

# YRC JOURNAL

EXPLORATION, MOUNTAINEERING AND CAVING SINCE 1892

ISSUE 17 SERIES 13 SUMMER 2014



## **CLIMBING THE BIANCOGRAT, PIZ BERNINA**

**Photograph - Richard Gowing**

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**CHAMONIX TO ZERMATT**

**CYCLING IN KIELDER**

**CALP, COSTA BLANCA**

**MALTA AND GOZO**

**SOUTH AFRICA**

**WALKING THE LENGTH OF THE PYRENEES**

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# THE PENNINE WAY

The Pennine Way is 270 miles long ignoring any deviations to find your digs or campsite. Devised by Tom Stephenson in the 1930s, it follows the line of the Pennines from the Peak District to the Tyne, along Hadrian's Wall and then north over the Cheviots to reach the Scottish border at Kirk Yetholm. It was Britain's first national trail. Most people walk from Edale going north, leaving any wind and rain behind their backs. There are conflicting opinions as to exactly how long it is given bits have been re-routed over the years. One thing is certain it is a long hard walk and at the last count to have to negotiate 287 gates, 249 timber stiles, 183 stone stiles and 204 bridges.

There are near ridiculous claims as to how quickly it has been completed but most people doing it as a continuous walk target three weeks to do so.



Richard Josephy completed the walk last year and he shares his journey with us in pictures reflecting on the experience.

## PENNINE WAY REFLECTIONS

Like Wagner's operas, the Pennine Way is not nearly as bad as it sounds. Yes, there are long stretches of featureless



moorland with only the odd reservoir for entertainment, but even this sort of walking has its own charm. The Pennine Way is also not nearly as bad as it used to be, with most of the really boggy sections paved with flagstones.

There is tremendous variety over the 270 mile route: as well as the moorland with skylarks and curlews for company, there are forests, ridges, riverside paths, and fields. The total ascent (and descent) of 36,825 feet includes ten 2000 foot tops, and is nearly all on good paths with very few badly eroded bits. There are even a couple of rocky staircases. Surprisingly, there are some places with no discernible path, and even one or two where it is quite easy to go wrong.

I set off on 1st May intending to complete it in 20 days doing typically 14 – 18 miles a day, with a few short days built in for relief. In the event, a bad leg caused me to delay the final 4 days until the beginning of July.

Highlights of the walk for me were: on the first day the change from an idyllic sunny morning in the pastures of Edale to the bleakness of the Dark Peak; arriving in the Yorkshire Dales after five days of moors and reservoirs; the grand walk from Malham to Horton; Teesdale with High Force and Cauldron Snout spectacular after a day or two of rain.



High Force



I remember orchids in profusion in the Northumberland forests; and finally walking along the Border Ridge and down into Scotland in the sunshine.

With several other long distance paths to choose from, far fewer people do the Pennine Way these days. On 8 out my 20 days I met no other walkers and, apart from Hadrian's Wall, which was busy, the maximum number I met in a days walk was 4. This is partly explained by the fact that most people do it south to north as I did. However, it was good to meet others in the evening, in the pub or in the hostels and B & Bs I stayed in. Most of the latter are well geared up for walkers, offering a mug of tea on arrival, drying if necessary and, if there is nowhere to eat nearby, either an evening meal or a lift to the nearest pub.

High Cup Nick



I did come across some interesting and very friendly people. The chap carrying full camping gear of about 1960s vintage (the gear not the chap), with a pack so heavy I couldn't lift it off the ground never mind walk with it. After four days his feet were in a terrible state.

I didn't see him again and often wonder how far he got. Another camper, older than me, who was going so slowly that though he started at 7 every morning he didn't get to his night stop till 10 or 11 pm. He said he wasn't enjoying it at all, but he was bloody well going to finish it.

Other highlights were Cross Fell on a fine day but with wind so strong I could barely stay upright and Hadrian's Wall in spite of the unaccustomed numbers of people.

Hadrian's wall



Then there was the couple that I got to know quite well, who turned up in the pub in Dufton with my waterproof trousers which I had left behind at Keld.

Of course it had stopped raining by then but it was kind of them anyway.

Next there was a young couple, again backpackers, who sped past me going up Great Shunner Fell. When I asked if they were doing the Pennine Way they said "Yes, as part of Lands End to John O'Groats" They had got this far in what seemed to me an incredibly short time and looked as fresh as the day they started. There was a young American who was really enjoying his first walk in England, but wanted to know if the hills were always so wet underfoot. I had to tell him that, after a prolonged dry spell, he hadn't experienced wet conditions at all.



Pyramid Orchids



Kinder Scout from Edale.

Finally, I remember the chap who turned up as I was celebrating my completion of the walk outside the Border Inn at Kirk Yetholm. He had just completed his thirteenth Pennine Way.



Spotted Orchid

Would I do it again?

Yes, but perhaps not thirteen times.



The Schil on final day

# WILDER WEATHER?

Can Presidents Fly? Michael Smith gave it a good go last December.

It was a bit breezy on the tops after the Christmas meet and it has been followed by storms and tempests and considerable flooding.



There is little argument that our extremes of weather are getting more extreme. As I sit here penning this on a dreary dismal January afternoon with my walking gear dripping dry under my porch I have just read my paper with tales of tennis being played in Australia in temperatures of 108 degrees and freezing conditions on the Gulf of Mexico with most of North America ice bound.

Oh for those traditional meets December in the Lakes more often than not with snow and ice conditions but often sunny; January Dales meets often with snow on the ground and sometimes falling. I recall having been rescued by police when trapped in my car in snow drifts on the A65 on a Settle meet and one January having to drive miles with nearside wheels scraping the verges to get enough traction to get to a Hill Inn meet.

The weather was not always good but it was usually seasonal.

I recall a white out on High Street walking from Kentmere one Christmas meet. We did find our way to the Kirkstone Inn but very late and after only a brief respite set off back down the valley with dusk already setting in. We ended up wading through the river to stagger over a lower track to arrive back a good hour after we had planned. In true YRC fashion and showing the usual concern for missing members, the rest of the club was just starting their second course when we go to Denis Driscoll's.

Perhaps we need to rethink our meets programme. What about January meets in Florida for snow-shoe trekking? Snorkelling on Ilkley Moor? For those who like sailing holidays it appears the Somerset Levels have a lot to offer.

Mountain weather as we well know is very fickle and fast changing but the overall trends used to be reasonably predictable.

Reminiscing whilst looking out of my window at a flooded garden it reminds me of one far-from-typical December meet of old. We were at Coledale and the clag was so bad we decided on a long low-level walk round Derwentwater.

Unfortunately the lake had been topped up and was much longer and deeper than usual. We resorted to removing trousers etc., just maintaining the proprieties, and wading knee deep across the duck boards towards the hotel on the other side. Cars were stopping to see this crocodile of walkers wading across the lake but we ploughed on. Bad mistake - where the duck boards ended we had to step down into still deep waters and those of us in the shorter leg department got parts of our anatomy wet which certainly feel the cold. Fortunately given we were far too wet to enter a posh hotel, a good Samaritan took our money inside and brought out a few beers. Somehow drinking in the rain did not seem to matter.

Another wet experience was when two of us stayed on after a meet at LHG planning to return Monday night.

We packed up Monday morning and drove to Grasmere to walk over Helvelyn and bus back from Patterdale. We should have done it the other way round. It had been a snowy weekend but Sunday had cleared up and blue skies and snow covered tops had tempted us.

There was only a light covering on the eastern hills but it still made a pretty picture and good enough walking conditions. We were however slower than we expected and were still on the tops when darkness descended in the valleys and sitting there taking a perhaps too long breather and admiring the sunlit summits to the west we noticed clouds moving in from Morecambe Bay.

Off we set hot foot towards Patterdale but half way down the heavens opened and dark it definitely was. We did have small emergency torches but it was a slow trip down other than when we slipped on the wet grass. Needless to say we had missed the last bus. Time for a beer before closing time but nowhere to be found for a bed and taxi would have been prohibitive so improvisation was needed. Somebody had left his garage unlocked so we guarded it from the inside for him till it was light before setting off walking towards Kirkstone just to get warm.

After a couple of brisk hours a bus was due to overtake us so we stopped at a bus halt and thankfully it came along only ten minutes late. Relief, but not well received though, when reporting back to work a day late.

One other case of a surprising dramatic change of weather was a long walk from Whinlatter to Black Combe. A 5.30 start saw us being dropped off by bus, clad in shorts and lightweight tops as it was glorious June, and off we went.

We were scheduled for first service stop for a breakfast bite at 8.30 but I got there at 11.00 with mild hypothermia after fighting through a hail storm in all my bad weather gear. The support team wrapped me up and kept me warm and ferried me to the 11.00 break spot where I was up to helping the weary walkers still keeping going. On to the mid-afternoon service point where I actually rejoined the walkers and impressed those waiting for the finish as I stormed in with the front boys. It was only after the President bought the first few home a pint in the pub that I explained that I had missed out three of the five stages.

The weather has always been wild and unpredictable and we have had severe examples over the years but I don't recall as many or as frequent as we are seeing in the UK these days and everywhere in the world they are talking about new records.

A friend of mine has decamped to South Africa for a couple of weeks to get away from our gloom and sent me two pictures yesterday showing just how weather can roll in where mountains are involved.

# SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is a country of rapid change and I am not going to touch on the politics or their economy.

Table Mountain can see clouds build up very quickly and for the technical, the flat top of the mountain is often covered by orographic clouds, formed when a south-easterly wind is directed up the mountain's slopes into colder air, where the moisture condenses to form the so-called "table cloth" of cloud.

As you leave the coastal areas not only the weather but the climate changes. Most different eco zones can be found here and it is a place I hope to visit although it is as well to go with somebody who knows his way about. If you go with a tour company you are likely to visit the usual places and good as these are, there is a lot more to South Africa.

I have friends with family out there and they talk of the other South Africa, those parts that the tour companies rarely reach.

