

The Making of a Cultural Landscape: The English Lake District as Tourist Destination, 1750-2010

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The Origins and Development of Mountaineering and Rock Climbing Tourism in the Lake District, c.1800-1914.

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The Lake District has played a central role in the development of the sport of rock climbing in the British Isles, the late Nineteenth Century witnessing increasingly athletic and gymnastic approaches to the crags and fells of the Lake District. Climbing as we know it today emerged as a sub-cultural development, gradually establishing the legitimacy of an increasingly sporting approach to mountains, changing as it did so the accepted notions of what it meant to be a mountaineer. Despite the accumulated Romantic and literary reputations of the Lake District landscape, mountaineering in the Lake District was slow to emerge, the cultural significance of the Lake District landscape to mountaineers remaining for most of the Nineteenth Century, if not entirely negligible, then certainly subordinate. Why this should be so forms the basis of the first part of this chapter, focussing on the cultural significance of mountains in a European context and the pre-eminence of Alpine mountain landscapes as tourist destinations amongst the bourgeoisie. The élite tourist focus on “being elsewhere”¹, on social distancing, exclusive locations and internalized notions of Romantic individualism and self-cultivation meant that Alpine mountain landscapes emerged as the locus of the British middle classes fascination with mountaineering in the middle of the Nineteenth Century. The second half of this chapter examines the emergence of the Lake District as a tourist destination for British mountaineers and rock climbers in the 1880s and 1890s as the regional middle classes sought to exploit the recreational hinterlands of the industrial cities of the North of England by adapting élite cultural approaches to mountain landscapes and applying them to regional upland landscapes. Part of a drive to express regional self-identity and exceptionalism, the cultural meaning of the Lake District landscape to mountaineers and climbers, always multi-layered, became enmeshed in new recreational paradigms, gradually differentiating itself from the Alpine mountaineering tradition that had gone before.

Historians seeking to explain the origins of mountaineering and rock climbing in the British Isles have struggled to present a coherent account of how, but more importantly why, mountaineering as a leisure and sporting activity emerged in the middle of the Nineteenth Century. Historians of sport have found it particularly difficult to categorize, for if it contained ‘sporting’ elements and motivations, it reached its apotheosis in the middle of the Nineteenth Century as a leisure activity amongst upper-middle class British tourists whilst on vacation in the Alps. Unlike the dominant British sporting paradigm, the team-sports model, British mountaineers seemed reluctant to form clubs, or indeed any form of institutional voluntary association that would celebrate and facilitate

¹ Baranowski, S. and Furlough, E., (eds), *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture and Identity in Modern Europe and North America*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

recreational approaches to native mountains. It presented the peculiar spectacle of a major British sporting and recreational pastime that took place entirely on the Continent. The second half of the Nineteenth Century saw the slow transformation of mountaineering from a social field dominated by notions of romantic individualism and cultivated excursionism, where external aesthetic, literary, cultural and scientific criteria valorized behaviour, to a social field where internal and sub-cultural criteria increasingly determined value.² The growth of elements of sporting culture, with an emphasis on rock climbing in the British Isles, was the result of widening class participation in the 1880s and 1890s.³ This was not always welcomed or encouraged by the Alpine mountaineering establishment.

We cannot begin to understand the emergence of rock climbing and mountaineering in the Lake District without an analysis of class. Alpine mountaineering was a form of cultural capital that required time, money, motivation and cultivation to acquire. To be a mountaineer in Britain for most of the Nineteenth Century meant to climb in the Alps, Europe or the Greater Ranges. The Alpine Club, founded in 1857 by the pioneers of British mountaineering, was based in London. Its members were mainly upper middle class professionals, and ‘more likely to be Liberal Dissenters than Tory Anglicans’.⁴ The club resembled other elite gentlemen’s clubs, providing space and opportunity for expressions of shared interests, offering select conviviality, fellowship and exclusivity. The goal of the Alpine Club was not to establish a national mountaineering movement with local representation and regional affiliates with local mountain affinities, or to encourage mass tourism, healthy lifestyles or lower-middle class and working class participation. It existed to celebrate its members’ achievements and maintain its exclusivity. Membership required Alpine climbing experience ‘or evidence of literary or artistic accomplishments related to mountains’.⁵ Alpine mountaineering had high barriers to entry in terms of the costs of an Alpine holiday and this exclusivity was cultivated and reinforced by devotees of mountaineering when they met in London. What constituted the correct approach to mountaineering and mountain landscapes was maintained by cultural arbiters in the Alpine Club, prospective members having to negotiate the usual clubland paraphernalia of proposal, election and exclusion.⁶

A de facto social qualification also contributed to the genteel identity of the Alpine Club as “a club for gentlemen who also climb.” These policies ensured that the social profile of the Alpine Club remained

² Hoibian, Olivier, ‘Sociogenesis of a Social Field: The Cultural World of Mountaineering in France from 1870 to 1930’, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 41, (3-4), 2006, pp. 339-355, at 340-1.

³ Westaway, J. H., ‘The German Community in Manchester, Middle-Class Culture and the Development of Mountaineering in Britain, c. 1850-1914’, *English Historical Review*, 124, (508), pp571-604, at 592-595.

⁴ Hansen, P. H. ‘Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain’, *Journal of British Studies*, 34, July 1995, pp.300-324, at 310-311. Hansen, P. H., *British Mountaineering, 1850-1914*, Harvard University, Ph.D, Chapter 2, ‘The Alpine Club and Alpine Exploration’, pp.107-161. Robertson, D. ‘Mid-Victorians amongst the Alps’, in Knoepflmacher, U. C. & Tennyson, G. B. (eds), *Nature and the Victorian Imagination*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 113-136, at 120.

⁵ Hansen, P. H. ‘Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain’, *Journal of British Studies*, 34, July 1995, pp.300-324, at 309-310.

⁶ Lunn, A. *Mountain Jubilee*. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1943), pp.205-206.

somewhat higher, and the number of its members much lower, than the mountaineering clubs founded throughout Europe in the 1860s and 1870s.⁷

The focus on Alpine landscapes as the premier tourist destination for British mountaineers coloured impressions of upland Britain. For most of the Nineteenth Century the mountains of the Lake District were understood in comparison to the Alps. This paradox was a commonplace of aestheticized approaches to mountain landscapes. What was true of the picturesque tourist in the Eighteenth Century was true of the mountaineering tourist in the Nineteenth Century: 'Educated awareness of what constitutes an ideal landscape' meant that 'the tourist travelling through the Lakes and North Wales will loudly acclaim the *native* beauties of British landscape by invoking idealized *foreign* models.'⁸ As the hills of the Lake District offered no Alpine scale challenges, or unclimbed summits, they received relatively little systematic attention from mountaineers affiliated with the Alpine Club in the first two decades of the club's existence and a good deal of condescension. Ironically perhaps, it was the voluminous popular literature produced by Alpine mountaineers, where Alpine landscapes were idealized, aestheticized and dramatized that provided many people's first encounter with the Alps and with mountaineers' cultural approaches to mountains. 'Landscapes', as Simon Schama has reminded us, 'are culture before they are nature; constructs of the imagination'.⁹ For the majority of tourists and mountaineers, the mountains and fells of the Lake District were experienced as ideas before they were ever experienced in reality, ideas formulated and articulated by a particular class at a particular time. We cannot understand the cultural meaning of the mountains of the Lake District to mountaineers and rock climbers without a wider understanding of cultural approaches to mountains amongst the European bourgeoisie that had cohered by the middle decades of the Nineteenth Century.

Undoubtedly tectonic upheavals in human intellectual perception across Europe in the Eighteenth Century shaped attitudes to mountain landscapes. The Enlightenment reversed the polarities of aesthetic perceptions, theories of the sublime inserting themselves between nature and the human soul, expressed as a desire for a new 'sensation of wonder mixed with fear, a pleasurable encounter with forbidding landscape or the darker passions'.¹⁰ Natural philosophers, natural historians and scientists began to seek evidence for Gods' handiwork in the natural world. In seeking evidence of design they stumbled upon facts that altered their notions of chronology and man's place in the universe. Geologists and glaciologists found in the mountains evidence of deep-time, recalibrating our notions of the scale of evolutionary forces, relegating notions of Gods agency to an ever more remote singularity. With the 1779 publication of *Voyage dans les Alpes* by de Saussure, Professor of Natural Philosophy at the Geneva Academy, the

⁷ Hansen, P. H. 'Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 34, July 1995, pp.300-324, at 310.

⁸ Andrews, M. *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1989), p.3.

⁹ Schama, S., *Landscape and Memory*. (London: Harper Collins, 1995), p.61.

