

YRC JOURNAL

EXPLORATION, MOUNTAINEERING AND CAVING SINCE 1892

ISSUE 11 SERIES 13 SUMMER 2011



MATTHES CREST, YOSEMITE

2010 Meet

Photograph by Tim Josephy

ARTICLES

CAVING IN CHINA

ROCK CLIMBING IN NEW ZEALAND

BOLIVIA EXPEDITION

ROCK CLIMBING IN SPAIN

TREKKING IN THE KHUMBU

ON SNOW SHOES IN FRANCE

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Deadlines for material for the journals are December 15th and June 15th
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The current series 13 of the journals goes back to Summer 2006. Series 12 was published under the title of the 'Yorkshire Rambler' and goes back to summer 1994. Both these series are held in electronic form.

Earlier journals can be accessed for information and go back to the formation of the club in 1892

ADRIAN BRIDGE

A very black day in early April saw the death of our Immediate Past President in a climbing accident. We will all have our memories of Adrian who will be sadly missed by all in the club although this is as nothing compared to the family in these situations.

Please see page 38 for the formal obituary.

A keen climber Adrian was regularly to be seen on some rock face. Below is a picture of him taken just over a year ago in Spain, Andalicia, inland from Malaga. El Chorro village is by this crag which was deep in the local gorge next to a railway tunnel.



Adrian was such an active member that his name and picture crops up throughout this edition reflecting those activities. Adrian had just returned from a four man trip to Sella climbing nearby.



Adrian, with Andy Wells and Mike Smith - the other member of the party was Tim Josephy, who took this photograph

Peter Chadwick, our current President, comments that to him, Adrian was simply one of the best, if not the best. A day in the hills with Adrian was always exciting and exhausting, due to his inability to go up the normal or easy route, and due to one's own inability to keep up. He never tired and was always cheerful and willing to help anyone. His contribution to the Club over many years was immense and he will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him.

Quite apart from Adrian's exploits on the hill and crag and his efforts over the last two years as our President he had been of great support to your editor in producing the journal.

Only days before the tragedy he had been chasing up a missing meet report for me and had said that if it was not forthcoming he would do one himself. Adrian also provided a valuable service in proof reading each edition.

A regular provider of snippets or articles he had in fact sent one in for this edition in which quite poignantly, he recalled an early caving incident which could also have had a very dramatic outcome. He said that thinking about it since, had given him cold sweats! This was a follow up to previous articles detailing 'near misses' as a caution to others.

It happened many (35+) years ago during a CPC Gaping Gill winch meet and involved abseiling down the main shaft, which was then relatively dry, since as usual, they had diverted the stream to keep winch customers dry.

In Adrian's own words.... "The plan was to abseil down the main shaft and exit via Bar Pot – which was always rigged on these meets. The problem was with the rope we had – 'tho I didn't see it at the time. It was Courlene, a polypropylene rope about 11mm diameter, of which we had plenty for life lining with, on ladder pitches. We didn't have a long enough length for the whole descent, so had one piece from the surface to Birkbeck Ledge at about 190 ft, and took another length to tie onto it to reach the bottom. My memory is a little vague about who else descended (and they perhaps would rather not be named in connection with such a foolish venture!) but it was around the time of our Gouffre Berger trip, so quite possibly involved some of those lads.

The rope was thrown over the lip of the shaft at the end furthest from the winching site and a rough hessian bag put under it at the lip. I was the last to descend and just before I did, the rope protector became detached and disappeared over the edge. OK, I thought and set off without one in place. All went well and we regrouped on the copious Birkbeck ledge and joined the second rope to the first. SRT was in its infancy – for us at least – and we needed to re thread our figure of 8s below the knot, so when launching out for the second pitch a significant stretch in the rope above caused a lurch downwards, followed by a little bit of yo-yoing.

This was a bit heart in the mouth stuff since the ab. was now completely free. We all got to the bottom OK and made our exits.

It was only a short while later that some rope wear research being carried out by cavers at Leeds University was published at a conference. It had frightening consequences. They had loaded a rope with an 80kg weight and arranged a rig with a motor and eccentric connection such that the rope moved up and down over a limestone rock edge. This simulated rope movement in SRT actions. Tests were done wet and dry and on different rope types. No ropes provided much resistance and the Courlene we had used was by far the least abrasion resistant, breaking after just a few cycles. Clearly when this became known, all SRT rigs were arranged to have

no/minimal rock contact, ropes being re-belayed as necessary, and of course, Courlene was not used at all.

Had we sought to ascend the rope, there is no telling how far we could have got before disaster overtook us."

Since that incident, Adrian acknowledged he had done a few things with with an above average degree of risk, but had been aware of them, but that time was in blissful ignorance. Adrian had since come to realise just how lucky he was, having learned that a chap Mick Borroff knew was killed whilst prussiking up a shaft in a pothole in the Picos d'Europa in 1975 when rope abrasion was the cause ! "I feel so lucky to have got away unscathed," said Adrian recently.

Not so this time I am afraid.

Richard Josephy comments that the last walk he did with Adrian was on a sunny day in North Wales. That of course was enjoyable, but a day that sticks more firmly in his mind was a year or so ago. In dreary weather they did three dreary North Pennine 2000s. Most people's spirits would be dampened by the featureless surroundings (they couldn't see much of them anyway), the horrible conditions underfoot and the difficulty of locating summits in mist. Not so Adrian, who was unfailingly cheerful and enthusiastic throughout the full day's walk. His generosity and thoughtfulness were

typified by the fact that it didn't seem that he was reducing his pace to match Richard's, but Richard knew he was.

There must be so many of us with happy memories of days out with Adrian: what better memorial could there be?

There is a lot more that could be said but perhaps the biggest tribute lies in the number of times Adrian features in this journal.

Many members have of course commented to me on this tragedy and not all have felt able to put pen to paper but I think Mick Borroff has perhaps expressed the sentiments best

"Big smile, big hallo, up for anything (and some more!), travelling light, fleet of foot and hard to keep up with, pushing for the summit, and another one, two, admire the view, come on - just one more before it gets dark! Good to be with, a great sense of humour with immense courtesy, sound judgement, always encouraging. A momentary slip, un-recovered and all that remains are many rich memories - we'll miss you Adrian."

Editor



Adrian on the Magical Mystery Tour, at Toix, Costa Blanca

Photo Tim Josephy



Adrian on top of the Obelisk on Mynydd Tal-y-mignedd

Photo Mick Borroff



Adrian in California, 2006 on North Ridge of Mount Conness

Photo Tim Josephy



Adrian in Millstone Quarry

Photo Mick Borroff

AUTUMN : THE BEST OF ALL SEASONS

Michael Smith

The hectic days of young families and working weeks behind us, a number of friends meet at short notice on weekdays to make the best use we can of good breaks in the weather.

Most weeks we manage one or two days out in the Pennines or the Dales unless we are busy further afield. Conversation flows freely and, as John Muir put it, we...

*Climb the mountains and get their good tidings.
Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine
flows into trees. The winds will blow their own
freshness into you... while cares will drop off like
autumn leaves.*

This week was typical with Peter Chadwick and Paul Dover having a day out above Ilkley. An hour's walk over the moors had us identifying old rock carvings and naming hills from Pendle, past upper Wharfedale to the North Yorkshire Moors.

Dropping into Rocky Valley we soon identified the outcrops we'd not visited for a generation - when Bill Lofthouse organised Wednesday evening meets for those living near Leeds and Harrogate. Several climbs in the easier grades were tackled and most managed though the exit from *Little A* proved too much, *Stiction Chimney* was as cramped as ever and the crag seemed greener than we remembered.



Stiction Chimney, Rocky Valley
Photographs Michael Smith

With a break for a sandwich it was soon late afternoon and we beat a hasty retreat to the car so we could eat together then wend our ways to our various evening engagements.

Other days have seen similar trios of Club members tramping over the moors of the Peak District to the Stanage and Derwent Edges for a few climbs before retiring to a hostelry for an evening meal. The days were rounded off with lectures by Alpine Club members held in Hathersage.

What makes these days so rewarding is the breadth of experience within the party giving a range of perspectives on any topic. We've seen a young red kite playing dropping a stick only to stoop down neatly invert and recapture it time and again, sulphur springs, cup and ring marks, the remains of a cosmic ray detector, white mountain hares and old acquaintances.



All have provoked interesting discussion.

Having the right companions is essential or as Charles would have it...

*Unless a tree has borne blossoms in spring,
you will vainly look for fruit on it in autumn.*

These opportunities for getting out in this way arise, will develop with time and inevitably, sooner or later, will cease to be practicable. That's why we make the most of them while we can. Recent events reported elsewhere in this issue bring home to all of us just how transient they are. As CS Lewis wrote...

*Autumn is really the best of the seasons; and
I'm not sure that old age isn't the best part
of life. But of course, like autumn, it doesn't
last.*

Carpe diem, quam minimum credulapostero.

CHINA CAVING

The Club's cavers are still going out to China regularly to survey the countless systems to be found there.

Eddie Edkins recalls a recent episode which sticks in his memory.

Goat Herd Cave

We visited a stretch of hillside a few miles, south of Yanhe town on the west side of the mysterious but infectious Wu River which winds its way on towards the mighty Yangse near Wu Long. The approach road was very steep in places causing the heavy goods vehicles carrying rocks spinning their wheels on the slippery, stone surface. We parked close to where Yanhe's new dam is being constructed amid the sound of noisy construction vehicles and the chaos of materials being shunted around. A 35 minute walk down an interesting even-sided valley led us westwards to the entrance of Goat Herd Cave, our objective that day. The walk was punctuated by plenty of interest, the usual paraphernalia of Chinese rural sights and situations; a grand party was in process. We mused for a while at a sort of Chinese Ponderosa where the servants were all wearing bright red tunics; a large man-sized wooden box, which Bruce identified as a coffin, added to the scene; assortments of ducks and chickens were darting everywhere; a dry stone wall very neatly finished helped frame this collage of activity. Various items of machinery in the process of repair or being cannibalised, seeming almost abandoned, were scattered around. Many of these dismemberments were accompanied by very cheerful and smiling faces!

Alongside the road on the left of the track, which had long since been levelled out, the remains of the previous day's flood waters flowed innocuously into a quite large cave entrance set back about 20 metres. We accessed this entrance by descending the slope and clambering over a couple of metres of wall. The whole length of road hereabouts has been raised, levelled and supported by this wall sometime in the past.

Only a small trickle of water led into the entrance of Goat Herd Cave today and we entered the cave in the firm knowledge that much of the work has already been done surveying a large proportion of the system. Our objective however, was to try and establish a link with another discovery made earlier in the expedition. Bruce believed that the pitch, about 230 metres into the cave, would lead to the cave at a lower elevation. The first job is to descend the pitch by using a fixed rope which would enable us to return safely if our hunch was wrong. Time was moving on swiftly and since we didn't start out until after lunch time we were playing catch up! As we progressed through the long easy section of the cave and being so busy and fixed on our goal, we hardly notice the young man who had tagged along behind. Pleased to have more company than just Bruce, I checked him out and realised he was more ill equipped than myself. He has no source of light with him. (These sorts of event happen many times in whatever activity you carry out in China and

in any case these people are naturally adept in conditions where nowadays in the west, all sorts of sophisticated inventions and qualifications are a prerequisite to complete an activity). But even I had to concede a light in total darkness can have its advantages, especially in a cave!

When the pitch was rigged Bruce gave our new companion a small LED light bulb used for reading survey instruments and ushered him on his way back out of the cave to safety. He was so obviously disappointed not to be able to accompany us - but of course we wouldn't have time to explain and teach him SRT techniques if SRT became mandatory later on! In fact, fifteen or so minutes before we entered the cave, we came across a group of Chinese who appeared to be looking for something; but limited communication confounded any proper understanding and when we departed after a very brief encounter they seemed quite unhappy. They wandered off apparently grumbling a little, in another direction without doubt confident of their knowledge that they could show us around their cave system, moving with great competence carrying simple hand torches of which only one was in use. He must have been part of this group!

It took us what seems to me to be an eternity before Bruce found the junction in question, somewhere off to the right where our surveying work must start. By this time I had absolutely no idea where we were relative to the surveyed section, after all it was my first visit to this cave and I hadn't done my homework! We stopped briefly for Bruce to get the survey gear out of his sack and he gave me the tape, all of fifteen seconds and we were off again. It was my turn to lead now, and I have to say, the job of being the tape man and finding the next likely survey station gives only the misguided illusion of being the decision maker and pioneer in the team; the real work is done by the person who records the data and also sketches. The sketch work requires a detailed impression of the journey through the cave, as many cross sections of the system as practically possible and to keep an eye on the tape man and others who might be involved in surveying. This requires working in harmony. Bruce is a master of this, probably being a professional surveyor helps! So as I went off on my first leg there was time to reflect on the cave as it was unravelled before me but being attached the tape is also like a dog being restrained on its lead as it eagerly pulls its master forward getting disapproving yanks in response. Surveying that day with Bruce was a bit like that!

Most of the cave system is formed as immature vadose passage. In flood conditions the cave would take tremendous amounts of water and though this was not so apparent in the larger initial passages, as one gets to the lower sections, there is much evidence of flooding. The whole system has undergone some change in the very recent geological past due to both the effect of sediment invasion and boulder blockages brought in from the surface landscape which itself will have undergone change due to local irrigation and slope removal. This is to be expected of almost any Chinese cave since quite often surface conditions pre-suppose this type

of evolution. Caves and karst are an intrinsic part of the country life for most Chinese living in a karst environment.

A little further on, and it became apparent, even to me, that we were moving in a clockwise direction and that was how we were to eventually return to the pitch. For a short while we entered a section which was long and fairly straight with a roof which slowly reduced down and in doing so showed evidence of residual matter from very recent flooding. This probably occurred even when the others were here a few days ago! Is that why we're doing it today – had they lost the plot? A little further after the end of this section we arrived at a further junction and Bruce, thankfully, offered to check it out. Before I had time to get any relaxation out of this respite he arrived back again indicating with haste that the right hand turn was the way on. He thought the pitch linking the two caves would be close. He was right and after a quick look round sure enough there was the base of the pitch.

This confirmed that there was no further exploration required and we could return to the surface. I thought "great", Bruce hadn't been taking any prisoners today and had forged through the cave, for me anyway, at quite a pace which I could easily keep up with. When we stopped earlier, I had felt guilty about taking time out to do the necessary to raise my blood sugar and since this takes several minutes at least of adjustment before I can proceed confidently, it always seems to incense those who don't want to be held up! But this was my first and only SRT experience in China albeit only about 60 feet but it seemed to me that there was much more

water falling from the top of the pitch, was it raining outside? Feeling a little de-skilled using borrowed gear I ascended the pitch cautiously.

We proceeded quickly back to the entrance and thankfully when we exited, some 40 minutes or so later, the weather was fine and we commenced the long, laborious walk along the valley and up those nagging roller-coaster type steep bits often found in a karst landscape. Bruce set the pace and soon started to extend the lead but then he suddenly stopped and on approaching him I saw that he had taken an interest in a recently built dry stone wall so I took photos of him proudly standing in front of the wall which with Herculean effort, he attempted to re-build! He soon outpaced me again but it didn't matter as it was a wonderful quiet, subdued sort of evening and of course everything always seems different when you look at it from another perspective! Well, it was quiet until a small motorbike screamed to a halt beside me and the rider pointed to the empty pillion seat behind him. I was on like a shot and a few minutes later passed Bruce who was beginning to puff a little as he climbed a slope and I experienced the warm expected glow within, turning to see his look of surprise as he returned my wave. "Only two miles to go Bruce!" I shouted. The rider skilfully negotiated the steep and bumpy sections and dropped me at the van where the driver was relaxing engrossed in listening to some Chinese classical music. The rider waved to me in a knowing fashion and I knew without being told that he would return to pick up Bruce. Both Bruce and myself felt that the rider showed generosity of spirit that gave an added to an extremely enjoyable day.

CHINA UPDATE

GUANGXI 2010: BRIEF REPORT ON EXPEDITION ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS - TONY HARRISON

Guangxi 2010 (the 23rd China Caves Project expedition) was a "two-centre" trip, with visits planned to Leye County and to neighbouring Fengshan County, both in the north-west of Guangxi Province. Both areas had been visited previously by the China Caves Project; Leye in 2000 and 2002, and Fengshan twice in 2004 and again in 2005. For reasons beyond the expedition members' control, somewhat more time was spent in Leye than in Fengshan, compared to pre-expedition plans which were for a majority of caving time to be spent in Fengshan.

In Leye the expedition achieved much more than a two-day exploration of just one shaft which was envisaged before the team arrived in China. This was because about 6 days proved to be available for caving, as our stay in the county was extended to allow attendance at all the celebrations taking place (see below). The team focused on an area just to the south of the famous Dashiwei Tiankeng, which had not been visited by the earlier China Caves Project or other western expeditions to Leye. In total 13 caves were explored. The bulk of these were vertical shafts, some exceeding 100m in depth, but regrettably most had little horizontal development at the bottom. The most exciting find was Ye Zhu Tuo, a multi-pitch series of rifts which was not bottomed in the time available and which becomes a key target for a future team in the area.

In Fengshan the expedition's objective was to search for an underground link between the 38.5km Jiang Zhou cave system in the south of the county, and the extensive Ma Wang Dong system a few kilometres to the north. Whilst a link was not proved in the available time, considerable progress was made. Visits to the northern series in Jiang Zhou produced significant lengths of previously undiscovered passages but no links were achieved with other caves to the north. One of these, Long Shi Shaft (discovered in 2005), was the focus of particular attention, and from the foot of this 80m shaft, a large new passage was discovered heading in the direction of Ma Wang Dong. Yet again lack of time frustrated this attempt but the cave may well prove to be key in effecting an eventual link between the two large systems.

The main reason for the team visiting Leye County at the start of the expedition's time in China was to celebrate the strong relationship which has been built up between the China Caves Project and the local community in Leye, particularly since

2010 was the 10th anniversary of the first visit to the county by the China Caves Project. In the event, our visit coincided with an assessment by UNESCO of a submission by the recently established Leye-Fengshan National Geopark for listing in the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network. News of the success of this application came through whilst the team was in Leye and led to further celebrations in which the team was glad to be involved.

The findings of the expedition are now being assessed and surveys drawn up for publication in the near future.

Troglomorphic biological studies were carried out during the expedition (notably of millipedes and isopods); the findings will be included in the above mentioned publication. A small biological success achieved by the expedition above ground was the discovery of a new and remote location (half way down a 180m SRT pitch into the DashiweiTiankeng!) of the rare orchid *Paphiopedilum dianthum*, which is classified as endangered in the IUCN Red List.



坑口标高: 1332米
 洞口高程: 873米
 洞穴末端高程: 634米
 洞道长度: 6630米
 洞道深度: 698米

LEYE COUNTY, GUANGXI, CHINA

Surveyed:
 13 October 2000 Guangxi Caves 2000 Expedition
 13,15,16,20,21,22 March 2002 Hidden River Expedition

Survey Team:
 Andy Eavis, Ged Campion, Simon Brooks, Bruce Bensley, Stewart Muir,
 Alister Renton, John Whalley, Shaun Penny, Tony Penny, Graham Salmon,
 Erin Lynch, Petet Hall, Pascale Bottazzi, Roman Hapka

Map by John Whalley

Cave Entrance Alt. 897m
 Cave End Alt. 634m
 Length 6630 m
 Vertical Range 698m

The board celebrates a previous exploration to Dashiwei East and was photographed by John Whalley

To the left is an extract from the larger board.

THE YHA

Many of us are members of the YHA and indeed some have been members for more years than they like to admit. Given the age of some of our members I wonder whether some were not members in the earliest years of the organisation.

Richard Schirman, a German school teacher, first thought of Youth Hostels over a hundred years ago. He wanted to give young people living in cities the chance to get out in the fresh air, to explore the countryside and to have a break from their dismal surroundings, visiting new places, meeting new people and sharing new experiences. From there the idea spread and the YHA Youth of Great Britain was formed in 1930.

During the Second World War the number of YHA members doubled and it went from strength to strength but by the 1980s, it was facing a rapidly changing world. Maintaining accommodation in a wide range of buildings in some of the best bits of the countryside, often in wild and remote places, was increasingly expensive. This led to considerable change within the organisation, including the development of a more professional management structure. The needs of the traveller were also changing. Young people wanted to explore a wider world, to meet and share experiences with others from different backgrounds and cultures. They also wanted better facilities (smaller rooms, better toilets and showers) and increasingly began to book on the internet where an increasing number of commercial hostels were becoming available.

The YHA had to acknowledge and accommodate this; its network of properties continually changed, new hostels have opened and others closed as the needs and patterns of travel changed. Young people's activity holidays were introduced and today thousands of young people benefit from these programmes. Whilst the YHA is aiming to reach out and enhance the lives of all young people it is open to all so anyone can stay with YHA and increasingly the casual bed nights are taken up by older users.

Gone are the days when you had to muck in. They now employ 1000 staff, have a turnover of around £50m and a property portfolio currently valued at around £85m. Visitors of all ages and backgrounds enjoyed over 1.7m overnight stays last year, but only 35% of these were taken by young people under the age of 18.

Historically, YHA has made a modest trading surplus. However, for many years it has not generated enough surpluses to maintain its hostels to an appropriate standard. This has become even more important as guests' expectations and regulatory requirements increase and they very much need the support of users like ourselves to help bridge that gap.

Happily this coincides with our ambitions to have a more varied meet programme including areas perhaps not deemed to be classic areas and as a result, where kindred club huts are not available to us. We have been making

increasing use of YHA and SYHA hostels over recent years and the Club has now elected to join as a group member and parties of 5 or more can use this membership. It does, more importantly, give us access to a lot of locations at a reasonable price where otherwise we might struggle

Whilst it is great to go back to classic areas there are many pockets of Britain well worth an occasional visit where our only options are YHA, commercial hostels or even more expensive hotels all of which require advance bookings which brings different problems with a membership reluctant to commit far in advance. Unless members are prepared to commit further in advance we are going to have to be restricted to the same areas year in year out.

For an example of an area where opportunities may well open up for us by using the YHA, the valleys of rivers running east out of the North Pennines make up an area sometimes known as the "Kingdom of the Three Rivers" (Tyne, Tees and Wear) or "Land of the Prince Bishops". We have had a number of meets in the area over the years including a fondly remembered classic when we stayed at the Hudecote Centre near Middleton in Teeside on which occasion we arrived in thick snow, woke Saturday to clear blue skies and frosted snow making for glorious walking and followed on the Sunday with an underground trip into some old mine workings.

I suspect the area is sometimes under-rated or overlooked; after all, it has 35 summits over 2,000ft in height. Before the CRoW Act, many of these peaks were off limits without specific permission but are now part of open access agreements. Access land in the North Pennines is pretty rough territory but new opportunities have opened up since then and there must be scope for a good long walk. The meets committee is always looking for ideas preferably with someone prepared to organise them so can I start the ball rolling for 2013. There must be scope for a route from Edmundbyers YHA hostel, north of Stanhope for example. The Wearside Way at its western end would provide a good basis for one leg of a possible route. Could we take in Killhope Law 2,208ft and Burtree Fell 2,008ft, Middlehope Moor.

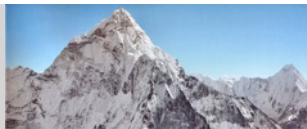
Killhope Forest



There must be possibilities utilizing two of the scattered YHA hostels and walking between them - Edmundbyers for Friday night to end at Langdon Beck via Ramshaw, Nockton Fell, Green Hill just N of Allenheads then over Allenheads Common and Killhope Law to pick up the Weardale Way?

Get your thinking hats on and feed ideas to your committee
Ed.

CHIPPINGS



LONG AND WET.....

It is reported that Jason Mallinson, Rick Stanton and John Volanthen (U.K.) and Rene Houben (Holland), have beaten the world longest cave dive penetration record in the Pozo Azul caves in Covenera, northern Spain.

Last September, the team, supported by Spanish divers, explored and surveyed a total diving distance of 8825m from the cave entrance. The cave is now known to be over 9km in length.

After a week setting up, the divers completed the 5.5 hour dive beating the 7.8km (4.8-mile) world record for the longest cave dive penetration, recently set at Wakulla Springs in Florida.

Closer to home, Artur Kozlowski, and Jim Warny last year are reported to have established the British Isles cave diving distance record. The pair set a new record of over 3.3km in the Gort Lowlands in county Galway. After several years of exploration in the area, the two divers, using re-breathers, finally connected entrances in the Coole River system.

... AND WINDY? A CATCH 22

When the wind blows, it blows in cloud which keeps us comparatively warm. Conversely when we have no cloud cover the clear nights lead to extreme cold during winter months.

It follows therefore that during the long cold nights last winter when more power was needed to keep our homes warm the lack of wind made wind turbines a waste of space.

Official figures have been released to show that in the year to last September our wind farms worked to 23.6 of their capacity and even with today's high levels of subsidy they need to work at 30% to be cost effective even if you ignore the argument that they never turn when most needed.

Apparently last year was the least windy since 1894 although I do recall some very windy interludes.

Even the official figures or the interpretation of them are open to some doubt.

A report backed by the John Muir Trust questions wind power's ability to deliver electricity when most needed. After studying the ability of wind power to make a significant contribution to the UK's energy supply, it concludes that the average power output of wind turbines across Scotland is well below the rates often claimed by industry and government. Indeed, for numerous extended periods of time all the wind turbines in Scotland linked to the National Grid muster less than 20MW of energy.

Helen McDade, of the John Muir Trust, said: "This report is a real eye opener for anyone who's been wondering just how much power Scotland is getting from the fleet of wind turbines that have taken over many of our most beautiful mountains and hillsides. The answer appears to be not enough, and much less than is routinely claimed."

Stuart Young, author of the report, said, "Over the two-year period studied in this report, the metered wind farms in the U.K. consistently generated far less energy than wind proponents claim is typical. The intermittent nature of wind also gives rise to low wind coinciding with high energy demand. Sadly, wind power is not what it's cracked up to be and cannot contribute greatly to energy security in the UK. It was a surprise to find out just how disappointingly wind turbines perform in a supposedly wind-ridden country like Scotland. Based on the data, for one third of the time wind output is less than 10% of capacity"

Not much of a return for despoiling land that we hold dear!

WHITE NOSE

In USA more than a million bats have died in the past four years from a disease called White Nose Syndrome as the stricken creatures have white fungus growing on their snout, ears and wings. Similar fungi have been seen on bats in different countries in Europe which does not necessarily mean it is affected by WNS.

In 2009 however WNS has been found in France, Germany, Switzerland and Hungary where it has not so far been associated with any major bat mortality.

Research is currently being undertaken to further clarify the distribution of the fungus in Europe. The spread is likely as a result of natural activity by bats but humans may well play a part. It is strongly advised that cavers categorically limit the access to caves where bats inhabit, especially during winter time when bats are hibernating and the transmission of WNS is likely to occur. You are also asked, difficult as it may be, that prior to, or following a change of caving area you carefully clean with clean preferably soapy water, all the individual equipment (clothes, boots, harness...) and collective equipment (ropes, carabineers, ...) used in caves, as well as their containers (transport bags or boxes used inside and outside the cave): this is very important even if WNS have not been found in the area of the cave as it will prevent the introduction of foreign organisms/substances and will reduce the possibility of contaminating the site.

If you observe dead bats or bats with white fungal growth on their ears/snout/wings, do not touch them but please note the exact location and take photographs if possible then, report immediately this information to: wns@eurospeleo.org. There is a more detailed fact sheet for cavers written by the FSE European Workgroup on WNS

NO BOG TO GO TO

I am loath to go to print with much about the proposed sale of our woodlands as by the time it goes to print it will be out of date. I know many members have signed petitions and joined in formal consultations.

One thing worth saying however is that many woodlands are managed for their own primary purposes and without proper consideration for the wider environment and what solution going forward will best improve this situation is open to debate regardless of your political persuasion.

In the Flow Country in the Scottish Highlands, you're as close to Iceland and the Arctic as you are to London. This is a landscape thousands of years in the making and no matter how unwelcoming, is a valuable part of the balanced ecology of the country.

The gently undulating peatland, boggy and squelchy underfoot, stretches before you as far as the eye can see with a patchwork of pools, carpets of mosses - emerald and gold in colour, surrounding you, and the gentle calls of birds on the wind. The mossies abound but there are other insects so small you could miss them, while at your feet, carnivorous sundew plants digest live flies. This is how this wilderness should be - ancient, remote and rich in wildlife.

Unfortunately however if you explore further, you see hints of trouble in this vast space. Trees can't survive naturally in this cold and exposed landscape, so it's a shock to see conifer plantations bordering Forsinard Flows, an extensive RSPB managed reserve. It's even more shocking when you realise that these trees - planted only 30 years ago - are drying out this ancient, fragile and unique landscape. There's nothing wrong with forestry in the right place, but tax breaks fuelled the planting of these trees with little care for the appalling damage that they would do. Don't let our bogs dry out!

