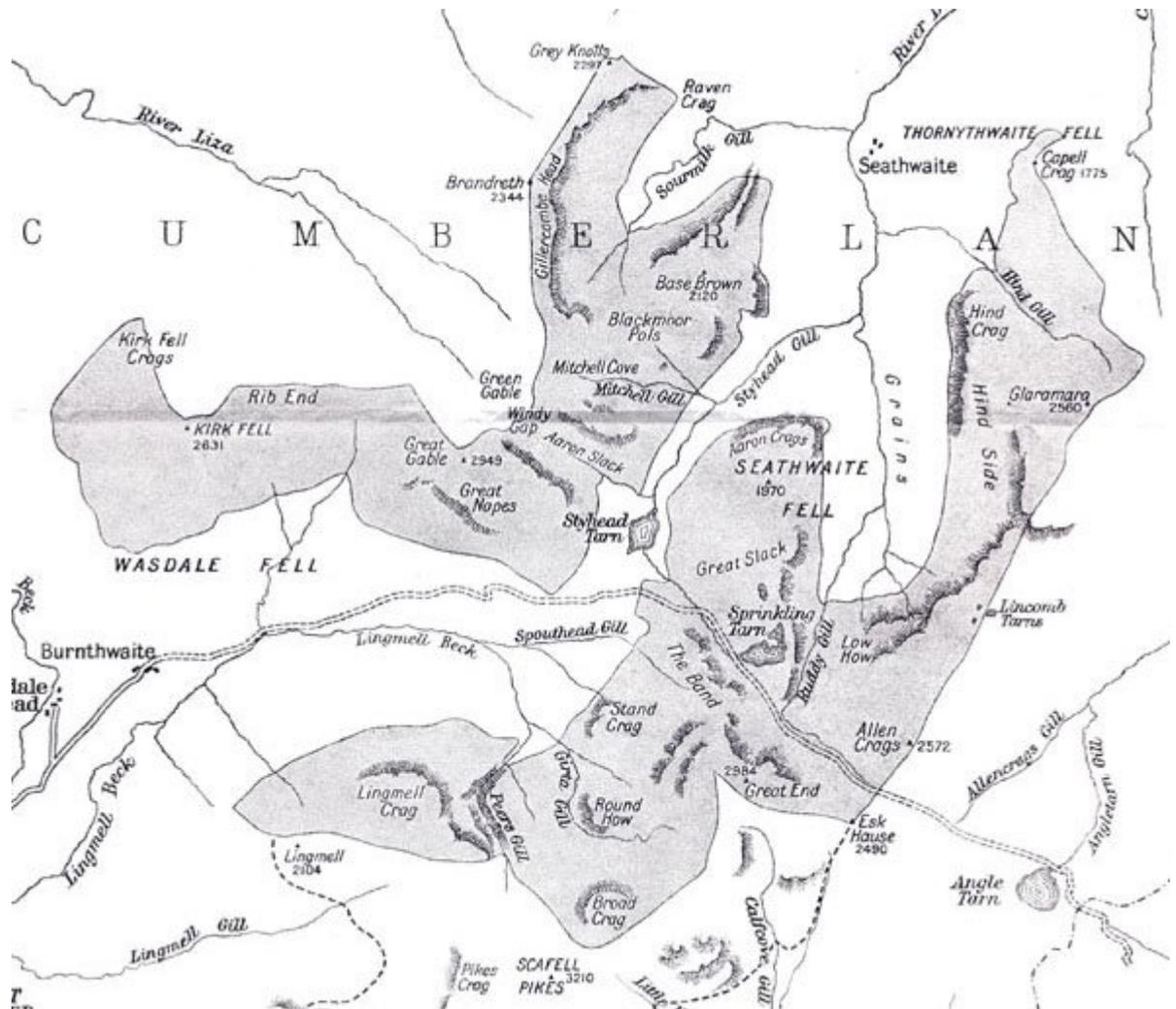


# UNVEILING THE WAR MEMORIAL TABLET

Great Gable, June 8th, 1924

W. T. PALMER

On Whit Sunday the Club completed its task of a permanent and magnificent memorial to members who fell in the Great War. In October, 1923, the title-deeds of 3,000 acres of high mountain had been handed over to the National Trust. The rocks, buttresses, and recesses of Lingmell, Great End, Allan Crag, Green Gable, Great Gable, Kirkfell and other peaks east and west of Sty Head Pass had been secured, as Dr. Wakefield (the new President) declared, *to us and our children for ever.*



The occasion at Coniston was historic. The next ceremony on Great Gable was more intimate. If there is any communion with the spirits of dead warriors, surely they were very near that silent throng of climbers, hill-walkers, and dalesfolk who assembled in soft rain and rolling mist on the high crest of Great Gable. The gloom and gentle wind-sounds added impressiveness to the occasion. There was no effort at pageantry or emotion; the service was a tribute to memory.