¹⁰ Spufford, F. *I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination*. (London: Faber & Faber, 1996), p.18.

notion of climbing a mountain for scientific purposes was firmly established.¹¹ As notions of God's agency and immanency began their long recessional, Enlightenment *philosophes* celebrated the perfectibility of mankind, of man in a state of nature, exemplifying the nobility of peasant communities in mountain regions, of mountain landscapes as the very "Seat of Virtue".¹² Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* (1760) 'was chiefly responsible for focusing changing perspectives on the Alps'.¹³ Mountain worship was a feature of the German *Sturm and Drang* movement in literature, where sublimity and subjective experience formed a literary topos as jagged and extreme as the mountain landscapes in which they were set.¹⁴ German Idealist thought found in the struggle to climb a mountain and attain a summit the perfect metaphor for the dialectical method and the teleological drive towards the Ideal, exemplified in Goethe's *Faust*. This reverence for mountain landscapes and their symbolic importance was further reinforced in German culture by romantic nationalism.¹⁵ Since the publication of Tieck's novel *The Wandering of Franz Sternbald* (1798) 'the walking and sketching tour became an essential part of young Germans' self-discovery, and their interest focussed increasingly on the beauties of their homeland'.¹⁶ Tieck, echoing Schellings *Naturephilosophie* in his novels, did much to romanticize the 'wild call of the mountains'.¹⁷ It was further expressed by the Turner movements' devotion to physical renewal in an outdoor context as a way of rebuilding the individual and society.¹⁸

These currents in European thought profoundly influenced English Romanticism and the Lakeland poets perception of the Lake District landscape, none more so than Coleridge. Before Coleridge had even set eyes on the Lake District he had attended the

¹¹ Ring, J. *How the English Made the Alps*. (London: John Murray, 2000), p.19. Bigg, C., Aubin, D., Felsch, P., 'Introduction: The Laboratory of Nature – Science in the Mountains', *Science in Context*, 23 (1), 2009, pp.311-321.

¹² Schama, S., *Landscape and Memory*. (London: Harper Collins, 1995), pp.478-490. Rudaz, G., 'Stewards of the Mountains: The Poetics and Politics of Local Knowledge in the Valaisian Alps', in Cosgtove, D., & della Dora, V., (eds), *High Places: Cultural Geographies of Mountains, Ice and Science*. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), pp.147-161, at 153.

¹³ Ring, J. *How the English Made the Alps*. (London: John Murray, 2000), p.17. Schama, S. *Landscape and Memory*. (London: Harper Collins, 1995), pp.478-490.

¹⁴ Giacomoni, P., 'Mountain Landscapes and the Aesthetics of the Sublime in Romantic Narration', in Gillespie, G. E. P., Engel, M., Dieterlie, B., (Eds) *Romantic Prose Fiction-Comparative Histories of Literatures in European Languages XXIII*. (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, 2008), pp.111-112.

¹⁵ Graeber, W., 'Nature and landscape between exoticism and national areas of imagination', in Gillespie, G. E. P., Engel, M., Dieterlie, B., (Eds) *Romantic Prose Fiction-Comparative Histories of Literatures in European Languages XXIII*. (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, 2008), pp.94-96.

¹⁶ Griffiths, A., Carey, F. *German Printmaking in the Age of Goethe*. (London: British Museum Press, 1994), p.216.

¹⁷ Giacomoni, P. 'Mountain landscape and the aesthetics of the sublime in Romantic narration', in Gillespie, G. E. P., Engel, M., Dieterlie, B., (Eds) *Romantic Prose Fiction-Comparative Histories of Literatures in European Languages XXIII*. (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, 2008), pp. 107-121, at 115.

¹⁸ Ingomar Weiler, 'The Living Legacy: Classical Sport and Nineteenth-Century Middle-Class Commentators of the German-Speaking Nations', in J. A. Mangan, (ed.), *The European Sports History Review, iv: Reformers, Sport, Modernizers: Middle-Class Revolutionaries*, (London, 2002), pp.9-34, at 10; Eisenberg, .C., 'Charismatic National leader: Turnvater Jahn', in *European Heroes: Myth, Identity, Sport*, Richard Holt, J. A. Mangan and Pierre Lanfranchi (eds), (London, 1996), pp.14-27.

University of Göttingen and climbed the Brocken in the Hartz mountains.¹⁹ A significant translator and interpreter of German Idealist thought and literature, he had also imbibed the German cultural reverence for mountain landscapes. In August 1802 he set off on a nine day tour from Keswick to St. Bees on the Cumberland coast and back over the central fells of the Lake District, maintaining a letter journal which his biographer describes as forming ‘the first literary description of the peculiarly English sport of fell-walking. Coleridge was in effect inventing a new kind of Romantic tourism, abandoning the coach and the high-road for the hill, the flask and the knapsack.’²⁰ He also largely abandoned guide books which ‘tended to provide travellers with fixed itineraries around a series of principle sights.’²¹ He took a sketch map in his pocket book, ‘a chart of the mountainous, craggy countryside over which he planned to wander.’²² On the 5 August on the summit of Scafell Coleridge penned a letter describing what he saw and how he felt:

O my God! What enourmous Mountains these are close to me...the
Clouds are hast’ning hither from the Sea – and the whole air seaward
has a lurid Look – and we shall certainly have Thunder.’²³

He then began to descend Broad Stand, today considered to be a Moderate grade rock climb. Lowering himself over edges he soon found he could not go back. His own account of the descent ‘shows Coleridge at his finest pitch: a comic hero beset by tragic visions, spiritual, intelligent, and supremely self-aware of his own psychological drama’, the exertion ‘making his muscles tremble with exhaustion and vertigo’, his mind exulting, producing an ‘effect of almost religious intensity’.²⁴ Coleridge’s descent of Broad Stand to Mickeldore has been appropriated as foundational by British mountaineering historians searching for antecedents.²⁵ Whilst Coleridge, the ‘Metaphysical Mountaineer’²⁶ was also an inadvertent one, this climbing interlude and the wider mountain tour of which it was part represents a significant cultural shift in attitudes to mountains, unleashing the intellectual forces that would shape mountaineering in the nineteenth century.

Since at least the 1770s the Lakeland scenery of Lancashire, Cumberland and Westmorland had been ‘a serious challenge to the aesthetic supremacy of the European Grand Tour’²⁷, the tour to the Lakes a necessary component of élite tourist itineraries. The Picturesque tourist appropriation of landscape was, however, essentially passive and contemplative, effected by means of seeing and hearing. Whilst Gray’s *Journal of the Lakes* (1769) had transposed the sublime’s ‘vocabulary of “horrid beauty”’ from the Alps

¹⁹ Holmes, R, *Coleridge: Early Visions*. (London: Harper Collins, 1998), pp.229-231.

²⁰ Holmes, R, *Coleridge: Early Visions*. (London: Harper Collins, 1998), p.328.

²¹ Hewitt, R. *Map of a Nation: A Biography of the Ordnance Survey*. (London: Granta, 2010), p.209.

²² Hewitt, R. *Map of a Nation: A Biography of the Ordnance Survey*. (London: Granta, 2010), p.210.

²³ Holmes, R, *Coleridge: Early Visions*. (London: Harper Collins, 1998), p.329

²⁴ Holmes, R, *Coleridge: Early Visions*. (London: Harper Collins, 1998), p. 330.

²⁵ Hankinson, A., *A Century on the Crags: The Story of Rock Climbing in the Lake District*. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons,1988), p.14.

²⁶ Holmes, R, *Coleridge: Early Visions*. (London: Harper Collins, 1998), Ch.13.

²⁷ Andrews, M. *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1989), p.153.

to the Lakes, establishing the Lake District as the definitively sublime English landscape²⁸, it took the Romantic sensibility to accelerate beyond this, touching, feeling and experiencing landscape in ways that were often visceral, ludic and pantheistic. Above all, Romanticism stressed the primacy of the individual. It valorized the subjective experience of landscape and mythologized what we might call a wilder tourism, at the heart of which was the notion of the solitary wanderer, the romantic individual. Romanticized individualism and aestheticized approaches to landscape was a feature of pan-European bourgeois notions of *Bildung*

which stressed inner growth, the development of the whole personality and the elevation and transformation of the individual through contact with classic works of civilization and sublime natural landmarks.... Visual connoisseurship over “nature” –its study, its appreciation, its proper care –provided the educated middle class with an index of good breeding, a seemingly irrefutable ground from which to lay claim to social and cultural leadership’.²⁹

Mountaineering, a largely upper-middle class pursuit of the professional classes, was not immune from these class-based assumptions. Mountaineers, exemplifying the educated bourgeoisie, conceived of themselves as travellers (as opposed to tourists) satisfying wider aesthetic, cultural and scientific criteria. The end of the Napoleonic Wars saw a boom in British tourists reacquainting themselves with the Alps.³⁰ Romantic exiles like Shelley and Byron eulogized Swiss democracy, Roussevian simplicity and the ‘cold sublimity’ of the Alps: ‘to me’, said Lord Byron ‘High mountains are a feeling’.³¹ Increasingly the Romantic desire to experience and not just contemplate mountains was fused with a desire to understand their origins. British scientists like Forbes and Tyndall popularized the Alps with their writings.³² As tourist infrastructure developed in the 1840s and as Switzerland settled down after the *Sonderbundskrieg* of 1847 there was a huge influx of British tourists in the Alps. The railways reached Basel and Geneva and ‘Switzerland came to be hardly more than a day’s journey from London and the fare less than ten pounds.’³³ The 1850s and 1860s were to see a huge explosion in British mountaineering in Alps. British mountaineering historians have characterized this as the “Golden Age” of Mountaineering. Between Alfred Wills ascent of the Wetterhorn from Grindlewald in September 1854 and Whymper’s ascent (and subsequent disaster) on the

²⁸ Schama, S., *Landscape and Memory*. (London: Harper Collins, 1995), p. 471.

²⁹ Lekan, T. ‘A “Noble Prospect”’: Tourism, *Heimat*, and Conservation on the Rhine, 1880-1914’. *Journal of Modern History*, 81, December 2009, pp.224-858, at 844.

