

## **The Solitary Hut**

### ***Location***

The Solitary is a wooden hut accommodating up to ten people situated 400m away from the Loft Hut at Blea Tarn. It shares the same car parking facilities as the Loft. Access is through the gate of the car park. Members then follow the path to the hut and can use the wooden bridge to the right of a large stone crossing the stream.

### ***History And Background***

The hut was formerly a private Roman Catholic Chapel in the back garden of an old lady living in Penwortham, Preston. It had twelve stained glass windows representing the stations of the cross and still has a stained glass window for the door. When the old lady died the next of kin agreed that LMC could have the building as a hut for the Lake District.

It was duly dismantled and transported on a flat bed truck and passed over the wall of the field to its present location. It was reassembled and a porch and large kitchen were added.

The stained glass windows overlooking the tarn were replaced with large windows giving an excellent view to the tarn and nearby hills.

Water was piped from the local steam and calor gas was installed and it remained in almost constant use until 2002. There then followed a period of neglect and a certain amount of damage caused by curious cattle.

### ***Recent History***

The hut had gone into slow decline between the years 2000 - 2004. The less than welcome attention of sheep and cattle caused damage to the gutter, down spouts and ultimately the main wooden window sill. Andy Bond reported several leaks in the kitchen area due to water running through the tar felt. Roger Gott and Tim Woods visited the hut in October 2005. Temporary repairs were made to the lean to kitchen roof, and a full survey report was produced.

Tim Woods was elected as warden to the hut in October 2006, and he still presently holds this post.

He re coated the kitchen roof with plastic cloth and cold bitumen, thus eliminating three out of the four leaks in the kitchen. The fourth leak by the sink was stemmed to only "Kick in" after four hours of continuous rain.

However, on New Years Eve of 2006/2007 there were violent gales and rain which blew off much of the tar felt on the tarn side of the main living part of the hut and left a gap in the roof also bringing down part of the ceiling by the inner door. The porch and kitchen areas were unaffected. The window sill of the main tarn side window was badly rotted at both it's interior and exterior.

Emergency work was carried out in January 2007.

Further storm damage occurred at the end of January 2007, but a further work day in February 2007 made the hut water tight, albeit on a temporary basis, and the wood on the window frame was stabilised. Tim Woods also took photographs of, and made detailed measurements of the missing ceiling.

A full "works weekend" occurred on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2007 and the roof was substantially repaired, the ceiling was replaced, and the broken beam of the porch was replaced using a 4 \* 4 bottle jack - Gareth Snell's inspiration with Craig Hinkes supplying the generator.

Three further works weekends took place in 2007 when the roof covering was strengthened, new ceiling painted, floor repaired, fascia replaced on the tarn side, barbed wire fencing and stiles erected near the porch and a footbridge was kindly assembled by Chris Walker. Richard Toon used his dry stone wall skills to replace the steps to the entrance.

Tim Woods also carried out annual maintenance work, including creosoting the exterior walls and clearing gutters. Bernard Smith kindly spent a day installing the replacement linoleum and carpeting for the porch and main living area.

The window frames were made water tight by using plastic padding in lieu of putty. It got washed away by the frequent heavy rain. Edgar's friend noticed a cracked branch overhanging the hut and a visiting party removed it the following weekend.

Further finishing off work took place in April and October 2008 and a privacy curtain, and other amenities have been installed in the wash room for privacy. The church window in the front door has been repaired to make the hut air tight.

### ***Present Facilities***

The hut has a porch area to store wet equipment and clothing.

The main living area has seven bunk beds - 2 \* 3 tiers, and one being "death bivouac" over the wash area. The wash area has a basin and other facilities. The heating is provided by a calor gas wall heater and the bottles are situated outside to the tarn side of the hut.

The stop key to the water supply is situated outside by the drain pipe near the back edge of the kitchen.

The kitchen is a large one and has 4 ring burners and grills and a sink and large table which can seat 8. The usual cookware is present and the sundries and crockery are now stored in plastic resealable boxes and drawers.

The side and front of the hut are bounded by two adjoining streams.

The water supply is taken from a stream by the road wall, which feeds into a Belfast sink and is then piped down to a black plastic header tank, 20 yards above the tank, this is further piped to the edge of the hut by the stop tap.

### ***Note for Members***

This is your hut, for the exclusive use for yourselves and your guests.

Please note the following:

- If possible use battery or electric light.
- The gas bottles should be turned off at night and at the end of the stay.
- Please remove all food and other waste, immediately on production of the same.
- Livestock use the field, so that it is simply a matter of following the country code.
- It is a wooden building and especially at risk to fire.

Please note that the following rules apply as with the Loft:

- Switch off music systems prior to your arrival.
- Close the gates immediately after using them.
- Do not park anywhere in the yard other than in our parking area, next to the Loft.
- Do not venture into any of the garden areas.
- Do not disturb the people at Blea Tarn house and be aware that they have young children who go to bed early.
- Be quiet by the house and within our car park, especially after 9.00 pm.
- Do not take vehicles into the yard after 11.00 pm. Late arrivals must be unloaded from the road and then parked overnight on the National Trust car park at Blea Tarn, which is about ten minutes' walk away.
- Only 6 cars can be parked on our car park, additional vehicles should use the National Trust car park at Blea Tarn.

Please use and look after and enjoy the hut!

*Tim Woods*