The RSPB now has a chance to undo the damage before it's too late. They have the opportunity to buy two of these plantations covering 1,500 hectares, remove the trees and heal one of Britain's last wildernesses.

The Tubney Charitable Trust has apparently pledged to add 50p to every £1 they raise, making any donation go even further. With their help, a donation of £6.50 buys 100 square metres of plantation if you feel like supporting this cause

DIRTY ICE IS GOOD

Researchers have discovered that contrary to popular belief half of the ice flows in the Karakoram Range are actually growing rather than shrinking.

The discovery adds a new twist to the row over whether global warming is causing the world's highest mountain range to lose its ice cover and further challenges claims made in a 2007 report by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the glaciers would be gone by 2035.

The new study by scientists at the Universities of California

and Potsdam has found that half of the glaciers in the Karakoram Range are in fact advancing and that global warming is not the deciding factor in whether a glacier survives or melts.

Their report, published in the journal *Nature Geoscience*, found the key factor affecting their advance or retreat is the amount of debris - rocks and mud - strewn on their surface. Debris-covered glaciers are common in the rugged central Himalaya, but they are rare in the more stable landscapes of the Tibetan Plateau, where rates of retreat are higher.

In comparison more than half the studied glaciers in the Karakoram are advancing or stable.

UPDATE FROM LEBANON

We exchange journals with the Spéléo Club Du Liban and their President, Bachir Khoury, has just been interviewed for *Time Out Magazine*. We may not share exactly his lyrical sentiments but it is good to see caving being introduced to a wider audience.

What is it about caving?

You get attached to caves. It becomes more than just a hobby; it's a passion. In a cave you have a feeling like you go back in the womb - no light, no sound, the temperature is stable all year long. I miss it when I am outside of the caves.

What's the attraction of small spaces?

You have small spaces but sometimes they are huge! You have big holes, beautiful formations, scenery you've never seen before - it's so serene.

How does Lebanon fare for caving?

We have 500 caves, with more to discover. Lebanon has the deepest pit hole in the Middle East which can take two whole days to go in and come out - it's 622 metres deep. We are rich with water and calcite so you get many formations because the rock melts like cheese.

How many members does Spéléo Club du Liban have?

50 to 60 active cavers. It was started back in 1951 by a few adventurous guys. Many of the old members are still attached even if they don't do caving - they attend meetings and support the activities.

Are there dangers?

There have been accidents because it's an extreme sport, but Spéléo has a lot of security measures - everything is triple checked - so thank God we have had no deaths or severe injuries in our history.

Spéléo Club du Liban (03 738736).

<http://speleoliban.org>

NEW ANTI-ATLAS GUIDEBOOK

Published by the Oxford Alpine Club, A new Moroccan Anti-Atlas North guidebook is now on sale. The OAC are the OUMC's "parent" club for members when they leave Oxford.

This is the first guidebook published by an Oxford climbing club for a very long time! 'Rock Climbing on the North Side of Jebel el Kest' by Steve Broadbent. To purchase go to OAC books, online shop. www.oxfordalpineclub.co.uk It is on offer at £23.99

The OUMC has been at the forefront of exploration of the Anti-Atlas mountains in Morocco's southwest for a number of years now, with many current and ex-members visiting the region since 2006.

The book describes more than 650 traditional routes between Moderate and E6, with everything from 8m roadside crag routes to 800m Alpine-style ridge climbs.

The club have been there a number of times but if you want to return or go for the first time there is useful material in earlier editions of the journal but this guidebook may throw more light on the area.

The place has an ideal climate between September and April, so if you're looking for winter sun and miles of sun-drenched orange quartzite then it's a great place to consider for your next climbing trip.

They claim this to be the definitive guide to rock-climbs on the North side of Jebel el Kest, including Sidi M'Zal, Idagnidif, Afantinzar, Samazar and Tanalt areas.

MOUNTAIN RESCUE, BY BOAT?

Last edition we had an article about doing the Three Peaks by boat; this time to pursue the theme we look at the sterling work by a mountain rescue team who use boats.

The Swaledale Mountain Rescue volunteers have over the years found themselves called to assist when people get into trouble in the Rivers Swale or Ure. As a result they have formed a team known as their Swiftwater and Flood Rescue Unit and for 8 years now they have been polishing their techniques. Their ambition is to effect rescues without getting their feet wet but will do whatever is necessary if safe to do so. They may rarely actually use any sort of boat but do employ an inflatable rescue sled which is not far removed from one.

As always they welcome support whether by volunteering or donating funds and can be contacted on 01748 826989 or secretary@swaledalemrt.org.uk

Ed

COASTAL UPDATE

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 introduced new powers to extend public recreational access to the English coast. It places a duty on Natural England (NE) and the Secretary of State to secure, as far as possible, a continuous, signposted and managed long distance walking route along the length of the English coast.

The route will include an area of wider coastal land (spreading room), which will be accessible for open-air recreation – for

example, to provide an area where people can rest and enjoy the scenery, picnic or go bird-watching.

Before the new right of access can come into force on a stretch of coast, NE must firstly submit a coastal access report to the Secretary of State setting out how it proposes to implement access on that particular stretch of coast. The Secretary of State will then decide whether their report should be approved (possibly with modifications) or rejected. The Secretary of State must consider any representations and objections that NE has received about the proposals before making a decision.

To help people understand this process, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has now published guidance which explains how a NE report will be considered. This is designed to assist, using 'plain English', anyone who is involved or interested in these procedures .

It includes guidance on the process for making and considering representations and objections and also identifies the roles that the Secretary of State and the person appointed to consider objections will play. A copy of the guidance can be viewed/downloaded at: <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/countryside/crow/110401-coastal-access-report-pdf>

Ed.

LAKES TO DALES

The first phase of the consultation about the boundaries of these national parks has shown that at least 68% of those responding support the principle of designation for each of the five proposed extension areas as National Park.

Respondents generally agreed that the natural beauty and the opportunities for outdoor recreation of the areas proposed met these criteria for designation.

The County and District Councils were generally not supportive of the proposals but they would lose some authority and councils by and large do not like to see their empires shrink. The National Park authorities were supportive.

They received a similar level of response in support of the proposal to designate the Orton Fells as National Park, although no clear consensus emerges from the consultation as to which National Park it should be included within with a considerable diversity of opinion being expressed.

Natural England have now come up with their proposals and have just completed a second phase of consultation on these. They are a variation to the boundaries of the Yorkshire Dales National Park consisting of: an extension to the north, which now includes the Orton Fells, with a major addition at Crosby Ravensworth Fell, and the northern Howgill Fells, Wild Boar Fell and Mallerstang, with a small addition east of Tebay; and an extension to the west, which incorporates Firbank, Barbon, Middleton, Casterton and Leck Fells, the River Lune and fells to the west of this, with a number of additions at Lowgill, below Owshaw Hill and a major addition which extends the boundary as far as the Old Scotch Road

in places, and one deletion north of Kirkby Lonsdale. They also propose a variation to the boundaries of the Lake District National Park consisting of an extension to the east, from Birkbeck Fells Common to Whinfell Common with one small addition at Dillicar Common; and an extension to the south, from Helsington Barrows to Sizergh Fell, including the Lyth Valley, with one small addition at Cinderbarrow.

Natural England expect to consider the response to their final proposals by September and their decision about any extension for either National Park would then be submitted to Defra for confirmation.

THE FORCES OF NATURE

(When your number is up)

It is amazing what information comes to hand when you are an avid collector of stamps.

Alan Linford has turned his thoughts to the disasters in Japan and turned up a stamp which is not impressive but brings to mind a grim story. Mt Unzen, South Japan erupted in 1792, and the tsunami killed 12000 people.

In a later (1991) eruption volcanologists Maurice and Katia Kraffi and Harry Glicken were killed by pyroclastic flow.

Nothing especially odd about that but Harry had been at his post on St Helens in 1980, until relieved by David Johnson who did not survive that eruption. The Grim Reaper lives in a volcano!

n.b. A pyroclastic flow is a fluidised mixture of solid to semi-solid fragments and hot, expanding gases that flows down the flank of a volcanic edifice which can travel at speeds in excess of 100 miles an hour.

NEAR MISSES

Following David Handley's article in the winter 2009 Journal, other members have touched upon near misses they have survived. Given our interests it is indeed doubtful if any of us have not put ourselves into situations which could have led to very different and unwelcome outcomes. David's concept was that by highlighting these we may learn from other people's near disasters.

Adrian Bridge had submitted one such piece shortly before his accident.

Your editor recalls a mishap in the abandoned mines at Alderley Edge when he was in his late teens. For those not familiar with these holes in the ground they were mined from the Bronze Age (c. 4000 years ago) until the early 20th century. From time to time many have been closed for safety reasons but such barriers have not lasted long and the area has been a proving ground for would be cavers. Most of the mines are now accessible although many surface features have been obscured by vegetation over the years. Many of the mines are now owned by the National Trust and have

been leased from them by the Derbyshire Caving Club which maintains access and continues to explore and search for areas of mining that have been closed for centuries.

This is a sandstone escarpment with a number of vertical faults which have been enlarged over the centuries by the action of both water and man. Rich seams of lead and copper were to be found near these faults.

The mines were home from home for generations of ill equipped and not overly wise youths, me included. The details of our escapades are lost in the mists of time but one experience I will never forget. One feature down there was known as plank shaft for the simple reason that it was a shaft of indeterminate depth only to be crossed by a loose builder's plank. I do recall one occasion when I had almost crossed the shaft when I looked back to say something and fell off. In those days of hemp rope I had a fairly bulky pack of kit on my back which somehow jammed between the plank and the rock wall sufficiently to pause my progress enough that I could grab hold of the plank and my friends could then drag me to safety. Ah the follies of youth.

Being a 'Rambler' from Manchester way, I not only got my pleasures on moorlands and down these holes in the ground but learned my first moves as a climber on Stanage and Froggatt Edges which also tempted me into situations I was not then properly equipped to cope with, but more of Froggatt later.

THE BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION (BCA)

Recently the Club has become a Group Member of the BCA. This organisation fulfils for caving and potholing what the BMC does for mountaineering and fell walking, and is recognised by the UK Sports Council as the governing body for caving in Great Britain. It is a federation of Regional Caving Councils, national bodies with specialist interests, caving clubs and individual members.

For many years the Club has been a member of the Council of Northern Caving Clubs (CNCC), one of the main functions of which has been to negotiate agreements with landowners to permit access by caving clubs to caves on private land. In particular, it organised permits to control access by cavers to the Leck Fell area, which includes the Easegill system, the longest system of cave passages in the UK. The CNCC is now subsumed into the BCA structure.

AS a Group Member of the BCA the Club also becomes a member of the British Cave Research Association (BCRA), which is a charitable organisation aimed at promoting the study of caves and karst by encouraging the exploration of caves both in the UK and overseas, which, of course, is also one of the stated objectives of the YRC.

Like the BMC, the BCA also operates a Public Liability (PL) insurance scheme. However, unlike the situation with the BMC, PL cover is not a compulsory component of BCA Group Membership and at present the YRC has opted out of this.

Ed.

More details of the BCA and BCRA can be found in their web sites: www.british-caving.org.uk and www.bcra.org.uk.

Arthur Salmon

BRANCHING OUT

It has been brought to my attention that some members think your club is branching out into new areas of interest.

Whilst they do say that a little bit of what you fancy is good for you I must report that this YRC has nothing to do with our club other than it is a Yorkshire organisation.



I know a lot of us like crawling through passages underground but this has no bearing on this matter.

The Yorkshire Rat Club (est, 2002) is, as I understand it, for keepers of Fancy Rats so if by any chance that is what turns your fancy, try contacting www.yorkshireratclub.co.uk

Info. courtesy WCIC

SIACHEN GLACIER

Whilst not a comprehensive review in the normal sense, Stephen Craven brings to our attention a new book and whatever you feel of the political background he recommends it to you.

Kapadia H. (2010) *Siachen Glacier the Battle of Roses* pp. xxiii & 229 (New Delhi: Rupa).

Harish Kapadia is a well-travelled mountaineer and prolific author about his climbs and treks in the Himalaya. In his latest book he records a detailed history of the various expeditions, from 1821 to 2010, both military and civilian, to the Siachen Glacier at the northernmost tip of India.

The military were involved since the days of the British Raj because of the need to discourage the Tsar who had designs on the Empire. This was part of the "Great Game", well illustrated in Rudyard Kipling's famous 1901 book "Kim". The Survey of India sent many teams to Siachen and elsewhere, escorted by army people, but there was no military action until recently.

The current problem, as described by Kapadia in this book, is that the Siachen glacier and adjacent peaks have the misfortune to be situated where the disputed frontiers of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and China meet. The border between India and Pakistan has been disputed since Partition in 1947. Since 1984 there has been full scale intermittent fighting at the Glacier between the Indian and Pakistani armies with appalling environmental devastation.

The tragedy is that although the war is unwinnable, and horrendously expensive in human and rupee terms, the antagonists have failed to reach agreement after 26 years.

Kapadia gives a good account of the various military and political attempts to find a solution, and of the several intervening civilian and military expeditions to the adjacent peaks.

There is, however, one major omission from the political aspects of the story. Stephen contends that the tragedy can be blamed on Clement Attlee, the British (Labour) Prime Minister, who agreed to the Partition of India in 1947. "His expedient decision has been responsible for the deaths of millions of locals, during and after 1947, along the whole length of the artificial Indo-Pakistani border."

SUMMER (A Wet Crack or should that be Craic)

Following his article about the joys of Autumn, early in July Michael Smith was out with the President walking and climbing a round of the Stanage and Bamford edges in the Peak, after one of the driest springs on record. Light rain set in as Michael neared the awkward top of one VD crack in Bamford's Wrinkled Wall area but the weather cleared as they finished it. Then Peter was in a similar position on the next crack climb on the Wall when the heavens opened and the rock was soon streaming with water. Michael quickly found a 1m cube niche to squat in and belay while fighting off Peter's dog's attempts to escape the rain. Meanwhile, Peter battled on retreating deep into the upper crack, reached the top he found some shelter until the sun emerged and then brought Michael up.

At that point the pair of them stowed the sopping gear, finished off the walk and retired to the pub. Another good day: 8 miles and 5 climbs. Oh the joys of an English Summer!

WINTER

Continuing the theme, looking back at last winter Michael Smith has provided these reminders.

The first is Derwent Edge from the north and the lower is looking towards Manchester (Longendale) from Round Hill by the Woodhead Road



BOLIVIA RETROSPECTIVE

John Sterland's memories of base camp and the Pelechuco trek of the YRC's 1988 expedition to the Bolivian cordillera Apolobamba. On that trip he was accompanied by Ian Crowther, David Hick, Harvey Lomas, David Martindale and Michael Smith.

The route to the Apolobamba started up the motorway out of La Paz and then through the "shanty town" of El Alto to Lake Titicaca, where a right fork was taken when the road ceased to be metalled. It soon became apparent that the driver, his assistant, and the camp minder had no idea where the Apolobamba was. Not one of them had ever been there, although it was only two hundred miles from La Paz. The road was comparatively well engineered, but was very stony and dusty. It evidently followed a centuries-old trail to Pelechuco. We were detained at several military police posts, where it was necessary for us to produce passports. This was probably in accordance with normal arrangements for the locals, who have to show travel permits and passports when they cross from one province to another. We had lunch at a village where one of these provincial posts was located, and it cost £9 for nine people, including beer. The meal consisted of a broth of lamb, rice, traditional-type potatoes, and a variety of black potato.

The trail across the head waters of Lake Titicaca was almost entirely under water, and all hands were required to push the jeep across to firmer terrain. Then at a village called Escamo we had a puncture. This did not surprise us when we inspected the tyres, for none of them would have passed the tyre test in the UK.

As we drew close to the mountains the weather became very cloudy, and visibility was reduced to about thirty yards. We were aiming for Ulla Ulla, a small village in the foothills of the Andes, but none of the locals seemed to know exactly where Ulla Ulla was: they just knew it was a long way. In the event we bypassed Ulla Ulla, and shortly afterwards, three and a half hours travelling time from Escamo the light began to fade as we arrived at another village named Hichocolo at about 6.30 pm. We hoped that we might stay the night in the school room at Hichocolo, which bore the notice "Nucleo Escuela Rural". It is quite usual in normal circumstances for travellers in these remote areas to be accommodated in the local school room. Unfortunately, however, the schoolmaster was ill and was lying on the school room floor, so that haven was not available to us. We were only about ten kilometres from the village of Nubi, which was as far as we expected the jeep to take us, and a young school teacher offered to guide us over the Sierra to Nubi, which we intended to be our base village.

The track from Hichocolo, which would be impassable in the rainy season, was located between two very obscure rows of stones to delineate the general direction and had been made reasonably flat by scraping off the other ubiquitous stones.

The existence of several water courses necessitated frequent reconnaissance to ensure that the jeep could negotiate the terrain. We eventually arrived at Nubi, well after darkness had descended, to a dual reception committee of the inhabitants, who had been alerted to our imminent approach by the head lights of the jeep. The first contingent consisted of children, and the second of adults, who stood behind them. The school teacher from Hichocolo negotiated for us to stay the night in the schoolroom, and we went to bed (in the dark) at 9.30 pm, and rose the next day at 6.30 am. We then set out to find a suitable site for our base camp as far up the Nubi valley as possible beyond Nubi Lake.

Within the compound where the school was located there was a bee-hive-shaped oven with three holes; one at the top for ventilation, and two about six inches from ground level; one for feeding the fire, and the other for inserting the bread. The fuel used is either the grass of the tundra, named lenya, or sometimes llama dung. The main activity of the villagers was looking after the llama and alpaca herds, on which they heavily rely for their existence, and many of the animals had coloured ribbons in their ears to identify the herd from which they came.

The school had twenty pupils, with one school master to look after them. They were taught in the new school house, whereas apparently we had been accommodated in the old school house. Many of the pupils had to walk four or five miles each day to school, and return the same distance to their home in the late afternoon. All the villages we visited in the Apolobamba had school houses provided by UNESCO, sometimes in conjunction with the Bolivian government. Spanish is the language taught to the Indian children, so we were able to communicate reasonably well.

In another part of the village there was what appeared to be a chapel and this, in common with many other buildings, had an earth floor. I located one small building which seemed to have excavations under the floor. I later discovered that it was a "two hole" loo, abandoned for the time being and replaced by another smaller loo in another part of the village. It appears that the villagers used one for a time, moving on to another until the first one had subsided a bit!

Nubi village boasts the inevitable very rough football pitch, and we were given permission to photograph a match between the young men of the village. Football seemed to be the only physical recreation of the village, and the girls and ladies also played the game; one of them was carrying a child in a papoose carrier. The shawl, or papoose, was folded over the child in a very similar fashion to a nappy.

We then set out to find a suitable site for our base camp as far up the Nubi valley as possible beyond Nubi Lake. Nubi Lake itself is three kilometres long, fed by two smaller lakes further up the valley. All were glaciated, and the two smaller ones higher up the valley were heavily silted. Since it was not desirable to drink glaciated water, a site near a small stream was sought, and a suitable place was found near the outfall of the third lake. The preliminary walk up the valley revealed that there were quite a number of flowers in the area, and many birds. In fact on this and following days we

saw black ibis, giant coots, ducks, and a honey buzzard, which seemed to be about the same size as an English buzzard.

Having selected a suitable site for the base camp, at about fifteen thousand feet, we returned to Nubi village where we hoped to hire mules, but apparently none were available. However, it was agreed by the locals that a sufficient number of men would be available on the next day to man-handle our equipment and baggage to the base camp. As things turned out, however, the next day they decided that the baggage was too heavy for them, and they decided to patch up the roofs of their buildings instead!

Fortunately David Hick had seen a muleteer (arrieros) in the locality with a mule and a donkey, and arranged that he would assist us with the transport the next day. This meant that we had to spend another night, the Tuesday, in the school room.

The arrieros, with his mule and donkey, was very late arriving on the Wednesday, and we thought he would not turn up. We therefore had to hump a lot of the equipment ourselves, because it was likely he would not be able to make the two journeys which would be necessary in the one day. Because of this, when the four of us who were carrying the loads returned to Nubi we did not have a full complement of sleeping equipment. I had only one portion of my two-layered sleeping bag, and Harvey Lomas had no sleeping bag at all. Added to this Mike Smith was ill.

However, by sharing clothing and equipment we were able to spend a reasonably comfortable night, and we had decided that the rest of the equipment could be transported by the arrieros with the mule and donkey the next day.

To our surprise the arrieros did return that evening with Francisco, the camp minder, at 8.30 pm and wanted to go up to the base camp again that night, although it was pitch black. In view of the fact that we would have been left without any sleeping and other equipment, or would have had to accompany him, we said it was no go and elected to get up at 5am for a 6am start the next day.

However, loading the mule and the donkey took longer than expected, as it always did, and we eventually set off at 7.00am. The loads were probably too heavy for the animals and very slow progress was made to join Mike Smith and David Hick, who were engaged preparing base camp.



Base camp, located as it was near the outfall of the three Nubi valley lakes, was comparatively handy for climbers on both sides of the valley. As I have mentioned, it was close to a mountain stream, which although it froze solid every night, was very useful for ablutions and washing clothes when it thawed out, as it did half way through each morning. However, the water was so cold that washing clothes was a very uncomfortable exercise.



The temperature varied between 27 degrees centigrade during the day and minus thirty at night. It was dark between 7 pm and 7 am, so it was a long uncomfortable night. Our leader had given us a list of suggested equipment to take with us, and included in this was a "hospital" water bottle. I thought that this was an unnecessary addition to our already heavy baggage, and I did not take one. However, I soon realised the wisdom of the advice, because I always had to respond to the call of nature during the night, and the temperature was always low enough to freeze the proverbial outside the tent.

One of the first things to do on arrival at base camp was to construct a loo, and this job inevitably fell to me. During the excavations for this edifice I noticed a considerable number of green chrysalises underneath most of the stones, but we were unable to identify what variety of moths was likely to emerge in due course.

The next day was spent by the genuine climbers in checking their equipment preparatory to embarking on their attack on three major peaks in the area. On the Friday after our arrival at base camp Mike Smith, David Hick and Ian Crowther made an attempt to climb Cololo, which is 19,404 feet high. I and David Martindale took the advanced camp tent and one or two other items of equipment up to the col overlooking the lake, and then crossed the peat bog to the glacial moraine, in which three small lakes had formed. The whole area was extensively glaciated, and several moraine flowers were found.

On the way up we discovered a miniature house and allied outbuildings, which we assumed was made by an Indian child, in a stone shelter at about 16,500 feet. To surprise the builder we put a bar of chocolate inside the doorway. An alternative explanation given to us later was that it was a model of a house to scare off or satisfy the mountain spirits, and the builder hoped that one day he would own a house like it.

We carried the baggage to about 17,000 feet and handed over the equipment to the climbers at the beginning of the glacier. On the way down we went very close to an inhabited hovel at 16,500 feet where there was a woman and a very fierce dog, which in fact attacked Ian two days later when he returned.

The attempt on Cololo was not entirely successful, the three climbers getting to within two hundred feet of the summit. The main reason for the failure was that the advanced camp was not high enough. Ian arrived back in camp at about 8 pm on Saturday night in an exhausted state and decided not to do any more climbing. Thereafter at base camp we followed the progress of the remaining two climbers through binoculars, and during the three weeks we stayed at base camp they were able to make two first-time British ascents and pioneered a new route on Cololo, which they subsequently conquered at the second attempt.



Cololo with new route on the right skyline

All these peaks were about 20,000 feet, and details of the climbs have been well documented by Mike Smith, who made detailed observations of temperature, snowfall, wind velocity and so on, both on the mountains and at base camp. Being a physicist he was well qualified to make these records.



David Hick on the upper ridge of Cololo - photos by Michael Smith

It had been arranged that if they were in difficulty while they were at advanced camp, each evening when it became dark they would light a red flare. The idea was that if we saw the red glare from base camp we would have to mount a rescue operation the next day. We could not expect any help from the locals because of their superstitions, and so the remaining four in the party, later reduced to two, prayed that at nine o'clock each evening we should not see a red rocket, and that we would be able to go to bed knowing that all was well. Goodness knows what we would have done if we had been called out on a rescue attempt at 20,000 feet.

It was soon discovered that we did not have sufficient food to last three weeks, and it was agreed that on the following Thursday Ian Crowther and I would trek over the mountains (not the 20,000 feet peaks) to Pelechuco to buy more supplies.

David Martindale and Harvey Lomas had only been able to obtain leave from their respective jobs for four weeks, and they had to make an early return to England. They were to accompany us to Pelechuco to board the Saturday truck from Pelechuco to La Paz. Several days before our departure for Pelechuco, a young Indian came to see us early in the morning just after we got up to ask if we had any medication to cure his wife. We asked questions as far as we were able, in Spanish, which he only vaguely understood, and we eventually found that she was sick and had diarrhoea. We diagnosed that she had "the trots", to which all of us had been subject on at least one occasion. We therefore prescribed Imodium tablets, and off went the comoseta armed with a supply of this

medication. This evidently proved to be the wrong diagnosis and treatment because three days later he returned, saying that his wife was no better, and he requested that we go to see her. Further questioning revealed that she was likely to have cystitis or some infection of the urethra. Mike Smith and I therefore packed up our medical equipment and medication in a large bag and accompanied the Indian, whose name was Andres Barreras, to his village at Kelo

Pado, which took us about one and a half hours of rough walking.

This indicated to us that the bush telegraph had been in operation, and in fact our presence was known to all the locals within several kilometres. There were no roads leading to Kelo Pado, which is situated in what amounts to a secret valley. The village was almost at the head of six small lakes, marked on all our inadequate maps as only one large lake, connected by an outlet stream to the Nubi valley system of lakes. This proved to be quite incorrect, since the source of the river running into the lakes at Kelo was from the South, rather than the North East, as marked on the maps.

On arrival at Kelo Pado we were taken into a small courtyard by Andres Barreras. Two small boxes and blankets of llama wool were produced and we were invited to sit down. On one side of the courtyard were some sort of living quarters, probably communal for day-time use, and on two other sides were store houses. On the fourth side was what could have been a slaughter house, because there was a stone channel leading from the doorway to the exit from the compound: presumably this was for the blood to run away. No doubt the building was used for killing llamas, and some llama meat, dark red in colour, was laid out on one of the walls to dry. The open gateway into the courtyard had an unnecessary overhead lintel, and the walls of the buildings were made of peaty earth, bound together with whitish mud, and bonded with stones. The roofs were thatched and the courtyard was cobbled.

Many of the members of the family of the Indian girl were inside the living quarters, and very soon smoke issued from the roof. The fire was to heat water to prepare some cocoa, with which we were later served in mugs made of metal. This beverage was very expensive, and only drunk by the locals on special occasions, so we were very honoured by their hospitality. While we were drinking the cocoa two members of the family went to fetch the Indian wife, who was only about eighteen and who we had been told could not walk. She was supported into the living quarters, and then there was another long wait. Eventually Andres said that she was ready to see us. We entered the hut and saw her sitting on a small chair surrounded by members of the family. The building had two beds, one at either end, and a miscellany of various domestic utensils and paraphernalia in between. We asked her where the pain was, and ascertained that it was worse after urinating. Very "wisely" we then considered the medicines available, and gave her a course of antibiotics, and departed hoping our treatment would be successful.

We had occasion to revisit Kelo Pado again shortly afterwards, when the wind broke the middle pole of our communal tent, which collapsed on top of all our stores. We had three smaller mountain tents, used for sleeping accommodation, but our meals were prepared and eaten in this large bell tent, which also housed our stores. The mornings in the district were generally calm, but almost invariably about 1 pm the wind rose, sometimes quite strongly, resulting that day in the breaking of our tent pole. On several afternoons there would be flurries of snow, but the wind would subside about 8 pm. It was therefore necessary to replace the pole, but unfortunately there were no trees whatever in the Nubi valley or on the surrounding hills. We had noticed some wooden stakes at Kelo Pado, so we went to the village again on the pretext of asking how Andres' wife was.

She seemed very much better, and we were encouraged to ask if Andres could lend us a pole for the tent. The Spanish word for pole is "palo", and the Spanish word for chicken is "pollo". For a long time Andres thought we required a chicken, and a good deal of unintelligible conversation ensued on this mistaken premise. Eventually he understood and produced a wooden paddle which was used in their

small boats on lake Nubi for fishing. Apparently quite large fish can be caught in the lake, except in the months of July and August, so the paddle was available for our use.