If any members do want to go out there, Stephen Craven who is now semi-retired will be happy to help. There is also the possibility of joining the Mountain Club of South Africa (MCSA) on one of their meets.

We have again received the latest journal if this club, courtesy of Stephen. These are handsome hardback productions and it is as usual full of interesting articles. It will shortly make its way to our Club library.

This edition includes an expedition to the Antarctic Peninsula by seven members of the Alpine Club including one South African. After what sounds like a fairly hairy sail down in a 60 foot yacht, their first sortie was to pulk over the glacier for nine days and then climbed Mt. Nygren, 1,454m.

They moved on to Mt. Matin which they found to actually be 2,415m. Various others followed culminating in Mt. Iverleith at 2,038m.

The MCSA was formed in 1891 and has very similar aims to ourselves, apart from ambitions underground.

Amongst the other articles is one on Branberg, the mountain that burns named for its reddish



These pictures of Table Mountain were taken 30 minutes apart

glow at sunset. Its highest appeal is that it is also the highest in Namibia, at 2573m.

The journal also covers a north-south traverse of Liverpool Land Peninsula on Greenland, starting near the area from which two of our members have recently returned.

Another unusual expedition covered was an international group hiking through Kosovo and Montenegro and another to Ladakh.

There is also an account of the first ever climb to the summit of Nanga Parbat via the length of the Mazeno Ridge. It took a total of 18 days. The ridge is 13 k long, and the longest on any 8000m peak. Much of the ridge is at about 7000m.

Stephen has also made comments on items in our last journal. Jeff Hooper writing about Mrs. E.P. Jackson fired his curiosity. Jeff tells us that her husband died in South Africa in (presumably) 1881. The Alpine Journal (May 1881) 10. 231 tells us that Jackson died at Wynberg, Cape, on 17 Jan. (presumably) 1881.

Stephen looked at the Cape newspapers for 17 Jan. *et seq.* 1880 and 1881, and found no such report. That proves nothing, but the archives for 1880 and 1881 ([www.national.archives.gov.za](http://www.national.archives.gov.za)) contain no death notice for Edward Jackson. This is significant because at that time in the Cape, deaths were notifiable only if there was an estate to be

distributed. All deaths, births and marriages became notifiable in 1895.

The Alpine Journal (1943) 55 (266), 59 mentions Mrs. E.P. Jackson *en passant*.

He comments on our trip to Mt. Mulanji which he found interesting. It prompted him to look at the MCSA Annual index - only five reports in 103 issues.

Finally on fracking: The S.A. Government has stated that it wants to frack in the Karoo - where the huge southern hemisphere telescope has just come into commission. People are wondering how the earth tremors (or worse) will affect the telescope.

The Karoo is a vast and unforgiving landscape of which a small part forms a National Park. Probably the largest ecosystem in South Africa, the Karoo has a wide diversity of lifeforms, adapted to survive in these harsh conditions. The National Park is dominated by the lofty Nuweveld Mountains standing above the rolling plains.

The country has nearly 1800 miles of coastline facing two oceans giving it a generally temperate climate. This is assisted by the average elevation rising steadily towards the north and away from the sea. Due to this varied topography and oceanic influence, a great variety of climatic zones exist. The climatic zones range from the extreme desert of the southern Namib in the farthest northwest to the lush subtropical climate in the east along the Mozambique border and the Indian Ocean.

The extreme southwest has a climate like that of the Mediterranean with wet winters and hot, dry summers. There is a coastal belt stretching down the West coast to Port Elizabeth on the southeast coast and on average about a 100 miles wide which is known as the Cape Floral Kingdom, for good reason. Further east on the south coast, rainfall is distributed more evenly throughout the year, producing a green landscape. This area is popularly known as the Garden Route.

The attractions of many of the National Parks are well documented with the Kruger being perhaps the flagship. Most people's stand-out memory and impression of the country is Table Mountain which is impressive but there are many other mountain areas of great interest.

Table Mountain is actually a fairly level plateau about two miles from side to side and edged by pretty impressive cliffs. Flanked by Devil's Peak to the east and by Lion's Head to the west, it forms a dramatic backdrop to Cape Town as can be seen the photographs. It is not very high however and only reaches 3,563 feet. This mountain is served by a cable car and is a major tourist attraction but there is strong resistance to building another cable car up onto the Drakensberg (Dragon Mountains).

The high Drakensberg mountains, which form the south-eastern escarpment of the Highveld, run for about 600 miles and do offer some limited skiing opportunities during the winter. It is even colder in the western Roggeveld Mountains, where midwinter temperatures can reach as low as -15 °C. In the heart of the country the warmest time of the year has been known to approach 50 °C.

The highest peaks in the Drakensberg rise well over 10,000 feet. These include Champagne Castle, Popple Peak, Giants Castle, and the highest peak, Thabana Ntlenyana, at 11,424 ft. Other notable peaks include Mafadi (11,319 ft), Makoaneng and Njesuthi. The range straddles the border and the highest mountain actually in South Africa is Mafadi, on the border with Lesotho. Including those just over the border there are nineteen 10,000 foot peaks to be found.

The proposed cable car involves a 7km route for the Drakensberg, but may now be extended by another 5km to the Afrikski resort in Lesotho. The implications for the World Heritage Site and the potential environmental impact are of great concern. The cableway is opposed by the local AmaZizi and AmaNgwane people, where after years of consultation, there was consensus that 45 000 hectares of land would be committed to a community nature reserve and wilderness area. The cable route would jeopardise the integrity of the World Heritage status of the surrounding areas of the Drakensberg and it would destroy the opportunity to create an unbroken protected area, covering close to 300km of the Drakensberg range.

The Cederberg mountains are another fascinating range as touched on in our last journal. There are several notable mountains in this range, including Sneeuberg and Tafelberg, both above 6000 feet.

Quite apart from the joy of the mountains in their own right, the wildlife of South Africa is obviously a major attraction. Much is portrayed of the large animals but given the abundance of flowers in some areas and the many borders between different ecosystems there is a great range of bird life to be seen as well. There are penguins along the coast and kingfishers on inland waters. They have many species of kingfishers, from one of the smallest in the world, the pygmy kingfisher to the giant kingfisher, nearly as big as a kookaburra. All in all South Africa has 964 recorded species of birds.

A great location for wildlife and less well known than most is the Waterberg which has been described as South Africa's best kept secret. It has a rugged beauty and a tremendous diversity in plant and animal life, with its many rivers, streams and swamps, stretching for 100 miles. In addition to the spectacular scenery of the mountains themselves, there are numerous game sanctuaries and nature reserves.

This country has a lot to offer and with the Rand at its present levels it is far from expensive.



# **CHARLES RALPH BORLASE WINGFIELD**

Our early journals often featured the activities of Wingfield and back in 2009 we carried a commemorative piece about him. Subsequently John Gardner has done further research and prepared a piece addressed to members of the CPC which was, in the large part, produced in the Craven Pothole Club Record no. 112, October 2013, pages 7-9. Given his involvement in our Club I thought members would like to see the article in full and John has kindly agreed to this.

Most members will be familiar with Wingfield Ledge in the Gaping Gill Main Shaft complex – some from the safety of the winch, and others from their trips down Dihedral and Rat Hole. Not so many will be familiar with the story of the remarkable man after whom it is named.

Charles Ralph Borlase Wingfield joined the Yorkshire Ramblers Club sometime between 1906 and 1908, and was an active member until the Great War. His original caving explorations included Wingfield Ledge and Spout Tunnel in Gaping Gill, and Noon's Hole in Fermanagh, more of which later.

He was born in 1873 into the landed gentry class, the eldest son of Colonel Charles George and Jane Wingfield. The family home was Onslow Hall, some six kilometres east of Shrewsbury, a mansion house sat in about 200 hectares of land – alas, demolished in 1957 after it succumbed to a fatal attack of dry rot. His family also owned a fishing lodge in Norway, where he learned to ski.

Wingfield was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge before embarking on the life of public duty and privilege to which he was born. He joined the Shropshire Militia in 1892, an early form of the Territorial Army, where he was promoted to captain in 1908, serving in Ireland in 1910. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1899, when he could have been no more than 26 years old. In 1910 he was sworn in as a Freeman of Shrewsbury, and in the same year he was appointed Mayor without having been elected to the Town Council. He was later elected to the Council, raised to the Aldermanic Bench, and served two further terms as Mayor, in which capacity he welcomed George V to the town in 1914. In 1911 he was elected to the County Council, and in 1913 he was appointed High Sheriff of Shropshire, the oldest secular office under the Crown and the sovereign's representative in the county. Both his father and his son also held that post.

There is evidence that he took to his duties with enthusiasm. In the December of 1910 bad floods hit the Seven valley, flooding many homes around Shrewsbury and causing the postponement of Shrewsbury Town Football Club's inaugural match at their new ground. Wingfield responded by visiting the flood-bound cottages in a coracle.

Wingfield didn't allow the duties of his public offices and the management of his estate to dominate his life. He played hard, and judging from the Yorkshire Ramblers' Journals, he holidayed for at least two months a year. He was a very accomplished skier, and during the particularly snowy March 1909 undertook a ski tour that took him across the moors from Nelson to Sedbergh, via Burnsall Fell,

Great Whernside, Buckden Pike, Wild Boar Fell, and Standard Riggs. It took him seven days, and at 96 miles was the longest recorded ski run undertaken in England. He also skied extensively in the Alps.

He was part-owner of a 60-ton yacht, Gwynfa, which was crewed by amateurs, and more than once took month-long cruises around the coast of southern England and northern Europe. He was proud to proclaim that he achieved a speed of 90 mph in a 100 horsepower motor car, and he took part in a London-Cowes motor boat race.

