



## **Lunesdale Sub Aqua Club**

### **The history of the German Howitzer gun and Lunesdale Sub-Aqua Club by Chris Collingwood. March 2003.**

#### **History.**

After the first World War Towns and villages throughout Britain were given war mementoes such as tanks and guns in memory of the men who won the Victoria Cross. Coniston village in Cumbria were given a 75mm two ton, Howitzer field artillery gun, that had been captured on the Somme!

Some of the local ex-service men were so disgusted that it was a german weapon that was given to commerate the award of the Victoria Cross to L/Cpl Jimmy Hewitson that they rolled it into Coniston Water near the Ruskin Pier, after a late night drinking session in a local pub!

#### **Location.**

The aim was to find and raise the gun and donate it to the Kings Own Royal Border Regiment for their Museum. Other Diving clubs had tried to find the gun and been un-susessfull . Further investigation by Lunesdale had revealed that the original slipway had been moved over the years and everybody had been searching in the wrong spot! Lunesdale had found the gun and moved it underwater on several occasions to stop people locating it and possibly vandalising it. The gun was brought to the surface from 17m in November 1977. Almost as soon as the gun had been brought ashore Lt Col Peter Dew who commands the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion took it away to a secret location to preserve it as a museum piece!

Quite a number of people felt very angry in Coniston village, British Legion president Edward Troughton said: "There's only one place for that gun – the bottom of the lake." He said the original dumping was led by Jim Hewitson who won the V.C. in 1918. "It's our job to respect his wishes." The action of Lunesdale Sub-Aqua Club is just beneath contempt and they should be ordered to put the gun back in the lake!

The British Legion have actioned the Rawden-Smith Trust who own the lake bed they said "Your actions have caused a great deal of stress to the parish and the trustees have already instructed me to seek legal advice, the diving club could face a theft charge, I recommend that you return the gun to Coniston Parish".



### **Where is the gun now!**

The only two culprits that our in our club today are our President and Treasurer! The gun disappeared for a few years and rumour had it that it was in the drill hall in the King's Royal Border Regiment next to Waring & Gillows in Lancaster.

The Regiment moved to a new building on Caton Rd in Lancaster, I made an appointment to see the Colonel but to my dismay he knew nothing about the gun or its origins.

In June 2002 I had a meeting with one of the Curators at Lancaster Museum and he remembered the story about the gun, he informed me that it had been for many years based at the drill hall in Ulverston and the Caretaker over a period of many years "claimed ownership" of many artefacts, one of which was the gun! The Caretaker died approximately 3 or 4 years ago and his family sold of all of his *acquired estate* and nobody knows where the German Howitzer gun is now!

Or is there a budding Sherlock Holmes, who could solve this mystery and bring this story to a happy ending!!!

Chris Collingwood.



Chairman 2002-3.