³⁰ Buzard, J., *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to “Culture”, 1800-1918*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p.80. Withey, L., *Grand Tours and Cook’s Tours: A History of Leisure Travel, 1750 to 1915*, (New York: William Morrow & Co, 1997), pp. 196-219.

³¹ Manning, P. J. (ed.). *Lord Byron: Selected Poems*. (London: Penguin, 2005), Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage: Canto III, pp. 415-455, at 436, 440.

³² Fleming, F., *Killing Dragons: The Conquest of the Alps*. (London: Granta, 2000), pp.126-145, 177-191. Barham, T., *When the Alps Cast Their Spell: Mountaineers of the Alpine Golden Age*. (Glasgow: The In Pinn, 2004), pp.50-80. Engel, C. E., *Mountaineering in the Alps: a historical survey*. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971), pp. 84-107. Reidy, M. S., ‘John Tyndall’s Vertical Physics: From Rock Quarries to Icy Peaks’, *Physics in Perspective*, 12, 2010, pp.122-145.

³³ Annan, N. *Leslie Stephen: The Godless Victorian*. (London: Weidenfield & Nicholson, 1984), p.90.

Matterhorn in 1865, a huge number of unclimbed Alpine peaks were climbed. ‘Of forty-three first ascents in 1864 and 1865, for example, only five had been made by continental climbers.’³⁴ It was not just the fact of these achievements but their representation in print that made these mountaineering endeavours celebrated and familiar, drawing further tourists to the Alps in search of adventure. Wills ascent of the Wetterhorn was not a first ascent but the fifth or sixth; ‘it was not even the first ascent made by an amateur, for Agassiz had been up the mountain ten years earlier. But it was the first ascent to inspire a well-written narrative.’³⁵ The Alpine Club anthology *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers* was a great publishing success in 1859 and Whymper, capitalising on his notoriety after acres of newspaper coverage of the Matterhorn disaster, produced *Scrambles Amongst the Alps* (1871), deemed by many of his contemporaries to be the ultimate expression of Alpinism.

Historians seeking to understand this new British tourist *imperium* in the Alps and explain why people began to climb mountains for recreational purposes have outlined new historical forces at work. Dominant cultural discourses within British imperialism that stressed manliness and athleticism saw a growth of middle-class interest in sport and body cultivation. The British public schools promoted new chivalric codes that stressed stoicism and endurance, shaping perceptions of how to behave. From the peripheries of empire came tales of adventure and exploration that stimulated the desire to emulate and embody imperial vigour. If, as one commentator has noted, achievement was the ‘essence of mountaineering’ then ‘climbing gives, to those who need it, the reassurance that they are men – men still capable of defeating the tyranny of life.’³⁶ In the minds of many tourists, the Alps became a second Pole, the one month holiday in the Alps an opportunity to enact a type of imperial manliness.³⁷ Thus the specificity of the British bourgeois experience added new strata of meaning to the experience of mountain landscapes. To visual, aesthetic and cultural connoisseurship over nature the upper-middle class mountaineering tourist added notions of exploration and conquest. The impulse to dominate the Alps, evidenced by the first ascents of unclimbed peaks, suggests not only a desire to overcome nature but to establish primacy, a form of territoriality often at odds with the nationalist objectives of Alpine nations themselves.

But the bourgeoisie was by its nature cosmopolitan, subject to wider intellectual forces beyond the imperial domain. The professional and intellectual classes, struggling with the crises of faith, the question of what it means to be human and to lead the good life, found in mountains the space for inner exploration, spiritual solace and teleological hopes. The scale of Alpine mountains inspired awe, the evidence of geological time became ‘akin to time travel: a way to access the perspectives of the planet, if not the

³⁴ Fleming, F. *Killing Dragons: The Conquest of the Alps*. (London: Granta, 2000), p.291

³⁵ Engel, C. E., *Mountaineering in the Alps: a historical survey*. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971), p.93.

³⁶ Annan, N. *Leslie Stephen: The Godless Victorian*. (London: Weidenfield & Nicholson, 1984), p. 92.

³⁷ This discourse of conquest is perhaps most clearly articulated in the work of Peter H. Hansen. See for instance Hansen, P. H., ‘Modern Mountains: The Performative Consciousness of Modernity in Britain, 1870-1940’, in Dauntton, M. J. & Bernhard, R. (eds), *Meaning and Modernity: Britain in the Age of Imperialism and World Wars*, (Oxford: Berg, 2001) pp.185-202, at 187. Robertson, D. ‘Mid-Victorians amongst the Alps’ p. 133 was of the opinion that the language of conquest was rarely employed by writers in the pages of the *Alpine Journal*.

universe'.³⁸ This Copernican moment opened up new prospects to the Victorian upper-middle class mountaineer: 'the endless space of our interior self'.³⁹ Alpine mysticism re-enchanted the inner lives of Victorian doubters, sceptics and rationalists, recovering in mountain landscapes 'that "soul of loveliness" which the universe appeared to have lost.'⁴⁰ Leslie Stephen, author of *An Agnostic's Apology*, ruminated that if he were to invent a new idolatry 'I should prostrate myself, not before beast, or ocean, or sun, but before one of those gigantic masses, to which, in spite of all reason, it is impossible not to attribute some shadowy personality'.⁴¹ For Victorian intellectuals, the Alps took on aspects of the deity. The valetudinarian John Addington Symonds declared: 'As I am prostrated and rendered vacant by scepticism, the Alps are my God. I can rest there and feel, if not God, at least greatness – greatness prior, and posterior to man in time, beyond his thoughts, not of his creation, independent, palpable, immovable, proved.'⁴² Mountaineering, as Noel Annan has noted, had a peculiar hold over intellectuals:

Mountaineering makes it possible for the intellectual to experience things which would otherwise be impossible: danger, intense comradeship, manliness, physical pain in pursuit of tangible objective, and a sensation of being at one with Nature. Psychologically, the intellectual is always conscious of his own isolation. He is not at one with the human race'.⁴³

These class-based attitudes coloured mountaineers' notions of how you should see, appreciate and experience mountains. The upper-middle class professionals that comprised the Alpine Club's members considered themselves a 'natural aristocracy.....that turned its back on the industrial world of gutta-percha shoddiness.'⁴⁴ To a self-consciously intellectual aristocracy,⁴⁵ Alpine mysticism offered expiatory '*Selbst-tödtung*, a total surrender to larger energies...here the end is not connection with

³⁸ Schama, S., *Landscape and Memory*. (London: Harper Collins, 1995), p.488.

³⁹ Schama, S., *Landscape and Memory*. (London: Harper Collins, 1995), p. 489.

⁴⁰ Lunn, A. *Mountain Jubilee*. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1943), p.73.

⁴¹ Lunn, A. *Mountain Jubilee*. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1943), p.73.

⁴² Schultz, B., *Henry Sidgwick: Eye of the Universe. An Intellectual Biography*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.403.

⁴³ Annan, N. *Leslie Stephen: The Godless Victorian*. (London: Weidenfield & Nicholson, 1984), p. 91.

⁴⁴ Schama, S., *Landscape and Memory*. (London: Harper Collins, 1995), p. 502-503.

⁴⁵ Robertson, D. 'Mid-Victorians amongst the Alps', pp.120-122 makes the point that early mountaineers were from overwhelmingly intellectual professions, drawing on Noel Annan's seminal essay 'The Intellectual Aristocracy', first published in Plumb, J. H. (ed), *Studies in Social History: A Tribute to G. M. Trevelyan*. (London: 1955), pp. 243-287 and since republished as an appendix to Annan, N., *The Dons: Mentors, Eccentrics and Geniuses*. (London: Harper Collins, 1999), pp.304-341. C. E. Matthews, speaking as President of the newly founded Climbers' Club in 1898 and referring to the present composition of the Alpine Club noted 'it comprises within its ranks some of the best of the intellectual aristocracy of this country.' See Bryant, G. B. 'The Formation of the Climbers' Club', *The Climbers' Club Journal*, 1, (1) August 1898, pp.1-9, at 6. See also Hansen's analysis that 'the Alpine Club appears to be more representative of the larger and more diverse group of "gentlemanly capitalists."' Hansen, P. H. 'Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 34, July 1995, pp.300-324, at 311.

humanity but a transcendence of it.’⁴⁶ This resonated with those seeking distance from society.⁴⁷ Stefan Collini has noted what he terms a “Muscular Liberalism” as a defining characteristic of mid-Victorian Liberal intellectual elites, exhibiting and valuing stoicism and strenuousness, alive to the ‘ennobling compulsion of struggle’,⁴⁸ where a largely secular ethos of manliness was synonymous with individualism and ‘weakness of will...could be walked or climbed out of the system.’⁴⁹

Given this emphasis on individualism, exclusivity and intellectualism, bourgeois-romantic anti-tourism was never far below the surface in Alpine mountaineering circles, critical of the spread of mass tourism to the lower-middle classes and the working classes, always ready to assert aesthetic and cultural superiority.⁵⁰ Alpine mountaineers’ self-definition was constructed in contradistinction to mass tourism and class-based snobberies were commonly expressed.⁵¹ In Britain, social stratification meant that mountaineering remained the preserve of an élite. Liberal individualism was hostile to the notion of mass participation. Elite tourist destinations emerged in the Alps, trying to keep one step ahead of Cook’s tourists. The British *rentier* class de-camped to Switzerland in search of a healthier lifestyle, cheap accommodation, mountain scenery and cures for tuberculosis. Winter sports emerged which were socially selective from their inception. The aspirations and affinities of the bourgeoisie, often trans-national in composition, meant that “being elsewhere” was always an option. The “compensatory domains” carved out by elite tourists represented jealously guarded freedom for the privileged few:

Temporarily removing one from domestic society, the tour abroad presents an image in high relief of culture’s potential function in modern industrial democracies: the cultural is conceived of as “outside” ordinary social life, comprising a compensatory domain of autonomy and creativity to which utilitarian capitalist social

⁴⁶ Levine, G., ‘High and Low: Ruskin and the Novelists’, in Knoepflmacher, U. C. & Tennyson, G. B. (eds), *Nature and the Victorian Imagination*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp.137-152, at 141. ‘Prostration before sublimity’ led Levine to label Alpine mysticism ‘a mistake, a false tourism.’