One of his more amusing accounts is of a balloon trip undertaken with the renowned balloonist Percival Spencer. In those days, balloons were filled with town gas, hence Spencer's advice to extinguish "pipes and cigarettes" before they embarked. Taking off from Shrewsbury, they travelled for some 25 miles in a north-westerly direction at a maximum altitude of 4,700 feet, almost reaching Newcastle-under-Lyme. Their mode of braking was effective, if somewhat antisocial. "Our trail rope, about 300 ft. long, was let down, and presently it touched a tree top whose leaves we could see waving in the wind. Then it touched ground, and we descended until about 100 ft. of it was dragging across fields and hedges, and also, to our amusement and the surprise of the occupants, across the roof of a cottage. A woman and dog rushed out, and the latter started to chase us, barking furiously, but soon gave up as we were still travelling about 15 miles an hour, though the friction of the rope trailing had slowed down our speed considerable."

Despite all this activity, Wingfield found time to attend a large number of Yorkshire Ramblers' Club meets before the war, and was a regular attendee at the Gaping Gill winch meets, and was involved in a number of new explorations.

During the Whitsun meet in 1909, some of the right bank of Fell Beck was washed out, exposing the entrance to Rat Hole. Later in the year, a dam was built to divert the water down the new entrance making ladder descents of the Main Shaft feasible. The dam was broken at the end of the meet, and Wingfield and Addyman negotiated the entrance tube and reached the main Rat Hole stream before retreating when the support party outside signalled the arrival of rain with a revolver shot. They returned the following year, and reached the main pitch which Wingfield subsequently plumbed in 1912 to a depth of about 60 metres.

Wingfield was involved in the exploration of Spout Tunnel with Booth during the Whitsun meet of 1909. Spout Tunnel enters Jib Tunnel about ten metres down, and those who

have descended Dihedral will know that it is well named. Booth managed to enter the tunnel after being lowered on the winch, by swinging in towards it, gaining a foothold and hauling himself over the lip.

Wingfield descended using a short rope ladder hanging from the jib and also managed to swing into the entrance. They explored most of the accessible passages, but left an eight metre waterfall climb which entered the first chamber. A return was made in June with a surveying party including Rule, who described the short descent into the passage as "decidedly sensational". Wingfield managed to climb the waterfall, and the passages above were explored to where the water emerged from a bedding plane. Believing that they were close to the surface stream bed, they fired a revolver several times hoping that the sound would be heard by those above ground. It would seem that a revolver was an essential part of a gentleman caver's equipment in those days.

In 1913 a party including Ernest Baker and Wingfield visited Fermanagh with the intention of descending the previously unbottomed Noon's Hole. Both Martell and Baker had previously tried, and failed. Unfortunately, the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club ladders which had been sent out from England failed to arrive. Undeterred, Wingfield suggested that they visit Loch Earne, find a chandler, and buy the raw materials to make their own ladder. This they did, and armed with their new 105' ladder and plenty of rope for pulling it up and down as appropriate, they managed to reach the bottom of the 250' shaft.

Wingfield left an impression on Baker: "The handy man of the party was always Wingfield. His entire disregard of appearances was an example to us. He rarely shaved, he washed but sparingly, whilst a campaign was in progress; a singlet, a pair of shorts, and boots sometimes oiled but never blacked, always, however, well protected by a layer of cave mud, were his attire throughout our stay at Derrygonnelley" and this was the High Sheriff of Shropshire!

It was also in 1913 that Wingfield undertook the exploration for which he is best known, and was one of the most daring of its day. He was lowered on the winch from Jib Tunnel in what he describes as a "breeches", which presumably means the canvas breeches used in a breeches buoy. A thin rope was attached to the end of the winch wire, and Hastings pulled him over towards the south wall from the floor of the Main Chamber, allowing him to pull himself onto a buttress some 35 metres above the floor. From here, still in the breeches and attached to the winch wire he descended to a couple of chock stones where he was able to belay himself, and extricate himself from the winch cable.

Whilst waiting for Booth to join him, he set up a camera and took a remarkable photograph which fully catches the atmosphere of his situation. Once Booth had joined him, he set off along the terrace which now bears his name, some 33 metres above the Main Chamber floor. After 20 metres he reached the Rat Hole waterfall where the water proved to be too much for his lamp, and he had to retreat in semi-darkness.

The Great War then broke out, and his regiment, the Shropshire Militia, were mobilised as the 3rd Battalion of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry. Initially he was training troops in Pembroke Dock, but in October 1916 his battalion was sent to Arras on the Somme. Despite having been promoted to Major by this time, he sent himself to the frontline, and is later said to have compared trench warfare with potholing. He survived the experience and finished the war in the UK with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He had married Mary Williams in June 1916.



### **Lt. Col. Charles Ralph Borlase Wingfield**

As with many of its participants, the war changed the course of Wingfield's life. He is not recorded as having attended any YRC meets after the war, and he seems to have spent much of his energy looking after the interests of the men who had returned. He was president of the local Comrades of the Great War as well as that of the local branch of the British Legion, and he also helped to found the local United Services Club.

He was taken ill in 1923, and died on 1st February after an operation. He died young, probably not having reached his fiftieth birthday, but he packed more into his life than most people could dream of. He left a widow, two sons and a daughter.

Major sources:

Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journals, 1908 to 1924 (Members holidays, meet reports, and obituary)

Shropshire Chronicle, 3rd February 1923. (Obituary)

The Daily Telegraph, 14th February 1998, pp 34 (Obituary of his son)

Baker, E.E.(1923). Caving. Episodes of Underground Exploration" Chapman & Hall, London

John Gardner 9th September 2013

# CHAMONIX TO ZERMATT

Jack Short

Chamonix and Zermatt; for mountaineers two names which immediately bring to life stories of Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn. Similarly the name Haute Route means thoughts of toiling upwards on skis to cross the Col du Chardonnet. However there is another route more suitable for trekkers and long distance walkers. This is the Walkers' Haute Route and the classic guide book to this is the Kev Reynolds book issued in 1991.

**Introduction**

The full route from Chamonix to Zermatt is 177km long and takes anything up to 14 days. I had already done the middle stages of the route between Verbier and Arolla but in the opposite direction. However when a friend and I decided to do it in the classic direction we only had a week available which necessitated some short cuts and left the problem of how and where to start.

Flying to Geneva from Heathrow is straightforward with an early morning flight but as regular travellers to Chamonix will know, difficulties often arise when waiting for onwards transport. However, by taking a train direct from Geneva Airport to Martigny it was possible to catch a bus via Sembrancher and Orsieres to the village of Champex arriving about 5pm.

Champex is a busy little village and acts as a crossroads for lots of routes. There are plenty of hotels and refuge gites, and starting our journey here reduced the walking by about 40km. That decided it and we were to start from Champex.

**Day 1**

We travel to Champex and call in at Tourist Bureau to book a hotel. Having visited Champex several times I knew there were varying degrees of comfort available. Lowest is the refuge gite just outside the town where I spent one night in a room of French snorers. Second comes the hostel in the town usually full of noisy teenagers. Third is an Hotel where the staff are bored and the service is appalling. But there is another Hotel where the management greet you on arrival and make it a pleasure to stay there. The visitors' book contains signatures from ex Presidents of the USA and France, and several moviestars. Needless to say, that is where we stayed.

**Day 2**

A pleasant footpath near to the Hotel led to Sembrancher in about 3 hours and then the route followed the river to Le Chable in another couple of hours. Le Chable is at a height of 821m and our destination for the day was the Cabin du Mont Fort at 2457m.

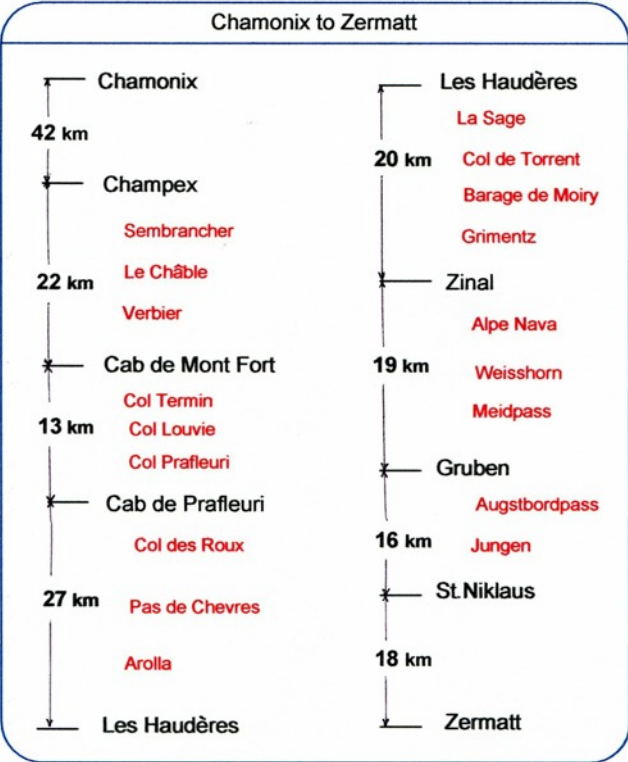
As you can appreciate this would have taken another six hours at least and was not to our liking. Fortunately in Le Chable there is a choice, either an expensive telepherique or a post bus if one can wait for the next one. We waited and took the bus to Verbier, the well known and busy ski centre. Not content with this excellent lift in altitude we walked through the village and took the lift to the top station at Les Ruinettes which deposited us on a fairly level track leading directly to the SAC Refuge where we had phoned ahead for a place in the dortoir.

**Day 3**

Today was to be a six hour trek via three cols with most of the route over 2500m.

First was the Col Termin 2679 approached by a narrow and exposed path, known as the Sentier des Chamois. There are safety rails at the tricky sections, and the views from this path were superb. There is a sharp left bend at this col and the Lac de Louvie lies 500m immediately below one. We take care and avoid the path leading down to the Lake. About 3½ hours from the Refuge we reached the next col, the rocky Col de Louvie at 2921m. This is the start of the Grand Desert and is well named. We descended a steep gully following the red paint marks on the rocks and I recalled a previous occasion when I was going in the reverse direction and had to climb up the gully full of waist deep snow.