Andres' wife was very grateful to us for curing her, and asked if we had anything to cure her mother, who had a pain in the shoulder. We did not have anything very suitable, but I did give her a tube of hydrocortisone, which we had for skin eruptions. I warned her, by a series of signs, that she should not take it orally, but I did not subsequently hear how she got on with it! We asked if we could take a photograph of Andres and his wife, and they rather surprisingly agreed to that. They do not like to be photographed, particularly the women, so before presenting themselves for the photograph Andres had a wash, changed his shoes and clothes generally, and donned a very colourful poncho and a highly coloured tall hat. His wife took off her hat – otherwise worn continuously – and posed with Andres, Ian and me for photographs. Andres asked if we would let him have copies, which we agreed to do, and he was surprised that we could not produce them straight away. He seemed somewhat dismayed when we said that it would be six weeks before we could send them to him. When I returned to England and had our films developed I sent two photographs by separate mail on consecutive days, but one was returned to me by the postal authorities. Hopefully the other one did arrive.

As mentioned in part one my special task was to make a botanical review of the area, and I spent a large part of my time in doing that. I was mainly concerned in making a survey of flowers between about fourteen thousand feet and seventeen thousand feet, and I was quite surprised how many varieties there were, but almost all of them were dissimilar from alpine flowers in Europe. Inevitably not all the plants I found were in flower, but some had seeded, so that my collection was split into two parts. The first was of dried flowers, and the second was of seeds. I did not have a proper flower press, so I had to improvise. I did this with the aid of two stout pieces of cardboard, interspaced with blotting paper, between which I carefully placed the flowers. I secured the whole package with elastic bands, put it under my sleeping bag and slept on it. This rather Heath Robinson arrangement seemed to work very well, and I was able to put together quite an interesting portfolio on my return to England. I also took photographs of all the flowers discovered in the Apolobamba, and also in Pelechuco. That village was at the lower level of about 12,000 feet, and many of the flowers and plants growing there were similar to European varieties. All these are recorded in my botanic portfolio of the expedition. I had hoped that Kew Gardens or other similar establishments would be able to identify the plants of the Apolobamba either from the pressed flower exhibits or the photographs, but to my great surprise I was not able to obtain identification of any of them except those for which I had been able to ascertain the local name from the indigenous Indians.

David Martindale had a similar lack of success in identifying the Bolivian birds, of which there was a multitude, both in number and variety, in our camping area. However, we saw black ibis, a wader on the second and third Nubi lakes, a giant

coot, and black and white Andean geese on several lakes, a buzzard-type bird, light brown in colour and two feet six inches across, large brown ducks with white stripes, silver coloured birds about the size of a thrush with a white streak on their bodies, innumerable small brown birds very much like sparrows, and an agilla, which was a larger bird about the size of a plover, black in colour with a white stripe on its body. There was also a smaller bird with a squarish tail and a white belly: its tail had a white tip and a white patch on the top. Once we saw a grey and brown bird about the size of a buzzard, which alighted on a rock in Lake Nubi and stood in a hunched - up position rather like a heron, but it had much smaller legs. Later on we were all thrilled when we espied two small condors high in the hills.

The day after our visit to Kelo Pado four of us trekked over the mountains from Lake Nubi to Pelechuco. This was a combined operation in that Harvey Lomas and David Martindale had decided to catch the weekly truck from Pelechuco to La Paz on the first stage of their return to England, and Ian and I wished to replenish our food supplies.

We engaged the same arrieros, who had earlier assisted us in setting up base camp, to accompany us and Francisco to the village and then on a trek round the mountains surrounding base camp. His name was Vernon Huanca, pronounced "Wanker", and he brought his mule and donkey with him. We negotiated his charge at forty bolivianos, but later we found we had to pay for food for his mule, which cost ten bolivianos in Pelechuco.

The track to Pelechuco started in the direction of the village of Nubi but almost half way along the North side of the lake we branched off North West up the hill and then across very rough boring country to Lake Cololo. Swinging south we passed an old cemetery at an ancient mining commune, where all the graves were covered with a little house-like building. The track passed the old mine and eventually joined the road to Pelechuco which climbed past two lakes on the left to the top of a 5,000 metre (about 16,250 feet) high pass. Then commenced an interminable downhill journey past Lake Katantica to what we thought was Pelechuco, but which turned out to be a small village called Aqua Blanca. Another three quarters of an hour walk brought us to Pelechuco, and the journey in total took us twelve hours. I calculated that it was probably about twenty five miles.

We arrived at Pelechuco at 7 pm, and we hoped to stay overnight at the Pension Mexico. Whether there were normally no rooms available, or whether they were all full we were unable to ascertain. However, the proprietress did not offer us accommodation, and we had to arrange to sleep in the village reading rooms.

Since by this time it was pitch dark it was rather difficult to unload the donkey and the mule and transport our equipment up the rickety and irregular stairs to the reading rooms. All the walls up the stairs were covered with 1965 editions of newspapers, leaves from books, Christmas cards (in English), plus photographs of politicians, both Bolivian and Peruvian, and any other bright posters which were

apparently available at the time. Francisco and the arrieros slept in the reading rooms as well. Since Francisco for some reason had not brought his sleeping bag with him I lent him my bivvy bag.

We had supper in the Pension Mexico, which by English standards was very sleazy, but by Bolivian standards very good. Next morning we had breakfast there, consisting of a cheese sandwich and coffee, and since there was nowhere else to eat we also had lunch there, and on following days breakfast and evening meals. The best part of the evening meals was soup, which was very palatable, usually flavoured with a herb very much like rosemary, which we diagnosed as having been taken from a small white-flowering bush which grew prolifically in the area. The soup was followed by a second course of noodles, potatoes and meat of unspecified variety.

Pelechuco had a very large central square with a fountain in the middle, and where hens roamed at will. The buildings on all sides consisted generally of very small shops, all of which seemed to be selling similar goods. It made one wonder who they were selling them to, since a large portion of the population appeared to be shopkeepers, and it seemed they could only be selling to themselves!

Most of the shops had masses of tins of sardines and evaporated milk and very little else, which led one to the supposition that there must have been some grand national transaction in which the supply of sardines to Bolivia figured very significantly. There was practically no cheese and what there was was very expensive, and little in the way of canned fruit and vegetables, but there were no fresh vegetables at all. The people in the village seemed very honest and trusting. For instance, one shopkeeper left her till unattended for over an hour. With the knowledge of several local people we took two cans of fruit and returned an hour or so later to pay for them.

Against this background we carried out a shopping expedition for base camp stores, which next day were dispatched back to base camp in the care of Francisco and Vernon Huanca. However, the food we were able to purchase was very limited, and comprised of very dry bread, what we thought were llama cheeses at two bolivianos (50p) each, the only two tins of fruit in the whole village, oranges, margarine, the one tin of corned beef in the village, and a bottle of Nescafe.

Most of the male inhabitants of Pelechuco, and indeed most Bolivian men generally, wore baseball-type caps carrying an advertising motif; e.g. Coca Cola or K B Toy stores. These would seem to derive their origin from the American Civil War caps. The average height of Pelechuco women, and generally in Bolivia, was about four feet ten inches, and Bolivia is the only place I have visited where I felt tall, for the men were only about five feet two inches tall. This I assume is because of the altitude at which they live, which would account also for the development of their very large chests. The women generally have long black plaited hair, about two feet long, and the Indian men do not grow beards.

We spent two days exploring Pelechuco and its environs, and took an interest in the buildings of the village, many of which were in a dilapidated condition, although quite a number of them were being renovated, very laboriously, by fairly large teams of local builders. Building techniques seemed to be similar to those in the UK; e.g. lintels are used above the doors and windows, although there is a scarcity of timber. Cavity-type pink bricks were used in many of the renovations, and mud is used to bind the bricks together. There was quite a large school in the village, and perhaps surprising in view of its remoteness, all the children attending wore white coats. This was not the only sign of modern civilisation in Pelechuco, for we observed that electric street lights bordered the main street. However, we found that the cost of these had been met by some international funding, but the village had never had sufficient money to pay for the provision of electricity, so they had never been lit.

Pelechuco is located in a bowl amid the mountains; numerous streams flowed through the village, and all the washing of clothes was carried out in these streams, which also provide the sewage system. Half way through the village there were three "loos", built over the stream for ease of effluent disposal. The great thing was not to live near the stream below these public loos. The village is the Bolivian equivalent of a market town and was the centre for much communal activity for people living several miles around – hence the public reading rooms.

Workmen such as gold miners occasionally congregated in the town. We met several of these outside the Pension Mexico. They had come into town to buy supplies, including explosives, all of which they seemed to be able to purchase from Maria da Alvarez, the owner of Pension Mexico. In addition to the eating place (hardly a restaurant), in the same building she had the largest village shop, selling a variety of food. The explosives were kept, or perhaps hidden, under a pile of rather ancient carrots. The gold miners told us that they earned five bolivianos a day. They enquired how much they could earn in the UK on the one hand, and how much various articles cost on the other hand. I felt in the circumstances I should tone down both answers, since there was such a tremendous difference between their wages and prices and those at home.

The plan of Pelechuco in our guide book was inaccurate, and I spent some time in drawing a more accurate version, which later was sent to the publishers. Whether they amended their next edition I do not know. On return to base camp I drew a very rough map of the area around Lake Nubi, which had also been inaccurately drawn in our guide book. This also was sent to the publishers, but we received no acknowledgement, so perhaps travellers are still being misled who acknowledged our assistance in the next edition. This perhaps is of little consequence, since the only foreign visitors to the Apolobamba since 1912 have been climbers and botanists, and they have all documented their travels. I think that until we arrived there had only been about twenty non-American visitors previously. I am not surprised.

As mentioned earlier, on our trips in and around Pelechuco we found a number of interesting sub alpine flowers, and in

search of these and in general to explore the region we walked about two miles down one of the trails towards the tropical forest, which is not far away. I was somewhat scared when the track narrowed to about eighteen inches under a rock overhang, with a sheer drop of 1000 feet below. On the way back, however, we saw a local couple with two very small children walking on the same route. They were evidently going home, probably after buying their week's supplies from Pelechuco, and seemed completely unperturbed by, or oblivious of the danger of the track.

While walking down the valley we saw a torrent duck, which follows the course of streams in ravine-like territory and swims with the torrent.

One morning we watched a lorry driver and his mate changing the main axle bearing of their lorry in the square; clearly, because of the distance from any garage, the lorry drivers had to be good mechanics. The vehicles in Pelechuco and elsewhere in Bolivia are mainly Japanese, but there are a few Italian and German vehicles. In La Paz a large number of private cars are second or third or even fourth hand American cars: it would appear that old bangers are knocked out in Bolivia.

Later that same day we were accosted by the police, specially drafted in, and who had details in a TAWA (travel agent document) of the imminent arrival of trekkers to Pelechuco. We found it difficult to persuade the police that the party referred to was not us, and there was a long explanation of the word "pax", since the document indicated that there would be several "pax". We suggested the possibility that it was a misspelling of the word "packs". The same discussion continued the next morning with someone who appeared to be a lorry driver. It seemed to us that the police had nothing else to do apart from trying to interpret this quite unimportant document.

David Martindale and Harvey Lomas caught the 2am lorry on Saturday morning to La Paz. This, however, did not leave until 4 am, after the driver spent two hours honking his horn in the village square. The journey to La Paz was reportedly very uncomfortable and dusty, and it took twenty four hours to cover the 22 miles. According to Harvey Lomas, at one staging point a local fat lady sat on his head, such was the overloading of the vehicle. Prior to the departure of Ian and me on the next day we accepted a letter from Maria da Alvarez to Pamela Holt, who was a botanist and climber who had visited the Apolobamba a few years before. I sent it on to Pamela when I returned to England: I saw her at the annual dinner of The Yorkshire Ramblers last year and she confirmed that she had received it and had replied to Maria, with whom she had stayed when she was in Bolivia. We compared interesting notes on the area, including her tale of when she and her female companion were accosted by bandits. We owed quite a lot of money to Maria for the last evening of our stay in Pelechuco, when we had got somewhat tight on Sangria: she said it was "cancellanoed". However, we had to pay one American dollar per night to the village headman (he might have been the mayor) for the use of the public rooms. This was a matter of bargaining, and we wondered how much went into his own pocket.

HOT ROCK

More on the recent climbing week in Sella, Spain, not far from Alicante, attended by Adrian Bridge, Andy Wells, Michael Smith and Tim Josephy



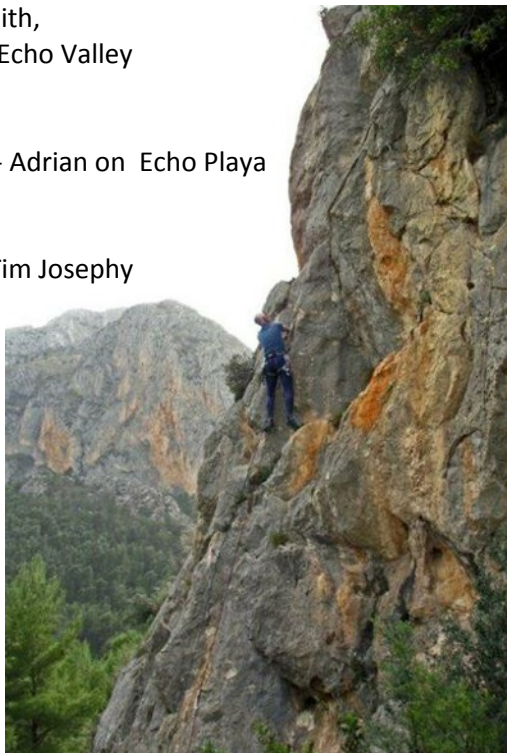
Penyon d'Ifaq at Calpe, from ridge, showing the rest of the team - Photo Adrian Bridge



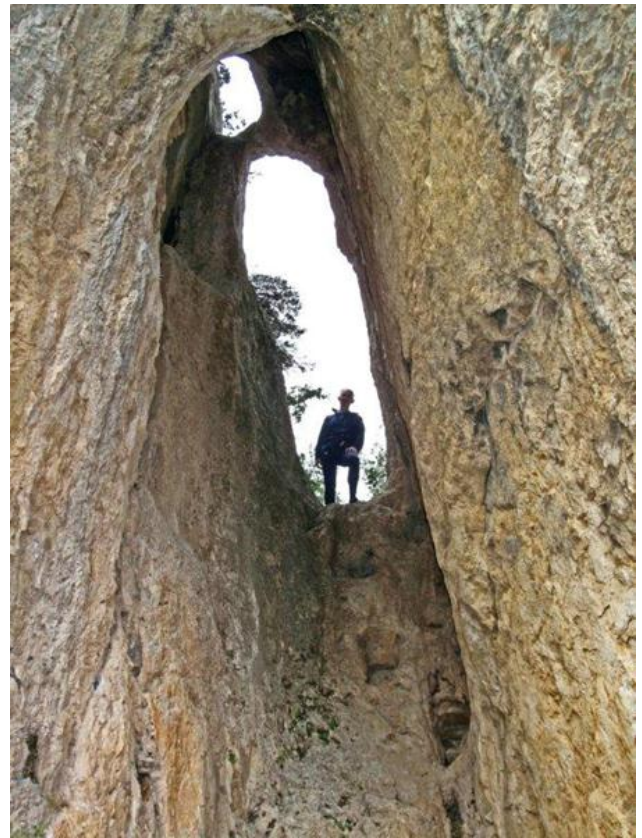
Michael Smith,
Via Esther, Echo Valley

and below - Adrian on Echo Playa

Photos by Tim Josephy



Bernia Ridge - Photo Adrian Bridge



Above - Adrian looking through The Eyehole, Sella
Below - Michael Smith on Espolon Gris, Toix West



A FEARSOME PROSPECT

Roy Denney

I recently had occasion to look through my photographs from my trek up the Khumbu Glacier. No, I was not contemplating a repeat, although that prospect is enticing. I was actually faced with the far more daunting prospect of giving another talk to the Woman's Institute about that episode. I did so a number of times during the years immediately following my trip but it is eight years now since I last did it and my nerve is not what it was.

Apparently the organisation locally has a list of supposedly interesting speakers they can call upon to brighten up their meetings and my name is still on that list. I had originally been introduced to them by an ocean yachting friend who worked the same circuit. They must be getting desperate to look to the tale of something that happened over 13 years ago or perhaps more up-to-date raconteurs may be charging too much. I did not have the heart to tell them that the modest fee against my name should really have increased over the intervening years. In reality, I would probably have done it just for my supper and petrol, as in the end I quite enjoyed dusting down my old slide collection which I had not looked at myself for many years.

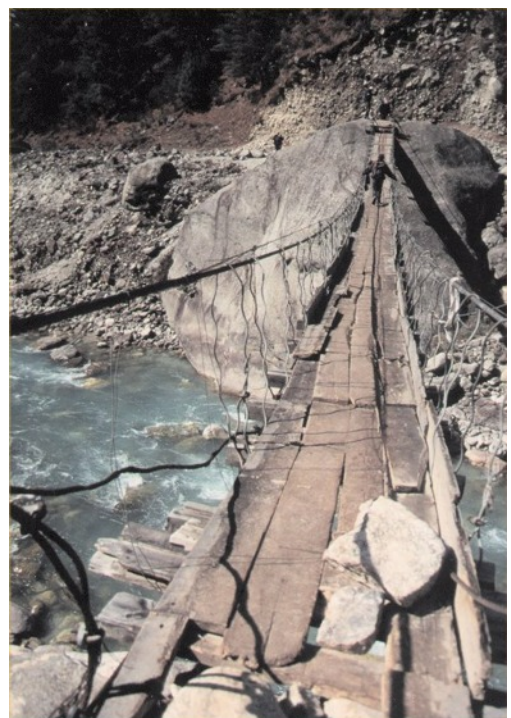
To celebrate his 50th birthday and my taking early retirement, a business friend (Alan Pearce) and I were determined to tackle something out of the ordinary and after considering a number of other options decided to go and see Everest. When it was a fresh report, Alan and I used to do a two hour slide show sharing the patter but it was refined down to a one hour power point presentation and as I continued doing them alone I learned to tailor the talk towards the group listening, as it was strange what elements amused or entertained them.

The highlight of the night for most WI gatherings was talk of staggering out of bug bag in the middle of the night in Lobuche to wander through the snow to the prepared hole in the ground to do what nature required. My description of disrobing in a toilet tent (a gesture to privacy totally unnecessary at 2.00 in the morning) sufficiently to do my business and then resuming the multi layers of apparel was far more interesting to them than me sitting on the slopes of Kala Pattar and admiring Everest.

Another incident which always brings a smile to my face when I mention it does not seem to trigger much merriment to the listeners so I do not mention it these days. I suppose if you have not been there it does not have the same impact. This relates to our last night at Lukla. We were upstairs in one of the then few two-story buildings and were discussing what tips to hand out to our support team. Our sirdar came up the stairs to talk to us and without giving it a thought I had said to Alan "Shush, I can smell someone coming". I had indeed smelled him before I heard him and it seemed an entirely natural comment in situ.

On the couple of occasions when I addressed church based groups there was much interest in the way the numerous religions in Nepal not only co-exist but overlap and merge. School groups were something else again. No oohs and ahs at the sight of mighty peaks but definitely for some of the perilous paths and reactions to some of the bridges were a delight.

Certainly my own pictures of bridges and others which have come my way from around the world could provide a fascinating story in itself as to how technology has moved on. Amongst the bridges we crossed in Nepal were several across the Dudh Kosi. In the lower reaches a long-stretching old bridge had just been replaced by a more modern one but higher up the valley, was one where holes in the planking were blocked by loose boulders.



Even the more modern of these was a far cry from the recently completed ocean bridge across Hangzhou Bay in China. This bridge is 36 Km long, has 8 lanes and in the centre is a 10,000 sq.m. service complex complete with petrol station, restaurant, hotel, conference rooms and a look out tower.

Another classic bridge in China seems to be trying to compete with air travel.



Turning to our trek itself, and with the benefit of seeing the pictures afresh, my own lasting memories are not of the trek as a whole but of a series of one-off highlights.

I recall the decrepit ex-military chopper which flew us into Lukla and that village itself with its remarkable 'airport'. An incredibly cold camp above Namche will never be forgotten for several reasons, nor will the days spent based at Dengboche acclimatising and doing day outings amongst the peaks in superb weather.

Phortse and its wildlife and the beautiful Dudh Kosi River on the way out also stand out but much in between was pretty grim and better not dwelt on.

The chopper was apparently one of 12 Soviet army surplus machines left behind in Afghanistan which had been acquired to set up this small local airline. I gather that by the time we used them they only had 4 left and were constantly cannibalising the others for parts. We sat on 'park benches' around the sides of the chopper with a mountain of freight in the centre. Any concerns we had about having our backs to the windows and not being able to see the views was soon dissipated as we could see perfectly well through the holes in the fuselage. Perhaps we should have known what to expect when the crew passed a tray round before take off with boiled sweets and earplugs!

Lukla airport was itself something of a surprise as well. We had little choice other than to fly there as the alternative was a 7 day trek from the roadhead. We did have the chance to take a small fixed wing plane to Lukla but it was much more expensive and having arrived we were glad we had elected for the copter. The short runway was uphill to stop the planes as they came in to land and on take-off it was like a ski jump as planes launched themselves over a dramatic drop to gain air speed. I gather the gravel runway has been improved since those days.



The most popular time to go is in the autumn after the monsoons but everywhere is busy at that time of the year which we thought would detract from the majesty of the area so we decided to go in the short window between the end of winter and the onset of the monsoons. In hindsight this was perhaps not such a good idea because as it turned out spring was late coming and the monsoons early. As a result we had some very challenging weather with several blizzards and at the end of the trek some torrential rainfall leading to mudslides.

On the way in, we did camp above Namche Bazaar near a large Soviet expedition, kitting up for a summit assault. They followed us up the valley, a few days behind us and it was later reported that they had 7 fatalities on Everest.

Rather than sign up for a large group trek we used Himalayan Kingdoms to make the arrangements to get us to Nepal and to introduce us to the Tiger Mountains Agency in Kathmandu who recruited our team to meet us at Lukla. We flew out of Kathmandu by helicopter to Lukla to start the trek.

Other recollections include setting off from Lukla, itself at 9184 ft / (2880m.) and finding it somewhat disconcerting starting the trek going downhill, bearing in mind how high we were to go.

This day lulled us into a false sense of confidence. It was mostly downhill and generally in hazy sunshine with an overnight at only minus 5 degrees. Next day involved a long climb, very steep in places, up to Namche Bazaar with light snow starting to fall for the last hour. We ended up camping on the hillside above the village and knowing that we had struggled to sleep the previous night, we decided to walk down the 300 or so feet to the village to pass some time in what could be loosely described as a bar. By the time we got back to our tent the whole night sky was alight with stars; every star in the heavens was on view. During the night as a consequence of these clear skies, the temperature fell dramatically to about minus 20 degrees bringing its own problems which have always caused some amusement when I did my 'talks'.

We had, of course, erected the canvas tent in snow and therefore wet, and in the morning it was frozen rigid and impossible to pack for some time. By late morning and in good sunshine we decided to push on with one of our Sherpas and to find a lodge for that night with our tent to catch up in due course. As it happens the lodge, if very crude, was so much better than the tent that whilst that was carted round with us for the rest of the trek we never used it again.

This was followed by several largely damp, misty and pretty miserable days culminating in us dropping over a thousand feet back down to the Dudh Kosi river, passing through woodlands in misty sunlight before the long climb to the monastery at Tengboche. Fog closed in during the steep ascent and heavy snow starting to fall. We were forced to spend from just after noon until our 7.30 bedtime, huddled around a stove in a small hut. Our companions were a party of twelve Germans only one of whom spoke even passable English. Five minutes break in the gloom in early evening gave us our only glimpse of monastery and next morning it was still snowing. After taking advice from our climbing Sherpa we decided to push on although we were not really equipped for those conditions. The alternative was apparently to risk becoming snowbound for several days which might have put our entire trek at risk. We proceeded very gingerly with a considerable drop beside us, across ice covered with still-falling fresh snow and in near-zero visibility. The risk was only justifiable as the slope was treed which should have afforded some protection had we slipped. As we dropped down towards the river through the woods the weather picked up a little and we did spot some wildlife looking as forlorn as we felt. We saw some Tahr, Musk and birds which we tried to identify later with only modest success.

Arriving at Dengboche after about five hours, we found a very acceptable lodge where we spent 3 nights. We awoke the next morning to wall to wall blue skies giving brilliant snow-scapes and the best weather of our entire trek. Each day was spent doing some hard walking from this seasonal village which actually manages to produce some food crops although at 4343m. We had some wonderful views of a good number of major peaks - Taboche (6542) below the village to the West and across the main valley, Pokhalde (5806) on the left looking up side a valley with Ama Dablam to right and below us. Towards the head of valley the Nuptse Wall hid Everest but its neighbours Lhotse (8501) and Lhotse Shah (8383) were clear with Island Peak (Imja Tse) (6189) in the centre of the Upper Valley with Makalu (8475) peeping out from behind it. We also had good views of Cholutse (6440) over a ridge to the east and Lobuche (6145) to the north east.

After a steep climb up the valley side, even the Sherpas felt the need for a breather and Alan's picture of myself and a Sherpa 'en repose' also amused many audiences.

It was on this climb that I experienced my only hint at what I take to have been altitude sickness. We had done the hard work and were just walking along a high ridge when I was hit by sudden lethargy almost like walking into a brick wall. After a rest we went no higher and returned to the valley for another nights sleep at that altitude and after that I was fine again.



The next morning saw the start of our long push for Lobuche with good views but rough going in places.

A path split off going over into Gokyo Valley by way of Chola La, a pass at 5420 mts which, we were given to understand, was the scene of several near disasters whilst we were in the area.

Across the skyline, approaching Lobuche, there was a disconcerting row of monuments to dead climbers, mostly Sherpas. The path then followed the edge of the Khumbu Glacier to this tiny very windswept hamlet with Mehra (5820) in view across the glacier. We stayed 2 nights in dormitory here, basically a communal wooden sleeping platform. We were glad we had sent a Sherpa ahead to book us in, as space was very limited and many had to resort to tents.

One advantage of going into the mountains early in the year is that the very limited toilet facilities are usually frozen. This is another aspect which entertained my listeners. The normal arrangement is a slow accretion of waste beneath drops and when the weather warms up they can be rather pungent. The downside is that when you get really high the best you can do is to dig a hole in the ground, not easy when the very small amount of top soil is frozen. As a gesture to privacy we did have a small toilet tent on one of the yaks. It has to be said that awaking in Lobuche in the early hours of the morning and feeling the need is a pretty desperate situation.

Pulling on boots in the dark to creep out of the hut and make your way down a slope of fresh snow for about a hundred yards is bad enough but disrobing in a tent smaller than a telephone box in the dark, at a temperature I could only guess at (but cold) and then doing your thing with nothing to hang on to is a memory that will last with me for ever.

We left at first light (5.45) to make our way up the edge of the glacier to Gorak Shep; a long grind taking three hours in well sub zero temperatures. Hazy sun finally crept into view as we approached the lodge with the impressive Pumo Ri (7145m) in the background.

Two hours climbing took us to the summit of Kala Pattar. As we climbed we had great views of Everest itself and down onto base camp, until mist and snow closed in half way up. This summit was the highest point of our trek and is now accurately measured as being 5643m.



In pretty awful conditions our Sherpa brought us down by a longer but safer and actually quicker route involving a short walk part way along ridge towards Pumo Ri and then a longer but contoured path down, in light snow. We were then faced with tackling the two hour walk back to Lobuche in the face of a blizzard but ended up having done the round trip in eight hours.

One of the advantages of building up strength and improving oxygen absorption on the way up mountains is of course that when you start to descend you feel like a spring chicken. We had planned to overnight at Pheriche but were going so well that we pushed on to Phortse.

Overall this was a nine hour walk out, first down the valley through Dughla and Pheriche then alongside the Imja Khola river then up a high narrow path contouring precariously around hills to the west of river before dropping into the mountainside village of Phortse where we found a lodge with no heating. Snow on ground was tricky in places but the weather was fine during the morning. Falling snow and hail in afternoon made us question the wisdom of having been so ambitious. It continued during the final ascent to, and arrival at, the lodge.

Next day we set off to drop down through forest to the Dudh Khosi river running down the stunning Gokyo Valley and then up a very hairy trail the other side. During the river crossing we had excellent views including Cho Oyu (8153m) on the Chinese border. With bad weather threatening we followed the in places, extremely narrow, long contouring high path over the shoulder of Taboche before dropping down to climb back up and into Namche. We were in torrential rain which became a blizzard which turned the sandy trails above Namche into mud slides to the distress and amusement of porters and trekkers alike depending on their success or otherwise in keeping their feet.

Next morning saw us in bright sunshine and we made a good start. We were descending the long hill through mixed woodland to join the Dudh Khosi river with its nerve racking bridges and the walk down the valley to climb out of the National Park at Jorsale where our original intention had been for another overnight stop.

We had by now decided to make a forced march of this day and to cover what had taken us 2 longish days coming in. When after lunch, it began to pour with rain, we started to regret this plan but having sent on our porters and the Sherpa to try to book us into a lodge we had no option but to literally plough on through the rain and mud finally arriving somewhat exhausted and wringing wet after 9 hours of very hard work.