⁴⁷ Tuan, Y-F., Book Review of Cosgrove, D., & della Dora, V., (eds), *High Places: Cultural Geographies of Mountains, Ice and Science*. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), in *Progress in Human Geography*, 34 (3), pp.403-405, at 403.

⁴⁸ Schama, S., *Landscape and Memory*. (London: Harper Collins, 1995), p. 503.

⁴⁹ Collini, S., *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp.113, 170-196. See also Leonard Woolf’s comment that G. M. Trevelyan, a great lover of strenuous walking in the hills, was a ‘Muscular agnostic’. Cannadine, D., *G. M. Trevelyan: A Life in History*. (London: Harper Collins, 1992), p.145.

⁵⁰ Debarbieux, B., ‘Construits identitaires et imaginaires de la territorialité: variations autour de la figure du “montagnard”’, preprint on author’s webpage <http://www.unige.ch/ses/geo/collaborateurs/publicationsBD.html>, originally published as “Le montagnard : imaginaires de la territorialité et invention d’un type humain”, *Annales de Géographie*, Paris, 660, pp 90-115.

⁵¹ Annan, N. *Leslie Stephen: The Godless Victorian*. (London: Weidenfield & Nicholson, 1984), p. 235. Bryant, G. B. ‘The Formation of the Climbers’ Club’, *The Climbers’ Club Journal*, 1, (1) August 1898, pp.1-9, at 8.

arrangements pay no heed. Travel, like culture, offers an imaginative freedom not as a rule available in modern social life.⁵²

For the upper middle class British mountaineer, the Alpine mountaineering holiday offered freedom, a liminal space outside of economy and society, where liberal individualism and personal liberty were maximised, small group fellowship was forged and exclusivity maintained. The persistence of notions of romantic individualism and *bildung* meant that those elements of the British middle classes that could have demonstrated social leadership within the wider outdoor movement were reluctant to participate in voluntary associations that would widen participation. In Britain this delayed the development of mountaineering and climbing clubs with cross-class appeal. In the European Alpine nations in the 1860s and 1870s, national mountaineering clubs emerged with regional branches. Class-based exclusivity was to some extent mitigated by shared nationalist aspirations and shared affinities for local mountain landscapes. They frequently catered for and in some ways sought to unify different expressions of the outdoor movement, with differing class components and affiliations, such as hiking, mountaineering and skiing.⁵³

Whilst valuing exclusivity, British Alpine mountaineers also helped to construct a new cultural approach to mountain landscapes. They approached mountain terrain and created imaginary territories, aestheticized and intellectualized places, with the Alps at the apex of an idealized taxonomy of landscapes. ‘The construction of a category “mountain” is thus social...the product of collective imaginations.’⁵⁴ For most of the Nineteenth Century, the mountains and fells of the Lake District were understood by British mountaineers in comparison with the Alps, lesser forms of the ideal conception of mountains perhaps, but also as part of a typology of mountain landscapes where pre-existing recreational and touristic paradigms could be adopted and adapted. The emergence of rock climbing in the Lake District in the 1880s and 1890s represented a repurposing of elite cultural models by the regional middle classes, hungry to develop the recreational opportunities of the upland hinterlands that the expanding railway network and increasing leisure time brought within reach of the industrial cities of the North. Whilst the Alpine holiday remained an elite preserve, mountaineers could not help but write about their experiences in the middle-class quarterlies, newspapers, journals and books. New recreational paradigms became available to the regional and local middle classes, mediated through print, illustration and later photographs. In the industrial cities of the North, mountaineering began to be cultivated amongst prosperous industrialists

⁵² Buzard, J., *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to “Culture”, 1800-1918*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 81.

⁵³ Hoibian, Olivier, *Les Alpinistes en France, 1870-1950: Une histoire culturelle*. (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2000). Drouet, Yann, ‘The CAF and the Borders: Geopolitical and Military Stakes in the Creation of the French Alpine Club’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 22(1) January 2005, pp.59-69. Stumpp, S., ‘Alsation Ski Clubs Between 1896 and 1914: An Exploratory Evaluation of the Role of Employees in the German “Sportization” of Skiing’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 27, (4), March 2010, pp.658-674.

⁵⁴ Rudaz, G., ‘Stewards of the Mountains: The Poetics and Politics of Local Knowledge in the Valaisian Alps’, in Cosgtove, D., & della Dora, V., (eds), *High Places: Cultural Geographies of Mountains, Ice and Science*. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), pp.147-161, at 149.

and the professional and commercial classes. Whilst the Alpine vacation retained its currency as cultural capital, the regional middle classes began to celebrate the recreational potential of hills closer to home. ‘Culture’ it has been noted, ‘proceeds incrementally, building on whatever was available before, sometimes using a well-tried and established formula, other times innovating radically.’⁵⁵ In the Lake District in the 1880s and 1890s the conditions emerged that fostered radical innovation. The athletics boom in the public schools and the growth of the gymnastics, body cultivation and physical fitness movements empowered new approaches to the physical challenge of mountaineering. Widening class participation began to undermine the gentlemanly codes that governed mountaineering. Pressure began to build for voluntary associations that would better represent the aspirations of the regional outdoor movement. Rock climbing gradually developed as a distinctive approach to the mountains and crags of Britain and the Lake District landscape played a central role shaping in this emergent new recreational paradigm.

The growing popularity of mountaineering literature and imagery fostered localized approaches to the regional mountains of the British Isles. In the Nineteenth Century vigorous walking and scrambling on the Lakeland fells developed as a leisure pursuit amongst the middle classes in Cumberland and Westmorland, with its own cultural traditions and equipment. To walk in the fells and explore your native county was a celebration of regional distinctiveness. To be a good fellsman or fellswoman was a form of territoriality that expressed local exceptionalism and celebrated regional identity. This was framed within wider historical self-conceptions of distinctiveness: individual autonomy, personal liberty, nobility and a love of freedom were said to be in part racially defined, the Scandinavian origins of the Cumbrian yeoman and statesman being much discussed regional characteristics. Gradually, as Alpine mountaineers began to explore the recreational possibilities of Britain’s upland landscapes, visiting the Lake District first on family vacations, then as training for the Alps, they increasingly came into contact with local fellsmen; important climbing partnerships emerged. Thus the Penrith based corn dealer George Seatree, and the Lorton based land agent and farmer, J. W. Robinson played critical roles as mentors, climbing partners and friends to early rock climbers.⁵⁶ This “fellowship of the hills” and the liminality of mountaineering culture did much to engender a new kind of freedom: a temporary release from the suffocating restrictions and limitations of the class system. The discourse around the nobility of the Cumbrian statesman in many ways echoed Rousseau’s idealization of mountain virtue, satisfying an upper-middle class desire for *völkisch* authenticity. Against a backdrop of increasing concern over racial degeneration, this racially inflected idealization of the vitality and nobility of mountain stock is clearly seen in the eulogies for J. W. Robinson. Delivering an address on the occasion of a dedication of a memorial to Robinson on Pillar Rock on the 13 June 1908, the Yorkshire solicitor Cecil Slingsby noted:

⁵⁵ Sassoon, D., *The Culture of the Europeans from 1800 to the Present*. (London: Harper Press, 2006), p.xvi.

⁵⁶ Hankinson, A., *A Century on the Crags: The Story of Rock Climbing in the Lake District*. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1988), pp.28-40. Mill, C., *Norman Collie: A Life in Two Worlds. Mountain Explorer and Scientist, 1854-1942*. (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), pp..35-40.