The weather was kind to us this time and we descended easily to the Glacier at the bottom of the gully. The Glacier is retreating rapidly and at this time and place, was about 100 metres wide, fairly level and had a stream of water running over the ice. This was soon crossed and we carried on following the trail markers for another



hour to reach the third col, Col de Prafleurie 2965m set on top of a jumble of rocks which required a careful descent, a previous visit had required the cutting of steps, but this was even more tricky. Another hour and we dropped down another gully protected with chains, to enable us to see the cabin we were aiming for, the Cabane de Prafleurie. This is a private hut with a large capacity but with limited meal provision. Nevertheless it is a vital staging post on the route, and we were made most welcome.

#### **Day 4**

The obvious way from here is the miners' path down to the Dam at the northern end of Lac des Dix but as we were intent on short cuts we chose the shorter Col des Roux and then down to the Lake at La Barma joining the path alongside the Lake.

At the far end of the Lake there is a choice of routes, either a path to the Refuge des Dix, or omitting the Cabane and going direct towards Arolla, our next aim. First it was necessary to cross the stream feeding into the Lake from the Glacier de Cheilon. To assist in this crossing there is a suspension stayed bridge made out of light alloy framing. It looks extremely fragile but a quick structural survey concluded that we could cross it one at a time. From here we continued upwards, crossing an area of slippery shale and a large boulder field, towards the Col de Riedmatten 2919m, but of course there is a quicker way bypassing the Col at the foot of the cliffs to reach the Pas de Chevres at 2855m where two vertical ladders fixed to the rock face lead to the top of the pas. It should be mentioned that it is necessary to change from one ladder to the next at about halfway as they are separated by a gap of a metre. Interesting, but I had been down them on another occasion. My friend was impressed when I told him how many rungs he had to climb. Having climbed the ladders we arrived at a flat area which soon turned into the 5km path down to Arolla at 1998m. Before reaching Arolla we could see the town square below us and to encourage us the sight of the local bus waiting for passengers. We quickly ran down the zigzags into the office to buy tickets and into the bus which then took off to Les Hauderes reaching the village in a half hour and saving us a two hour walk or staying in Arolla. It had been a long day, but the local tourist office found us a bed and breakfast place which turned out to be a first floor apartment with a good kitchen, but we opted for the local restaurant and bar.

#### **Day 5**

I knew that there was a Postbus at 8am from Les Hauderes to the next village La Sage which would save us an hour and possibly enable us to get to Zinal that day. However, after waiting for a bus which did not arrive, a more detailed examination of the timetable revealed that it did not run on fete days, and it dawned on me that the 1st of August was the Swiss National Day. We walked to Sage and onwards to the next village Villa on a good track with excellent views. All this took about an hour and a half and

meant that we had a long day ahead to get to Zinal where there is usually plenty of accommodation. However we had the 2919m Col de Torrent to climb first and it would be about six hours from our start before we reached the top with magnificent views in all directions. A further hour down the slopes brought us to the Barage de Moiry where we stopped for lunch at the café at about 3.00 in the afternoon. Our choice of routes was now limited if we were to get to Zinal that day. Either four hours over the col de Sorebois or a two hour walk into Grimentz and a further 1½ hours to Zinal. The problem was solved when we were offered a lift into Grimentz from the Moiry café, which we gratefully accepted. The walk from Grimentz into Zinal was an easy road walk and we arrived at Zinal in the middle of the local fête with lots of activity going on. We booked into a hotel, and had our dinner in a marquee erected in the village square.

#### **Day 6**

Today's destination was the isolated village of Gruben, eight hours walk away. We decided to call in at the hotel Weissshorn about four hours away from Zinal for lunch. This is a decidedly eccentric Victorian Hotel built in 1884 with some updating in later years and although I had stayed there some years earlier I felt it was worth another visit for lunch or an overnight stay if the weather was bad. It was an uneventful walk on a good path but the views diminished as thick mist eventually descended on us. We passed extensive avalanche defences and began to wonder what was in store for us as we could barely see the route, and I knew the Hotel was slightly off the main track. However I was reassured by coming across a signboard placard advertising "Le Sentier Planetaire" with a picture of one of the planets (I think it was "Pluto") and I knew we were close. Eventually the hotel loomed out of the mist and we called in. As we still had the Meid Pass ahead of us and the avalanche works made navigating difficult in the mist we decided to stay the night and carry on to Gruben the following day. There was a commercial trekking party staying there, having come up from Grimentz but as they were in the dortoir we managed to book a room to ourselves.

#### **Day 7**

Weather was back to normal so we had another short day ahead, resuming the journey to Gruben via the Meid Pass at 2790m and down to Gruben, a small village with only one hotel "The Hotel Schwarzhorn" according to the guide book. This is where some confusion took place as we walked into the restaurant and asked at the bar for a "chambre" to be greeted with surprise as the bar staff only spoke German and replied they only had a "matratzenlager". We were surprised but said that would be OK and asked could we eat, again confusion as it appeared to be just a bar for the locals, but they rustled up some food and we didn't argue. I am now convinced that it wasn't the Hotel but a bar called the Waldesruh Restaurant. It was fortunate we ate well the previous day at the Weissshorn! At breakfast we were the only people in the bar but they made us some sandwiches to take with us and we made the best of it.

## Day 8

This was to be our final day's walk, and only 16k and 7½ hours to St. Nicholas according to the guide book. The Augstbord pass at 2894m, our first objective was reached in about three hours with a good but steady, inclined path. The other side of the pass leads downwards with ever increasing views over the Mattertal and a superb mule track made out of enormous flat slabs finally leads us to the attractive village of Jungen at 1955m after a further three hours walk.

The village itself was not our objective, but maintaining our policy of shortcuts the small but welcoming cable car terminus. Unfortunately on our arrival at the cable car we joined a crowd of day trippers to be told that the cable car had developed a problem and it would be several hours before it would be working again!

Although it was tempting to call in at the Restaurant

"Junger-Stubli" where I had stayed some years before and wait, we resisted this on the basis that the cable car might take a long time to fix, there were a lot of people waiting ahead of us, and the car only took two people at a time.

So, 900m below us and several hours later we arrived at our destination of St. Nicholas and found a rather nice hotel on the outskirts of the village out of range of the dominant church bells which toll the passing hours at the Railway Station end of the village, in time for an excellent dinner.

**Conclusion:** - The next day we caught the early morning train to Geneva and hence back to reality via British Airways. We had failed in our attempt to reach Zermatt in a week, but the earlier risks of carrying on past the Weisshorn in the mist outweighed the loss of a day, and there was always another time to complete the High level route to Zermatt.

# PYRENEAN PERAMBULATIONS

## From the Atlantic to the Mediterranean on the GR11 by Alan Kay

A complete traverse of the Pyrenees from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, following the route of the GR11, totals 837km, with almost 40,000m of ascent and a similar amount of descent, and if attempted as one complete walk could take about 45 days. David Hick and I decided to attempt the walk, though two weeks at a time, over a period of four years from 2010 to 2013.

The GR11 is on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees, and was favoured over the GR10, the equivalent route on the French side of the mountains, for a number of reasons:-

- The weather is generally drier and more settled to the south of the range.
- There is more scope for camping, particularly wild camping.
- There are fewer people in the hills.
- There are a few east – west valleys on the GR11, resulting in a bit less climbing, though this is more than compensated for by the overall roughness of the terrain and paths of the GR11.
- Last but not least, our grasp of Spanish was adequate, not so our French.

To begin the venture in July 2010 we "cherry picked" what was probably the best section, 238km from Canfranc to La Guingueta, with 11,500m of ascent and 12400m descent.

In the second year, in July 2011 we walked the 222km from La Guingueta to Camprodon, including 13,000m ascent and 13400m descent.

In September 2012 we decided to continue the eastern traverse, and walked 157km from Camprodon to the Mediterranean coast at Cap de Creus, including 5,000m ascent and 5,700m descent.

The final section, from Cabo Higeur, the headland overlooking the Atlantic, to Candanchu, was covered in July 2013. This involved 220km walking, 8,500m ascent and 7,000 m descent.

Each section had its own highlights, so here, to whet the appetite of anyone thinking of following the route, is just a small selection –

- The Barranco Arrablo and Rio Bellos, east of the Ordesa Canyon, two beautiful valleys of almost continual waterfalls, cascades and wild flowers, followed by a truly mind boggling descent of 1750m.

- The Refugi de Baiau, a small metal cabin perched high above the Estany de Baiau, on the border with Andorra, at the foot of a huge scree slope which had to be ascended next day.
- The Barranco da Rueda, a wide valley one day's walk from Candanchu, a sheltered sanctuary for herds of cattle, masses of flowers, and surrounded by mountains thrust upwards, perfect examples of the work of plate tectonics.
- One day's walk beyond the small town of Benasque there was perhaps the most remote, beautiful and wild campsite on the route, beside the Estany Cap de Llauset lake – a campsite to dream about.



Cabo Higuer, Atlantic Ocean at the western end of GR11.

Ibons de Ballibierna – beautiful lakes encountered 2010.