We contacted our agents in Kathmandu to try and bring forward our helicopter pick up and woke next morning to a message that there was a chopper available with spare seats but we had to throw our kit together in a rush and dash down to the airstrip. We were actually at our hotel in Kathmandu by 10.00 am although they did not have a room free till the afternoon. We took advantage of this time to have a very welcome hot shower and full massage.

Having cut two days out of the return trek, we were left with 3 days for sightseeing and recuperation in this fascinating city.



Top to bottom
 Ama Dablam
 Dengboche
 The ridge from Dengboche
 Taboche from Dengboche

Top to bottom
 Imja Tse (Island Peak)
 From Pokalde
 looking over Dengboche
 and looking into the valley
 Leaving Dengboche



Top left - Khumbu Glacier
Looking down on Gorak Shep with
Kalar Pattar on left
View of Everest from Kalar Pattar
(Black mountain)
Bottom Left - The Dudh Kosi

Top Right
Phortse and 2 views from it
Bottom
Cho Oyu up the Goyko Valley

SNOWSHOEING Mick Borroff

My only prior experience with raquettes de neige had been a half-day tromp up through the forest to a mountain hut in the Austrian Alps some time ago, and I had been sufficiently impressed with their capabilities that I was happy to try it again. There have been several times when I wished I had a set (post-holing across to Ben Macdui with Adrian Bridge and an exhausting direct ascent of Great Whernside spring to mind). In the past few years snowshoeing has enjoyed a big rise in popularity in the Alps, driving the development of a wide range of new equipment. Plastics are now used extensively and the image of “tennis rackets” strapped to one’s feet is long gone! Crampon-like spikes, articulated toe claws and lateral teeth provide stability whilst ascending, descending and traversing, while heel-raise systems relieve tired calf muscles on steep climbs.

1. A Walk in the Woods

Wanting to make use of the Christmas break this winter and capitalise on our investment in a set of winter tyres for Hilary’s car, we decided to drive to France to give it a try.

After a bit of research, we decided to head for the Haut Jura near the Swiss border, as it was a good balance of not being too far to drive and seeming to offer plenty of snow and a range of route possibilities combined with relatively low avalanche potential. There is little information on actual routes on the net, other than the waymarked pistes de raquettes maps produced by the tourist information centres, but plenty of photos of people doing it! I decided to buy the relevant IGN 1:25,000 map and plotted out several options based on summer walking routes. We caught the ferry to Zeebrugge and drove down almost empty motorways to the Jura with pleasingly increasing amounts of snowcover, to the village of Les Rousses, not far above the Col de la Faucille and checked into our hotel.

We hired snowshoes the next day and strapped them on for our first route in the sunshine – a waymarked circuit passing the old military Fort des Rousses, a well preserved structure where the cellars are used to mature 75,000 wheels of the delicious Comté Jurafore cheese for up to 24 months. Starting from the centre of the village, the route was well used and we traversed a mixture of forested and more open terrain around the Le Platelet gite, trying out the snowshoes’ capabilities (and ours) on a variety of slopes and snow conditions.

Keen for a longer, quieter and more remote route, the next day we caught the free bus along the valley to Bois d’Amont, planning to return to Les Rousses by a mainly forested route across the Massif de Risoux, which I picked out from the IGN map using marked tracks and footpaths. We climbed steadily through a temperature inversion, eventually emerging from the morning mist into sunshine and reaching a height of around 1200m at the (closed) Chalet Rose, where we stopped for lunch. The IGN mapping had some limitations in correctly plotting the course of some of the paths through the trees



TSL 418 snowshoes

and my GPS was very useful in checking our actual position. We eventually emerged onto a prepared cross-country ski route which followed a GR route with its familiar red and white paint flashes. The periodic onrush of Lycra-clad skiers on the manicured piste was an unwelcome contrast to the silent snow-clad woods we had enjoyed and we left the piste as soon as practicable to make our descent back to Les Rousses for a well-earned coffee and cake as it began to get dark.

On New Year’s eve we spent half a day snowshoeing in the Bois de Tresbury starting from the village of Lamoura following a circuit through woods and open valleys, returning to the hotel for a splendid multi-course New Year dinner in full French style.

After an understandably late start on New Year’s day, for our next route, we drove through La Cure and headed up into the spruce woodland of the Massif de Massacre, where some 600 Italian mercenaries sent to rescue the city of Geneva in sixteenth century were slaughtered in a series of skirmishes with the Duke of Savoy’s forces. Forestry tracks and footpaths were followed in a rambling circuit up to about 1400m finishing at the Chalet de la Frasse, for a welcome beer outside the refuge, relaxing in the warmth of the sun, before a swift return down to the car park.



Snowshoeing in the
Foret de Massacre, Haute Jura

On our last day we had to leave by early afternoon, so we selected a short route from Les Rousses up through the woods to La Roche Blanche, a limestone outcrop with an extensive view over the tree canopy to Les Rousses and the ridges overlooking the l'Orbe valley. We also bought some new snowshoes and found two series of regional French raquettes guidebooks published by Glenat and by Libris.

On our journey back to Zeebrugge across snow-swept France, we stopped briefly at Verdun. The freezing fog shrouded the First World War cemetery giving it a haunting monochrome simplicity - symmetrical rows of pale crosses over whiter snow with ghostly images of yew trees barely discernable around the perimeter.

2. A Walk in the Park

We were keen to try snowshoeing in a more alpine environment not too marred by ski development, so instead of our usual spring holiday walking in southern Spain, so in late March we headed for somewhere more mountainous, but in a part of France where we'd not been before. Armed with our new snowshoes, a couple of French Guides de Raquettes and an IGN 1:25,000 map we drove down across France to the L'Ubaye valley in the Haute Alpes de Provence. This valley is advantageously located between the Queyras and Mercantour national parks, with high level road access at about 2000m (snow permitting) via the Col de Vars and Col de Larche.



Vallon de Crachet
from Col du Vars, Queyras

Based in the village of Jausiers at 1200m, near the town of Barcelonnette, we had access to a wide range of possibilities. The upper Ubaye valley is unspoiled, with a few small villages generally roofed with rusting corrugated iron. Over the years this part of France has suffered from depopulation and there is little "holiday home" development, although this is beginning to change.

We arrived after a lengthy heat wave that had ablated much of the snow on the lower south-facing slopes, which had then been followed by some moderate falls of new snow, but at least the two high cols were passable. The avalanche warning level was set at Grade 3 (medium), with north-facing slopes presenting the highest risk, local guides ruling out the routes

to the higher summits. Mindful of this and the recent deaths of eight snowshoers in Haute Savoie, we sought detailed advice before setting out on each of our routes.

Our first route was a circuit beginning with a steep climb through the forest following indistinct waymarks to the Roche-la-Croix fort (part of the Maginot line) strategically sited above the village of Meyronnes with a commanding line of fire to the road beside the l'Ubayette river far below.

Next up was a higher route from the village of Fouillouse up a valley towards the Col du Vallonet following the route of the GR5 which the gite d'étape owner assured us was risk free. The Vallon du Vallonet was broad and our route was a safe margin from the steeper slopes. A small herd of mouflon were seen close to Fort de Plate Lombard - another link in the Maginot line. We followed a pair of recent snowshoe tracks and eventually saw the owners as they whooped past us on skis back to the village, leaving us in isolation once more. We stopped in the gite for an excellent meal and a chat with the owner.

The next day was rather wet so we explored Barcelonnette and some of the surrounding villages. The day after was sunny and we headed up towards the Col de Larche to explore the delightful Val Fourane following the l'Ubayette river towards Lac du Lauzanier along another leg of the GR5 inside the Mercantour national park. This was a popular route with showshoers and had a well defined piste in its lower parts. Higher up there were few sizable wet snow avalanches, but all had petered out well before the piste.



Wet snow avalanches
in Val Fourane, Mercantour

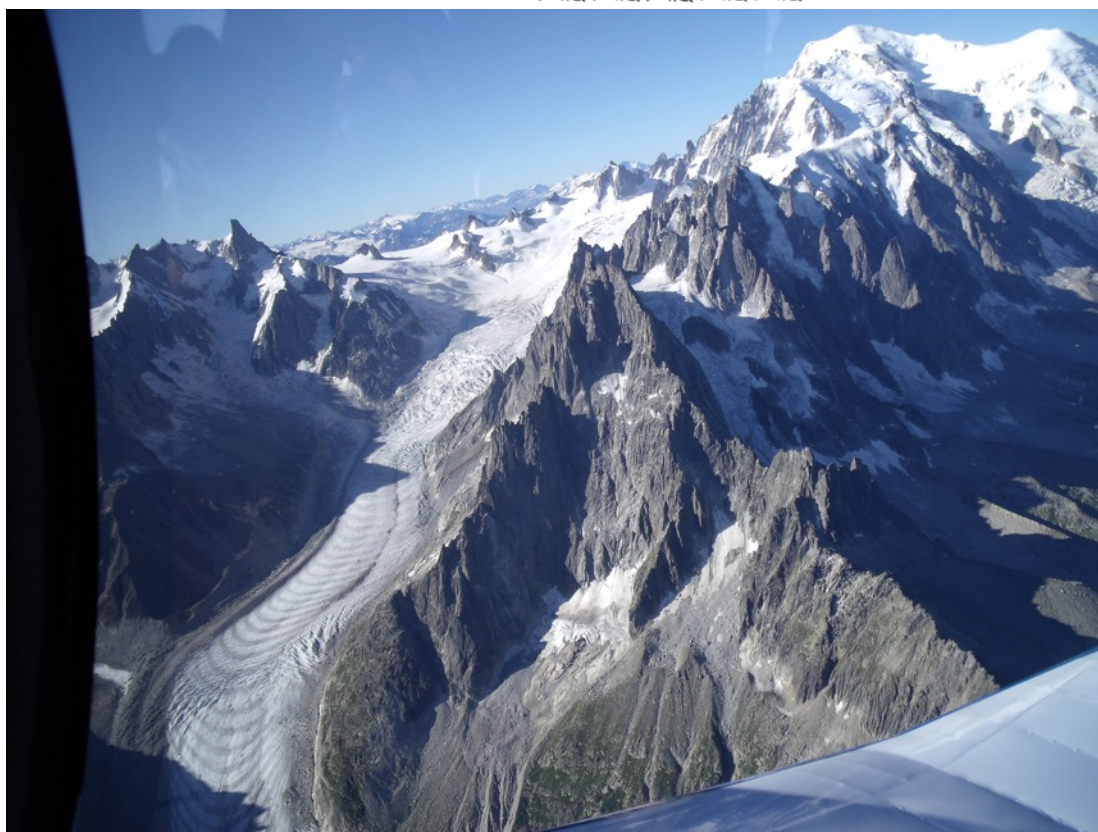
The last day was again sunny and very warm. Hilary was invalidated out with a blister bigger than the Compeed that was meant to protect it! I chose a half-day route which started just below the Col de Vars and I headed into the Vallon de Crachet. There were several small groups of cross country skiers on the same route. Again there were lots of small wet snow avalanches, but had stopped within the slope and none had threatened the ascent route. I eventually climbed a modest summit on the ridge overlooking the Vallon de l'Infernet and admired the sweeping views. By midday, the sun had considerably softened the snow and

sections on the return were hard going despite wearing snowshoes. In the afternoon, I explored the upper reaches of the Ubaye valley as far as the roadhead at Maljasset and its CAF hut admiring the fields of wild pink crocuses.

In conclusion, if you can walk then with slightly more effort you can snowshoe and will enjoy a different perspective on the winter mountains. With a judicious choice of routes, you can avoid the crowds and have some excellent days out in the Alps. I can't wait to go again!



Snowshoeing in Val Fourane looking towards the Lac du Lauzanier, Mercantour



La Mer de Glace
(Sea of Ice)

Taken by
your Editor's
daughter
Sandy, as she
flew over the
Alps in a light
aircraft

FROGGATT EDGE

But Not As We Know It!

John and Valerie Middleton

After Stanage the gritstone of Froggatt Edge is arguably England's second most visited climbing venue. Its popularity is due to a clean, quick drying rock that presents a multitude of top quality challenges.

This short article is about another Froggatt Edge of similar quality to be found in the antipodean paradise that is New Zealand.

NEW ZEALAND is well known for its spectacular scenery, challenging long distance walks, mountaineering and entertaining cave systems. It is not so well known for rock climbing. The reasons for this are not immediately obvious as there are sufficient developed areas of worthwhile rock to justify investigation by any passing visitor. Additionally these localities are invariably found in stunningly beautiful locations well away from any crowds. In South Island, for example, there are at least 48 separate regions recorded¹ of which each will contain several further sections. Probably the most renowned, visited and photographed of these is *Castle Hill* with its great limestone boulders. These can be easily reached, being some 100km to the west of Christchurch. *Paynes Ford* in the Takaka region of the very north is again limestone and has in excess of 200 all-year-round and very worthy sports routes, mainly in the mid-grades. Takaka is also one of the countries major areas for caving so it is worthwhile taking along a good lamp for underground investigations.

On North Island there are more than 25 regions² with the majority occurring well south of Auckland. The finest of these are located in the triangle formed by Paeroa in the north, Mangaotaki to the south-west and Lake Taupo to the south-east. Of particular note are the 800m long and up to 80m high limestone cliffs of *Mangaotaki*, the 60 quality sports and traditional climbs at *Waipapa* and the stunningly beautiful ignimbrite cliffs of *Whanganui Bay* by Lake Taupo where the number of routes now exceeds 200. In the centre of this "golden" triangle lies the small village of Wharapapa South that in turn is home to some of the finest rock climbing in all of New Zealand.

WHARAPAPA SOUTH is really a farming community rather than an actual village that lies some 70km south-east of Hamilton. The region is little visited by travellers but it is very attractive with a landscape of steeply rolling hills populated by premium cattle and sheep. Frequent rocky outcrops, edges and boulder fields dot the surrounding fields providing added drama and visual excitement to the passing landscape. Within a 10km radius of Wharapapa South over 800 testing

sports routes are reported together with much quality bouldering. The local cultural and information centre masquerades as "Bryce's Café³". This is situated within a few metres of the junction between the Owairaka Valley and Wharapapa South Roads. Bryce's provides delicious home cooked food, a full range of climbing gear to buy or hire, accommodation, guiding and as much advice regarding the region as any climber might require including up to date local access agreements. In the 1970's Bryce was a devotee of Derbyshire grit so he fully understands the English psyche. Also nearby is "CastleRock Adventures⁴" a commercial organisation that specialises in outdoor pursuits.

HISTORICALLY² exploration of the region is relatively recent with the first ascents in the area being made at *Castle Rock* in the early 1980's. The principal climbers involved were Graeme Dingle, Geoff Mills and Kevin Boekholt. In 1987 Hamilton climbers, including Grant Pearson, Gary Lokum and Phil Higgins, commenced bolting the cliffs and this team was later joined by several Auckland climbers. Their greatest discovery was *Froggatt Edge* in 1990 with *Sheriden Hills* becoming the next area to receive their attention. So successful was this intense spate of exploration that the first guide book to the area was ready to be published by Pete Mannings in 1991. This included over 230 recorded routes. As always a new Guide Book stimulated much activity and many more routes were quickly added as were additional local venues. Twenty years later exploration still continues apace notably by the enthusiastic Bryce Martin and friends.

THE ROCK at Wharapapa is volcanic ignimbrite. Ignimbrite is a form of tuff that has been fused together whilst extremely hot within a pyroclastic flow. The result is a frictionable all-weather greyish climbing surface reminiscent of a hard pumice-stone that has been peppered with small pockets (the very convenient result of trapped gasses!). These pockets come in a great variety of shapes, sizes and depths; some proving to be excellent one finger to full hand jugs whilst others that have suffered more erosion are distinctly delicate in use. This distinction is not always obvious until too late! Cracks are uncommon and this together with the profusion of pockets certainly distinguishes the Wharapapa ignimbrite from Derbyshire gritstone. Most of the rock faces prove to be steep but there are sufficient fine slabs and overhangs to provide ample opportunities for aficionados of such delights. The principal and most easily accessible climbing areas are at *Bayleys Road* (71 routes), *Froggatt Edge* (120 routes), *Secret Valley* (100 routes), *Sheridan Hills* (41 routes) and *Smiths* (150 routes). Almost all of these are sports climbs but there are also several traditional routes and bouldering problems.

THE ROUTES may be anything up to 35m in length. They are generally very well bolted although the first bolt on occasion may seem a long way off should the rock be wet as on our visit! Additionally it is best to be aware that some of the bolters subscribe to the following philosophy "...we still need to make room for routes where the crux is not just some gymnastic manoeuvre but instead a mind game where a large run out or a technical section on marginal gear needs to be negotiated..." (Quote from the *Freeclimb Web Guide*², page

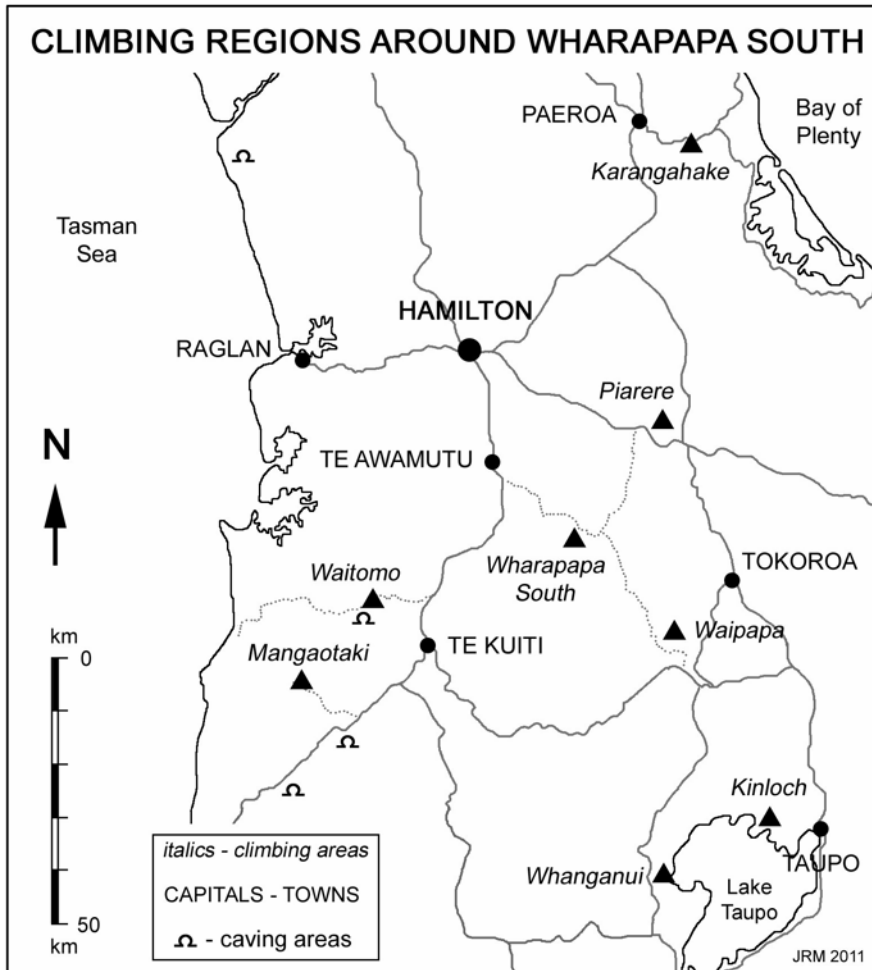
6, by Cliff Ellery). Perhaps luckily for us none of our ascents met this particular ethical standard. The grading system used in New Zealand is the same as that used by Australian which does tend to throw up a few anomalies when compared with French Sports grades as we understand them. Comparisons made in this article are based on our own experiences and subsequent extrapolations. The grades tend to vary from A10 (F4a) to 28 (F7c) with the majority being between A16 (F5b) and A23 (F6c). Bryce Martin recommends that on first acquaintance with ignimbrite it is probably best to commence climbing at least one grade less than would be considered normal. We had originally planned on four days intensive climbing in the vicinity of Wharapapa but due to continuous torrential rain we spent the first three investigating the many local but worthwhile sites by car. On the fourth day the sun came out and fully justified our patience. We headed for *Froggatt*.

FROGGATT EDGE can be reached from Bryce's Café with less than a five minute drive down Whatauri Road. The cliffs are on private property but the landowner allows free access down a track to a grassy parking area directly beneath the main climbs. These are on a series of buttresses of variable height (to 35m) and width (to 50m). The typical surrounding scenery is particularly beautiful here with a delightful stream nearby and extensive views throughout. A freshwater tap is on site as are two basic long drop toilets together with signage to the various sections. The latter items have been provided by the farmer and it is thought that at some stage he may wish to make a charge for access.

We immediately headed to the "Main Face" and after bouldering around the base for several minutes decided to commence climbing at two grades less than we would normally have done! This was a wise move and we commenced with "Al Fresco", a confidence building 20m long 5a. The three star "White Christmas" was our second choice with the initial moves climbing an easy corner followed by a satisfying steep wall at 5b and 15m. After White Christmas came "Thunder Blaster" with its long, steep, jug infested wall leading to a heart pounding *way out* finish, superb, 5c and 22m. The intricate but rewarding "Terror Incognito" ensued at 6a and 25m with this ascent finally giving us the confidence to achieve a very satisfactory full days climbing with varied styles on superb rock in an idyllic situation with friendly local climbers. Just like *Froggatt Edge* back home!

QUOTED WEBSITES OF INTEREST.

- ¹ www.rockclimbing.com for general information on climbing sites.
- ² www.freeclimb.co.nz for information on North Island rock including some essential downloads.
- ³ www.rockclimb.co.nz for up to date information on the "golden" triangle region plus useful notes on Bryce's Café and Shop.
- * www.castlerockadventure.co.nz for tailor-made adventure packages based around the beautiful Castle Rocks valley, Wharapapa.



REVIEWS

YORKSHIRE- Doreen Brigham

For those of you who may have missed it I would like to share a poem with you which featured in a television programme recently.

A Symphony for Yorkshire is one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken by the BBC in God's Own County. With an original, specially commissioned score by composer Benjamin Till the Symphony showcases the skills of two hundred and fifty musicians from all over Yorkshire. It's a celebration of Yorkshire's musical talent as well as the county's glorious locations. Glimpses of breathtaking scenery, snatches from diverse but often fantastic musicians and wonderful slightly arty arty filming make up this piece in four movements. The anthem in the last movement 'Sing a Song of Yorkshire' was written by Doreen Brigham, the widow of a former manager of the bank and it was brought to my attention by my pensioner's staff magazine. I gather it was broadcast on the BBC's local programme over four nights and repeated on BBC 4 with a documentary of how it was made.

The full 19min original is available from the BBC on http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/sheffield/hi/people_and_places/arts_and_culture/newsid_8859000/8859457.stm and can be searched for using "A symphony for Yorkshire"

The author of the poem was 98 when she wrote it for a BBC competition which she won. The lyrics themselves are well worth a further airing. I have been in touch with her son who looks after her affairs and he tells me she would be more than happy to have it reproduced in the journal.

At the risk of being lynched by traditionalists I would prefer this to the 'Yorkshire' we sing at our annual dinners.

Roy Denney

**Sing a song of Yorkshire, from the Humber to the Tees;
Of horses, wool and terriers, of pudding and of cheese.
I know no other county where the land is quite so fine.
England's lovely county; And I'm proud to call it mine.**

**Where shining purple heather stretches far across the moor,
and the lapwing's cry above me, takes the place of traffics roar.
When peace comes drifting gently, there's no place I'd rather be,
than this land of hills and valleys, from the Pennines to the sea.**

**Stately Norman castles, side by side with yeoman homes.
Lovely abbeys in the valleys, resting place for abbots' bones.
Thundering falls and howling rivers, tiny chattering streams.
Woods ablaze with bluebells, to fill the heart with dreams.**

**So when I've done my roaming, and when my step grows slow;
when heart and mind assure me that the time has come to go,
then let me rest in Yorkshire, for it's there I want to lie
'neath sun and wind and heather... and a gleaming Yorkshire sky.**

Copyright Doreen Brigham

"LET'S GO CLIMBING!" by Colin Kirkus, 1941

ISBN 10: 1904466176 - ISBN 13: 9781904466178 Published by Rockbuy Ltd

This is obviously not a new book it is still in print and was last published in 2004 and can be commended to anybody who has not read it.

Whilst not one of the more 'famous' names in climbing Colin was probably one of the most influential climbers Britain has ever produced. His series of new routes on "Cloggy" was unparalleled until the emergence of Joe Brown, 20 years later. His book "Let's Go Climbing!" was written as an introduction to the sport of mountaineering and was read and revered by both Joe Brown and Don Whillans. The book takes us through every aspect of mountaineering, from hill-walking to rock climbing and winter mountaineering. It is an extremely good read.

Anyone who shares his deep love of the mountains will enjoy this book. As Colin Kirkus famously said to Alf Bridge on the top of Sgurr Alasdair: "You know, Alf, going to the right place, at the right time, with the right people is all that really matters. What one does is purely incidental."

Kirkus also climbed extensively in the Alps and made a pioneering Alpine-style ascent in the Himalaya in 1933. His career was interrupted by WW2 and he was killed in 1942.

I can do no better to commend this book than to reproduce the opening chapter:

"It was cold and bleak when I reached the summit of Snowdon at 5.30 on Easter Sunday morning. I had been climbing all Saturday, and had returned in the evening to the little climbers' hut in the Ogwen Valley, where I was staying. Most of the others were drifting off to their bunks, but it was such a lovely night-starlit and frosty-that it was more than I could resist. So I collected a little food, pulled on my sodden boots, found my ice-axe, balaclava helmet and gloves, and set off, a little after midnight, with a strange feeling of high adventure.

It was wonderful to be walking across the crackly frozen bog, all alone in the night. I experienced a satisfying sense of freedom and all sleepiness was driven away by the keen air; I felt I could keep going for ever.

Soon I reached a slope of hard snow and had to cut some steps. I cut with a steady rhythm, and got very hot and sticky with the hard exercise. It was almost as light as day, with the moonlight on the snow, and I had no difficulty at all in seeing where I was going, until I got into the shadow. Then a kind of chill seemed to descend on me and all the snow looked even and featureless.

I had a short rest when I reached the crest of the rounded eastern ridge of the Glyders and then set off on the 1,500-foot descent to Pen-y-Pass. It was very rough and stony, and the moonlight played queer tricks. I would step on to a firm-looking rock and find it was a deep hole, or else I would prepare to jump down a drop of four feet, only to be brought up with a jolt after a few inches. After a little practice you learn to take up these shocks in your knees, so that you can run quite safely, even in the dark, down a steep rough slope, without any danger of a sprained ankle. The fact that you are wearing heavy climbing-boots instead of shoes makes a great difference, of course.

I passed by Llyn Cwm-y-ffynnon, a beautiful little tarn, now half frozen over, and reached Pen-y-Pass (the top of the Pass of Llanberis) at about 3 a.m. It was quite an eerie business, climbing over the rickety stone wall with all the caution of a cat-burglar, so as not to arouse the sleeping occupants of the hotel. My nailed boots made a loud ringing sound as I crossed the main road and set foot on the Snowdon massif, which was my objective.

The rest of the expedition was pure joy. I made my way, first along the crazy path and up grass slopes, and then up slopes of snow where sometimes I had to cut a few steps. Then came the cocks, a mere scramble in summer-time and not difficult even now, though they were glazed with ice in places. And finally a narrow snowy ridge brought me to the summit of Crib Goch.

Crib Goch is in many ways the most lovely peak of Snowdon. It is just over 3,000 feet in height, and from Pen-y-Pass appears as a sharp cone. But on the other side is a narrow ridge, which is justly famous among mountain-lovers. I shall never forget crossing the ridge this Easter morning. The hard snow was piled up to a knife-edge on the crest, while on the right it dropped in an almost vertical wall of white. The slope on the left was easier, but still quite steep. The snowless valleys were almost invisible, so that there was nothing to be seen in front but this narrow gleaming moonlit edge, dropping down into nothingness. I felt as though I was poised in the air, on the very top of the world.

All around were snowy summits, dropping weirdly into the inky blackness beneath; they looked almost like clouds. Yet there was no atom of danger to take my mind off all this magnificence; I knew the place well and felt perfectly at home.

I was feeling warm and exhilarated as I made my way through this enchanted scene, over the spiky pinnacles and up the rocky ridge of Crib-y-ddisgyl, and on to y Wyddfa, the summit of Snowdon. It was 5.30 now and beginning to get light. The moon seemed to have lost its brilliance, and the snow was a dead unearthly white, cold and spectral. A chilly wind had sprung up and I shivered as I forced my way into the old wooden hut on the summit. The door was jammed with frozen snow and it was a tight squeeze to get in.

There was no furniture inside, nor glass in the windows, and the floor was covered with a thick sheet of ice. I ate a little food, but my fingers got frozen as soon as I took off my gloves, so I just stamped my feet and shivered and waited for the sunrise.