Our dear old friend possessed in a high degree all the best characteristics of the north country yeoman, the back-bone of our race. In many cases, and most certainly in that of Robinson, these northern yeomen are the descendents of the Norse “bonder”. John Robinson was essentially of Scandinavian ancestry, and I have often called him a British Norseman. If I could have paid him a higher compliment I would have done so.⁵⁷

George Seatree, writing Robinson’s obituary in the first volume of the *Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal* delivered his own perception of Robinson, less insistent on racial lineage but still focussed on regional exceptionalism and local identity, mentioning Robinson’s lifelong adherence to the Society of Friends and the Pardshaw Meeting, and his family roots as freeholders.⁵⁸ Gradually these interlocking senses of identity, articulated within the wider outdoor movement, shaped the cultural landscape of the Lake District. The middle class Liberal concern for individual liberty found its physical embodiment in the idealized Cumberland statesman. This was reinforced by wider regional affiliations. As the old county boundary of Lancashire went up to the Three Shire Stone on Wrynose Pass, the Coniston fells and the southern Lakes were Lancastrian. Far from being “other” or distant, the fierce county loyalties of mountaineers from the industrial cities of Lancashire saw the southern Lake District as “our” hills. County loyalty and pride was a major component of regional self-identity. When W.G. Collingwood wrote his influential 1902 guide to the region he called it *The Lake Counties*, not “The Lake District”. With the growth of the industrial centre of Barrow-in-Furness, this would reinforce the growing sense of entitlement and legitimacy amongst lower-middle class and working class climbers like George Basterfield and A. H. Griffin after the First World War. This developing sense of regional identity, of the uniqueness of the industrial cities of the north and their relationship to their upland hinterlands, did much to break down class barriers. Specific county identities were also understood in the wider context of Northerness. Slingsby emphasises the ‘north country yeoman’, his cultural reference point being further north still, in Scandinavia. Slingsby, described by British mountaineering historians as “the father of Norwegian mountaineering”, had climbed in Norway since 1872 and did much to popularize it to mountaineers as a “northern playground” to rival the Alps.⁵⁹ Directly influenced by Ambleside resident Harriet Martineau’s writings on Norway, Slingsby was undoubtedly also influenced by W. G. Collingwood’s scholarly, popular and fictional explorations of the Lake District’s Scandinavian heritage.⁶⁰ Teutonic and Norse legend, literature and

⁵⁷ Waller, M. *A Lakeland Climbing Pioneer: John Wilson Robinson of Whinfell Hall*. (Carlisle: Bookcase, 2007), p.139.

⁵⁸ Seatree, G., ‘In Memoriam: John W. Robinson’, *Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal*, 1907, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp.3-9, at 4.

<http://www.frcc.co.uk/archive/1907-1919/V1-1.pdf> [Accessed 2 June 2011].

⁵⁹ Slingsby, C. *Norway: The Northern Playground*. (Findon, Aberdeenshire: Ripping Yarns, 2003. First published Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1904).

⁶⁰ James S. Dearden, ‘Collingwood, William Gershom (1854–1932)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Sept 2010

[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/39918>, accessed 2 June 2011]

doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/39918

culture were becoming increasingly important to the regional middle classes in the North of England. Offering cultural reference points that were cosmopolitan and international, they bypassed national and imperial discourses on identity and enabled the construction of a regional sense of exceptionalism and a localised sense of Englishness.⁶¹

Changing recreational attitudes to the mountains, fells and crags of the Lake District were slow to emerge however. A writer in the *Penny Magazine* of 1837 could not persuade his Wasdale-based walking guide to take him up Broad Stand and this attitude remained typical of the Dalesmen who guided tourists over mountain paths.⁶² The first professional climbing guide was only employed in 1901 by the new proprietor of the Wastwater Hotel in Wasdale, J. Ritson Whiting, in an attempt to maintain his climbing clientele. His choice of guide, Joseph Gaspard from the Dauphiné, suggests an effort to emulate the Alpine mountaineering tourist experience but also a lack of indigenous candidates who would be willing to trade amateur status as mountaineers for the indignities of oiling and nailing their clients boots.⁶³ Gaspard spent the lucrative summer months of June, July and August back in his native Dauphiné.⁶⁴ Exploration was generally sporadic and casual, with some notable exceptions. Broad Stand was ascended by the Swiss born Lake District resident C. A. O. Baumgartner in 1850. He also climbed in Snowdonia and was 'one of the first Alpine climbers who deliberately sought out and climbed the individual rock features of the British hills – not the hills themselves, but the individual ridges, buttresses, crags, and other rock features.'⁶⁵ Broad Stand was ascended again in 1857 by Prof. Jon Tyndall, the pioneer of rock climbing in the Alps, who described it as 'a pleasant bit of mountain practice and nothing more'.⁶⁶ Drawn to vacation in the Lake District by its Romantic and literary associations, Alpine mountaineers began to concede that vigorous walking and scrambling up rocks and gullies might offer some 'pleasant relaxation which had a direct bearing on their activities in the greater mountains of the world'.⁶⁷ For a while in mid-century Pillar Rock in

Rollinson, W. , 'William Gershom Collingwood, 1854-1932', in Collingwood, W. G., *The Lake Counties*, (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1988, pp.viii-x.

⁶¹ Westaway, J, 'The German Community in Manchester, Middle-Class Culture and the Development of Mountaineering in Britain, c.1850-1914' *English Historical Review*, 164 (508) June 2009, 571-604.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ehr/cep144>

Readman, P., 'The Place of the Past in English Culture c.1890-1914, *Past and Present*, clxxxvi, February 2005, 147-199.

⁶² Clark, R. W. and Pyatt, E. C., *Mountaineering in Britain: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, (London: Phoenix House. 1957), p. 25.

⁶³ Hankinson, A., *A Century on the Crags: The Story of Rock Climbing in the Lake District*. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons,1988), p.66.

⁶⁴ Price, N., *A Vagabonds Way: Haphazard Wanderings on the Fells*. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1914. 3rd edition 1937), pp.72-73.

⁶⁵ Clark, R. W. and Pyatt, E. C., *Mountaineering in Britain: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. (London: Phoenix House, 1957), p.22.

⁶⁶ Clark, R. W. and Pyatt, E. C., *Mountaineering in Britain: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. (London: Phoenix House, 1957), p.25.

⁶⁷ Clark, R. W. and Pyatt, E. C., *Mountaineering in Britain: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. (London: Phoenix House, 1957), p.26.

Ennerdale became the focus of attention as its summit was only attainable by moderate scrambling and rock climbing, Leslie Stephen ascending it in 1865 and again in 1872.⁶⁸

Gradually more organized approaches to the mountains of England and Wales began to emerge from within the Alpine Club. C. E. Matthews of Birmingham, an original member of the Alpine Club, visited Pen-y-Gwryd in Snowdonia in January 1870: “At that time of year”, wrote Matthews, “we were quite certain of having the inn to ourselves; we almost always found snow on the hills”⁶⁹ an important consideration for those wanting to practice their mountaineering craft in preparation for the Alps. Matthews went on to form his small group of friends into the Society of Welsh Rabbits, dedicated to spending annual meets around Christmas time at the Pen-y-Gwryd and climbing throughout the British Isles. Perhaps the individual who did the most to reposition the Alpine Club’s attitude to the mountains of Britain was the Manchester merchant Eustace Hulton. Between 1875 and 1883 he organized the annual Alpine Club Dinner and Meet each spring, in either the Lake District or North Wales. These events usually involved strenuous walking and scrambling, with an eye for mountaineering challenges, particularly if there was snow on the ground. Cecil Slingsby, delivering a paper to the Alpine Club in April 1886 exhorted its members to ‘not neglect the Lake District, Wales and Scotland, whilst we are conquerors abroad.’⁷⁰ Even so, as late as 1894, according to Prof. Norman Collie, the bulk of the Alpine Club membership remained in ignorance of the mountaineering and climbing potential of the Lake District and dismissive of the emerging sport of rock climbing.⁷¹ Hulton’s biggest influence was to encourage the mountaineering aspirations of a number of Lancashire industrialist families in the 1870s and 1880s, notably the Pendlebury’s of Liverpool and the Pilkingtons and Hopkinsons of Alderley Edge. Keen Alpinists, they were pioneers of climbing in the Lake District and were seminal in supporting the nascent outdoor movement in the North-West of England. Charles Pilkington’s presidency of the Alpine Club 1896-8 and his tireless lecturing on mountaineering to rambling groups and climbing clubs did much to narrow the social distance between élite clubs like the Alpine Club and the new regional clubs.

By the 1880s we can identify the emergence of a highly innovative mountaineering and climbing culture in and around Wasdale Head in the Lake District. Centred on the Wastwater Hotel and the guest house at Row Head, the isolation, difficulty of access and the lack of accommodation in the valley had the effect of concentrating tourist provision for visiting mountaineers, climbers and walkers. As late as the early Twentieth Century the western Lakes were indeed ‘unique in their continuing isolation from the main tourist centres’, ‘beyond the reach of the day excursion from Keswick, except for the most

⁶⁸ Clark, R. W. and Pyatt, E. C., *Mountaineering in Britain: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. (London: Phoenix House, 1957), p.24. Hankinson, A., *A Century on the Crags: The Story of Rock Climbing in the Lake District*. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1988), pp.15-21.

⁶⁹ Clark, R. W. and Pyatt, E. C., *Mountaineering in Britain: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. (London: Phoenix House, 1957), p.29.

⁷⁰ Clark, R. W. and Pyatt, E. C., *Mountaineering in Britain: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. (London: Phoenix House, 1957), pp.42-43.