Refugi de Baiau, near the border with Andorra

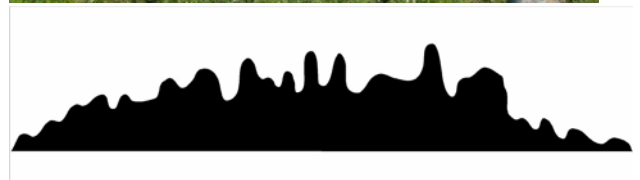
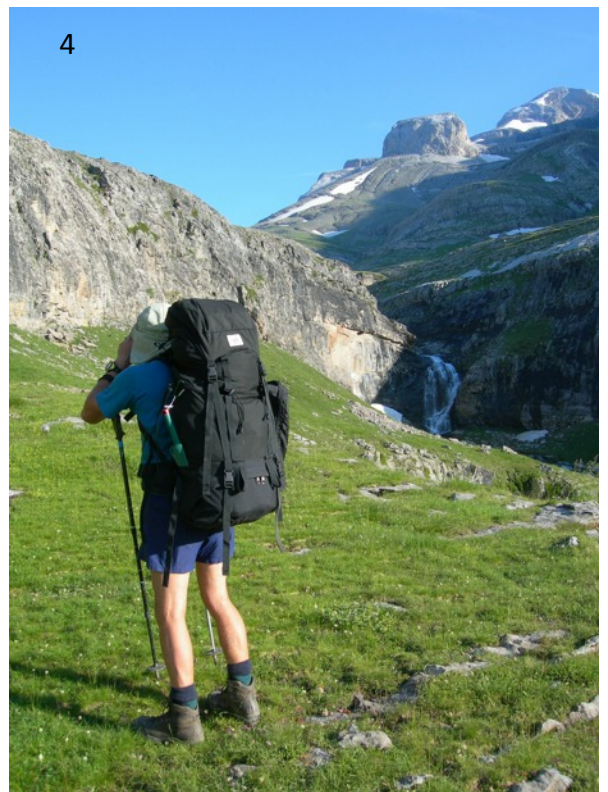
Descent to the Med at El Port de la Selva.



The GR11 takes a wonderful route through largely remote and wild country; there are few mountain “Alpine” style huts, but there is much scope for wild camping in secluded valleys, beside remote mountain lakes, or occasionally over-nighting in small villages.

There could hardly be a better way to get to know these mountains and the people who live and work amongst them.

Photographs this page Alan Kay



The best guide for the route is "Through the Spanish Pyrenees: GR11" by Paul Lucia, published in 2007, though since publication there have been two or three changes in the western section of the route.

Photographs previous page by David Hick

- 1) Glacial lakes (Ibons) between Collada Ballibierna and Estanys d'Anglios
- 2) Between Collada Ballibierna and Estanys d'Anglios
- 3) Alan seated in Estanys d'Anglios
- 4) Valley of the Barranco Arrablo, Ordesa National Park  
waterfall is the Cola de Caballo "the horses tail"
- 5) Lac Ruis

# MALTA AND GOZO A Rock Climbers Brief

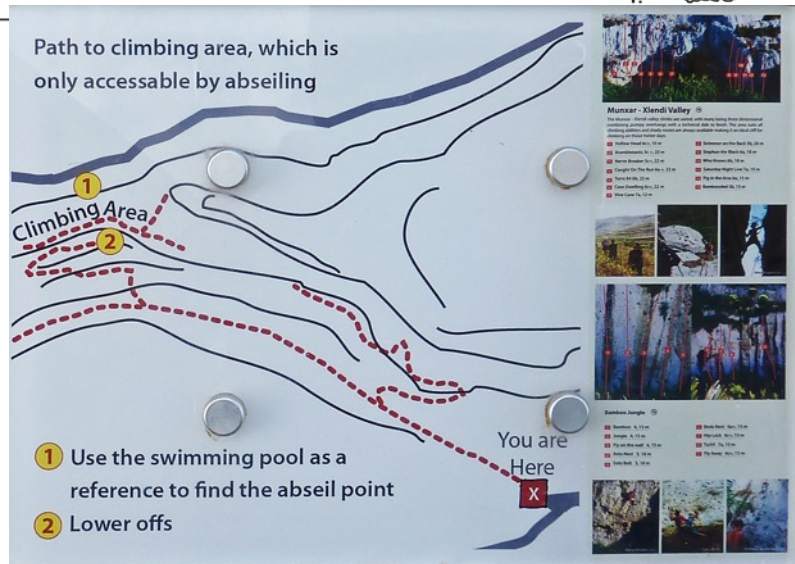
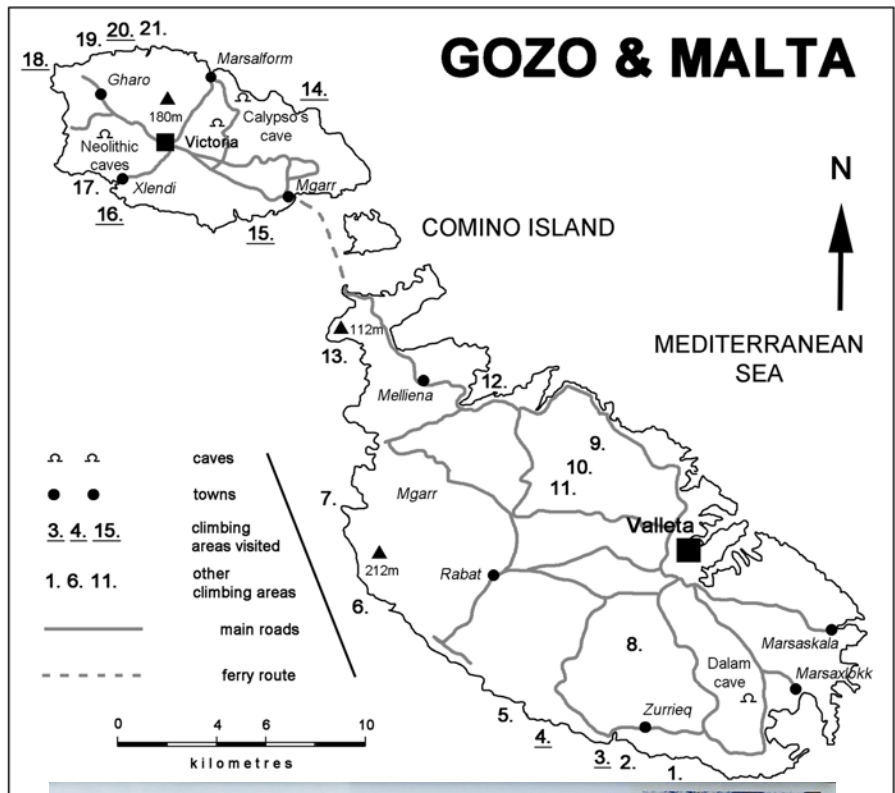
John and Valerie Middleton

Just as the February weather became wetter and wetter, windier and windier, colder and colder a sanity saving climbing guide book happened to drop through our letter box. This was entitled *Sport Climbing in Malta & Gozo*, a new guide tempting us with some 500 recently bolted sports routes of all grades, including a 3 star 3+! Why had we never heard of Malta for winter climbing? It was south of Sicily, almost in Africa, so it must be warmer and drier; let's go!

Within a fortnight "Easyjet" had efficiently deposited us at Malta airport. Hertz quickly and equally efficiently hired us an almost new car for £8 per day and a short drive and ferry crossing had us at our accommodation on sunny Gozo within 7 hours of leaving the gloom of Manchester. Our spacious and good value apartment cum hotel was in the very attractive south coast village of Xlendi. Economical restaurants and cafes abounded. Twenty five different crags were beckoning and all could be reached within a 20 minute drive.

A potential eight days of paradise!

Day one, of course, appeared heavily overcast but, undaunted, we headed for nearby Wied Ix-Xlendi (number 16 on the map; wied translates as valley) and Vine Cave Crag. Thanks to a special climbers sign-post by the roadside (photo 1) this was easily found and a 33m abseil to the base of the buttress quickly accomplished. The valley bottom was overrun with 3 to 4m high bamboos and seemed rather oppressive but the rock looked good. It was a 23m high wall, some undercut, of massive limestone that proved to be sprinkled with small pockets, small lay-offs and small pinch grips – these features would prove to be a characteristic for most of the routes on our venues.





The climbing was indeed excellent but the grades.....tough would be an understatement! We hoped to warm up on a F5b but this proved to be 5c if not 6a! We did eventually up the standard but all seemed at least one grade more than stated. The moral at Vine Cave Crag is make sure that you can climb a normal English F6a or you may not get out of the valley!

Once we had completed the only five routes that we could manage we made a ten minute drive to the other side of the valley and the unusual Ic-Cnus Slab (17). This looks like a hill that had been cleanly sliced in two, with one half missing, rising directly above a maze of small farmer's fields. The semi concreted farm track passed directly beneath the routes making belaying possible directly through the car window if preferred! There are some 22 lines to challenge here with grades ranging from 3+ to 7a+ although once more all proved tougher than expected. However as the sun had now re-appeared, an enjoyable and more relaxing afternoon was had.

The second day again commenced with threatening clouds but a decision had been made and today was to be at the sea cliffs of Wied Il-Mielah (20). Once more it was possible to drive to the very edge of the routes whereupon there were very substantial abseil points. This is an atmospheric place that has an unusually friendly feel to it. There are 47 routes here of which 29 are graded as 4s and 5' making it an ideal venue for anyone who is new to sea cliff climbing. This is also where the previously mentioned 3 star F3+ resides taking a 16m line up the exposed seaward arête of the Il-Mielah Arch. Unfortunately after only three routes we had to retire from climbing due to continuous rain but even though the rock was wet its rough friction allowed us to make an easy escape.

For days 3/4/5/6 and 7 the sun shone almost continuously and we climbed and climbed visiting some nine differing venues. Of these the undoubted highlights were on Diamond Buttress and the Flying Arete at Wied Babu (3)



There are 23 stunning routes here from F5b to F6c eleven of which justify 3 stars and only two are un-starred.

Our next highlight was at Mgarr Ix-Xinni (15) and on the particularly Dream and Champagne Walls although the number of hard routes here did limit our ambitions. Our final highlight was during the afternoon before our return flight when we managed to ascend two of the quite amazing routes on Motorcycle Slabs at Ix-Xaqqa (50)



These are 37m in length, on excellent rock and continuous F5c difficulty throughout (these would be F6a anywhere else!). An excellent culmination to our 8 days on these islands.

Our small team was composed of ourselves and John and Miranda Myers, local climbing friends from Sheffield.