The east window was almost covered by a framework of feathery icicles, and I kept watch through a ragged hole that was left in the middle. All the valleys were filled with mist, with the peaks standing up clear above, like islands. It got slowly lighter, but no warmer. Then presently a scarlet glow appeared above a level purple bank of cloud lying on the horizon, and soon the red sun, looking queerly oval, came into view. As soon as it rose above the cloud it changed to gold and made the icicles in the window gleam like diamonds. I could feel its warmth immediately and grew cheerful and comfortable again in an instant.

Half an hour later I was descending to Glaslyn in a sweltering heat, the great snowy bowl of the cwm acting as a kind of giant reflector.

I have begun with this description to try and let you feel something of the spirit of the mountains. If you are keen you can manage an expedition like this after a very short time. You must first get used to being on the mountains by yourself, and learn to find your way in a mist. Then you must practise some rock-scrambling until you feel really at home on craggy ridges. There is nothing very alarming about mountaineering on a moonlit night, but the snow-climbing is not so quickly learnt; until you have mastered the rudiments of this branch of the sport it will be as well to have an experienced companion with you on winter expeditions.

And now-why do we go climbing? I hope I have already succeeded in showing you something of the attraction. Most of you must sometimes have felt an urge to get away for a little while from all the noise and bustle of modern civilization, to escape into wild country quite away from other people, where you are your own master and where every-thing that you do depends on yourself and on yourself alone. It is the same feeling that makes desert islands sound so attractive. We cannot all go to desert islands-and might not like them if we did-but we can do the next best thing and go to the mountains.

Then there is the scenery. If you have been used only to woods and trees and fields, you will be amazed when you get among the mountains. There you will see great cliffs and rocky ridges, and tarns nestling in lonely hollows, and the valleys so far below will seem to belong to another world. It is impossible to describe this spirit of the mountains, but you will feel its spell as soon as you are amongst them.

But we can get all this by just walking up, you may say. Why go out of your way to climb difficult rocks? That is quite a sound argument, which is partly why I am going to tell you in the first few chapters what to do to make yourself a competent fell-walker. If you feel perfectly contented once you have learnt to wander safely over the homeland hills, and have no ambition to try anything harder, then it would be foolish to try to persuade you to climb against your will. You will have found a wonderful new world and a freedom that cannot be obtained elsewhere.

But there still remains the question-why do we climb? The primary cause is, I think, the spirit of adventure. Fell-walking is a pleasant recreation, whilst climbing is a definite sport, fascinating and absorbing, and with a very special technique of its own. Perhaps, when you are resting half-way up a mountain, lazily basking in the sunshine, you may look across at a near-by precipice and amuse yourself by idly planning an imaginary route up the middle. At first it looks very hopeless and terrifying and inaccessible, and then you notice that there are quite a lot of grass ledges dotted about here and there. Then you see that these, ledges are quite close together, and realize that the bits of steep rock separating them are actually quite short. Thus, in your mind, you have transformed an unclimbable cliff into a series of short rock walls.

You have begun to acquire the mentality of the rock-climber. And it will be a further comfort if you realize that some of the ledges may be as big as rooms, and that the rocks which look so smooth from a distance are covered with holds and rough enough to remove the seat of your trousers if you give them a chance.

Then you may see a minute figure moving steadily up the steepest and sheerest part of the crag, with two others standing almost motionless on a ledge below, joined to the leader by the thin white line of the climbing-rope. And if you feel a momentary half-fearful desire to be with them, out there on the face of the cliff, then you are cut out to be a climber.

Then, perhaps, you race up to the summit, to be there in time to greet the victorious party. But instead of appearing with the strained anxious faces of people who have narrowly survived a great ordeal, they stroll up casually, carrying coils of rope, smoking pipes, and chatting cheerily. They assure you it is quite an easy climb and say they aren't expert enough to do anything difficult.

The lesson to be learnt from this is that you should not judge by appearances. Crag almost always look more difficult from a distance, especially if seen face-on, when a slope of easy angle may appear to be quite vertical. Apart from what we may call its poetic appeal, climbing is a splendid sport. When people ask me why I climb, I ask them in return why they play rugger or tennis or cricket or hockey, or whatever they do play. And almost invariably they argue that in other games you play to win, by pitting your strength and skill against the opposing team. But so you do in climbing, the only difference being that, in place of human opponents, you have to fight against the natural difficulties of the rocks themselves. Instead of playing another team you do a different climb; instead of playing a return match you do the same climb again under different weather conditions. And if you don't believe that there is anything in climbing as exhilarating as dashing over the line to score a try or hitting a cricket ball for six, then you will soon alter your views if you give climbing a trial. To be poised on a steep smooth face, concentrating with every nerve, and then to stretch cautiously up and to come unexpectedly on a large handhold which solves the problem-that seems to be the most thrillingly satisfying moment of your life each time it happens.

But what about the danger, you may ask. Is it worth the risk?

The answer to this is that climbing is not a dangerous sport if you follow the rules. People who take risks are not considered heroes in the climbing world; they are considered fools and bad climbers. But when an accident does happen the newspapers make a terrific sensation of it: they give more prominence to the two or three fatal accidents that occur each year in this country than to a hundred motoring accidents. And that is why the general public regards climbing as a hazardous pastime. But if you always turn back when in doubt there should be very little danger. And if you do make a mistake and fall off, you have quite a good chance of being held by your second man if the rope is being managed correctly. And the second can fall off to his heart's content, with no injury except to his pride (some seconds seem to have none) and a certain tenderness - well deserved - about the ribs.

There is little doubt that climbing is much less dangerous than, say, motor-cycling or aviation; you will be able to realize this better when you have learnt the use of the rope and seen the very adequate precautions that are adopted.

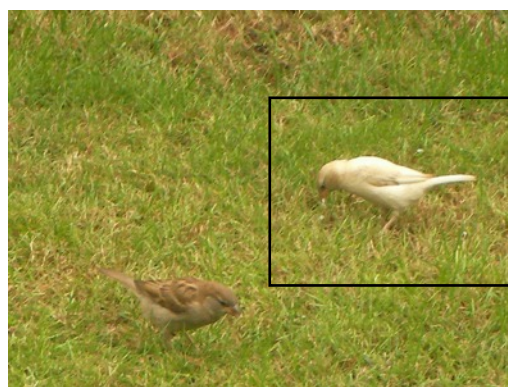
As an exercise climbing is unrivalled, since every muscle in the body is used. It teaches judgment and courage and coolness in emergency, and makes you forget completely all the worries of everyday life. It is a wonderful chance for adventure in pure air and magnificent surroundings. Few who start climbing ever give it up.

Once a climber, always a climber."



The term black and white is normally taken to suggest something is clear or certain or possibly your favourite tippie.

I would suggest that the identification of these two creatures is far from straight forward. Give them some thought - the answers are in the section on Natural History



OBITUARIES

I regret to inform members that in addition to Adrian Bridge, we have also lost another three members. Further, those who have been in the club some time may remember our former member, John Medley who has also passed away. Unfortunately we have received the following email from Michael Medley, his son.

"I am very sorry to have to inform you that my father, John Medley, a YRC life member, died last month at the age of 87. It was a sudden rupture of an undiagnosed aneurysm in the aorta, on the night of 11-12th January. For his retirement he had moved from Yorkshire to West Devon where, until three or four years ago, he still enjoyed weekly walks on Dartmoor, and was renowned in the Tavistock U3A walking group for his goat-like springiness."

We must also mark the death of one of the world's top mountaineers. ERHARD LOTETAN was killed in April while climbing in Switzerland on his 52nd birthday. He was one of the few people to reach the summits of the world's 14 highest mountains having been the third to do so when he completed his quest in 1995.

When in 1986 and then 27 years old, with his fellow Swiss climber Jean Troillet, he made a revolutionary single-push ascent of Everest in a record 40 hours, climbing by day and night and without using extra bottled oxygen or carrying tents or sleeping bags. The pair took one of the most direct routes, climbing the north face, via the Japanese couloir at its foot and the Hornbein couloir at the top. Among his other impressive achievements was the traverse of the Annapurna Range in 1984; in the winter of 1989, with André Georges, climbing 13 north faces between the Eiger and Doldenhorn in the Bernese Oberland in only 13 days. And the ascent of the south-west face of Cho Oyu, in 27 hours, in 1990. In 1994 Loretan made a solo climb of the highest peak in Antarctica, then unnamed, and it was christened Mount Loretan in his honour by the climbing world.

Also, whilst also having no connection with our club, it is perhaps also worth recording the deaths of two climbers of considerable repute if not a little mystery. Firstly CHRIS (Crystal) DALE who had personal traits which many would fail to understand but it must be recognised that he pushed the boundaries of rock climbing. Chris has died aged 49 after fighting cancer. He had a passion for solo climbs among the toughest peaks of Europe. At 6'6" his long reach allowed him to establish numerous routes verging on the impossible, many of which have rarely, if ever, been repeated. Not only this but where many climbers pre-prepare and practice moves to build up to first ascents, often by abseiling down rock faces, Chris preferred to lead with no preparation- just going for it. He was renowned for bold climbs with little protection.

He is credited with making dozens of first ascents and in 2003 he climbed what he believed to be Britain's last unclimbed peak, a rocky pinnacle called Dun Dubh – Gaelic for black fort – in the Quiraing mountains on Skye.

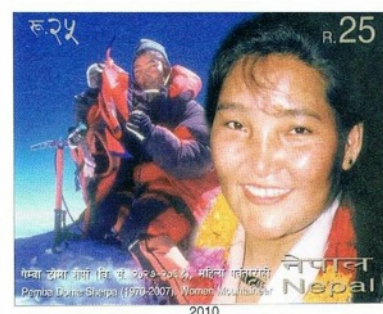
The second is PEMBA DOMA, a Sherpa who, on the 22 May 2007, fell from a height of 8000m whilst descending Lhotse. A simple statement from a report spotted by Alan Linford that could almost pass unnoticed, and a postage stamp. They mark but do not do full justice to this remarkable Sherpa.

Pemba Doma was fluent in 9 languages and a world traveller raising money for her charity 'Save the Himalaya Kingdom'. A non-profit group dedicated to educating Nepali children regardless of caste. Born 7 July 1970 in Namche in the Solukhumba district of Nepal and raised by her grandparents she attended one of the schools built by Edmund Hillary.

Her parents died when she was 2 years old. In 2010 her husband, Rajen Thamp, travelled to Switzerland to receive the Saint-Vincent Award in memory of her work.

Pemba was the first Nepali female mountaineer to climb Mt Everest by the N face, the second to summit from both N&S faces and one of 6 women to have reached to summit twice. A few other notable summits, Mt Blanc, Cho Oyu, Loborche East and Island Peak, she was leader of the 2002 Nepalese Women Everest Expedition.

The four members we have lost are Adrian, John Devenport who died on 9th February, totally unexpectedly, Howard Humphries who died in May and Ron Goodwin who died last July after suffering a massive stroke. His wife Marion was also unwell and after a short spell in a nursing home, died in December, in Harrogate District Hospital. His son Ian says he knows Ron looked back on his time with the YRC with fond memories. Both Ian's parent's ashes are now together on Roseberry Topping - a hill that played a large part in the Goodwin Guisborough years!



RONALD GOODWIN - Member since 1967

Ron came to the club when he ceased officiating and playing hockey, very strong and fit, and with many skills he soon immersed himself in club activities, making a substantial contribution. Ron always put more into a venture than he took from it.

He was, with his two sons Simon and Ian, heavily involved in the rebuilding of Lowstern; his project management skills a factor in the successful completion of the hut. I was particularly appreciative of his engineering skills, when in 1989 having undertaken the task of the power supply to the hut, I disappeared off to Taiwan leaving him with a design and materials and a request "complete on my behalf". The power supply like all aspects of the project was done to a tight budget and years later in response to the call for more power Ron, always well organised, had all the details to hand.



Ron would not claim to be a mountaineer but game for anything. My first alpine meet with him was in 1971, and my last memorable trip with him was a winter crossing of the Aonach Eagach (with Eddie Edwards); he was a regular on Scottish meets.

On completion of his Honours degree in Mechanical Engineering at Durham, Ron worked for ICI for most of his career holding many senior and sometimes difficult managerial and engineering positions. His 1975 move to Belfast, being particularly difficult. He returned to Yorkshire in 1979, and long standing members will remember the Club Annual Dinners at the Harrogate Headquarters of ICI. Ron always loved the outdoors and travelled extensively and frequent business promotions within ICI often took him away from the YRC.

Ron and Marion were married in 1953, a marriage to last for 57 years; sons Simon and Ian were at one time YRC members and it would be nice to see them rejoin and enjoy the benefits of Lowstern and the evolving family meets.

An accomplished musician, organist at his local chapel for many years, Ron's unpretentious attitude to religion best summed up by his instructions for his funeral, "no fuss, no service just get on with it". It was some time after his death on Sunday July 11th 2010 at the age of 83, that the YRC learned of it and as such were not represented at his funeral.

Alan Linford.

ADRIAN BRIDGE - Member since 1983, President 2008-2010

Adrian Donald Cree Bridge was born in Guildford on the 1st of April 1946. After attending local schools he went to Swansea University where he gained a BSc in Chemical Engineering. It was here that his interest in caving began. He joined the university's caving club and with them took part in the rescue efforts at the Aberfan disaster.

Upon leaving university in 1968 he joined ICI Fibres at Teeside, living in Redcar. He stayed with them until 1971 when he joined Johnson & Johnson at their factory in Gargrave. During this time he joined the oddly named T-Pot caving club, soon leading them into bigger and better trips underground in the Yorkshire Dales.



During one of these trips they came across some ladders labelled Craven Pothole Club; realising that they could achieve more with the support of a bigger club, they decided to join the CPC. Adrian's caving exploits went from strength to strength and apart from descents of most of the deep holes in the UK, he was also among a team of six who reached the bottom of the Gouffre Berger, then the deepest cave in the world. The significance of this is that up until then, successful descents had only been achieved by siege tactics and multiple underground camps; their "Alpine style" tactics heralded the future of deep caving.

By now Adrian's interest in caving was beginning to wane. With some like minded friends, he formed the WARTS, the Walking and Rock Tigers. The name is typical of Adrian's wry humour but we can imagine that their activities would have lent an aptness to the name. He was still active with the CPC, climbing at home and abroad; indeed he maintained his links to that club all his life.

In 1985 he moved to Abergavenny, but still maintained his climbing and walking activities in the north, regularly travelling

up for weekends and on a couple of occasions attending the YRC Long Walk meets. Some members will remember brief conversations with him as he sped past wearing minimal gear and carrying little except his trademark broad grin. Adrian's fitness was legendary, but he never worked at it for its own sake - he just enjoyed running walking and climbing whenever he could. He ran most weekends if he wasn't climbing; he ran the London Marathon twice, once aged 55 and again at 60, raising money for Hope Hospice and Children with Leukemia.

1992 saw Adrian moving to Mold and joining Nice-Pak as technical manager, where his technical and managerial skills gained him international respect. Although he had latterly begun working part time he was still very much involved in projects which took him all over Europe. That he was held in high regard is evident by the many tributes from his colleagues. One such, "It goes without saying that Adrian had a lot of time for his job but he had an awful lot of time for people here as well. People knew that he cared." will strike a chord with anyone who knew him.

Adrian met his future wife Felicity at Swansea University. Despite (or perhaps because of) his quirky ideas on cuisine and suitable days out to court a young lady, their relationship prospered and they were married in 1971. Ian was born three years later and then Joanna in 1976. Anyone who has shared hill days with Adrian will testify to the love and pride that he had for his family and shared his delight in the birth of Ian's children Matt and Sienna. I remember climbing with him in Morocco, the route was called "Grandad's Groove" and he was so pleased with the climbing and the aptness of the name. Joanna talks of childhood "Daddy walks" along non-existent paths, never ending, and with the promised ice cream van always around the next corner. I think we've all been on those walks with Adrian! Another quote from a work colleague, "Adrian clearly had three passions in his life: his family, his work and his love of the outdoors." I'm not sure about the order of the last two but the first was clearly true.

Adrian joined the YRC in 1983 and immediately brought a new dynamism to the meets he attended. For him a weekend was time not to be wasted; not for him the Sunday morning drive home, there was always another route to do, another hill to climb. One could not help but be swept along by his boundless energy and enthusiasm, under his guidance achieving more than you ever thought you could. And in the hut in the evening he would listen to the tales of the day, genuinely interested in what folk had done, however trivial in comparison. He was a true gentleman, just the best person to spend a day on the hills with.

Exploration and adventure were central to Adrian's ethos. He organised trips to Lundy, Spain, and particularly the High Sierras of California which he loved. He also joined trips to the Dolomites, Switzerland, Morocco and the Himalayas. I was lucky enough to accompany him on many of these expeditions; we packed in more than most people do in twice the time, got into a fair few scrapes and climbed some awesome routes. It got a bit scary at times but Adrian was always so solid and dependable that you knew it would all be alright in the end. In tight corners he was always there with his impish grin and his evident enjoyment in the adventure.

Adrian was elected President of the YRC in 2008. He was instrumental in bringing new life and purpose to meets and as immediate Past President was actively pursuing ways to rejuvenate the club. His death whilst climbing at Pothole Quarry near his home was all the more shocking because he was such a careful climber. Perhaps the best testament we can give is to try to bring the same energy and enthusiasm to our lives that he did to his own.

Surely no more can be said of anyone than that he left the world a better place than he found it.

Tim Josephy

I would be most grateful if you could convey the heartfelt thanks of Adrian's family and me to all those Yorkshire Ramblers who sent cards and letters of condolence to us and who attended the funeral and celebration of Adrian's life on 20th April, 2011 in Chester.

The warm and personal expressions of sympathy and of appreciation of Adrian have touched us and helped us in what has been an overwhelmingly difficult time.

Adrian took great pleasure in his membership of YRC, in its activities and the fellowship of those who loved the outdoors and the thrill of the adventure to be had in mountains. I know he would want me, on his behalf, to thank all those who have climbed, walked, trekked and socialised with him, sharing the camaraderie, joy of wonderful scenery and the challenge.

Adrian enjoyed life and filled every moment. We will miss him so much.

With all best wishes

Felicity Bridge

JOHN CHARLES DEVENPORT

Member since 1987

Born in 1955, John started attending club meets in 1972 with his father Jack who was president 1974-76 but it was not until 1987 that he joined as a member. John died as a result of a major heart attack whilst out on a solo cycle ride, just 4 months after his early retirement from a career in road transport safety, to which he dedicated himself to for some 30 years. He was highly regarded by his profession throughout the country and on his retirement from the Transport for London Authority, the Metropolitan Police awarded him a special commendation for his outstanding services to road safety. This was an award that meant a great deal to him. John would have made the most of every minute of his retirement – cycling, photography, travelling, meeting up with friends, more time with the family, working on his new allotment, and completing the jobs that Katrina had in mind for him!

Meet reports indicate that he attended meets in the UK between 1972 and 1985 before joining his first alpine meet in 1986. It was these that became his focus over the next 11 years and for which he best remembered by those with whom he climbed. Latterly, his major association with the YRC was staying at Lowstern and Low Hall Garth with his wife Katrina and son Oliver. Paul Dover comments that it was on two of these occasions that he together with his grandson Billy enjoyed their company in the hills, taking both boys up their first ascent of Penyghent.

Michael Smith comments on the Alpine meets John regularly attended. He encouraged others, was a quiet asset to any team and utterly reliable. He generously transported people about and Michael recalls one rainy rest day he took a couple of them out of the valley they were in for a tour round the foothills searching out the sunny patches until finding a suitable spot for lunch and a relaxing drink with a view.

A particular trip with John Michael recalls and describes as perhaps their best day out together, was an ascent of L'Aiguille d'Argentière. The weather was kind and John was keen to use his camera which involved the rest of them in crossing and re-crossing a number of crevasses and snow bridges to get the right shots.

Earlier times.

Ailfroide in the Dauphine with L to R;
John Devenport, Jon Riley,
Arthur Salmon, Michael Eckersley,
Graham Salmon and David Smith.

John, Katrina and their son Oliver with Billy



When the children were small and Michael and Helen were both teaching with long summer breaks and had no need to rush back from Alpine meets. On one of those occasions John was the only other person left in camp as the others had headed home. He brought cheese and wine and joined them for a simple pasta and tomato based meal and a pleasant evening of conversation.

An annual reminder of John's enjoyment of the hills came in the home-made Christmas cards based on his stunning photographs of outdoor scenes.

Michael and Peter Chadwick having recently retired from full-time employment and getting out into the hills more often had been speculating as to who else might soon be in a similar position and able to join them and John's name had come up, wondering when he would be back in circulation. Sadly that will not now be.

David Hick also remembers their time together on the Alpine meets in the 80s and 90s and considers John was an accomplished alpinist. He enjoyed climbing many 4000m peaks with John. Memorably, David Smith, John and David

climbed the Rimpfischhorn from the Britannia Hut over the Allalin Pass and up a verglased ridge, all in thick cloud. A fantastic day. Other peaks they climbed together included the Dent Blanche, Jungfrau and Dom.

David confirms however that it was photography where John really excelled and to receive a Christmas card from John always meant a print worth framing. The YRC dinner menu was often graced with a photo provided by John. John achieved the highest distinctions in photography, most notable of which was the award of the FRPS with a stunning set of images capturing the sensuous beauty and shapes of sand dunes of Northern California. He had very recently been invited by the RPS to join their panel of distinctions assessors – a clear indication of the respect that the photographic world had for John and his abilities.

John helped Paul Foley, a close friend and colleague, in the founding of the Mirage Group some 20 years ago and remained a very dedicated and active member of the group ever since. Indeed it was through Mirage that John and Katrina first met each other, whilst they were all away on a photographic week on the Dorset coast as a group. Paul was John's best man at their wedding in March 1997 and gave a moving eulogy at the funeral.

Paul comments that whatever John did in his life he applied the utmost integrity, dedication and professionalism to it, he did it with great attention to detail and he did it well, very well, but he also did it in an unassuming and modest way – he never sought the limelight or the plaudits of others.

HOWARD HUMPHREYS

Member since 1956

Born 15th of February 1936, Howard joined the YRC in January 1956, preceded by his brother Gordon, his father Harold, his great uncle Albert and grandfather Harry. He loved hills, living on one at Rainow as a small boy, and later at the top of Dobcross. His fascination with sailplanes started when he was about nine years old: the Rainow house was a good launching site. All his pocket money went on balsawood, cement, tissue paper and dope: he invested in a pattern book of aerofoil sections which he would copy and try out to see which went best on our hill.

Saddleworth was a good place to live for sailplane flying. He had plenty of exercise marching up hill to launch sites and hurtling downhill to retrieve from curious hikers or cattle. He had many planes - all of his own design, elegant and robust. He was building to the end - 8ft wingspan with full radio control.



He liked to know how things worked and was happy as a sandboy employed in the instrumentation business combining the science of the processes being controlled with building and installing fiddly electromechanical gadgets.

Starting with extensive improvements to their own house, he realised he could make an interesting living working on old stone properties which the average small builder would shy away from. He worked alone - stonework, plastering, plumbing and electrics. His clients liked the little touches such as in the plaster - no square-shaped corbels, always elegantly curved. He made door furniture from polished-up bricabrac. Using the methods of the pyramid-builders and a range of carefully bought or made tackle, he would haul granite lintels for upstairs windows by patiently ratcheting, taking care as you have to when working alone handling weights of half a ton or more.

His main hobby was plantsman-gardener, with a particular interest in alpine plants. The garden in Saddleworth had over a thousand named plants - from trees to thimble-size - and appeared as a feature in Lancashire Life, His Stranraer garden, made on a bit of acquired field was featured in Dumfries & Galloway Life. Both were open in the Yellow Book scheme to raise funds for the Red Cross and preparations were in hand for this year's opening when he died. He twice won silver medals at RHS Tatton shows exhibitions. Hence his added delight in the Himalayas and bringing back unusual specimens.

His nickname at prep school was 'Froggy', earned by being able to do far more froggy-hops per minute than any other five-year-olds in his class. He was a good gymnast and cross-country was his favourite sport. Members remember him as being average-fast uphill but notably sure-footed and fast downhill (all that sailplane-chasing?). Tales are told of him on a Long Walk in Edale asking to be excused if he stepped out ahead, but he had a date in Manchester that night: some believe that he was back in Manchester before the rest of the group reached the terminus. He was sure-footed - content to walk about unsecured on a pitched roof when fixing a chimney, or trudge an 18" wide path across a cliff face with a 3000 ft sheer drop ...

In Nepal some think his reputation lives on as the man who could straighten angle-section tent pegs with his bare hands and who could fix kettle handles. Borne of many years' skiing trips the Alps with his two and Gordon's four children, where a running repair kit was essential, he always carried pliers, tiny hacksaw, rivets, araldite - fix anything, from your trousers to your bindings. So sherpas watched in amazement when a spiral-drive drill came out of his rucksack, cut a new hole, in with a rivet, presto! kettle back in service,

His skiing style was all his own: to have attended ski-school never occurred to him. He turned by jumping - not elegant,

but he was undaunted by the blackest bits of black runs. This gave him time to be up and down twice while the rest of us ambled. His evening duty was as pancake maker.

Howard was pleased with the YRC Morocco trip: it was after his problems started and he was surprised at how well he could move. But after that, progress was not good and he needed his electric buggy to move about the house and in the garden which he had, fortunately, made with beds raised almost to table height.



I would like to remind you that members often outlive most of their contemporaries and it makes it difficult to justice to their life and careers by way of an obituary. As Editor I am the repository of personal details and sometimes photographs provided to me by members to assist when this situation arises, as ultimately it must.

Only a few members have taken advantage of this, possibly because others feel they are tempting fate, but I would ask that you give it further thought. If preferred, such material can be kept in a sealed envelope.

EDITOR



TAKE CARE - BE AWARE

I DON'T WANT TO SCARE YOU BUT

Lyme Disease is a fairly rare illness, but it has recently started to become more prevalent and the risk of infection should not be ignored. It is caused by bacteria carried by ticks and people who walk in the countryside through rough vegetation are most at risk. Ticks are found in any moist, rough vegetation in woodland, heath and moorland areas including deep vegetation such as bracken and often in others that are decaying in mats such as sedges, grasses, etc. growing in also in leaf litter within deciduous woods and at woodland edges, in glades and by paths.

Most organisations whose members are active in the wider outdoors do issue some advice which is just as well as there is a widespread lack of knowledge and awareness regarding tick-borne diseases. Many people with typical symptoms will not actually be tested for the presence of even the most common of the diseases. For those who are tested for one or more of the possible diseases, a negative (and thus inconclusive) test will generally result in further investigation being abandoned. Few people will be lucky enough to see a GP with sufficient knowledge to give a clinical diagnosis, i.e. based on symptoms, knowledge of a tick bite event, etc.

It is suggested that official statistics for prevalence of tick-borne diseases in Britain are an underestimate of the true

picture due to the apparent clinical unreliability of laboratory tests. It is very likely that the majority of people suffering from tick-borne diseases do not receive treatment at all because there symptoms remain undiagnosed or misdiagnosed.

Lyme disease is perhaps the most common of the diseases carried by ticks in the UK and symptoms can develop within weeks. They may include tiredness, chills, fever, headache, muscle and/or joint pain, swollen lymph glands and blurred vision. A characteristic skin rash may appear which is generally a circular rash that may clear in the centre, resulting in a "Bull's eye" appearance. It can expand and move around the body.

If early symptoms are not recognised, serious complications can develop weeks, months, or even years later. It is likely that infected ticks need to be attached to the body for at least a day before they can transmit the bacteria to us so diligence is very much needed to remove them carefully before any damage is done. When fully fed they can increase to the size of a grape pip, but unfortunately the larvae are smaller than a pin head and often difficult to spot.

Later stage symptoms include arthritis in the large joints,

which can recur over many years. Nervous system problems are common, e.g. numbness, meningitis (with fever, stiff neck and severe headache), Bell's palsy (paralysis of the facial muscles) and memory problems. Some people experience irregularities of the heart rhythm.

Lyme disease should be diagnosed by a physical examination and medical history. This clinical diagnosis may in some cases be supported by laboratory testing. Diagnosis based on tests alone is not reliable - a negative result does not mean that the disease is not present. Symptoms can mimic those of other diseases. Diagnosis is easiest when there is a skin rash but this occurs in less than half of sufferers.

The best way forward would be more education of GPs most of whom rarely ever meet the problem. Unfortunately they may well become more used to this problem as the incidences increase. Even if diagnosed the treatment is ill defined.

It is very difficult to avoid ticks because they can be found in urban parks and gardens, as well as typical countryside locations. It is possible for you or your pets to bring ticks into your home. The best strategy is 'awareness'. Check yourself for ticks whenever you have visited a place where they may have been present. Do this both immediately and for up to three days after any outdoor visit. This may allow you to see any adult tick that has attached.

Unfortunately for many of us this means checking ourselves daily.

Once it has started to feed, its blood-engorged body will make it very visible. If you find a tick, remove it as soon as possible. This is all very well but for those of us involved in outdoor sports this means daily inspections all the time.

