperson himself. The careful consideration and planning that went into each and every walk combined with his years of experience and local knowledge of this area delivered a programme of walks which was exciting, exhilarating and sufficiently challenging while taking into account the varied ability and needs of the different groups. All walks were on well established trails and the conditions underfoot were always perfectly safe.

The routes chosen afforded those first time visitors to the area the opportunity to fully appreciate the majestic beauty of the Lake District.

On day one the group headed South towards Cat's Bells where some members peeled off and returned via Hause Gate to either follow the Cumbria Way back to the hotel or take the more leisurely approach and return using the ferry on the Derwent Water. Other members of the group meanwhile continued on via Maiden Moor and High Spy to Dale Head.

On day two the group headed North towards Skiddaw with part of the group going directly to Skiddaw House while others reached that destination via Little Man on their way to the summit of Skiddaw. Again all groups returned along the Cumbria Way where the photo opportunities were truly out of this world.

Unfortunately all good things must come to an end and so on that Wednesday morning as Gerry our coach driver pulled out of Keswick and headed North on our homeward journey there was a uniformity of opinion amongst his passengers that Keswick and The Lake District had indeed lived up to its well deserved reputation as the UK's premier outdoor leisure destination.