#### IN BRIEF.

PROS. Easy to get to; Good accommodation at all prices; Very cheap car hire; Good quality and good value food; Climbing is normally on vertical cliffs of very solid limestone; Route length averages 20m; A wide range of grades extending from F3 to F8c+; Climbing areas quite easy to find from the Guide Book. Most crags require less than a 10 minute gentle walk; Bolting on all the routes that we climbed was good; Potential for new routes is considerable.

CONS. Variable grades but generally quite tough; The majority of routes are in the 6b+ and upwards category with a slight shortage of routes for mid-grade climbers (10 to 12 days' worth?), grade 5 and lower climbers are quite well catered for; A 'clip stick' for the first bolt could be an occasional advantage. Many crags only have a small number of routes on them making it often necessary to visit more than one venue per day.

#### HISTORICAL.

Records show that climbing on the Maltese islands commenced with the military during the Second World War and in particular members of the Royal Marines and Royal Naval Mountaineering Club. These personal climbed many of the classic traditional lines. After the War a few local Scouts and members of similar groups continued new route development albeit slowly. At the start of the 1980s a rather more serious development of the cliffs

commenced but it was not until the advent of modern 'sports' climbing in the mid 1990's that the full potential for Maltese rock began to be realised. By 2007 the first fully detailed guide was published as *Malta Rock Climbing* by Richard Abelo, John Codling & Andrew Warrington. This included over 1,300 traditional routes, 200 sports routes, bouldering and several sea level traverses. The inevitable 'route explosion' followed publication that has now placed Malta firmly on the International climbing scene.

**DEVIATIONS.** Because of its strategic position between Sicily and the Libyan coast Malta has a history dating back to well before 5,000BC with many ruins to prove it. There are also some 360 different churches the majority of which can only be described as very 'grand'. The capital, Valletta, many small towns on Malta and almost everywhere on Gozo is rather reminiscent of a by-gone age with their narrow alleyways, small shops, markets and architecture.

For countryside visitors there are many surprisingly good walks, particularly along the sea cliffs; some spectacular salt pans on Gozo; a number of caves, although none exceed 220m; a collapsed cavern, Il-Latijna, that is home to the hardest climbs on the islands and finally some of the finest diving to be experienced in the Mediterranean. Boredom is not an option!

#### WHEN TO GO.

Most Travel Guide books say that it is possible to visit the islands at any time of the year but it is also accepted that December and January can be quite wet. In our case at the end of February we had 2 days of drizzle and 6 of sunshine with daytime temperatures ranging between 18-22°C whilst nights dropped to by at least half of this.

## TUESDAYS UPDATE

We have occasionally reported on the informal club within a club made up of members getting together for midweek activity. This goes back to the 1990's, when a band of Members regularly met on Wednesday evenings to climb or walk in the Craven/Bowland and Pendle areas after work. There was quite a lot of climbing done, mainly on Twistleton and Hutton Roof crags. Horizons soon expanded and Crook Rise, Embsay, Earl Crag, and Widdop were included.

Many had retired by 1996/7 and David Handley suggested that the band of climbers, and others who were interested, might meet at Lowstern on Tuesdays and spend a full day on the hills. Members from further afield joined in occasionally, especially when Committee meetings were scheduled at Lowstern on Tuesday evenings

David Smith then took over the organization of the Tuesday walkers using email to communicate and as now members normally assembled at Lowstern by 09.30 and a route to take was then decided. However, individuals would also suggest areas to go to and DS began to include a suggested route in his emails.

#### MAPS AND GUIDES.

The comprehensive 2007 *Malta Rock Climbing Guide* is currently out of print but there are places on the islands where copies may apparently be 'rented'. The latest guide, which concentrates solely on some 500 'sports' routes, is *Sport Climbing in Malta & Gozo* by Simon Alden, Jeffrey Camilleri and Stevie Haston. This is easily found in major UK climbing stores and on the internet. Marked photographs of the cliffs make route finding easy and satellite pictures of the various areas ensure access. There is also an abbreviated guide entitled *Adventure Guide Book to the Maltese Islands* that includes rock climbing and is found in many Maltese shops.

As for maps then the one received with any car rental is usually sufficient. Gozo only measures around 14km by 8km and Malta about 26km by 18km. However if a larger scale is required then we used the excellent 1:25,000 *KompassNo. 235 Malta & Gozo* map which comes with a small Lexicon (in German).

The islands have a very active and well organised climbing club whose website is accessed at [www.climbmalta.com](http://www.climbmalta.com). All foreign climbers are welcome to contact the club for any up to date information or even for climbing assistance and partners.

The Three Peaks were often visited and a regular linear walk from Dale Head over Pen-y-Ghent to Ingleborough and Whernside was traversed prior to calling at Scar Top where Albert Chapman's wife Sammy would provide tea, sandwiches, and delicious cakes for all.

Derek Bush has now taken over coordinating these activities and if any members are likely to be in the area on a Tuesday, please contact him and find out details.

All the westerly Dales have been covered from Great Shunner Fell in the north down to Langcliffe and Settle and on to Pendle. (Most won't count Pendle as the Dales). The group have also walked from the Malham area in the east, westwards beyond Lowstern to Bowland Knotts and onto the hinterland of Bowland, a delightful area not often visited.

The group have ventured into the Lakes on a number of occasions. One of their more gentle walks has been to park at Tilberthwaite and walk through to LHG where they would have lunch, then walk back by the quarries.

Some Lakeland days have been exceptional for cloudless skies and visibility so good that Ingleborough could be seen from the top of Pike O' Blisco.

The Howgills have also been a favourite; particularly afternoon tea at the Cross Keys. Also the walk from Barbon through the woods of the estate then over to the Red Rose caving cottage and back over the fell.

They have walked around the coast line at Silverdale and also on Whitbarrow (a hidden gem) on the opposite side of Morecambe Bay, and also on Scout Scar above Kendal to which Chris Renton introduced them during the foot and mouth epidemic.

They have always 'kept an eye' on Lowstern as many of our members such as Mike Godden, John Lovett, Barrie Wood, and the late Richard Kirby were wardens during this period. It was particularly relevant when John Lovett masterminded the water pipe line from Clapham Village to the Club cottage, an undertaking the magnitude of which most Members are unaware and when Barrie Wood single handedly masterminded the building of the new kitchen.

Currently they do not go on the hill every Tuesday as family matters can be pressing. One of their number, Mike Edmondson to be exact, has moved to southern Scotland; but when he is with them he plots their outing on his GPS and takes photographs. He then emails them with an account of the day with details of distance, height covered and photos of all participants.

This group have had so many happy times, tinged with sadness for those who have gone before, particularly David Smith and Richard Kirby. Derek says he would like to think their ramblings on the hills are the YRC at its best.

Three recent trips show the sort of things they get up to. The first, setting off from Horton, with the intention of having a combined walk, an 'on the fly' decision saw the group splitting three ways after about 1½ miles. Derek Bush, Mike Hartland and Mike Edmondson headed for Pen-y-Ghent. Albert Chapman, John Lovett and Harry Robinson waited for Mike Godden who set off for a look at Hull Pot, then, after retracing his steps, the four of them continued round Sell Gill Holes and back via the Pennine and Ribble Way to Horton and the Pub to continue putting the world to rights.

The route to Pen-y-Ghent saw a detour for a view of Hunt Pot then on to the top in mist for a chilly lunch. The descent, via the 'standard' ascent route saw a number of changes with the path having been moved nearer the edge for some reason. Returning via Brackenbottom our outward path was visible across the valley and a quick detour in the village for a view of the buzzards allowed an interesting chat with the bird's owner.

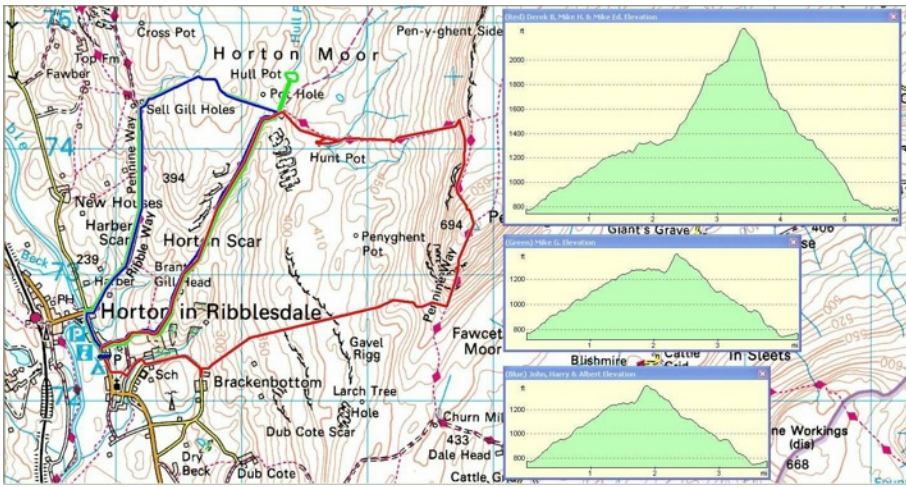
Map 1 shows the various routes taken in three colours which should be obvious to follow.