Ticks can locate their prey by detecting host body heat, carbon dioxide and ammonia. They may crawl towards a stationary host or stretch out their front legs, equipped with tiny 'grappling hooks' in order to attach to a passing host. So anything you can do to thwart these tactics may help you to avoid tick bites. There are many suggestions about how to stop ticks reaching your skin but there has been little measurement of their effectiveness. Awareness still remains the best strategy.

You can make it more difficult for a tick to reach your skin by wearing shoes rather than sandals and tucking long trousers into socks. Keep to the middle of paths where possible and do not sit on the ground in suspect areas.

For those of us who run through undergrowth, orienteering etc., full body cover is a must in suspect locations which means anywhere where livestock grazes particularly deer. Ticks can be more easily seen on white or light-coloured clothing.

You should check your pets for ticks when they come into the house and especially before letting them onto carpets bedding or near soft furnishings. Consider using anti-tick pesticides for them.

There are several myths about removing ticks if you have been bitten. Don't squeeze or twist the body of the tick, as this may cause the head and body to separate, leaving the head embedded in your skin and making the creature disgorge the contents of its stomach into your bloodstream.

It is highly advisable not to use your fingernails to remove a tick. Infection can enter via any breaks in your skin, e.g. Close to the fingernail. Do not try to burn the tick off, apply petroleum jelly, nail polish or any other chemical. Any of these methods can cause discomfort to the tick, resulting in regurgitation, or saliva release.

The best way to remove the beastie is probably to use tweezers dipped in antiseptic grasping the tick as close to the skin as possible without squeezing the tick's body. Pull the tick out without twisting - there may be considerable resistance. We do not of course always carry such aids but another method is to tie a single loop of cotton around the tick's mouthparts, as close to the skin as possible, and then pull gently but firmly, upwards and outwards

Wash your hands after any such work and in case you develop symptoms later, save the tick in a container although attached to sticky tape or folded in a tissue should suffice, making a note of the date and location. Taking it to your GP will help him to arrange tests for the problems. Also if possible, ask the doctor to return it to you after it has been analysed and send it, in the interests of research, to the Institute of Virology and Environmental Microbiology, Mansfield Road, Oxford OX1 3SR, saying where the infection occurred.

The Health Protection Agency is currently investigating ticks and details are available at:-
www.lymeseaseaction.org.uk/information/tick.htm
or from the HPA at www.hpa.org.uk.

The answer is to take care and be aware. You are most at risk of Lyme Disease when towards the south of England but unfortunately I am informed that it is spreading northwards and recently a case arose in the East Midlands so the Peak District is a developing risk.

The best advice is to carefully examine your body for ticks after every time you are in a possible danger area bearing in mind particularly their favourite locations; behind the knees, under the arms and on the scalp. Your groin area is also at risk. You should also carefully inspect all clothing, brushing thoroughly when in any doubt because ticks can crawl on clothing to reach their favourite meals.

Insect repellents containing Permethrin or DEET do supposedly protect against ticks for several hours if you wish to be really confident.

Editor

This information is reproduced in good faith from various sources but I am not a medical expert and you must use your own judgement at all times. No responsibility is taken for the information provided.



NATURAL HISTORY SNIPPETS

WILDLIFE, ECOLOGY AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



SLITHERERS

Amongst creatures getting ever rarer are our snakes. Hoorah! You may say but they are a valuable part of the eco system. The adder in particular is an "indicator species" and its presence demonstrates a healthy countryside with "bio-diversity" as it needs a mixture of habitat and a variety of prey species to survive (including mice, voles, frogs, lizards and young birds). If the adder is in trouble, the rest of nature is, too.

Less common now than it used to be is the harmless grass snake, I last saw one about three years ago, sunning itself by a canal bank although I used to see them fairly often. Adders also seem thinner on the ground, although I have seen a few this year. Their population is apparently plummeting - down 50% in the past 50 years and probably there are no more than 100,000 left. They do have predators which include some birds of prey, ravens, herons and gulls and the occasional badger and hedgehog but that is not the main reason for their decline nor are they suffering at mans' deliberate hand.

However our development of the countryside and more intensive forms of agriculture both cut off and isolate adder populations, limiting movement and causing inbreeding, which is a particular problem here in the Midlands. With around a third of adders now restricted to isolated pockets of suitable habitat and only small populations of snakes at each site, they are especially vulnerable. These small and isolated populations can start to decline purely through genetic effect as it inevitably weakens the adders' resistance to disease.

The adder is an incredibly beautiful snake but few people have a chance of seeing one.



Adders often bask and are usually easier to find than grass snakes which do so much less frequently and are more normally found in dark damp places near water and are good swimmers. Many people are familiar with the renowned pattern of the adder but not so with the grass snake which is olive coloured with rows of black spots and a yellow collar.



It is also a fascinating creature; in the spring, whilst I have never been fortunate enough to see it, the males

perform an incredible dance in which they tangle, twist, push, roll and writhe to gain supremacy and the prize of any available female with which to mate. Oddly, each male has two penises and no one knows why they are blessed with more than one. The female gives birth during August and September and can produce up to twenty young, each about 7 inches long and with fully functioning venom.

Adders occur throughout Britain in numerous habitats, including sand dunes, moorland, heaths and most areas of rough ground with cover and sites for the creature to bask. I well remember my sighting which did come as a bit of a shock. I was walking across a headland in North Devon covered with bracken and gorse and there was little doubt as to what it was with its zigzag pattern along its back.

My pastimes these days do however put me in places and at times of day when I do come across them more often. Being heavily involved in orienteering I am often out in wilder places quietly doing some mapping and when either planning or controlling an event, am often there just after dawn when they come out to warm up in the sun and often curl up on sandy tracks.

The adder is Britain's only poisonous snake and obviously needs to be treated with some caution, but there are many myths engrained in our culture. Adders are very shy and will normally be long gone by the time you arrive where they had been just minutes before. They will always do their best to avoid people and large animals but, if threatened, the adder may bite. Adders see and hear very well but they can also sense vibration with their bodies and smell the air with their tongues.

They grow to just over two feet in length and females are larger than the males (these have been recorded at nearly 3 foot). They are long lived creatures although we are not sure how long. Being cold blooded they need little food and can go as long as 18 months without any.

This snake is a member of the viper family and is also known as the common viper. Unlike most reptiles, which lay eggs buried in the ground, the female adder carries the eggs inside her until they are about to hatch. During the laying process the soft eggs break revealing the live young, usually between 8 and 12 in number.

Adder bites can be fatal but deaths in normally healthy humans are extremely rare and to the best of my knowledge have not happened in Britain for over 30

BLACK & WHITE ANSWERS

years. As best I can see from trawling the internet there have been only 14 known fatalities in Britain since 1876. If you are bitten it is not recommended that you try to suck out the poison or apply a tourniquet contrary to popular myth. You should seek medical help but anti-toxins are rarely necessary.

April is a good month to see adders, or a month to take care, as they will have emerged from hibernation and spend a much of their time basking in the sun.

Fifteen per cent of adults die during hibernation in a normal winter, and about a third of all juveniles do not survive their first year.

Once we get into summer the midday heat becomes too much for them and they are about as sun comes up but they then disappear underground or into stone walling for long periods to avoid the intensity of the midday sun.

Another snake we find in Britain is the smooth snake. This one is not venomous but a constrictor in that it grabs and squeezes its prey. This creature is a bit picky and lives almost exclusively on the sandy heaths of southern England. It mainly eats other reptiles but will take young mammals. It is about the same size as an adder and can live over 35 years.

The common lizard is well named if you know where to look for them and they abound in the forests of Northamptonshire where I am often to be found these days. Full grown they are just less than six inches long, live about 5 years and eat mainly spiders.

The slow worm is another creature I should mention. It is not in fact, a worm nor is it a snake despite its appearance. Slow worms are actually legless lizards. One way to identify them is to see if they have eyelids. Lizards (and therefore slow worms) do while snakes are lidless.

Given the problems of the adder I am pleased that Natural England is joining forces with the Zoological Society of London and Oxford University to help it. A team of experts will be taking DNA swabs from snakes across a variety of sites this year to determine the current levels of genetic diversity.

From the expected results it is hoped that it will reinforce the case for a number of conservation remedies, many of which are fairly obvious in any case. Creating wildlife corridors, to link and expand existing populations of all fauna and flora is a must if we are to allow them to survive. In extreme cases it may even be considered necessary to move in fresh snakes to some populations to widen the genetic base.

Roy Denney

The beast has been given a number of suggested names perhaps the best of which was a melanistic highland cow. Wrong! But surprisingly close in one sense.

The bird, it has been suggested may be a parakeet, canary or budgerigar - again all wrong.

The black beast is actually a full blooded Yak which I photographed whilst in the Khumbu.



Most of us have seen and indeed used creatures we loosely call Yaks but these are invariably crosses except in the very high reaches of the Himalayas.

There is always some confusion as to exact spellings of phonetic translations but what we use are normally Dzopkyo which are male yak/cow crosses and more docile than full bloods.

In less religious areas these are also killed for meat and even where the cow and its derivatives are 'sacred' and never slaughtered the locals are very pragmatic. When one fell during a trek I was on, the Sherpas went back in the evening to retrieve not only our kit but the prime cuts as well.

Yak burgers are surprisingly good eating, especially when smoked over dried Yak dung.

The yak/cow female cross is a Dzum usually kept for milk and butter but also sometimes also used as a beast of burden .

As for the bird -

this is actually a white sparrow photographed by Michael Smith



RATTY'S BACK

No 1 sighting this year was on a short stretch of the Itchen Way with the river on one side and the disused canal on the other. Unusual plants and butterflies abound; rarer birds were occasionally spotted and the river itself is as clear as any water I have ever seen, running off the chalk downs as it does.

The highlight however was standing watching water voles patrolling the banks and on one occasion as we watched one on the other side of the canal, it turned and slowly swan right up to our side just beneath us.

Roy Denney

MEETS REPORT

LOW HALL GARTH, LITTLE LANGDALE

7-9 January

As is often the case for Meets at the start of the year, the weather expected over the weekend was very uncertain. After an early start to the winter with low temperatures and much snow throughout December, milder Atlantic air was predicted to make itself felt. However, in the event, the thaw made only slow progress over the weekend and the fells had a fair covering of snow and ice above about 350m.

Although the Handbook lists the Meet as being on 7-9 January, quite a number of members took advantage of their retired state to extend the Meet by arriving on Thursday, thus giving themselves a good start to the weekend's activities. Alan Linford and Derek Smithson made an early start from Teesside on Friday arriving at LHG early enough to do a low level walk around Hodge Close through to the Coniston Road and returning via Tilberthwaite. Also on Friday, Paul and Phil Dover traversed Coniston Old Man from the Copper Mines and continued over Dow Crag to the Walna Scar Road. Conditions were ideal for cramponing, but difficulty was experienced in locating the summit of Dow Crag. Another party was reported to have gone as far afield as Black Combe to check the snow conditions. Unsurprisingly, no other walkers were seen on those fells.

With the exception of Harvey Lomas, who joined the Meet on Saturday, the attendees had all gathered by early evening. Late in the day the weather had become distinctly unpleasant with prolonged showers of sleet and snow, which left the lane outside LHG about an inch deep in slush. Indoors, however, one was met by a very cosy scene with roaring log fires in the main hut and across the lane in the Barn. To add to the general feeling of well-being Martyn Trasler, our Meet Leader, provided an excellent home-made soup and bread for all who wished to partake, just a fore-taste of the high standard of catering he provided throughout the Meet. Since the Three Shires was closed for refurbishment, the extra space and comfort provided by the Barn proved to be a real bonus.

Breakfast on Saturday and Sunday included the option of full English or simple. I would say that most opted for Full English, and it really was a hearty meal. Overnight the temperature had fallen and the rain and slush at low levels of Friday evening had become a sheet of ice on all the lower paths and roads. By about nine o'clock parties of varying size had set off for their chosen excursions.

The Presidential party, which included Michael Smith and David Hick, departed for the Carrs where they tackled a pair of the gullies in reasonable, but not ideal, snow conditions (grade I/II).

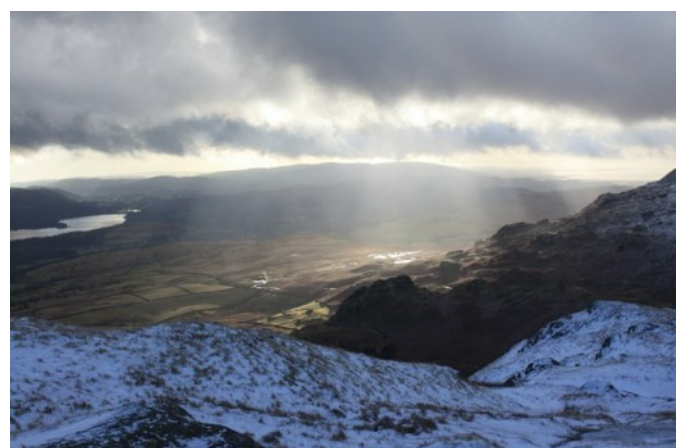


The Carrs - Photo Frank Wilkinson

The Dover cousins continued their activities by cramponing up Wetherlam by a sporting route, but conditions on the summit caused them to curtail their plans and to return via Tilberthwaite Gill.



Above, Wetherlam and below, the view of Coniston Water from it - Photographs Phil Dover



The writer and Frank Wilkinson set Pike O'Blisco as their goal. The most taxing part of the excursion was walking up the Wrynose Road, which was a sheet of ice. Once at snow level, cramponing to the summit proved straight forward, although visibility was often poor due to the blown spindrift and low cloud. The descent was made on the Langdale side with a traverse to Blea Tarn and a return to the Wrynose Road by the west side of Tarn.



Above, approaching Pike o Blisco and
Below, the view of the Langdale Pikes
Photographs Frank Wilkinson



Other parties, having decided on low level walks, roamed most of the area between Colwith, Skelwith and Elterwater.

The evening meal was a splendid multi-course affair ending with copious quantities of various cheeses and was excellent value for money, to boot. This left everyone highly relaxed and, in some cases, ready for an early night after the exertions of the day. Others, reclining in the comforts of the Barn, continued until late in the evening with the interminable discussion on the merits of leaving the stove doors open or closed.

On Sunday, a number of parties left directly for home from the hut, but others decided to drive to Langdale to make a trip from there before driving home.

Apparently, difficulty was experienced by some in leaving Little Langdale due to the extreme slipperiness of the road.

The Dovers went up Rossett Gill and circuited the head of the valley in wintry conditions on crampons taking in Rossett Pike and returning to the ODG via Stake Pass.

Michael Smith and the President went up to Pavey Ark and decided against Jack's Rake, which was plastered in snow and ice, but ascended to the summit and Harrison's Stickle by the easy gully to the eastern end of the crag. The summits

were reported to be a sea of spindrift and wind-blown ice particles. Frank Wilkinson and I walked from the hut to Blea Tarn and then traversed Lingmoor Fell. The lower reaches were frozen grass and icy, but higher up the snow was in good condition and crampons were not needed. At times, clearances in the cloud produced extensive patches of sky coloured with that beautiful steely-blue tinge that one only gets in mid-winter.



The Langdale Pikes from Lingmoor Fell
Photograph Frank Wilkinson

To top the day off, after 60 years of visiting Little Langdale, Frank and I discovered a much better route off the eastern end of the fell, which in the past we'd clearly missed. We returned to the hut via Wilson's Place and Stang End and found the Warden still busying himself with his duties. This was an excellent Meet, in spite of, or perhaps because of, the vagaries of the weather.

Arthur Salmon.

Attendees:

The President, Peter Chadwick,
Meet Leader, Martyn Trasler,
Ian Crowther, Robert Crowther, Paul Dover, Phil Dover,
Mike Godden, David Hick, Gordon Humphreys,
John Jenkin, Harvey Lomas, Alan Linford, Arthur Salmon,
Michael Smith, Derek Smithson, Frank Wilkinson.

NORTH WALES - RHYD DDU 11-13 February

As Peter and I pulled up outside Tan Yr Wyddfa (Oread MC hut) on Friday afternoon, after only three passes through the village, it started to rain. Oh I love Wales!

Perched on the western side of Snowden, Rhyd Ddu is a typical Welsh village and the Oread Club hut is a fine bow windowed four bedroom house fitted out to sleep up to 22 people, though only to seat 20 for dinner at a squeeze! The meet was well attended, by 21 people, who undertook a range of walks over the weekend, which provided four seasons of weather.

With everyone arriving safely on Friday, Saturday saw a 7am breakfast with the usual grouping up and planning

conversations. Unfortunately Richard Gowing had to return home but the remaining 20 drifted off to the hills and at 9:15 I locked up and bid goodbye to Roger (Dix) who went for a short stroll in the valley while I set off following the various groups who were climbing Snowdon.

Carol and John (Whalley), myself, two Alans (Wood and Linford), the Dovers (Paul, Phil and Evelyn) and John Brown all climbed and descended Snowdon via a combination of the Rhyd Ddu, Bwlch Cwm Llan, and the Rangers paths. Enjoying balmy sunshine in the valley, mist and drizzle on the way up and sub-zero temperatures and howling wind on the summit. Mick, Adrian, Peter (Elliot) and Peter (Chadwick) detoured to attack Yr Aran on the way up before descending down the railway to visit the magnificent 'Cloggy' crag. They ascended via its Eastern Terrace to the north ridge of Snowdon onto the Rangers path.

At this point Mick continued the descent while the others climbed up onto Moel Cynghorion where Peter the younger admitted defeat leaving Adrian and our esteemed President to question if over 60 really is over the hill, as they walked on to Moel Eilio before coming back for tea and medals.

Tim and Derek went south from Rhyd Ddu, climbing over Bwlch-y-ddwy-elor and along Cwm Pennant before then skirting to the south of Moel yr Ogof and down Cwm Meillionen. Richard Josephy and Iain drove over to the Moelwyns; climbing the horseshoe of Cnicht, Moelwyn Mawr and Moelwyn Bach. Frank, Alan Clare and Roger all opted for days below the clouds in the Beddgelert Forest and surrounding areas.

Despite a plea from the meet leader for an 8pm dinner to allow him to watch Scotland beat Wales; a request rejected, which meant Andy didn't spend dinner in a state of shocked disappointment (Scotland lost!). At 7pm, on the dot, as Alan Clare, John and Carol rushed in from the pub, we sat down to the parsnip soup starter and realised we had a spare bowl of soup. A quick recount confirmed one of our number was missing. Roger had not returned.

As we started to contemplate the idea of postponing the main course to go hunting for him, a head torch appeared at the kitchen window and Roger appeared, damp but none the worse for his ordeal, having got lost, twice, in the forest.

After the treacle tart we sat around with cheese and alcohol discussing the tenacity, if not the map reading ability, of YRC members.

Sunday dawned with a torrential downpour, which improved to a soggy drizzle by the time we closed up the hut. With many members deciding to head for home or saunters in the woods, Mick, Peter C, Peter E, Adrian and myself decided on another jaunt into the mists around the Llynns between Moel Druman and Moel Meirch. To Adrian's ongoing calls of "the cloud's lifting" we undertook a map reading exercise worthy of Mountain Instructor Certificate in the clouds above Beddgelert; the President showing that getting geographically challenged is not a requirement for the post.

While the views were lousy and the sky only marginally less wet than the turf it was an interesting day and as we arrived back on the road we turned back to admire the route as the cloud had finally lifted!

Despite the best efforts of the weather a productive and enjoyable weekend was enjoyed by all. Lets hope for some snow in Scotland next month.

Andy Syme

Attending:

Peter Chadwick, President

Andy Syme, Meet Leader

Peter Elliott, Mick Borroff, Richard Josephy, Phil Dover,

Evelyn Dover, Paul Dover, John Brown, Tim Josephy

Iain Gilmour, Adrian Bridge, Alan Wood, Frank Platt

Derek Smithson, Alan Linford, Alan Clare, Roger Dix,

Carol Whalley John Whalley, Richard Gowing

GLEN ETIVE 3-6th March 2011.

24 in a hut that holds 13? Luckily it comes with soft ground in the woods for camping and a clear, cold stream to wash in. Who needs fancy living? Inbhirfhaolain remains the four-star accommodation of Glen Etive. The payback? No mobile phone reception and no damn computers.



The Grampian Club hut, Inbhirfhaolain
photo Adrian Bridge

A three-dayer this, the majority of folk had descended on Glen Etive by Thursday evening. Adrian Dixon and I arrived late-ish at around midnight to the sweet sound of snoring from the bunk room. Come on chaps, where's the single malt whisky and the warm fire chat? No? Ah well, it's probably for the best. Quick cup of tea, get the tents up, and that's it for one more day.

No matter what time you rise on the Friday morning, breakfast is compulsory. Two Weetabix, two rounds of toast, a hot drink and its away. Adrian Bridge has got it cracked. No fuss, no bother, straight off to the hill. Very healthy. You never know what weather the Scottish meet in March is going to throw at you but the 2011 event has to be one of the warmest in recent years, and one of the driest too.

9 degrees centigrade during the day in the valley, night temperatures never went below 4c and freezing levels were way above the summits. No wonder the snow line was receding at great speed. So fast in fact that the high mountain field mice were exposed to the attentions of Adrian Bridges who insisted on first chasing them and then digging for them. Keep taking the medication son.

Everyone is keen for a good first day of the weekend. It is fair to say however that Mike Smith and Dave Hick who have had a three long days on the Braemar side of the Cairngorms are showing the signs of what a few Munros can do to you. Reluctance? Never the less, Buchaille Etive Mor via Curved Ridge is the target and leading the way is Richard Smith. On the way up Lagangarbh gully catches their attention as the preferred route. It sounds like getting down was tougher than getting up. This year Anoch Eagach ridge was traversed on scrappy snow by Peter Chadwick, Adrian Bridge, Steve Eccleston, and Aaron Oakes who in the customary fashion also traversed the bar of the Clachaig Inn. Adrian Dixon and Pete Elliott explored the Ballachulish horseshoe. Munroists clinically bisect and grab the two summits of Sgorr Dhearg and Sgor Dhonuill and then return the same way. It's amazing just how remote the rest of the horseshoe is. Note to self: do not under any circumstance attempt to descend these mountains by trying to force a route through forest plantations. It's on hands and knees and quite frankly embarrassing. Thank god nobody saw us.

Other YRC groups ventured onto Beinn Fhada and Bidean, The Pap, or Buachaille Etive Beag, and others explored Lairig Eilde and Glen Etive. Most were blessed with a hint of a view as the day progressed and all agreed to have had an excellent day in the mountains.



AO, SE and PC on Pap of Glencoe
Photo Adrian Bridge

Most braved the icy river for half a freshen up. Top half. Some went for the full monty with an icy freshen up bottom half. By the time Adrian and his team had pulled off an amazing bangers and mash supper with gallons of peas and a couple of glasses of red everyone was fully restored.

Saturday dawned and over a breakfast of more Weetabix and toast people started to convince themselves that yes they

could possibly find the strength to ascent yet more Munros. Alan and Derek made for Lagancharb and explored Rannoch Moor and the West Highland Way. They just loved it.

Harry Robinson travelled more of the superb Glen Etive joined by Roger and Stuart Dix. David Large and Trevor Drage bagged Ben Starav and while one team went for the traditional winter route of Curved Ridge on the Buachaille another team scrambled up Sron na Lairig a grade 2 ridge on Stob coire Sgreaach bagging Bidean and returning down the lovely Gleann Fhaolain valley directly to the hut.

Only quick fleeting glimpses of a view again until late in the day but plenty of reports of wildlife were made in these unusual mild conditions, Ptarmigan turning brown, frogs out of hibernation, deer high up and even bats flying. How warm does it need to be for the bats to be out hunting?

Adrian, well prepared, met demands for feeding with a superb chili and rice but strangely no peas? Not sure why?

No one went hungry.



Barrie Wood and Derek Bush
descending out of the clouds
Photo John Whalley

An excellent weekend. Thank you to Adrian Bridge for shouldering the burden of the organising and preparing meals. Outstanding effort. Next time - more peas please!

PE

Attendance.

Peter Chadwick, President
Adrian Bridge, Meet Leader
Steve Eccleston (G), Phil Dover, Tony Dunford, Ken Roberts
Laurie Partington (G), Peter Elliott, Alan Linford, Roger Dix
Stuart Dix, Harry Robinson, Derek Bush, Barrie Wood
Adrian Dixon, David Large, Trevor Drage (G), Aaron Oakes
Derek Smithson, Mike Smith, Iain Gilmour, John Whalley,
David Hick, Richard Smith.

LOWSTERN

8-10 April 2011

Most were already well ensconced round the fire when your scribe arrived late on Friday, the Presidential party of two having had an afternoon ascent of Pen-y-ghent and others having eaten at The Gamecock. A member who had been in residence midweek had seen goldfinches, a woodpecker and a nuthatch while sitting on the bench outside.

Saturday dawned with two hares resting on the grass 30m in front of the hut, reluctant to leave despite members taking morning tea on the bench. Then Tim arrived with the shocking news of Adrian Bridge's untimely death after a fall whilst climbing in Pot Hole Quarry, it silenced all conversation. Out in the bright warm sunshine all parties returned time and again to reflect on this sad news.

The Presidential party of four hardened walkers traversed the Barbon fells, the Occupation Road, Crag Hill, Great Coum, the County Stone and a beck-bottoming descent of Easegill (where the hot weather prompted an impromptu Presidential bathe in the Gill) to County Pot, then via Bull Pot Farm the Lune and the Barbon Inn for a well-earned pint.

Meanwhile, Ian celebrated his 75th birthday with a Forest of Bowland cycle ride of 58 miles taking in Slaidburn. The late arriving Whalley's walked to Sulber, Nick Pot and back over a relatively quiet Ingleborough. A senior party used a car to link shorter explorations of the entrances along the Tubary Road, Kingsdale, Deepdale, upper Dentdale, The Sportsman at Cowgill (much improved) and round to Austwick. Finally, starting from Austwick another senior party made an attractive circuit of Feizor, Stainforth and Giggleswick Scar. Ignoring the best weather of the year so far, two Smiths under the direction of Alister made an SRT descent of Hurnel Moss Pot, near Gaping Gill but approached from Newby, with its impressive Poseidon pitch and **nearly** enough rope to reach the bottom. Creative use of a cow's tail by Alister solved that problem and the sump was found to be no more than a trickle.

Local members arrived early that evening. After an aperitif of mulled wine and some hors d'oeuvres, the meal of soup, curry and naans, sticky toffee pudding, the meal was followed by toasts to absent friends, Adrian in particular, and Ian's birthday.



A small cake with 75 candles arrived and burned briefly like a firestorm but was extinguished in one breath. Many then retired to The New Inn for further refreshment.

Mistaking the freezer for a fridge, a senior member had two bottles of cheap 'bubbly' frozen overnight. The cooling liquid released more gas into the 'air' space increasing the pressure to the glass' breaking point. The rapid expansion instantaneously further cooled the liquid and gas resulting in freezing so rapid that the foaming mass turned solid before it had time to pass through the wire shelf.

With embedded shards of glass this posed a difficult cleaning task in the morning for the disappointed owner, but provided a fascinating physics demonstration.



County Stone above and Easegill Pool



Sunday started cool after a clear night but rapidly heated up. While one party did the round of a busier Ingleborough and quiet Crummack Dale another found an interesting and varied round in Bowland, starting at the Bowland Knotts col: Mick and Iain headed east along the ridge to the inscribed Resting Stone, then south to the trig point on Whelp Stone Crag. A short descent through the forest led to the delightful and unvisited valley containing Dob Dale Beck which was followed downstream via Bottoms to the Stocks Reservoir car park. After a visit to one of the hides, a return was made via New House farm and Pike Side.

Another party's bright idea of climbing was abandoned when it became clear that they had no rope.

Tim commented that it made a change to be at Lowstern and it not be raining – certainly the excellent weather made for a better weekend.

Thanks go to Iain for the organisation of and catering for the weekend - the last Club meet at Lowstern before the planned remodelling of the kitchen.

MS

Photographs by Richard Taylor

Attending:

Peter Chadwick, President, Alan Clare, Derek Clayton, Ian Crowther, Eddie Edkins, Mike Godden, Iain Hawkes, John Jenkin, Tim Josephy, Alister Renton, Ged Champion, John Whalley, Carol Whalley (guest), Mick Borroff, Michael Smith, Richard Smith, Richard Taylor (guest). Albert Chapman joined them for the meal,

HARRIS May 2 - 6

Monday saw the troops gathering at the ferry terminal at Uig in warm sunshine. Some had started early; Derek Bush and Barrie Wood had arrived on Saturday and had already traversed the Clisham ridge and walked at Rhenish point. Mick Borroff and Adrian Dixon managed 11 munros on the way, being joined by Richard Smith for the 7 on the South Cluanie Ridge. (They were to climb another on the way home, making 12 and that's apart from what they did on the meet!). Philip Dover climbed Beinne Bhuird on Loch Fyne.