⁷¹ Mill, C., *Norman Collie: A Life in Two Worlds* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press. 1987), p.36. Hankinson, A., *A Century on the Crags: The Story of Rock Climbing in the Lake District*. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1988), p.35.

determined.’⁷² Most visitors came from the West Cumberland seaside resorts, arriving by train and travelling along the carriage roads to Wasdale Head. For visitors intent on climbing, the main mode of access to Wasdale was walking. Vigorous pedestrians like Leslie Stephen, enjoying a short break in the Lakes, could take the train from Waterloo on a Saturday in April 1875 and arrived at Furness Abbey at teatime. On Sunday he proceeded to Foxfield Junction, embarking on the Coniston Railway to Coniston, arriving at about midday and setting off to walk to Wasdale Head :’’Thence we had to walk here crossing three ridges on the way. We managed the first two pretty well but J. W. became uncommonly tired over the last & I had enough of it – my knapsack being very heavy & nearly cutting my shoulder in two’.⁷³ The following Wednesday he walked back to Coniston to catch the train home. Wasdale was ‘assuredly the core of the mountains’ according to the actress Nancy Price. Arriving there on foot in 1914 she noted:

I think one should always enter Wasdale as daylight fades. I know that I felt everything to be essentially right as we scrunched down the Sty Head Pass in the gathering dusk towards the Inn – I beg its pardon, “The Wasdale Head Hotel”.⁷⁴

This hotel had been established at Wasdale Head by William Ritson, who had inherited the farm at Row Foot from his grandfather Bill Ritson. In 1856 ‘in response to the increasing number of visitors to the valley, he applied for a licence to sell alcohol’ and at the southern end of the farmhouse ‘added a small wing to provide accommodation’ which became known as the Huntsman’s Inn. Ritson would ‘occasionally act as a mountain guide for visitors, but had no interest in rock climbing and usually tried to dissuade tourists from attempting it.’⁷⁵ In the 1870s Tom and Anne Tyson established a teetotal guesthouse in the adjacent farm at Row Head which established a ‘reputation for good home cooking’.⁷⁶ In 1868 William Ritson’s farmhouse at Wasdale Head was said to offer “clean and comfortable” lodgings at Wasdale Head for ten or twelve people at a time’⁷⁷ but it had a reputation for being ‘raucous and unpredictable’. Ritson himself was something of a Cumberland celebrity: a ‘keen foxhunter, champion wrestler, excellent storyteller and shrewd businessman’.⁷⁸ In 1875 Leslie Stephen described Ritson’s as ‘the queerest of little places...The Ritsons [the landlords] sit in the kitchen all day & callers walk in & out. The roof is timber & hung with fitches of bacon & guns [?]; & I knock

⁷² Marshall, J. D. and Walton, J. K., *The Lake Counties from 1830 to the Mid-twentieth Century: A Study in Regional Change*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), pp.190-191.

⁷³ Bicknell, J. W. (Ed). *Selected Letters of Leslie Stephen: Volume 1, 1864-1882*. (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp.153-155.

⁷⁴ Price, N., *A Vagabonds Way: Haphazard Wanderings on the Fells*. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1914. 3rd edition 1937), p.65.

⁷⁵ Cocker, M., *Wasdale Climbing Book; A History of Early Rock Climbing in the Lake District based on contemporary accounts from the Wastwater Hotel, 1863-1919*. (Ernest Press, 2006), p.21.

⁷⁶ Cocker, M., *Wasdale Climbing Book; A History of Early Rock Climbing in the Lake District based on contemporary accounts from the Wastwater Hotel, 1863-1919*. (Ernest Press, 2006), p. 22.

⁷⁷ Marshall, Walton, 190.

⁷⁸ Cocker, M., *Wasdale Climbing Book; A History of Early Rock Climbing in the Lake District based on contemporary accounts from the Wastwater Hotel, 1863-1919*. (Ernest Press, 2006), p.21.

my head against the beams in the passages if ever I don't look out'.⁷⁹ In 1879 'Will Ritson and his wife Dinah retired from the Huntsman's Inn and Daniel Tyson, involved in running the Row Head guesthouse, took over the lease'⁸⁰ changing the name to the Wastwater Hotel. Slightly higher up the valley, the farm at Burnthwaite also took in guests. In 1935 Dorothy Pilley recalled her first visit to Wasdale c. 1910-20 and the changes that had come over Burnthwaite:

Baths and modernity have come to it. Then, one sat in a dark, cosy little room and ate in a narrow whitewashed cell, which I believe had once been a dairy. If you were much favoured, old Mrs. Wilson would let you sit and gossip in the kitchen.⁸¹

A visitors' book was kept at the Huntsman's Inn from 1863 and early records of mountaineering exploits were transcribed from this to the Wasdale Climbing Book begun in 1890 at the Wastwater Hotel.⁸² Along with the visitors' book kept by the Tysons at Row Head, from which extensive accounts have been published for the years 1876-1886,⁸³ they form an invaluable historical record of early mountaineering and rock climbing in the valley. Catering for tourists, walkers, mountaineers and climbers, these visitors' books provide evidence of visits by the professional classes from northern industrial towns but also indicate a high proportion of scholars, academics and dons from the public schools and universities, corroborating Noel Annan's statement about the attraction of mountains and mountaineering to intellectuals. Wasdale Head seems to have been a popular destination for academic reading weeks, offering cheap accommodation, inspirational landscapes, vigorous exercise and few distractions. Sufficiently off the beaten track to deter the trippers that were clogging up Bowness and Keswick and mountainous enough to satisfy aesthetic and athletic requirements, Wasdale combined rustic authenticity and a degree of remoteness and exclusivity. Lehmann Oppenheimer, writing in the *Climbers' Club Journal* of 1899 in an article entitled 'Wastdale Head at Easter' could write:

there are few spots of equal beauty so undisturbed by traffic, noise, and other accompaniments of a civilization to which too many holiday resorts have fallen victims. As yet no signboards point the way to the best scenery, the waterfalls are unenclosed, and the mountain sides undesecrated by railways.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Bicknell, J. W. (Ed). *Selected Letters of Leslie Stephen: Volume 1, 1864-1882*. (London: Macmillan, 1996), p.154.

⁸⁰ Cocker, M., *Wasdale Climbing Book; A History of Early Rock Climbing in the Lake District based on contemporary accounts from the Wastwater Hotel, 1863-1919*. (Ernest Press, 2006), p. 22.

⁸¹ Pilley, D., *Climbing Days*, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1989), p.58.

⁸² Now part of the FRCC archive. See Cocker, M., *Wasdale Climbing Book; A History of Early Rock Climbing in the Lake District based on contemporary accounts from the Wastwater Hotel, 1863-1919*. (Ernest Press, 2006), p.5.

⁸³ Jackson, H. and M. Jackson, *Lakeland's Pioneer Rock- Climbers: Based on the Visitors Book of the Tysons of Wasdale Head, 1876-1886*. (Clapham, North Yorkshire: Dalesman Books, 1980).

⁸⁴ Oppenheimer, L. J., *Heart of Lakeland*. (Ernest Press, 1988), p.15.

John Stogden, a Harrow Schoolmaster and one of the pioneers of guideless climbing in the Alps was a regular guest at the Wasdale Head Hotel, the first record of him visiting being in January 1870. He was ‘one of the first to draw the attention of his fellow-Alpinists to the opportunities offered by hills nearer home.’⁸⁵ His account in the Alpine Club’s *Alpine Journal* of the winter ascent of South Gully on Bowfell was ‘the first time the journal had published anything relating to climbing in Britain’, this a full thirteen years after the founding of the Alpine Club.⁸⁶ The Row Head guesthouse was also a popular destination for university reading parties. Charles Cannan, the Dean of Trinity College, Oxford, introduced the likes of C. E. Montague, A.E. W. Mason and Arthur Quiller Couch to the delights of Mrs Tyson’s ‘sweet mountain of mutton and Mr. Pendlebury’s pudding...a delicious compound of farm milk, tapioca and raisins.’⁸⁷ Reading parties taken at Easter or Whitsun or between academic terms remained short but could be prolonged in the summer vacation. In 1881 the twenty-two year old Walter Parry Haskett Smith spent two months in Wasdale as part of a university reading party, staying at Row Head for the first month. He was back in 1882 with his brother Edmund for nine weeks.⁸⁸ For the mountaineering tourist, particularly those with limited vacation time and on a budget, Cumberland offered a cost effective and time effective alternative to Switzerland. Writing c. 1898-99, the London school teacher O. G. Jones noted:

We cannot conveniently reach Switzerland at every season of the year. At Christmas and Easter it is entirely barred to most people. The expense of foreign travel is a consideration, and the question of length of holiday is rarely negligible. Cumberland can be reached in a night from London; the district is an inexpensive one for tourists...Personally I should always go to the high Alps when the chance offered itself, but Cumberland serves remarkably well to allay the desire for mountain air and vigorous exercise when Switzerland is out of the question.⁸⁹

The intensity of mountaineering exploration in the Lake District began to pick up in the 1880s and news of this began to be reported in popular periodicals. After spending mid-August 1884 at Row Head, climbing with large parties that included J. W. Robinson, the London journalist C. N. Williamson was able to publish what is arguably the first climbing guide to the region, as an article entitled ‘The Climbs of the English Lake

⁸⁵ Hankinson, A., *A Century on the Craggs: The Story of Rock Climbing in the Lake District*. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1988), pp.21-22. Cocker, M., *Wasdale Climbing Book; A History of Early Rock Climbing in the Lake District based on contemporary accounts from the Wastwater Hotel, 1863-1919*. (Ernest Press, 2006), facsimile of the Wasdale Climbing Book, p.2.

⁸⁶ Cocker, M., *Wasdale Climbing Book; A History of Early Rock Climbing in the Lake District based on contemporary accounts from the Wastwater Hotel, 1863-1919*. (Ernest Press, 2006), p. 18.

⁸⁷ Hankinson, A., *A Century on the Craggs: The Story of Rock Climbing in the Lake District*. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1988) ,p.48.