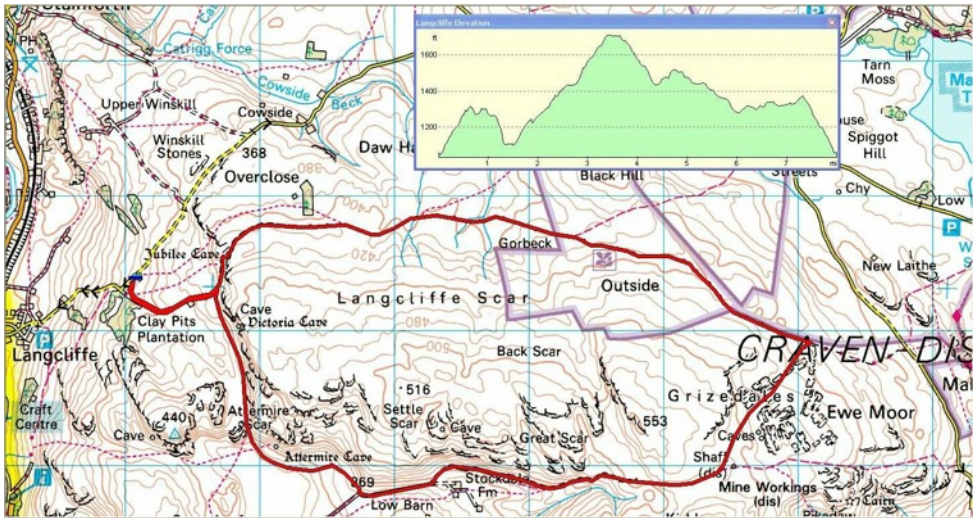
Another excellent walk starting at the back of Langcliffe with a good view of Malham Tarn at the far extent of the walk. Six members ended up splitting into three groups. Group One (Derek Bush and Mike Edmondson) followed the route in an anti-clockwise manner, Group Two (Mike Godden and Derek Collins) went clockwise passing Group One near the far extent of the walk. Group Three (John Lovett and Harry Robinson) went clockwise for some distance then re-traced their steps and retired to the pub to continue putting the world to rights. See map 2



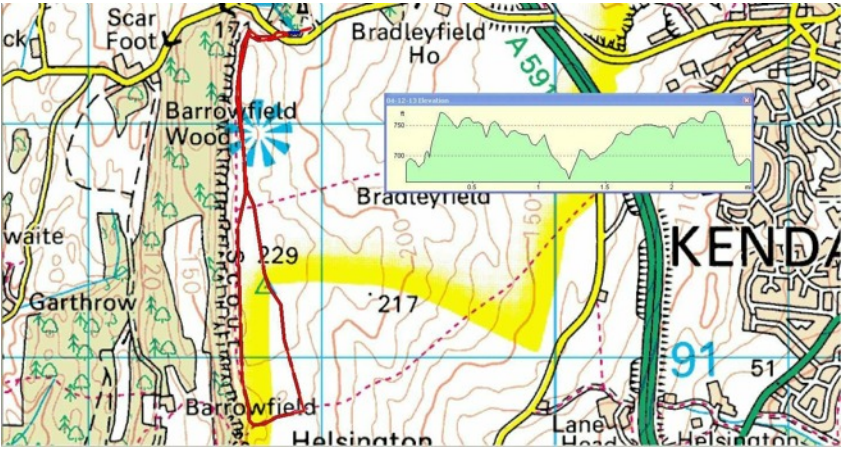
Another short walk along Scout Scar, just west of Kendal saw six members (Mike Edmundson, Derek Bush, John Lovett, Iain Gilmour, Mike Godden and David Gamble) set out in limestone country, being an appetiser for the Tuesday Christmas Lunch. Map 3



Pen Y Ghent



Langcliffe Scar



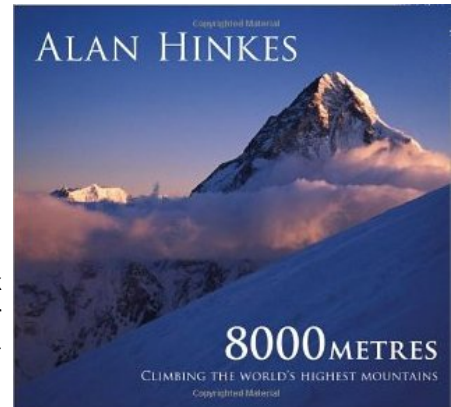
Scout Scar

# REVIEWS

## 8000 metres: Climbing the World's Highest Mountains

ISBN 978 1 85284 548 3 Amazon £16.25

Alan Hinkes, one of the guests at our Dinner last year, has produced a book in which he tells of his experiences of climbing all fourteen of the peaks over 8000 metres in the world. He describes his various expeditions and Alpine-style techniques.



Truly superb photographs accompany his text, portraying the harsh reality and risks inherent at high altitude in the mountains. This first autobiography by Alan, who on achievements must be Britain's greatest ever mountaineer, takes us through the camaraderie of high level camps; the characters he has climbed with and the very real hardships he has suffered but at the end of the day it is the actual exploits and his tremendous photographs which make this a first rate book.

Alan was born in Northallerton and the Moors and Dales were his playground. He progressed through hill walking to the ascent of his first 'mountain' Helvellyn, and the rest is history.

Alan is to be our principal guest at our next dinner. I can commend this excellent book to you.

## The Underground Adventures of a Rock Chick Carol Whalley

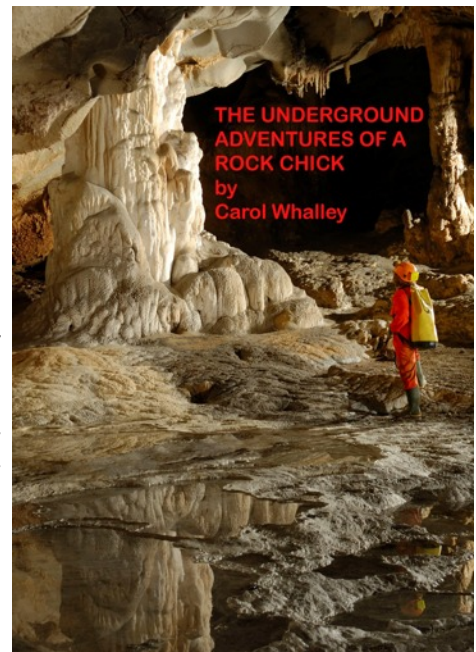
Self-published A5 soft bound with 212pp with 12 colour and 19 monochrome photographs price £13.50 normally but £12.50 from Bernies in Ingleton but seek out Carol herself for a YRC members' discount

The author describes this publication as *"a light-hearted look at caving over the past 30 years. Many important caving events are mentioned, but from the more human aspect. Personalities are strong in our fraternity ... and I am trying to let people of future generations know of our likes and dislikes, how we in our inimitable O.T.T. way, enjoy ourselves and are tightly connected by our interests."*

YRC member Carol certainly achieves that through the three books included in this publication: 'colourful characters'; 'expeditions' and 'travels'. Each book contains a number of stories woven around particular settings with short scenarios embellished with innumerable illustrative digressions.

This fragmentation makes it easy to pick up the book and dip into it, pick up the thread quickly and engage with the characters. Taken together as a whole, the anecdotes paint a broader picture of the author and her progress from adolescence towards motherhood.

Now, I have no claim to be any sort of a caver but the portraits of the characters I have met certainly ring true. Sociable, adventurous Carol mixed with the best in the caving scene not just from the UK but many from Eastern Europe and Iberia. While it is invariably 'touch and go' whether or not she and her companions get off on time or even get to their destinations, they do get to many fascinating places, end up in some tricky situations and have a plenty of parties along the way. The graphically related after-effects of some of these all-singing, all-dancing celebrations sound dire but impinge little on the planned caving, mountaineering or travels. No reader of the adventures of this 'rock-chick' could ever accuse her of being a couch potato. Her plans for off-the-beaten-track travel were ambitious so things inevitably went awry and Carol spares no one's embarrassment in relating the outcomes – not even her own – this is no hagiography. You will certainly find out much more about a number of YRC members' escapades in their earlier days. Not really a caver? Well that should not put you off reading this book as only a small fraction of the text is about rifts, avens, gour pools and the like of caving.



The Hill Inn, Marton Arms, Craven Heifer, Billy Connolly, Freddie Starr, Sid Perou, Prince Charles, Carlsbad NM, Bolzano, Dubrovnik, Istanbul, Sofia, Budapest, Aswan, Marrakesh, Samarkand, Corfu, Moscow and Beijing are all there – some as you will not have experienced them before.

As New Zealander Pam Henson put it *“Carol is in her high heels everywhere except actually in the caves, her eyes crinkling with mischief and the pints mysteriously vanishing into her smaller than average frame.”*

As one reads one can imagine Carol sat round a table with friends relating the tales. Her enthusiasm for life, her humanity, her impatience with the mundane and determination to wring something worthwhile and fun out of each situation, all shine through each chapter.

A conventional publisher might suggest the text would have benefitted from an edit and the weeding out of the odd homonym but such treatment could risk producing a stilted conventional report lacking the blatant verve and vigour of Carol’s fresh accounts.

If you have met Carol or were part of the caving scene in the 1970s or 1980s then this is a book to read for its rich and eclectic tales of the activities above and below ground together with the socialising afterwards and all its inevitable aftereffects.

A word of warning though  
this is not recommended for those of a delicate disposition.

It only remains to ask... “When do we get to read volume 2 covering the years after 1991, Carol?”

Michael Smith

I have hardly been able to put this book down; what a laugh it has been along the way for Carol, despite a few dodgy adventures and some sadness. A high proportion of those listed at the front were caving friends or acquaintances of mine as well and it is a shame to think how many went before their time.

That said their memory does not overshadow her story, which is an upbeat confirmation that life is supposed to be an enjoyable journey and not just a destination.

More strength to Carol’s arm for having written it. Let us hope that a few more with a tale to tell can be persuaded to have a go.

I was just trying to work out how it was that our paths did not cross more frequently, especially during the twenty years from 1975 when I was caving constantly. All I can think is that once I helped launch the Army Caving Association in 1977, I tended to be caving with it and those we invited along. Mind you that was a giggle too and had its moments from time to time.

Jack Sheldon, a writer with more than 10 successful books under his belt.



**ALL OUR YESTERDAYS - WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**



No prizes



Carol on camp guard duty during the Sheffield University Expedition to Turkey in 1976 and taking a break on the same trip



# CHIPPINGS



## UNRECORDED WAYS UPDATE

One of the most obvious legacies of our past is the network of historic rights of way. This is also the means by which the population can travel between communities, to and from places of work and to schools, churches shops etc. It also allows them to access the natural environment with the obvious health and wellbeing benefits. It is easy to take this for granted but it does need protection. The legal position is that public rights of way are minor public highways, which exist for the benefit of the community at large, in much the same way as the public road network does. They are the most widely recognised opportunity for the public to enjoy access to the English countryside.