After a smooth crossing, all arrived at the very comfortable An Bothan bunkhouse in Leverborough in the late afternoon.



Two took advantage of the sunshine to climb Roineabhal nearby. Only about 1600ft high, it has its feet in the sea and is a proper little mountain with exceptional views. It was climbed by several others during the week. The owner (and builder) of the bunkhouse, Rory, came over and proved to be a mine of information about wildlife, prehistoric sites and recommended walking routes.

On Tuesday, the Clisham ridge saw three parties, totalling nine enjoying the continuing fine weather. The only other walker seen must have been quite miffed to find the place so crowded. Derek and Barrie, having already done Clisham crossed another of the Harris ridges, climbing four summits. Peter Chadwick & his guest Richard Taylor took a bus to the NW coast and set off with bivvy gear. They reached Kinlochresort in the late afternoon and spent some time trying to find the prehistoric beehive dwellings the area is famous for, with no success.

After a comfortable camp the backpackers took in six hills including the Clisham ridge to complete two excellent days. Wednesday saw parties on the Toe, a hilly peninsula with spectacular sea cliffs and cave. Others walked round Scalpay Island or went bird watching along the magnificent west coast beaches.

On Thursday the weather began to change with some rain, but still pretty good by Hebridean standards. The Toe was again visited as was Scalpay. Other parties went to Beinn Dubh, Sron Ulladale and the mystical stones at Callanish.

In the evening we repaired to the nearby Anchorage restaurant where an excellent meal was enjoyed.

Friday dawned wet. A party of elder statesmen caught the ferry to travel down the Uists to Barra. Others walked locally or went to Callanish. The rain stopped and the afternoon became sunny and warm. The stones visitors met two women communing with the spirits. It was no surprise to find they were American but we declined their suggestion that joining them would help to balance our energies. Later we picked up an enthusiastic black and white guide who escorted us around the moors most professionally except when distracted by sheep.

The wild landscape of the Hebrides is home to diverse wildlife. We were too early for the flowers of the machair, but the list of rare birds included Black Throated Divers, Eider Ducks and the very rare Great Northern Diver. Also seen were Ringed and Golden Plovers, Redshanks and Corncrakes (heard not seen). And of course there were the majestic Golden Eagles, soaring unconcerned over the cliffs. One member was lucky enough to catch sight of three Sea Otters playing in the kelp on rocks near the Toe.

This was a very successful meet blessed with generally good weather and as always excellent company.

Thanks are due to Iain Gilmour for the organisation.

TJ

Attending

Peter Chadwick (President), Mick Borroff, David Handley, Iain Gilmour, Tim Josephy, Richard Taylor (G), Adrian Dixon, Phil Dover, Albert Chapman, Derek English, Derek Bush, Barrie Wood, Nick Welch, Richard Kirby, Richard Smith, Laurie Partington (G), David Hick, Ken Roberts.

Photographs by Richard Smith



On the ridge north of Carn a Mhaim looking West towards The Devil's Point



On the ridge north of Carn a Mhaim looking north towards the Lairig Ghru



On The Devil's Point looking north towards Cairn Toul



Cairn Toul



Top of Cairn Toul looking West



Looking north from Cairn Toul towards Braeriach

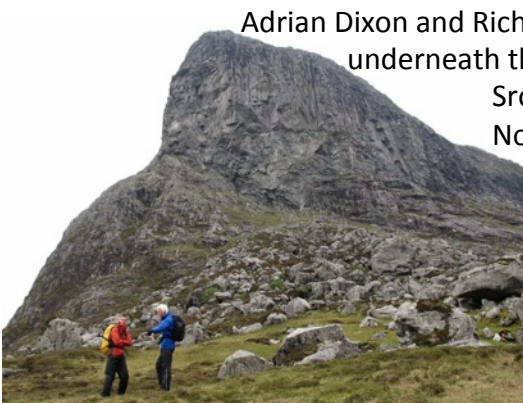
Photographs by Mick Borroff



Calanais Standing Stones, Lewis



An Cliseam ridge, North Harris



Adrian Dixon and Richard Smith underneath the face of Sron Uladal, North Harris



Ceapabhal, Toe Head, South Harris

LONG MYND, SHROPSHIRE JUNE 3 - 6

This years Social Meet was again ably organised by Paul Dover, to who we are extremely grateful. A great deal of thought and effort goes into the planning to find an interesting area to visit and a suitable hotel to say in.

The Long Mynd Hotel at Church Stretton, Shropshire was chose and proved to be admirable in both respects. The town is at the foot of the Long Mynd range of hills on one side and Caer Caradoc and other hills to the other. They are all easily accessible on foot from the hotel door without the need to drive. The hotel itself was fist class with excellent service and food.

The Friday evening saw some 12 couples gather for dinner. Unfortunately, John and Janet Hemingway were not able to be present having suffered a minor road accident on the journey down, but at least with no personal injury, and were greatly missed.

Saturday dawned warm and bright and we were joined after breakfast by Mike and Helen Smith who were staying at a local B&B. A party of 6 couples walked via Ashes Hollow and Boiling Well onto Pole Hill, the highest point on the Mynd.

There were several stops en route to enjoy the scenery and an impromptu reading of some of A E Houseman's poems in his "Shropshire Lad" helped to absorb the atmosphere. The panorama from Pole Hill was spectacular with clear views to Snowdonia, The Black Mountains and the Malvern Hills with Wenlock Edge closer to hand. The return was down Carding Mill back to the hotel. Other couples enjoyed visits to other places of interest in the locality including Ludlow and the Darwin Museum in Shrewsbury.



A very convivial Dinner was had by all after which the President gave a few words of welcome, also noting the fact that his old family motto that hotels are for those who cannot afford tents was being proved wrong on this occasion.

Fiona Humphries also presented Paul with a book on Birds of Long Mynd as a thank you on behalf of all of us.

Sunday proved to be somewhat cooler and damper but that did not prevent a party of 4 couples exploring the hills on the east side of the valley, ably led by Roger Dix who enjoyed showing us some of his old haunts and walks from his childhood years in the area. Hope Bowdler Hill was ascended via the Gaer Stone, then onto Willstone Hill and Caer Caradoc with its impressive Hill fort.

Some in the group had to leave for home that evening while the remainder stayed on for a third night and departed the next day. All in all, this was a very enjoyable and relaxing weekend with good company in a lovely and unspoilt part of the English countryside.

PC

Attending

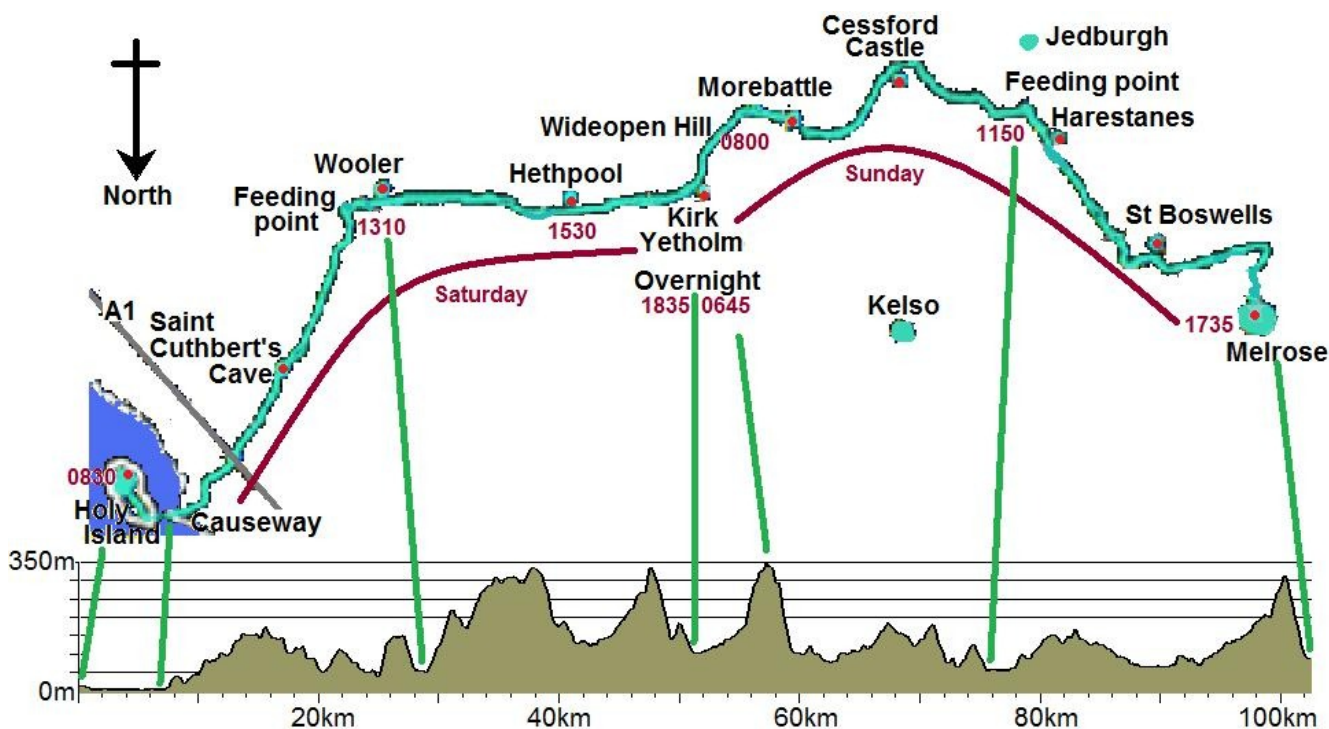
Iain and Sarah Gilmour
 Mike and Marcia Godden
 George and Sylvia Spenceley
 Alan and Madge Brown
 Peter and Ann Chadwick
 Roger and Gwen Dix
 Paul and Anne Dover
 Richard and Elizabeth Gowing
 Gordon and Fiona Humphries
 Tim and Elaine Josephy
 John and Pat Schofield
 Bill and Juliet Todd
 Mike and Helen Smith.

Photos by
 Paul Dover



CLUB LONG WALK, St CUTHBERT'S WAY SCOTTISH BORDERS JUNE 17-20

Two very long walks - Lindisfarne to Yirk Yetholm 30 miles then Yirk Yetholm to Melrose 33 miles. 63 miles or 100k in all.



Attendance:

The President, Peter Chadwick
 Iain Crowther, Meet Leader
 Mick Borroff
 Kevin Brown
 Patrick Henry (G)
 Roy Denney
 Roger Dix
 Stuart Dix
 Paul Dover
 Peter Green
 David Hick
 John Jenkin
 Richard Josephy
 Tim Josephy
 Aaron Oakes
 Michael Smith
 Derek Smithson
 Martyn Trasler
 Nick Walsh



Some of the happy band at the off.

The venue for this year's Long Walk was St Cuthbert's Way in the border country. St Cuthbert (635-687 AD) was a cleric at Melrose Abbey who traversed the route in order to take up the Priorship of Lindisfarne, where his body was returned to rest after a life as a travelling bishop and a hermit on the Farne Islands

The 63-mile walk was spread over two days with accommodation at the Kirk Yetholm Youth Hostel, conveniently situated near the half-way point. Ian studied his tide tables and decided that the only way was to do it in reverse (uphill), i.e. starting at Lindisfarne and finishing at Melrose; otherwise the causeway would be covered.

The weather forecast was dire. This did not discourage the starters gathered at the feet of St Cuthbert's statue for a group photograph. At 7:30 on Saturday morning we set off.

The causeway was dry apart from shallow puddles and the rain was holding off.

Soon we were at the railway crossing where a call was dutifully made on the telephone provided and we were told a train was due any minute. Impatience prevailed however and most took their chances running across the rails! It must be said that the time between our very first awareness of the actual train to when it was speeding past the crossing was less than 10 seconds!



Photo - John Whalley

The way remained quite pastoral as we gradually ascended the high ground between the coast and the valley of Wooler Water. A short break was enjoyed at St Cuthbert's Cave. One can imagine this large rock shelter beneath a gritstone crag providing an excellent bivouac for St Cuthbert and his retinue.



Early enthusiasm



The supported feeding point was by a bridge over the River Till some 15 miles into the walk.

Photos - Kevin Brown

From the bridge a climb up rough moor led to a forest before the descent to Wooler.

Beyond the town was a bigger ascent as we crossed the Cheviots. It was then that the skies opened and gave us rain for the rest of the walk. The last couple of miles to Kirk Yetholm were shared with the Pennine Way.

It was a considerable relief arrive, wet and bedraggled, at the Border Inn and order a pint of real ale. Soon the president entered, losing no time chatting with the ladies and looking like the cat that got the cream!



Photo - John Whalley

The Saturday finishers were Mick, Kevin, Patrick, Roy, Paul, David, Richard, Tim, Aaron, Michael, Martyn, John W and Nick.

At 15 miles Paul, The Dix's and Peter Green joined the support party of Ian, Derek and John Jenkin.

Sunday was a better day weather-wise, but more complicated to report! Aaron and David retired due to bad blisters. Mick, made it as far as the feeding point and then dropped out. Martyn and the Dix's headed home.

Richard and Nick decided to ascend Hedgehope Hill and Comb Fell (South of the Cheviot) returning by the Hartshope Valley. On the way home on Monday, they did Cushat Law.

Roy and Peter G walked locally before joining the support team. Paul elected to get a lift and then walk the last 20 miles to Melrose Abbey.

The main party set off early. I missed joining them due to faffing about with gear upstairs. I felt stiff and slow as I set off through the wild flowers of the riverbank so it was perhaps as well. Two hours later I was on the top of Wide Open Hill, reading a plaque that proclaimed to be the half way point of St Cuthberts Way and the highest point on the walk. Doing the Maths my best hope would be to finish at the Jedburgh feeding point.

After Cessford there was a major deviation to the route. Making a detour due to the attentions of a large bull, I got hopelessly embroiled in a tangle of vegetation in a wooded gorge and could only make progress by walking up the riverbed, using my poles to balance against the current. It was Oxnam Water, and as soon as I was clear I phoned a worried Ian to arrange a pick up at Crailing. This was just as the finishers were passing between the Eildon Hills for the final leg.

In all four completed the whole walk:

Patrick and Peter C who then visited our member David Stembridge, who lives locally and who later brought them back to the hostel and Kevin and Michael, who were recovered by the support party.



A wet and weary Kevin Brown in front of Melrose Abbey at the finish of the walk

As for the others: Tim, had retired at the feeding point due to a painful hip. Paul completed his 20 miles and was also recovered by the supporters.

Thanks go to the SYHA staff and to our support team. Ian especially appreciated assistance from Peter Green in providing pre-cooked meals for both Friday and Saturday evenings, and from John Jenkin who ably managed the much appreciated culinary arrangements.

JCW

MEETS MONTAGE



Above and below - Christmas Meet 2010

Photos Paul Dover



January Lakes Meet

Top - Arthur Salmon on Pike o Blisco

Lower- Paul Dover on Rossett Pike

Photos Frank Wilkinson and Phil Dover



Adrian Bridge, Peter Elliott and Peter Chadwick
contemplating Clogwyn Ar'Du
on Rhyd Ddu meet

Photo by Mick Borroff



Presidential Party on Calf Top, Lowstern Meet

Photo by Mick Borroff



Most of the team, Glen Etive meet

Photo by Adrian Bridge



En route to the Harris meet, Mike & Richard Smith on top of A'Mhaighdean and a crossing of the River Allt a' Chonais via a wire bridge (south of Achnashellach)

Photo's above by Richard Smith



Am Bothan bunkhouse, Leverburgh, Harris

Photo Mick Borroff



JS

President and Vice President in convivial mood at the social meet, as were other attendees (right)

Photos by Paul Dover and John Schofield



PD



JS

CLUB PROCEEDINGS

Over the last two years the Club have been reviewing their rules of governance , bye-laws and guidelines to reflect the world of today and they are printed here as a single point of reference.

Rules

1. Name

The name of the Club is The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, referred to in these Rules as 'The Club'.

2. Aims and Powers of the Club

2.1 The aims of the Club are to organise walking, mountaineering and skiing excursions, to encourage the exploration of caves and pot-holes and the pursuit of other outdoor activities and to gather and promote knowledge concerning natural history, archaeology, folklore and kindred subjects.

2.2 The Club may do anything lawful that may be deemed necessary in order to promote its objectives, including the use of the following powers:

- (i) to construct, alter, provide, manage, maintain, furnish and fit with all the necessary furniture and other equipment, the buildings and any other premises or structure or land which the Club may need for its objectives;
- (ii) to employ and pay any employees, servants and professional or other advisers;
- (iii) subject to any consents required by law, to borrow monies up to a limit of £50,000, to invite and receive contributions or grants or enter into contracts and to seek subscriptions or raise monies in any other way;
- (iv) subject to any consent required by law to buy, take on lease, sell, lease or otherwise dispose of, hire, charge or mortgage or acquire any land or property of any sort, receive any guarantee or indemnity and give guarantee or indemnity up to a maximum liability of £20,000;
- (v) to promote, encourage or undertake study or research and disseminate the results of such;
- (vi) to produce, print and publish anything in written, oral, visual or electronic media;
- (vii) to provide or procure the provision of services, training, consultancy, advice, support, counselling and guidance;
- (viii) to promote and advertise the Club's activities;
- (ix) to invest any money that the Club does not immediately need in any investments, securities or properties;
- (x) to establish, support or join with any institutions, societies or associations whose objects are the same as, or broadly similar to, its own;
- (xi) to purchase or otherwise acquire any of the property, assets and liabilities of any of the institutions, societies or associations with which the Club is authorised to join, and perform any of their engagements;
- (xii) to transfer any of the Club's property, assets, liabilities and engagements to any of the institutions, societies or associations with which the Club is authorised to join;
- (xiii) to open and operate banking accounts and other banking facilities;
- (xiv) to enter into any arrangements with any governments, authorities or any person or association necessary to promote any of the Club's objectives;
- (xv) to insure any risks arising from the Club's activities;
- (xvi) to indemnify and insure the Committee against the costs of a successful defence to a criminal prosecution brought against them as Committee members or against personal liability incurred in respect of any act or omission which is, or is alleged to be, a breach of trust or breach of duty, unless the Committee members concerned were reckless or knew the act or omission was a breach of trust or a breach of duty;
- (xvii) to delegate upon such terms and at such reasonable remuneration as the Club may think fit to professional investment managers ("the Managers") the exercise of all or any of its powers of investment provided always that:
 - a) The Managers are authorised to carry on investment business under the provisions of the Financial Services Act 1986.
 - b) The delegated powers shall be exercisable only within clear policy guidelines drawn up in advance by the Club.
 - c) The Club shall be entitled at any time to review, alter or terminate the delegation or the terms thereof.However, the Club shall be liable for any failure to take reasonable care in choosing the Managers, fixing or enforcing the terms upon which the Managers are employed, and requiring the remedy of any breaches of those terms and otherwise supervising the Managers, but otherwise shall not be liable for any acts and defaults of the Managers.
- (xviii) to permit any investments belonging to the Club to be held in the name of any clearing bank, trust corporation or stock-broking association which is a member of the Stock Exchange, or any subsidiary of any such stock-broking association, as nominee for the Club, and to pay any such nominee reasonable and proper remuneration for acting as such.

3. Membership

3.1 Ordinary members

Any person over 18 years of age who has shown an interest in the aims of the Club to the satisfaction of the Committee is eligible for election.

Candidates for election must be proposed and seconded by existing Members who have themselves been in membership for not less than twelve months.

Candidates' names and details will be circulated to all Members at least seven days before any election. Election will be by ballot of the Committee and to be successful an applicant must gain 75% of the votes cast.

3.2 Honorary members

Honorary membership may be conferred on persons in recognition of their eminence in promoting the aims of the Club. They will be elected by a majority of those voting at a General Meeting following nomination by the Committee. Honorary members will have the same privileges as ordinary members, but will not be liable for any subscriptions.

3.3 Life Members

Life membership is conferred on any Member with 35 years continuous membership and is so noted in the Handbook. Their privileges will be in accord with the prevailing Bye-laws.

3.4 Temporary Members

Temporary membership may be granted to suitable persons in line with the prevailing Bye-laws.

3.5 On joining, all members will be provided with a copy of the Rules and Bye-laws of the Club and agree to be bound by them and do nothing which is contrary to, or in conflict with, the aims of the Club. If at any time the Committee is of the opinion that the lawful interests of the Club so require, it has the power to expel or suspend any Member provided that such power is not exercised unless:

- (i) not less than 14 days' notice in writing is given to the Member concerned of the meeting of the Committee at which such action is to be proposed and of the grounds for such proposal;
- (ii) the Member concerned is allowed an opportunity to make oral representations in person and/or written representations, as they think fit, to the Committee before the motion for expulsion is put to the vote;
- (iii) there is a 75% majority of the Committee as set out in Rule 5.1 present and voting, in favour of such expulsion or suspension.

3.6 Any person ceasing to be a Member of the Club shall thereupon forfeit all claim upon or right to the Club, its property and funds which membership of the Club would otherwise confer upon such person.

4. General Meetings

4.1 General meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the Bye-laws. An Extraordinary General Meeting of the membership must be called by giving the notice required by the Bye-laws, but in any event at least 21 days' notice must be given. This notice must specify the time, date and place of the meeting. If special business is to be discussed, full details or the general nature of the business must be given. All relevant paperwork shall be circulated to the Members not less than 21 days before the meeting.

Notice of the meeting must be given to all Members. A quorum at a General Meeting shall be 30 Members or 50% of the membership, rounded down, whichever is the smaller number. Non-members shall not be present during a General Meeting without the approval of the meeting.

4.2 The Annual General Meeting of the Members shall be held during November each year for the purpose of transacting the following business:

- (i) to consider the Annual Reports of the President and Officers and statement of accounts;
- (ii) to elect Honorary Officers of the Club;
- (iii) to elect the members of the Committee;
- (iv) to appoint an Auditor or Independent Financial Examiner of appropriate status;
- (v) to agree the levels of subscriptions for the forthcoming year;
- (vi) to receive the report of the President detailing the activities of the Club and explaining what action has been, or may be taken, on matters raised at the previous AGM or any Extraordinary General Meetings of the Club or by a ballot of the Members;
- (vii) one year before the end of the incumbent's term of office, to elect a President to take office at the subsequent AGM.

4.3 The Members may exercise the following powers either at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting or by ballot, if permitted by the Bye-laws:

- (i) to amend the Rules of the Club;
- (ii) to consider, and if thought fit, pass any Members' propositions.

4.4 The President of the Club and in default, a Vice President, normally presides as Chair at every General Meeting of the Club. If there is no President or Vice President present, or if they are not present within 15 minutes after the appointed starting time or are unwilling to take the Chair, the Members present must elect one of their number to chair the meeting.

4.5 At any General Meeting a resolution put to the vote of the meeting shall be carried provided a majority of the votes cast are in favour. The Club may alter the Rules only by a special resolution. A special resolution can only be passed at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Members of which 21 days notice has been given of the intention to pass a special resolution and at which more than 66%, rounded up, of those Members voting are in favour. It will be taken on a show of hands unless a count is demanded, before or after the result of the show of hands is declared. A count can be demanded by the Chair of the meeting or by at least two Members who are present. No proxy votes are allowed. Postal voting shall only be used in the circumstances set out in the Bye-laws.

4.6 Every Member has one vote including the presiding Chair. All Members present shall be afforded the right to speak at a General Meeting.

4.7 The following documents must be sent to Members at least 21 days before the date of the Annual General Meeting:

- (i) a copy of the balance sheet and the income and expenditure accounts which are to be laid before the Club at the General Meeting;
- (ii) a copy of any report from the Independent Financial Examiners, Reporting Accountants or Auditors.

5. The Committee

5.1 The Committee consists of:

- (i) the President,
- (ii) any President Elect,
- (iii) any Vice President,
- (iv) the immediate Past President, for one year after relinquishing the Presidency,
- (v) the Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer,
- (vi) the Huts' Secretary,
- (vii) the Hut Wardens,
- (viii) not more than five Members elected at the Annual General Meeting who shall hold office until the Annual General Meeting in the year following that in which they were elected, but they will be eligible for re-election, and
- (ix) not more than three additional Members who may be co-opted to, and by, the Committee.

Co-opted members shall have exactly the same voting rights as elected members.

5.2 The Committee is responsible for the management of the Club and may exercise all the powers of the Club. As far as reasonably possible, they will act in consultation with the Membership at large on any major strategic plans for the work and future development of the Club; they will consult widely within the Club and shall not implement any such plan without the prior approval of the Members at a General Meeting or by ballot **except that** the Committee may implement the plan without such approval only to the extent that failure to implement, in the reasonable opinion of the Committee, would not be in the best interests of the Club, or would, or would be likely, to result in a breach of statute or other law, contract, trust or duty of care by the Club or any members of the Committee, or in damage to the reputation of the Club, or in a legal claim against the Club.

5.3 In exercising their powers, the Committee must comply with the terms of a Member's proposition, which is passed at a General Meeting of the Members or by a ballot of Members in accordance with the Bye-laws, except to the extent that such compliance, in the reasonable opinion of the Committee after full and diligent consideration, would not be in the best interests of the Club, or would, or would be likely to, result in a breach of statute or other law, contract, trust or duty of care by the Club or any members of the Committee, or in damage to the reputation of the Club, or in a legal claim against the Club. At the next General Meeting the Committee shall explain what action has been taken on such a Member's proposition. A Member's proposition shall be either submitted to a General Meeting of the Members, or by ballot for consideration by the Committee, in accordance with the Bye-laws.

5.4 The Committee can make such Bye-laws as may, from time to time, be considered necessary within the powers contained within the Rules. The following matters shall, *inter alia*, be determined in the Bye-laws:

- (i) the procedure for fixing Hut fees and usage;
- (ii) the procedure to be followed in respect of the Annual General Meeting and for calling an Extraordinary General Meeting;
- (iii) the procedure to be followed for holding a ballot of Member;
- (iv) the duties of the Committee and the conduct of its meetings and those of any sub-committees;
- (v) records, account and audit;
- (vi) the payment of expenses;

- (vii) Child Protection Policy;
- (viii) Health and Safety Policy;
- (ix) the use and safety of Club tackle.

All bye-laws shall be binding on all Members and the Committee may use such means as it thinks fit to bring the Bye-laws to the attention of members.

No bye-law shall contravene any of the provisions of the Rules of the Club.

5.5 The Committee shall meet, adjourn, observe the quorum and run its meetings as required by the Bye-laws.

5.6 The Committee has the power to delegate to officers of the Club such executive powers as it deems necessary.

5.7 Members must cease to be a member of the Committee if they:

- (i) become bankrupt,
- (ii) become incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering their own affairs,
- (iii) resign the office by notice in writing to the Club,
- (iv) are removed as a member of the Committee by the Members in General Meeting, or
- (v) cease to be a Member of the Club.

6. Officers

6.1 The Honorary Officers of the Club are:

- (i) the **President** who joins the Committee when he becomes President Elect and will remain on the Committee for one year after the end of the term of office;
- ii) the **Vice President** whose term is coincident with that of the President and is elected at the Annual General Meeting and is a member of the Committee;
- iii) the **Honorary Treasurer** who is elected at the Annual General Meeting and is a member of the Committee; and
- iv) the **Honorary Secretary** who is elected at the Annual General Meeting and is a member of the Committee.

The Committee may appoint from within its own membership to fill a vacancy in the office of Treasurer or Secretary which occurs between Annual General Meetings. Other official positions as determined from time to time will normally be filled from within the Committee.

6.2 The President

- (i) The election of a President takes place at the AGM one year before the commencement of the term of office, which is for two years. A nomination to the position will be made by the Committee to the AGM as set out in the Bye Laws.
- (ii) The President acts as Chairperson of the Committee, but may ask the Committee to nominate a Chairperson from within its ranks. If electing to chair Committee meetings, the President shall have the casting vote within the Committee in the event of a tied vote, but if electing to pass the Chair to another member of the Committee, then the casting vote is to be allocated to the presiding Chair.
- (iii) The President will normally act as the interface between the Club and outside bodies and represent the Club at formal functions. In the absence of the President, the Vice President will assume the normal roles of the President and will deputise for the President.
- (iv) The President will, for two years following election, chair the Meets sub-committee which will produce recommendations for the programme of Meets during the President's term of office.

6.3 The Honorary Treasurer's role is to:

- (i) ensure that effective accounting systems are in operation;
- (ii) ensure that the Club's bank accounts are operated in accordance with the procedures approved by the Committee;
- (iii) prepare annual accounts for the approval of the Members, and their submission to the Club's auditor(s) or Independent Financial Examiner(s);
- (iv) be responsible for ensuring that the Club's Officers, Committee and Members are protected by suitable and adequate third party insurance when in pursuit of activities on behalf of the Club; and
- (v) maintain an adequate reserve fund to cover contingencies.