⁸⁸ Cocker, M., *Wasdale Climbing Book; A History of Early Rock Climbing in the Lake District based on contemporary accounts from the Wastwater Hotel, 1863-1919*. (Ernest Press, 2006), p.23.

⁸⁹ Jones, O. G., *Rock Climbing in the English Lake District*. 2nd edition. (Didsbury, Manchester: E. J. Morten, 1973), pp. lvii-lviii.

District' in the Magazine *All The Year Round*.⁹⁰ It is perhaps instructive that Williamson's piece did not find its way into the quarterlies like the *Cornhill* or the *Nineteenth Century*, where so many Alpine Club members chose to publish Alpine accounts alongside the higher journalism, but in a middlebrow publication, edited by Charles Dickens Jnr, aimed at popular audiences. Williamson's article presaged the explosion of mountaineering articles and stories that appeared in the 1890s that would appear in popular monthlies like George Newnes *Strand* and *Wide World Magazine*, appealing to a wider class of readership.

The event that did the most to publicize climbing in Wasdale however, occurred in June 1886, when W. P. Haskett Smith was to establish an epochal climb that most mountaineering historians use as their datum for the birth of rock climbing in the British Isles, climbing the Wasdale Crack on Napes Needle. The climb, described by Alan Hankinson as 'arguably the most significant short climb ever made'⁹¹ represented a new level of technical difficulty on steep open rock, requiring gymnastic ability and athletic conditioning, and was a celebration of the kinaesthetic joy of climbing and a youthful statement of indifference towards much that the mountaineering establishment held dear. It is clear evidence of the culture of mountaineering beginning to hybridize, with new sub-cultures emerging. News of the ascent and the iconic image of the Needle shaped perceptions of the emerging sport of rock climbing, being reported in the *Pall Mall Budget* of 1890. In the early 1890s the sight of Professor H. Dixon's photograph of climbers on Napes Needle 'in a shop window in the Strand' inspired O. G. Jones to start climbing in the Lake District.⁹² The Abraham Brothers of Keswick, photographic entrepreneurs and mountaineers, sold photos of Napes Needle to tourists. Being the first to introduce the scenic picture postcard to Britain,⁹³ having seen them on sale in Zermatt in 1898, the trade in cheap images of the Lake District landscape and of climbing and mountaineering became a core part of their business. On a subsequent trip to the Haute Savoie, George Abraham 'was amused to discover one of their views of climbers on Napes Needle on sale in the shops of Chamonix, masquerading as an Alpine pinnacle called the "Aiguille de la Nuque"'.⁹⁴ By 1902 W. G. Collingwood could state that Napes

⁹⁰ Cocker, M., *Wasdale Climbing Book; A History of Early Rock Climbing in the Lake District based on contemporary accounts from the Wastwater Hotel, 1863-1919*. (Ernest Press, 2006), p.24. Jackson, H. and M. Jackson, *Lakeland's Pioneer Rock- Climbers: Based on the Visitors Book of the Tysons of Wasdale Head, 1876-1886*. (Clapham, North Yorkshire: Dalesman Books, 1980), pp.138-139. Reid, S. 'A History of Lake District Climbing Guidebooks', *FRCC Centenary Journal*, 2006, pp.852-894, at 873. http://manage.hotscot.net/customer_images/FA00F036-E183-44C7-A38C-40C3F0D4FE18/archive%20journals/frcc%20guides%20history%20frcc%20j%202006.pdf [Accessed 2 June 2011]

⁹¹ Hankinson, A., *A Century on the Crags: The Story of Rock Climbing in the Lake District*. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1988), p.40.

⁹² Hankinson, A., *Camera on the Crags: a portfolio of early rock climbing photographs by the Abraham Brothers*, (London: Heinemann, 1975), p.3.

⁹³ I believe this refers to Orell Fussli's Photochrome postcards, marketed by Photoglob in Zurich. Having perfected his new colour process in 1889, Fussli won first prize at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1900. See Walter, M., and Arque, S., *The World in 1900: A Colour Portrait*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007), p.13.

⁹⁴ Hankinson, A., *Camera on the Crags: a portfolio of early rock climbing photographs by the Abraham Brothers*, (London: Heinemann, 1975), p. 20.

Needle 'is pictured on all the posters of Lake District attractions'⁹⁵ part of the distinctive landscape repertoire of images that the tourist industry sought to promote. The Abrahams filmed an ascent of Napes Needle, possibly as early as 1913 and in the early 1920s produced a 'short travelogue-type film – a Pathé Review with printed captions' showing George Abraham leading the Arête route on Napes Needle.⁹⁶

What emerged in the decades up to the First World War at Wasdale was a highly distinctive climbing and mountaineering milieu that was recognized as such by contemporaries.⁹⁷ Wasdale Head cultivated the new sport and became a forcing ground for harder rock routes as well as winter mountaineering routes.⁹⁸ The shortage of accommodation in the valley led to intense overcrowding, particularly at Easter and Whitsun, W. G. Collingwood noting in 1902 that 'to enjoy this neighbourhood you must go there out of season; that is to say, any time except Easter and summer vacations'.⁹⁹ Class distinctions based on hotel status or room tariffs became impossible to maintain. There was simply no choice and more than a touch of the 'take-it-or-leave-it' approach that Marshall noted marked out the Cumbrian innkeeper, 'a man of considerable independence of attitude and outlook...prone to think that others should enjoy without complaint the food and linen to which he himself was accustomed.'¹⁰⁰ As the mountaineers virtually took over the hotel at certain times of year a highly playful and anarchic culture descended. Oppenheimer's essay 'Wasdale Head at Easter' describes catching the night train from Manchester and walking the twelve miles from the coast to Wasdale Head. Enquiring of Mr. Tyson about a room he is told that 'every room in the house was taken two or three weeks ago; there's some folks sleepin' I the smoke-room and some I the barn – not abed to spare nowhere, and they are full up at Burnthwaite too.'¹⁰¹ Far from being trippers from Barrow and Whitehaven, Tyson informed him that few were 'fro these parts: mostly they're from all over England – London and Oxford, Yorkshire and Manchester'.¹⁰² Professors, poets, bohemians, undergraduates, solicitors, the crowd Oppenheimer describes is cultivated, well travelled and not unfamiliar with the

⁹⁵ Collingwood, W. G., *The Lake Counties*, (London, Dent: 1988), p. 62.

⁹⁶ Hankinson, *Camera on the Crag*, p.27.

BBC Cumbria Webpage, Lakeland Life on Camera, 2008. Featuring the documentary *Inside Out: The Abraham Brothers*

http://www.bbc.co.uk/cumbria/content/articles/2008/10/13/abraham_bros_io_feature.shtml {Accessed 7 June 2001}

⁹⁷ Oppenheimer, L. J., *Heart of Lakeland*. (Ernest Press, 1988). Sansom, G. S., *Climbing at Wasdale Before the War*. (Castle Cary Press: Somerset, 1982). Griffin, A. H., *The Coniston Tigers: Seventy Years of Mountain Adventure*. (Wilmslow, Cheshire: Sigma Leisure, 2000), pp.43-57. Price, N., *A Vagabonds Way: Haphazard Wanderings on the Fells*. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1914. 3rd edition 1937), pp.65-95.

⁹⁸ Hankinson, A., *A Century on the Crag: The Story of Rock Climbing in the Lake District*. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1988), pp.41-87. Cocker, M. and Wells, C., 'Winter Climbing in the Lake District 1870-1941: a list of first recorded ascents and early attempts', *FRCC Journal*, 2002.

http://manage.hotscot.net/customer_images/FA00F036-E183-44C7-A38C-40C3F0D4FE18/archive%20articles/winter%20climbing%20history.pdf [Accessed 2 June 2011]

⁹⁹ Collingwood, W. G., *The Lake Counties*, (London, Dent: 1988), p. 64.

¹⁰⁰ Marshall, J. D., *Old Lakeland: Some Cumbrian Social History*, (Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1971), pp.168-169

¹⁰¹ Oppenheimer, L. J., *Heart of Lakeland*. (Ernest Press, 1988), p. 16.

¹⁰² Oppenheimer, L. J., *Heart of Lakeland*. (Ernest Press, 1988), p. 17.

