

LOCAL EXPLORERS

We have had a very successful year visiting a range of places and experiences around our local area. Historical sites, gardens, museums and guided walks to name but a few. The reason for this success is that we have a great group of people willing to step forward, organise and co-ordinate our monthly activities. As coordinator I usually organise at least two myself and I'm always willing to support others when planning and coordinating an outing. I feel it's important to appreciate the hard work that has gone into the planning and organising during the year to make our group so popular and successful.

We plan out our year in January so please put Tuesday January 13th 10 am at Grange Institute in your diary and share good ideas with a brew and a tasty treat in good company. *Liz Jackson*

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On 14th October, 30 Local Explorers met at the Information Centre in Coniston. We split into two groups of 15. Group 1 walked to the Ruskin Museum, led by Susan Jones and Group 2 prepared for a guided walk, taking in key points of the village. Andrew Musgrave had planned the walk and we started by visiting Donald Campbell's grave, where Janet gave background information into his achievements. Unfortunately for Campbell, whilst trying to gain his next Water speed goal of 300mph and above, his last run on Coniston Water proved fatal.

Andrew led us to the church and gave a brief history of the village and how it had developed over time. Coniston has a rich industrial history which dates back to the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1, especially in copper. In the mid 19th century, skilled miners from Cornwall and Germany, moved to the village with their families and transformed a small agricultural village into an industrial community. Once mined, the ore had to be shipped down Coniston Water, then taken overland to Ulverston. In 1859 a railway was built, making transportation of the ore more efficient.

Janet took the group to John Ruskin's grave in the church yard. Ruskin lived at Brantwood across the lake and requested that he should be buried in Coniston Churchyard. The symbols carved onto the Celtic style cross, represent many aspects of his life and writings. Andrew shared several amusing stories about life in Coniston before concluding the walk at the Ruskin Museum.

After about an hour, Group 1 completed the walk and Group 2 visited the museum. The Museum tells the story of Coniston through the life and times of its inhabitants, farming, copper and slate mining. We were able to view a collection of Ruskin Lace and were fortunate to see Campbell's Bluebird.

After the official visit, we were able to lunch in one of the many cafes, revisit the church and museum and walk up to the Copper mines. Coniston has lots to offer the visitor and it's well worth spending time there.

Thank you to Susan Jones, Andrew Musgrave and Janet Tabarandak