6.4 The Secretary's role is to:

- i) act as the portal for correspondence to and from the Club;
- ii) maintain membership records and distribute Meet circulars;
- iii) keep records and minutes of the Clubs meetings and activities and distribute the minutes, and Club notices other than as delegated to other officials;
- iv) be responsible for ensuring that notices and agendas are circulated for all meetings, within the timescales laid out within these Rules and Bye-laws;
- v) carry out such other liaisons as directed and approved by the Committee.

7. Service of Notices

The Club gives notice to any Member either personally or by delivering it or sending it electronically or by ordinary post to their registered address. If a notice is sent by post, it will be treated as having been served by properly addressing, pre-paying and posting a sealed envelope containing the notice. The notice will be treated as having been received two days after posting. The accidental omission to give notice of a meeting, or the non-receipt of notice of a meeting by any Member, shall not invalidate any proceedings or resolutions at any meeting of the members, or the Committee, or any subcommittee thereof.

8. Subscriptions

8.1 Subscription rates for Ordinary and Life Members are authorised by the Club in General Meeting. Members under twenty-five years of age on 1st November are entitled to pay only half the full subscription. Life Members over 65 years of age may elect to pay half the full subscription on giving notice to the Treasurer.

8.2 Subscriptions become due on joining the Club, but new Members are only liable to pay half the normal subscription in that year if joining after 30th April. Subscription renewals become due on 1st November and are payable in advance.

8.3 Members may choose to pay in excess of the required amount and such funds will be credited to the Gifts and Legacies Reserve.

8.4 The Committee, in its absolute discretion, may terminate the membership of any Member who is more than twelve months in arrears.

9. Accounts

9.1 The Committee must have proper books of account kept in accordance with the law. In particular, the books of account must show:

- i) all amounts received and spent by the Club, and for what;
- ii) all sales and purchases by the Club; and
- iii) the assets and liabilities of the Club.

9.2 As specified in 4.7 the Committee must, for each accounting year, present to the AGM the statement of accounts which must include an income and expenditure account, a balance sheet and such other reports, statements or audited accounts as are required by law.

9.3 The Committee shall nominate to the AGM an Auditor or Independent Financial Examiner of the appropriate standing in accord with current legislation and who shall not, if an individual, be a member of the Committee, nor related to the Honorary Treasurer.

9.4 The Auditor or Independent Financial Examiner must ensure that the Club is keeping proper books of account in accordance with legislation and the Rules of the Club and confirm or otherwise, that the books of account give a true and fair view of the state of the Club's affairs and explain its transactions.

10. Cheques and Bills etc

All cheques, electronic transfers of funds, promissory notes, drafts, bills of exchange and other negotiable instruments and all receipts for money paid to the Club must indicate the name of the Club in full and must be signed, drawn, authorised, accepted, endorsed, or otherwise made in the way that the Committee, from time to time, decides.

11. Indemnity of Members

11.1 In the management of the affairs of the Club, no Member will be liable for any loss to the Club arising from the investment of the Club's funds, provided professional advice was sought before making such an investment. Nor will any Member be liable for any loss to the Club arising from negligence or fraud by any agent, provided reasonable supervision was exercised. Also, no Member will be liable by reason of any mistake or omission made in good faith, or by any other cause except wilful and individual fraud, wrongdoing or wrongful omission by the Member who is sought to be made liable.

11.2 Every Member shall be indemnified out of the assets of the Club against any liability incurred by them in defending any proceedings, either civil or criminal, in which judgment is given in their favour, or in connection with any application in which relief is granted to them by the court from liability for negligence, default, breach of duty, or breach of duty in relation to the affairs of the Club. Furthermore, Members will be indemnified against all costs, charges, losses, or liabilities incurred by them in the proper execution of their duties. Should the Club's assets be insufficient to cover this indemnity, the members of the Club shall jointly and severally indemnify such Members against all liabilities properly incurred by them in the management of the affairs of the Club.

12. Custodial Trustees

Where assets of the Club are required to be held by Custodial Trustees, such Trustees shall be nominated by the Committee and will hold this position until death, or resignation, or until removed from office by a resolution of the Committee. Where it is deemed necessary or desirable by the Committee that a new Trustee or Trustees shall be appointed, or if the Committee shall deem it expedient to appoint an additional Trustee or additional Trustees, the Committee shall by resolution nominate the person or persons to be appointed. For the purpose of giving effect to such nomination, the President, for the time being, is hereby nominated as the person to appoint such Trustees of the Club within the meaning of Section 36 of the Trustee Act 1925 and he shall by deed, duly appoint the person or persons so nominated by the Committee and the provisions of the Trustee Act 1925 shall apply to such appointment. Any statement of fact in any deed of appointment shall, in favour of a person dealing *bona fide* and for the value of the Club or the Committee, be conclusive evidence of the fact so stated. These Trustees shall, at the direction of the Committee, make all such dispositions of the Club property, or any part thereof, and enter into such agreements in relation thereto as the Committee may deem proper for giving security for such borrowing and interest. All Trustees shall be indemnified as detailed in Rule 11.

13. Dissolution of the Club

The Committee may decide at any time to recommend the dissolution the Club. The Club shall then call a General Meeting to confirm such a decision at which the decision must be supported by at least 75%, rounded up, of those Members present. If it is resolved that the Club be dissolved, the assets of the Club shall be dealt with as follows:

The furniture, tackle and other property of the Club shall be given to some Kindred Club, or sold, as may be decided by a majority of those Members present at the Extraordinary General Meeting, and if sold, the proceeds shall be dealt with as part of the money of the Club. The moneys and investments of the Club shall be applied to the discharge of the Club's debts and liabilities, and subject thereto, to such purpose or purposes akin to the aims of the Club as may be decided by a majority of those Members present or, failing such decisions, as the President of the Alpine Club for the time being may decide. The Books, Maps, Pictures and Papers of the Club shall be given to such Public or Club Library or Libraries as may be decided by a majority of those Members present, it being made a condition that they shall be kept together as far as possible.

hole Club, The Bradford Pothole Club, The Wolverhampton Mountaineering Club, The Cairngorm Club, The Grampian Club, The Oread Club, The Ardal Turlag, The Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland, and The Yorkshire Mountaineering Club.

Bye Laws.

1. Joining the Club

1.1 The name of any person interested in joining the Club is sent to the Hon. Secretary and that person will become a 'Prospective Member'. Prospective Members will receive Club mailings. Prospective Members are normally expected to attend a minimum of three Club Meets to get to know members of the Committee and other Members before applying for full membership.

1.2 Applications for membership of the Club by Prospective Members are made to the Hon. Secretary on the Club's proposal form, which must be signed by the candidate, together with the proposing and seconding Members. When the Hon Secretary has received a valid proposal form, it will be acknowledged in writing and the candidate will then become a 'Proposed Member' pending the Committee's decision on full membership.

1.3 At the request of a Member, a friend's name can be added to the list of Prospective Members to whom Club mailings and journals will be sent for a year only, unless a further request is received. The Prospective Member will have no other privileges.

2. Temporary Membership

2.1 Members are at liberty to invite appropriate personal Guests, e.g. those who might be successful candidates for admission to the Club, to Club Meets, subject to such regulations as the Committee may, from time to time, deem necessary.

2.2 The following persons are deemed to be Temporary Members of the Club for the period hereinafter stated:

- i) persons introduced into the Hut as personal Guests of Members in accordance with the Rules and Bye-laws of the Club for the time being in force;
- ii) members of Kindred Clubs with which the Club has reciprocal arrangements for the use of the Club Huts who are using a Hut in accordance with the conditions of these arrangements;
- iii) members of other Clubs, Groups or Associations or other mountaineers who are Guests of the Club;
- iv) prospective Members attending a Meet of the Club as a step in qualification for election to membership of the Club; and
- v) persons authorised to use the Huts in accordance with the Rules and Bye-laws of the Club.

2.3 A Temporary Member is entitled only to such privileges of membership as are offered by and are incidental to the use of a Club Hut, and are subject to the Rules and Bye-laws of the Club, a copy of which will be kept in the Hut. The Committee has the right to refuse temporary membership to any person or to withdraw such membership without giving any reason. Temporary membership commences upon arrival at the Club Hut and continues until final departure.

3. Current Subscription

The subscription for Ordinary and Life Members is £45 p.a., except as specified in Rule 8.1

4. General Meetings

4.1 Members wishing to propose alterations to the Rules must submit their proposals in writing to the Honorary Secretary not less than 56 days prior to the date of a General Meeting. Nominations for the positions of President (see 6. below); Vice President, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer must be received in writing not less than 28 days before the meeting. The Committee may also put forward nominations for these positions. All such nominations are to be notified to the Members as indicated in Rule 4.1. In the absence of any written nominations, candidates may be proposed from the floor at the meeting.

4.2 Members wishing to raise other business for transaction at the Annual General Meeting must give notice to the Club in writing not less than 42 days before the meeting.

4.3 An Extraordinary Meeting of the Members may be called at any time by the Committee or on a requisition by not less than ten Members. In either case the object of the meeting must be specified in the notice convening the same and only business for which the meeting is called and any other business of which due notice is also given shall be transacted at such meetings. Such a meeting must be convened within 56 days of receipt of a requisition and Members must receive 21 days notice.

4.4. At a General Meeting, a proposer of a motion may speak for no longer than five minutes, and other persons, including the proposer of an amendment to a motion, may speak for no longer than four minutes, except with the permission of the meeting. The proposer will be permitted up to a further two minutes to respond to any comment, except with the permission of the meeting.

5. Ballots

Not less than 10 Members may, in writing, request the Committee to organise a ballot of the membership upon the subject indicated in such a request. If, at its absolute discretion, the Committee decides to comply with this request, any papers accompanying the voting paper must offer a balanced view of the subject matter, and such papers must be approved by the Committee before being sent to Members.

Thereafter a voting paper providing for options to vote for or against the proposal shall be sent by post or electronic means to each Member with a request that it be returned to the nominated officer within twenty-one days from the date of service; the result will be declared in accordance with the voting papers returned within that period.

6. Nomination to office of President

A nomination to the office of President will be made to the Committee by the current President after consultation with the last six surviving previous Presidents. If the Committee approves the nomination it will endorse it and recommend it to the AGM. Members may make representations to the existing President or Committee to assist in this process and have the right to make propositions direct to the Members at the AGM in accord with the Rules & Byelaws.

7. The Committee

7.1 It is the current policy of the Club that Members taking on substantive roles on behalf of the Club shall have a place on the Committee enabling them to have an input into the affairs of the Club, although it is accepted that they may find it appropriate only to attend Committee meetings when matters within their remit are on the agenda. It, therefore, follows that they should be elected to the Committee at the AGM. At the first Committee meeting of each year the roles needed for the effective running of the Club will be allocated to the appropriate members. Where no suitable candidate is on the Committee, the Committee may appoint Members not on the Committee and may elect to co-opt them to the Committee.

7.2 Some roles may be shared and some members may hold more than one position. At the current time the following roles are identified:

Secretary & Treasurer, (both of whom are normally elected to their specific positions at the AGM), Chair, Minutes Secretary, Meets Secretary, Membership Secretary, Huts Secretary, Journal Editor, Webmaster, Warden LHG, Warden Lowstern, Librarian, Archivist and Tackle Custodian.

The Committee also nominates an Auditor or Independent Financial Examiner, as specified in Rule 9.3. In addition, members may be requested to serve on outside bodies.

7.3 The Committee must meet at least three times a year, fixes its own times of meeting and determines its own procedures. A special meeting of the Committee may be called at not less than 14 days' notice at the request of the Secretary or in response to a request by not less than 5 Members of the Committee stating the purpose of the meeting.

7.4 Proposals arising at any meeting of the Committee must be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast, except when otherwise specified within the Rules. Every Member has one vote including the presiding Chair. If the votes are equal, the presiding Chair has a casting vote. No business shall be transacted at any meeting of the Committee unless a quorum of Members is present at the time that the meeting proceeds to business. One third of the Committee members, as specified in Rule 5.1, constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Committee. They must be present in person.

7.5 The President, the Treasurer and the Secretary are delegated to take such decisions, between meetings of the Committee as are deemed necessary, after consultation and agreement between the aforementioned officers, and provided the action is reported to, and ratified by, the Committee at its next meeting.

7.6 Responsibilities of the Committee

i) At its first meeting after the Annual General Meeting, the Committee elects, from within its number, members to fill the positions required to ensure the efficient organisation of the Club and its affairs and to act as custodians of its various assets.

ii) It appoints sub-committees to deal with any special aspects of work of the Club under such terms of reference for such sub-committee as the Committee may from time to time determine, except that the Chair of each sub-committee shall be a member of the Committee. The President, Vice-President, President Elect, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer are entitled to participate in the meetings of all sub-committees and shall be notified of their meetings. Minutes will be taken and reported to the Committee. A quorum shall be three members.

iii) Appoints Members to serve on a joint committee with any other organisation or organisations on any matters coming within the objects of the Club.

iv) It approves, or otherwise, applications for membership.

v) Appoints not more than four Members to act as Custodial Trustees in which the property of the Club may be vested upon trust to be dealt with from time to time as directed by a resolution of the Committee as a whole, of which an entry in the minute book shall be conclusive evidence.

vi) Establishes and maintains as part of the Club's Bye-laws, policies on specific areas of the Club's affairs where appropriate.

vii) Is responsible for Club publications.

viii) Is responsible for representation of the Club with external organisations where appropriate.

ix) Is responsible for the preparation and representation of any petitions or campaigns to achieve the objectives of the Club.

x) Is responsible for the preparation and distribution of any policy and publicity material.

xi) Determines the fees and bye-laws for use of the Club's properties.

xii) Agrees policies in respect of Kindred Clubs, Guests and Temporary Members.

xiii) Is responsible for Child Protection Policy.

xiv) Is responsible for Health and Safety Policy.

8. Financial affairs

8.1 The Treasurer together with other members of the Club, which usually will be members of the Committee, shall be registered with the Club's bankers as signatories to act on behalf of the Club to whatever extent and in whatever combinations as shall be determined by the Committee from time to time.

8.2 The Club's financial year commences on 1st October.

8.3 Reimbursement is made to officers for the cost of items and services obtained specifically for the Club. A mileage rate is available to Wardens to meet the cost of fuel for travelling to and from huts for maintenance. Food costs are paid for working meets and there are no bed-night fees for volunteers. Other payments may be authorised by the Committee; but, when they are, the reasons for doing so should be stated clearly in the minutes.

9. Health and Safety

9.1 Hill-walking, caving, potholing, skiing, climbing, mountaineering and many similar activities, have an element of risk of personal injury or even death. Members and their Guests participating in these activities on Club Meets do so voluntarily. Individuals must be aware of, and accept, these risks and are responsible for their own actions, involvement and safety at all times. If a Club Member or Members decide(s) to accept responsibility for any activity, e.g. taking a group walking or caving or skiing or climbing or mountaineering, it is on the basis that the Member(s) is/are only helping by sharing their experience; is/are not in any way qualified; is/are not regarded by the Club nor regard themselves as 'technical experts'; but are amateur walkers, cavers, potholers, skiers, climbers or mountaineers etc. with some experience which they are

prepared to share. Any less-experienced Members accompanying them take any advice on this basis and the onus of responsibility for deciding whether or not to rely on any such advice lies with the less-experienced Member.

9.2 It is the policy of the Club to:

- i) provide adequate management of health and safety risks arising from the use of Lowstern and Low Hall Garth Huts; to this end, Hut Wardens are authorised, in consultation with the President, to carry out such remedial action that is urgently required, but must report on Health and Safety considerations to every meeting of the Committee;
- ii) consult with members on matters affecting their health and safety;
- iii) provide and maintain adequate safety equipment;
- iv) ensure the safe handling of substances;
- v) take measures to mitigate accidents by carrying out risk assessments as appropriate; and
- vi) revise and review its policy at regular intervals.

10. Huts and Hut Fees

10.1 The use of any Club Hut is restricted to Members, Proposed Members and Temporary Members.

10.2 On arrival, all Members, whether Temporary or otherwise, must fill in the Hut Book with the names of all the members of the party.

10.3 Members may have their own key to the Club's Huts (one key services both Huts), the Library and the tackle store. All keys, which remain the property of the Club, will be provided against a returnable deposit of £10 per key. Hut and Library keys may be obtained from the Huts Secretary and tackle store keys from the Tackle Custodian.

10.4 Members must not under any circumstances lend a key to a non-member not present with them

10.5 Members are requested to return any keys no longer required.

10.6 Members using Huts must, as a matter of duty of care, make themselves and any Guests aware of the fire and safety systems.

10.7 The following definitions will apply for the payment of Hut fees set by the Committee:

'Members' are YRC Members and their Families, and Gritstone Club members;

'Family' is defined as direct line, i.e. a Member's parents and grandparents, children and grandchildren and their spouses or equivalent;

'Kindred' are Members of nominated Kindred Clubs;

'Others' are all Guests and other users.

Current fees:

Low Hall Garth: Members £3.50, Proposed Members £3.50, Kindred Club Members £5, Others £7;

Lowstern: Members £3.50, Proposed Members £3.50, Kindred Club Members £5, Others £10.

At either Hut, for other users as a group, there is a minimum weekend (Friday / Saturday nights) charge payable in advance. This is currently £100 at Lowstern and £60 at LHG. Midweek there is no minimum charge.

10.8 The Club acknowledges the following clubs as 'Kindred': The Gritstone Club, The Climbers' Club, The Scottish Mountaineering Club, The Rucksack Club, The Wayfarers Club, The Fell and Rock Climbing Club, The Midland Association of Mountaineers, The Craven Pothole Club, The Bradford Pothole Club, The Wolverhampton Mountaineering Club, The Cairngorm Club, The Grampian Club, The Oread Club, The Ardal Turlag, The Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland, and The Yorkshire Mountaineering Club.

11. Child Protection Policy

11.1 The Club recognises that in the area of child protection it has a duty of care to safeguard all young persons involved in the activities of the Club and in the use of its premises. To this end the Huts booking form shall draw attention to the hirers' responsibilities for the safety and care of young persons.

11.2 Members using YRC premises must be aware that:

i) Young persons under the age of 18 who are brought to a Club cottage or a function as a Guest must be accompanied by a parent, or an adult acting *in loco parentis*, who will be solely and absolutely responsible for that child's safety and care.

ii) Any adult in charge of a child *in loco parentis*, must have the formal written permission of a parent of that child.

Groups containing persons under 18, who are being supervised by an adult *in loco parentis*, must have a designated person identified to all present as being responsible for child protection issues at all times.

12. Club Tackle

12.1 The Club's tackle is housed in a tackle store at Lowstern. Members wishing to use the tackle may do so. Keys for the tackle store are available from the Tackle Custodian. Any tackle-store key- holder must accept the duties and responsibilities identified below in 12.2, 12.3 and 12.4.

12.2 After use, tackle must be returned immediately to the store in a clean state, with the ropes uncoiled to facilitate drying. There is a tap in the outside wall and a water wash-brush for cleaning the ropes.

12.3 All equipment/tackle in the tackle store is recorded in an inventory and stored safely. All useable items have a unique identifier. For example, all ropes have been marked by length and diameter and all ladders and tethers labelled indicating length and age. Bolts, hangers, maillons, slings, karabiners and pulleys are colour coded. An inventory is kept on the wall in the tackle store and a booking-in and -out system has been adopted so that equipment can be properly checked after use.

12.4 All equipment users have a responsibility to take as much care of the equipment as possible, e.g. carrying ropes in bags underground, protecting equipment against abrasion on hangs, stone fall and so on. It is in everyone's interest to look after this equipment and record accurately any incident /damage that could affect its reliability. The Tackle Custodian will be responsible, as far as possible, for enforcing this policy, but cannot be solely responsible. The usage/incident log must be completed appropriately to comply with current health and safety regulations in accordance with British Caving Association standards. Users must advise the Tackle Custodian if any tackle is lost or damaged.

12.5 The Tackle Custodian is required to make periodic checks on all tackle, and equipment will be discarded after certain periods of time or on evidence of wear and tear. Such checks will be carried out at least once a year

In futherance of these rules and bye-laws in accord with the Bye-law re Committee Responsibilities (7.6.vi The committee establishes and maintains as part of the Club's Bye-laws, policies on specific areas of the Club's affairs where appropriate) these additional policies and guidelines are in place at present.

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## **Newsletters and Journal**

### **Newsletters**

Mailings are published at least quarterly and contain information on Club activities and news etc., as well as details of forth-coming meets. Members with e-mail are sent a notification pointing to the document on the website; members without access to e-mail will continue to receive copies by post.

### **Journal**

The journal creates a permanent record of the Club activities and articles of general interest to the membership. They are currently issued at the end of January and July each year with a copy date for material 6 weeks earlier.

## **Website**

The Club website [www.yrc.org.uk](http://www.yrc.org.uk) provides up to date information on forthcoming meets, meets reports, Club Rules & Bye-laws, committee proceedings and newsletters ; our own, kindred & other huts info; as well as history, past members and more. There is also a link to the Forum (but remember you need to register separately for that when you first go there).

To log in to the members area, use your email and your personal password. If you forget your password there is a "Forgotten Password" link on the log in page. Members can contribute photographs to the site and post their own news to the Forum. Please contact Andy Syme for further information or to discuss ideas for development of the site. If all else fails, email [webmaster@yrc.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@yrc.org.uk) for help.

## **YRC Library**

The Club's Library is at Lowstern in the Library Room. The Library is kept locked for insurance reasons. Keys are held by the Librarian. Members can purchase keys for £10, which remain the property of the Club, from the Huts Secretary. (If lost, a further key will cost £10).

The library is often opened over a weekend to groups of non-members approved by the Librarian.

To borrow books. When visiting: enter details in the Borrowing Book: also record the return. By post: ask the Librarian, when returning: enclose sufficient stamps to cover the outward postage.

When visiting, browsing or borrowing, please take care to return each book to its coded position. Please enter your name in the visitors/browsing book.

A new catalogue is on the computer in the Library: it is password controlled and the password is in the members handbook. The catalogue shows over 1200 books, excluding journals. Books are listed by categories i.e. Mountaineering; Archaeology, History & Science; Caving & Potholing; Guides; Journal; Periodicals & Society Publications; Skiing; Walking & Trekking; Other.

### **YRC Archives**

In 1992 it was considered that much of the Club's history should be brought together in a Public Records Office, to be maintained and be more accessible for reference under the control of a professional archivist. The material remains the property of the Club. Our Archivist will advise members from time to time of archival material being deposited and can supply on request a list of material currently held by the Service.

The YRC archival material is held at the North Yorkshire County Record Office, Malpas Road, Northallerton, DL7 8TB. Tel: 01609 777585, e-mail: archives@northyorks.gov.uk Our contact is Ms M J Boustead, Senior Archivist (Collections).

It is a five minute walk from County Hall, the railway station and the town centre car park. The A1 & A19 are a few miles distant. Staff will be pleased to give directions when requested. The facilities include: large public search room, internet access, WiFi hotspot, tea room for visitors' use, and toilets. There is no charge to visit the Record Office. Please make an appointment before visiting. Bookings can be made by telephone, by e-mail, by fax, by post or in person. Fees are charged for copies.

#### Opening hours

|           |                 |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Monday    | 9.00am - 4.45pm |
| Tuesday   | 9.00am - 4.45pm |
| Wednesday | 9.30am - 4.45pm |
| Thursday  | 9.00am - 4.45pm |
| Friday    | 9.00am - 4.15pm |

The office will usually remain open over lunchtime but it may be necessary to close between 1 pm and 2pm.

Saturday opening. The office will be open between 9.30am and 4.15pm on the first Saturday of each month). Original items must be ordered in advance. The YRC Archivist can supply a leaflet with location map on request.

### **British Mountaineering Council**

The Club is affiliated to the BMC which represents the interests of climbers and mountaineers at both local and national level. Affiliation to the BMC provides all members of the YRC who are resident in the UK with indemnity insurance against civil liability claims while undertaking climbing, mountaineering and abseiling as well as scrambling and mountain walking. All members will receive copies of Summit magazine. YRC members can upgrade to full individual membership of the BMC with additional benefits. Details are available by post: BMC, 177-179 Burton Road, West Didsbury, Manchester, M20 2BB. Tel: 0161 445 6111 or from the web: [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk)

As members of the BMC, members are eligible to receive a discount on normal retail prices from a number of retailers on presentation of your YRC Handbook at the time of purchase. A full list of participating shops and discounts is available from the BMC web-site

### **The British Caving Association**

The Club is a Group Member of the BCA. This organisation largely fulfils for caving and potholing what the BMC does for mountaineering and fell walking. It is a federation of various bodies within those sports and individual members. One of its main functions is to negotiate agreements with landowners to permit access by caving clubs to caves on private land. The Club have not elected to join the BCA's public liability insurance scheme.

As a Group Member of the BCA the Club also becomes a member of the **British Cave Research Association**, which is a charitable organisation aimed at promoting the study of caves and karst by encouraging the exploration of caves both in the UK and overseas.

### **YHA**

The Club is a group member which entitles our members to the facilities and pricing structure of other members of the YHA. The card is held by the Club Treasurer and may only be used by groups of 5 or more members

### **YRC Merchandise**

Rob Ibberson is the stockholder for YRC branded goods and should be contacted if members wish to purchase any of the items which are listed with prices in the handbook.

# THE SECRET OF HILL HOLLOW

Two mice and a mole were digging a hole  
So secretly nobody knew  
They dug it at night so there was no light  
For people to see what they'd do

They were seeking the gold that the goblins of old  
Had hidden beneath the green hill  
And it gave them great pleasure to think that the treasure  
Might just pay the telephone bill

These three little diggers were working like devils  
And after a week and a day,  
The work was proceeding on several levels  
And no one had had any pay

One night about two the grey mouse called Hugh  
Was feeling the need of a break  
So he settled his girth with his back to the earth  
And opened his old ale and cake

But as he leaned back the wall gave a crack  
And quicker than you can say 'Splat'  
He roiled back into space with a look on his face  
That would surely have frightened the cat

In the tunnels nearby the two heard the cry  
And a very shrill squeak and a rumble  
So as quick as they might they arrived at the site  
Of their colleague's unscheduled tumble

Then Arnold the mole peered into the hole  
And so did the brown mouse called Bert  
He said, "Where's he gone to? the poor little soul,  
It's a good way, I hope he's not hurt"

"Then we'd better look" said Arnold and took  
A step forward into the gloom'  
And with Bert close behind they descended to find  
A cavern as big as a room

And there in a heap, so it seemed, fast asleep  
With a flask of old ale in his grip  
They found chubby Hugh; so with no more ado  
They asked "Did you enjoy the trip?"

With a resolute sigh Hugh opened one eye  
And peered at his friends through the grime  
He said, "It's absurd, but I would have preferred  
For my catchers to be here on time"

"It gives you a fright when you're having a bite  
And you drop through the wall, out of view.  
I'd have liked something better on which to alight,  
And can think of nowt softer than you."

Feeling suitably chastened they grabbed Hugh and hastened  
To explore their newly found hall  
And they very soon thought that they'd found what they sought  
When they spotted a door in t' far wall

it was big strong and dusty with hinges all rusty  
And padlocks and bolts by the score.  
Standing there with his beer., Hugh said, "This panacea,  
Can be solved if we tackle the floor."

So they all looked around where the door met the ground  
And saw straight away he was right,  
For the base rock was cracked and not hard to extract  
Now they thought that their goal was in sight.

Then Arnold stood there with muscles to spare  
And rock dirt and pebbles soon flew through the air  
With Bert close behind him and Hugh to the rear  
Preventing the dust getting into his beer.

Inside, it was bright as a mystic blue light  
Illumined a brass banded chest  
Surrounded by armour and weapons of might  
Supporting a scroll with a crest

So the valiant mole took the brown vellum roll  
And examined the old goblin seal  
Then with tortoise like speed he started to read  
While the mice wondered just what the scroll would reveal

"We folk of Hill Hollow declare to who follow  
That we've gone where the old dragon's lair is  
But if you thought that we, would have left gold for thee  
You must still be believing in fairies."

*Another dialect offering from Tom Wise, the Earl Sterndale poet. The cave in question is Fox Hill Cave on the flank of High Weeldon due east of the Quiet Woman. Permission to print obtained by Derek Clayton who recalls a midnight descent with two friends (after visiting the Quiet Woman) but does not remember (or chooses not to advertise) how they got in as it is gated to keep out gromets. For the uninitiated a gromet is local word for potholers.*

# The Yorkshire Ramblers Club



**Established 1892 - [www.yrc.org.uk](http://www.yrc.org.uk)**

## **The Mountaineering and Caving Club**

The aims of the Club are to organise walking, mountaineering and skiing excursions; to encourage the exploration of caves and pot-holes; the pursuit of other outdoor activities and to gather and promote knowledge concerning natural history, archaeology, folklore and kindred subjects.

### **Editor**

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The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the YRC or its Officers.

**The YRC Journal is published twice a year and is free to members and certain kindred clubs. First published July 1899**

## **Club Properties**

**Low Hall Garth  
Little Langdale  
Cumbria**



**Lowstern  
Clapham  
North Yorkshire**