Alps. There is undoubtedly a preponderance of “higher professionals” in Oppenheimer’s account.¹⁰³ But we know that regional industrialists and businessmen were not underrepresented and that many of the academics from the regional and red brick universities were chemists and engineers with strong links to industry. Further down the social scale this milieu was open to tradesmen like the Abrahams of Keswick (photographers), Oppenheimer (mosaic flooring) and the lower-middle class teachers like O. G. Jones. Contemporary mountaineers remarked on the democratic nature of these gatherings, where class distinctions were discounted. Describing her first night at the Wastwater Hotel, Nancy Price, having overcome the embarrassment of being the only woman there and having the whole room stand when she came in to dinner, described the conviviality:

Everybody talked to everybody else – and what talk! I fancied myself at Zermatt. Ropes and axes, couloirs, arêtes, chimneys... That first night at Wasdale there sat down to dinner, two clerks from Barrow, an Oxford undergraduate... two keen young Americans... a well known author, and a gentleman who regaled us with tales of the good old days.¹⁰⁴

In this almost entirely male atmosphere, the ludic nature of recreation came to the fore. Training games like the Billiard Room Traverse, and the Barn Door Traverse and upside-down bouldering on the Y boulder in Mosedale demonstrated the intense physicality of this new culture, its inventiveness and playfulness, sub-cultural innovations that prefigure today’s climbing walls and bouldering scene. The climbing culture at Wasdale witnessed the sportization of mountaineering, the gradual working out of rules and codes of behaviour very different from what had gone before, less governed by external literary, aesthetic and scientific criteria, more concerned with things of interest to a small coterie within the sport: issues of what constituted acceptable and unacceptable climbing ethics, techniques and equipment. And this was reinforced through the development of club rituals, songs and the climbing club journals that were starting to emerge. If ‘one of the most important characteristics of play was its spatial separation from ordinary life’¹⁰⁵ then the remoteness and spatial separation of Wasdale did much to foster this playful innovation. Many climbers were conscious that travel began the process of separation, often meditating on the transition from the smogs of industrial Britain to the clean air and renewed clarity of the fells. In the night journeys by train, or huddled around the fire in the early hours of the morning at Penrith station, they began to put on new selves. Geoffrey Winthrop Young noted that the journey served to:

cover a similar change in myself, from an evening self laboriously constructed under a thousand pressures to do a hundred civilized

¹⁰³ McKibbin, R., *Classes and Cultures in England, 1981-1951*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p.46.

¹⁰⁴ Price, N., *A Vagabonds Way: Haphazard Wanderings on the Fells*. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1914. 3rd edition 1937), pp.69-70.

¹⁰⁵ Huizinga, J., *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, (London: Temple Smith, 1970), p.38.

tricks, to a spontaneous self that came of itself, with the winds and the height and the rapture of morning and movement. I was not introspective as a boy, but I must quickly have recognized that some sort of transition would take place; for I used to wait to change into mountain clothes until I was on the neutral territory of the train, so that the pleasanter self which waited for me somewhere about the thousand-foot level might not return to life in inappropriate trousers.¹⁰⁶

The democratic culture on display at Wasdale and the ‘return to life’ that mountaineering tourism offered led many contemporary commentators and social theorists to place great hope in the outdoor movement. C. E. Montague, chief leader writer at the *Manchester Guardian*, heavily promoted the outdoor movement and mountaineering in particular between 1890 and 1926, incorporating it into a critique of society based on New Liberal social theory. He saw it as a panacea for the ills of industrial society, a new space where class based politics would be replaced by rational, classless recreation, which celebrated regional identity and reunited socialist and liberal elements in the progressive movement. He appealed to the regional middle classes to take a more active role in the social leadership of the outdoor movement. Gradually, clubs that focussed on mountaineering and climbing in the British Isles emerged. In England the first to be established were clustered around the Pennines and in industrial Lancashire: The Yorkshire Ramblers Club (f. 1892), The Kyndwr Club (f. 1895), The Manchester based Rucksack Club (f.1902), the Derbyshire Pennine Club (f. 1906), and the Liverpool-based Wayfarers Club (f.1906).¹⁰⁷ The Climbers’ Club was founded in London in December 1897 to bring together those interested in ‘mountaineering in England, Ireland and Wales’, evidence, its founders suggested of something ‘hitherto only half suspected – of a large body of British climbers ready for an association from which the organisation and development of their sport might be looked for’.¹⁰⁸ At its inception the Climbers’ Club was careful to position itself, stating ‘the Club will be in no sense antagonistic to any existing institution’, respecting the territorial sensibilities of the Scottish clubs but also ongoing accusations of vulgarization from the Alpine Club.¹⁰⁹ The Lake District itself was among the last in this movement to establish regional mountaineering clubs, the Fell and Rock Climbing Club being formed 1907. Whilst its committee members were all resident in and around the Lake District it sought to boost its social and sporting legitimacy by inviting noted Alpinists from the region who also had strong Lake District climbing credentials, like Slingsby, Collie, Geoffrey Hastings and Charles Pilkington, to be honorary members.

¹⁰⁶ Young, G. W., *On High Hills: Memories of the Alps*, (London: Methuen, 5th Ed. 1947), p.24.

¹⁰⁷ Smith, F. D, *A Brief History/Introduction to the Yorkshire Ramblers’ Club*, 2011

<http://www.yrc.org.uk/content.aspx?Group=about&Page=history%20overview> [Accessed 2 June 2011]

Craddock, J. P., *Jim Puttrel: Pioneer Climber & Cave Explorer*, (Kibworth Beauchamp: Matador, 2009), pp. 33-34, 178. Fyles, K., and Stroude, B., (Eds), *100 Years of Wayfaring, 1906-2006*, (Liverpool: The Wayfarer’s Club, 2006).

¹⁰⁸ Bryant, G. B., ‘The Formation of the Climbers’ Club’, *The Climbers’ Club Journal*, Vol.1, No.1 August 1898, pp.1-9, at 4.

¹⁰⁹ Bryant, G. B., ‘The Formation of the Climbers’ Club’, *The Climbers’ Club Journal*, Vol.1, No.1 August 1898, pp.1-9 at p.4. Oppenheimer, L. J., ‘Correspondence, Manchester, March 16th 1901’, *Climbers’ Club Journal*, 1901, vol.3, No.11, pp.133-135.

Perhaps the most striking thing of all about the climbing culture that emerged in the period in the Lake District was its informality, emerging largely without formal voluntary associational structures. Even after the foundation of the regional clubs, bourgeois-romantic individualism remained in tension with further institutionalization, deeply ambivalent towards the mass appropriation of the hills that would be such a feature of the post-war period. The production of guidebooks was left to private individuals, and the First Series of F.R.C.C. guidebooks only began to appear under R.S.T. Chorley's editorship, G. S. Bower's *Doe Crag* appearing in 1922.¹¹⁰ Whilst the Rucksack Club had opened its first hut at Cwm Eigau in North Wales in 1912, followed by the Climbers' Club hut at Helyg in Ogwen in 1925 and the Rucksack Club's Tal-y-Braich Uchaf, Ogwen 1927, the first climbing club hut in the Lake District did not open until the Wayfarers' Club opened the Robertson Lamb Hut in Langdale in 1930. The Coniston Tigers assembled their own hut (an old garage) behind Coniston Old Hall in 1931.¹¹¹ The F.R.C.C. opened its Brackenclose hut in Wasdale in 1937.¹¹² Before the inception of dedicated climbing club huts the location, provision and nature of tourist accommodation proved hugely influential in shaping the emerging sport, its rituals and traditions.

Mountaineers and climbers in the pre-war period often had multiple club affiliations, expressing different localized identities, but the new regional clubs remained firmly middle-class voluntary associations, often negotiating private access agreements with landowners in the Pennines in a mutually beneficial compact that kept access to Pennine grouse moors tightly restricted. Whilst the mountains of Snowdonia and North Wales witnessed similar developments in the sportization of mountaineering, their cultural importance to recrudescing Welsh nationalist identity complicated attempts to appropriate them as cultural landscapes and tourist destinations. By 1914 by the preponderance of climbers and mountaineers from England looked towards the Lake District as the culturally most significant British mountain landscape, an evaluation reinforced by its Romantic and literary association as well as its relative accessibility. Its cultural significance as the "birthplace of rock climbing" was already firmly established. Its increasing accessibility meant that climbers from the industrial cities of the north could apply climbing techniques honed on the gritstone edges of the Pennines to mountain crags, leading to acceleration in the severity of climbs undertaken. The pre-war high watermark in terms of difficulty was reached in April, 1914 with Siegfried Herford's, George Sansom's and C. F. Holland's ascent of Central Buttress on Scafell. In choosing to find a suitable way to memorialize Herford and other mountaineers who had died in the Great War, in 1919 the F.R.C.C. effected to purchase Great Gable, eventually

¹¹⁰ Reid, S. 'A History of Lake District Climbing Guidebooks', *FRCC Centenary Journal*, 2006, pp.852-894, at p.854.

¹¹¹ Griffin, A. H., *The Coniston Tigers: Seventy Years of Mountain Adventure*. (Wilmslow, Cheshire: Sigma Leisure, 2000), p.63.

¹¹² I am indebted to Douglas Hope for this information on club huts, forming part of his Ph. D. research at the University of Cumbria. Hope, D. H., *The Changing Role and Influence of the Organisations that Pioneered the Provision of Recreational and Educational Holidays for Working People in the English Lake District, c.1930-2004*, forthcoming.

unveiling a bronze memorial plaque on its summit in 1924.¹¹³ No better cenotaph than the mountain itself was required to express the complete self-identification shared by English mountaineers with the Lake District landscape. Sacralizing the landscape added to the cultural valency of the Lake District landscape. The commonality of sacrifice in the Great War had reinvigorated arguments for the restorative nature of upland landscapes and renewed arguments for access to mountains. In donating the land to the National Trust the F.R.C.C. looked to the future of widened and more democratic access that was to be such a feature of the outdoor movement in the 1920s and 1930s. At the dedication ceremony on 8 June 1924, Geoffrey Winthrop Young provided a poetic distillation of all the many meanings that mountains signified to mountaineers and climbers: ‘Upon this mountain we are met today to dedicate this space of hills to freedom.’¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Hankinson, A., *A Century on the Craggs: The Story of Rock Climbing in the Lake District*. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1988), p.103.

¹¹⁴ Hankinson, A., *Geoffrey Winthrop Young: Poet, Mountaineer, Educator*. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995), p.236.

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