The simple eloquence of Arthur Wakefield, the glowing eulogy of Geoffrey Winthrop Young, the calm confidence of the prayers recited by the Rev. J. H. Smith, added to the striking power of the occasion. No one, however dour and hardened, passed through the service on Great Gable on that memorable day without feeling touched, but never was there unrelieved sadness in heart or mind.

The war-stained Union Jack which flew from H.M.S. Barham at the battle of Jutland, and which at the outset enshrouded the bronze tablet, gave the only touch of colour. For the rest, the climbers came in well-worn grey and brown. Now and again, through the hush, came the clink of boot-nails on the boulders, or a word of softly-spoken greeting. Grey mists and drifting rain gave us once more a mountain's greeting.

About five hundred persons drew closer together as the President stood on the rock-platform next the draped flag. Arthur Wakefield spoke slowly, under stress of the emotion everyone was feeling, of the climbers who had paid the last Great Sacrifice. He spoke of the love of freedom which had impelled them to dedicate strenuous hours to the joy of these hills, and to their love for their own land, which made its defence from incursion and domination a high and solemn duty. In a few words he described the great mountain park which lay in the mist and silence below and around, and which for memory, had been presented to the nation, a possession for ever.

Geoffrey Winthrop Young, a veteran of the Piave front, pronounced the following eloquent tribute to the fallen:

*Upon this mountain summit we are met to-day to dedicate this space of hills to freedom.*

*Upon this rock, are set the names of men-our brothers, and our comrades upon these cliffs-who held, with us, that there is no freedom of the soil where the spirit of man is in bondage; and who surrendered their part in the fellowship of hill and wind, and sunshine, that the freedom of this land, the freedom of our spirit, should endure.*

*This bronze stands, high upon the crowning glory of our free land, as a sign between us and them; our covenant that those to whom in the time to come we, too, shall be but as these names, or as less than these names, still hold their freedom of this splendour of height, still breathe its fearless health, the inspiration of its faultless pleasure free still, amid these untrammelled forces, to perfect their own vision of what is beautiful, interpret for themselves their own discovery of what seems true.*

*By this ceremony we consecrate a twofold remembrance; in token that these men gave their mortality of manhood for a redemption of earthly freedom, this rock stands, a witness, perishable also in the onset of time, that this realm of mountain earth is, in their honour, free. In token that their sacrifice bears witness still, beyond death, to the imperishable ideal of spiritual liberty, we commit to-day, not in bronze, but in unalterable faith, our thought of their triumph in the spirit to these spaces of power and light.*

*By this symbol we affirm a twofold trust: that which hills only can give their children, the disciplining of strength in freedom, the freeing of the spirit through generous service, these free*

*hills shall give again, and for all time.*

*The memory of all that these children of the hills have given-service, and inspiration, fulfilled, and perpetual-this free heart of our hills shall guard.*

The spirit of this eulogy permeated the whole service. The hymns which had been chosen were J. H. Newman's *Lead, Kindly Light*, and the funeral hymn of our Cumbrian dales, *O God, our Help in Ages Past*.

Godfrey A. Solly read the specially appropriate Psalm 121

*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.  
My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.  
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber.  
Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.  
The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.  
The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.  
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul.  
The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.*

H. P. Cain read aloud the inscription on the Dedicatory Tablet:

## **FELL & ROCK CLIMBING CLUB**

*In glorious and happy memory of those whose names are inscribed below, members of this club, who died for their country in the European War, 1914-18, these fells were acquired by their fellow-members and by them invested in the National Trust for the use and enjoyment of the people of our land for all time.*

J. S. BAINBRIDGE

J. G. BEAN

H. S. P. BLAIR

A. J. CLAY

J. N. FLETCHER

W. H. B. GROSS

E. HARTLEY

S. W. HERFORD

S. F. JEFFCOAT

E. B. LEES

S. J. LINZELL

L. J. OPPENHEIMER

A. J. PRICHARD

A. M. RIMER

R. B. SANDERSON

H. L. SLINGSBY

G. C. TURNER

B. H. WHITELY\*

J. H. WHITWORTH

C. S. WORTHINGTON

\*BH Whitely was wrongly recorded as BH Witty on the original memorial. This mistake was only discovered recently, and was rectified by the club as part of the FRCC centenary celebrations in 2006, the original name was cut out and the correct one brazed into place.



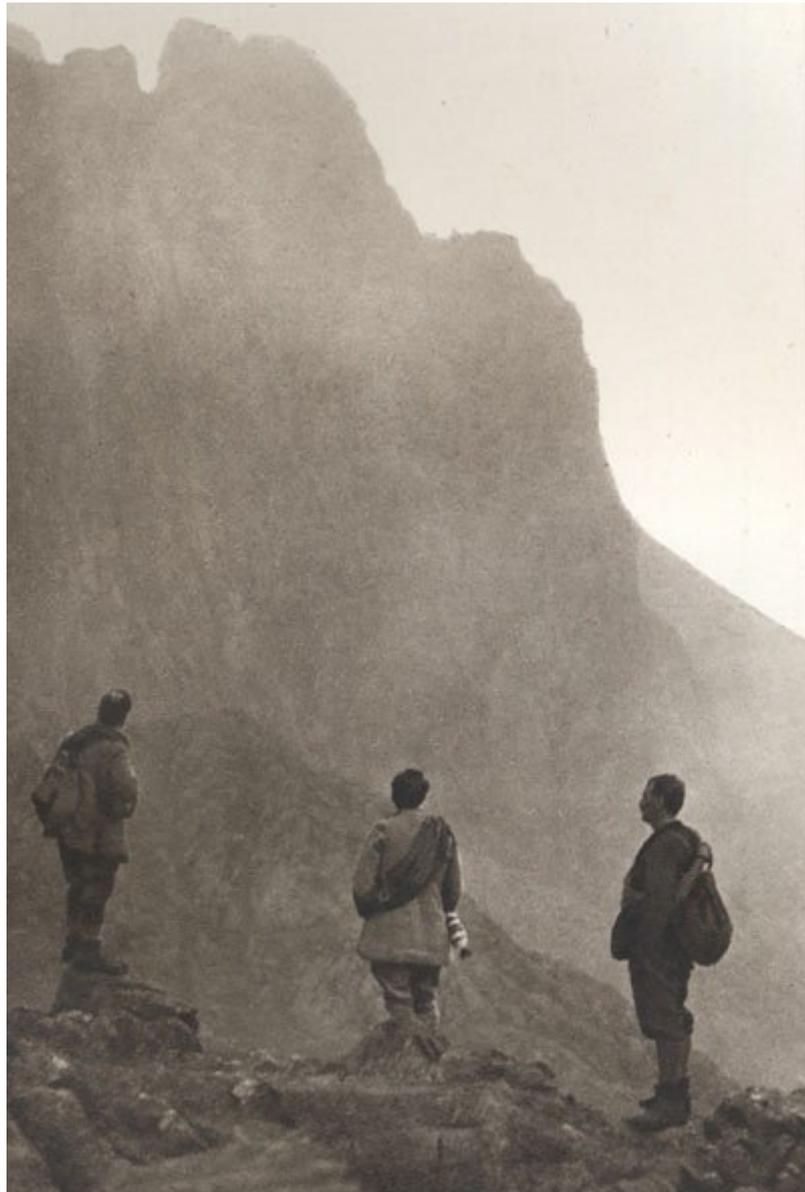
At the conclusion of the Service the Last Post was sounded by two buglers of the St. Bees' School Cadets.

Thus the Club completed the great task of a War Memorial. It is not right to be too proud, but as individual members those present felt that the Club had had a great opportunity for a Memorial, and that from first to last the scheme had been carried out in a great and noble manner.

In this National park, the climbers of the past (and of the present) will be remembered for all time.

*Afar in foreign graves they lie,  
Not here where they could wish to be,  
"Under the wide and starry sky,"  
Upheld by British crag and scree.  
And yet we felt their spirits dwell  
Amidst the circumambient air,  
Above the heights they loved so well,  
Austere, enchanting, cloud-capped, bare.  
For those who bravely die, 'twas said,  
Their tomb is the wide earth's extent,  
And Gable is for these, our dead,  
Their playground, and their monument.*

W. Snow



*Envoi*

JH Doughty

**Footnote:**

For many years now, The FRCC has held its Act of Remembrance on the summit of Great Gable on Remembrance Sunday in memory of its members who had been killed in the First and (subsequently) the Second, World Wars. Over the years, many non-members have arrived to join in the service and they are very welcome but please note the [request not to leave poppies or wreaths on the mountain.](#)