In reality there are only three types of highway in law; footpaths, bridleways and carriageways. There are restricted rights on some of these; for example can you cycle? drive animals? use non-motorised vehicles (bikes - horse drawn carriages)? Can you use a motorised invalid chair? Motorways also restrict types of user.

This should have been fairly easily sorted by class and the Definitive Map was intended to reflect these differences. There are however routes which have no apparent status or protection including Unclassified County Roads. There is little doubt that most authorities believed their UCRs to be vehicular highways but there was some misinterpretation and some oversight. Further recording confusion introduced by the various varying sorts of lists of streets kept by Highways Authorities.

The instructions to the surveyors of the original definitive maps stated that existing roads should not be entered as footpaths, bridleways or the obsolete category of 'roads used as public paths' (RUPPs). However some of these unclassified roads did get included on the definitive maps. It might be that the parish or urban district council surveyors thought that the way in question was genuinely only a footpath or bridleway, and did not have knowledge of the authority's roads records. In these cases it can mean that not all the public rights on a route are properly recorded or protected.

Footpaths and bridleways are recorded on the definitive map and statement (or should be) but would not normally have been recorded onto lists of streets, especially as in those days Authorities had no obligation to even maintain lists of streets. There is some overlap though, with a few routes being shown as footpaths or bridleways on the definitive map and also being recorded on the list of streets. In practice it seems that roads maintainable at public expense were recorded on the list of streets but by and large the only non-vehicular highways recorded there were urban or semi-urban footpaths i.e. jitties, ginnels, alleys or

estate paths. If a 'road' was not maintained at public expense but was used largely as a footpath or bridleway it seems in many occasions to have fallen in the gap between the two records.

It is further confusing because the definitive map only records some of the routes that you might believe are official 'paths'. There are also local authority records such as the List of Streets or List of Streets Maintainable at Public Expense. Some lists may suggest some legal status but not necessarily show what that status is. Some of the routes listed are known as Unclassified County Roads, marked by the Ordnance Survey as Other Routes with Public Access. Many are known as Green Lanes. These are all routes that are legally part of the public road network but usually unsurfaced; also some of these routes may only have footpath and bridleway rights rather than rights for vehicles.

The definition of an 'Unclassified County Road' was provided in the Local Government Act, 1929. As with all well intentioned legislation there have been unforeseen consequences we still need to be addressed today. It is generally accepted in law although by no means absolutely defined, that a 'road' is a vehicular highway. The use of the labels 'county road' and 'unclassified road' are used regularly within legislation to refer to public vehicular highways. As such routes, which highway authorities list as Unclassified Roads and Unclassified County Roads, unless there is specific evidence to indicate otherwise, are public vehicular highways. One problem is that in the interpretation of that act and the defining of individual routes, misunderstanding probably resulted in some bridleways and footpaths being incorrectly recorded as UCRs

Regardless of where or how a highway is recorded it cannot be extinguished without some statute or law (Once a highway, always a highway). The judge in *Harvey v Truro Rural District Council* (1903) put it succinctly "Mere disuse of a highway cannot deprive the public of their rights. Where there has once been a highway no length of time during which it may not have been used would preclude the public from resuming the exercise of the right to use it if and when they think proper."

Current legislation however which is waiting to be enacted does mean that unless a right of way is recorded properly somewhere, by 2016 it could be lost if a landowner closes it, unless a case can be made for it be given that status on evidence of usage.

There are problems with the network; there are missing links often just down to poor recording by parishes when the definitive map was started but these gaps do prevent us making best use of the network as a whole.

Some of the gaps are actually in use but just technically not recorded but these could be lost if not formalised by 2026. Some of the missing links might indeed have been highways in the past and would be invaluable again now given changes in where people live and work, and although some bodies have said that we should not pursue such historic rights of way as they are no longer of value, in our rapidly changing world with new developments and services shooting up all over the countryside such lost ways may suddenly become invaluable links again. There are already residential areas near to schools shops etc with no link between them.

It can easily be demonstrated that the network itself is not really fit for purpose any more. On the other side of the coin though, we have paths that no longer serve any purpose where their original destinations no longer exist and some are actually dead ends.

We need to look at planning opportunities not just to protect rights of way and new requirements within developments but to look at the broader picture and see if it affords any opportunity to improve the network itself.

In 2000, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act introduced a cut-off date of 1st January 2026 when all 'unrecorded' public rights of way will be permanently extinguished. At the time it was said this would benefit both land managers and users in terms of greater certainty about the existence of rights of way. That left 26 years to trace these ancient paths and bridleways through historical records and have them recorded. At first, this seemed an easy target but now, with half that time available gone, hardly any progress has been made. Part of the problem is that the legislative framework is so cumbersome that any improvements of corrections or indeed modifications/diversions can take for ages.

The definitive maps can only be changed by the highway authority making legal 'orders' to create, divert or extinguish rights of way, and/or modify the definitive map by deleting a route or adding an unrecorded one. Orders are necessary to modify the map to correct anomalies which can have resulted from something as silly as the width of pen used when the original survey map was drawn up by parish and urban district councils

Some of these routes form part of the access to properties, but a supposedly private drive may really be public, and other routes are sunken, walled or hedged lanes where public usage will have little impact on land use or farming activity.

The new Deregulation Bill when enacted should provide some changes to simplify the processes; introduce some element of common sense and provide a lot more clarity. This is needed as major infrastructure projects need to be aware of all such routes. HS2 Phase 1 from London to Birmingham seemingly were unaware of some County Roads.

## FSE - European Speleological Federation

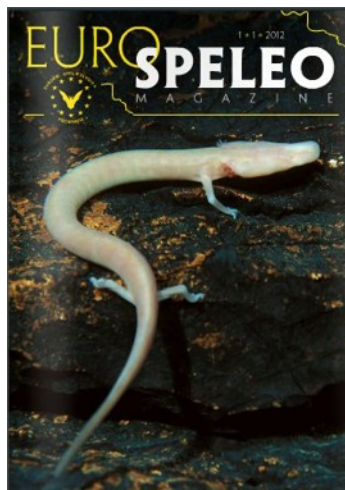
<http://eurospeleo.eu>

This is an international grouping of most of the speleological federations or national associations of 30 European nations.



The FSE was founded in 1990 and is covered by the International Union of Speleology (UIS). The FSE promotes sport and scientific speleology and encompasses speleology in all its forms.

For my sins your editor has volunteered to be on their editorial board but they must not expect profound advice and knowledge from me. They brought out their first magazine just over a year ago and it can be read by visiting [http://issuu.com/eurospeleomagazine/docs/esm\\_1-1-2012#](http://issuu.com/eurospeleomagazine/docs/esm_1-1-2012#)



I have basically offered to act as a gateway forwarding to them anything we produce in this field by way of articles and anything I get from our Lebanese connection.

Members could send things direct but I suggest they come to me for publication and that I then send any on.

Articles can be sent to [articles@eurospeleo.eu](mailto:articles@eurospeleo.eu).

They do say they may need help translating between French and English from time to time and I have offered to try my best but there are better linguists than me in the Club. I may well have to call on our cavers to answer some technical enquiries. And Ged Campion should be happy to assist given he is the new FSE President.



This body should be useful as a contact route to the national bodies in all these countries if our cavers wish to do some work over there although what the caving prospects are in the Vatican City I am not sure. Lets see how it goes?

## QUARRY PROGRESS

The Mineral Products Association (MPA) has launched a new National Nature Park as they describe it. In reality it is a nationwide network of quarries that have been restored for wildlife and which are accessible to the public. The online resource includes 50 sites around the country totalling 4,000 hectares, with a range of facilities including nature trails, viewing hides and visitor centres. Their Chief Executive says: "This is a landmark moment. This great industry has hidden its light under a bushel for far too long and finally we are beginning to build a potentially new asset for the UK with this new National Nature Park. It is our aim to double the number of quarries in the network to 100 over the next 2 years or so."

This is all very well and is to be lauded but the cynics amongst us cannot help thinking they are seeking brownie points for the desecration of parts of our countryside that they seek permissions for. They are to be encouraged but they could do so much more. Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire is the nearest hard rock to the south east and is massively quarried. We have been campaigning for years to gain more access to these areas for sporting purposes with little success. My committee recently invited the BMC to give us a presentation on the opportunities which could be provided. The local councillors and officer present seemed impressed and might possibly be able to use the planning system to bring some pressure to bear so long as anything agreed would not involve the local authorities with ongoing maintenance costs. There are several abandoned quarries which have been informally used for climbing and which more could be made of and we are pressing that the last cut from a face should not be by fracturing so that climbable safe faces would be left. There are also quite extensive wooded collars around some of the working quarries but apart from a few fixed trails they will not allow people in to wander in and study the wildlife, or just to pass through on a ramble. Wearing my hat as access officer for the orienteers I have spoken at length to quarry owners about using some areas but they are terrified of litigation and 'elf n safety'.

Anyway all progress should be welcomed even if we do feel the need to keep pushing at the door.

Another glimmer of hope comes from a grant supported project to increase the area of lowland heath in Merseyside which strangely will also benefit astronomers and rock climbers. Pex Hill Country Park, a wooded hill between Widnes and the M62 with views of the Mersey Estuary and the mountains of North Wales has gained £50,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant funding to improve the site for wildlife and all its human users. All visitors will enjoy easier and

safer access, including the climbers and astronomers, who use two features of the site, an old quarry and a working observatory.

The quarry is of hard sandstone with fairly sheer graded faces such as Lady Jane, Pisa and Breakaway.

## THREE PEAKS ARE 60 YEARS OLD???

The only time I tried running the three peaks it took me 6.00 hrs but probably felt like 60. I recall I was not in good shape after it.

The organised 'run' has now been going for 60 years but that does not justify an article heading I saw suggesting that these hills had been there 60 years. Add five noughts and you may get close. The race was first organised in 1954 in April starting from the Hill Inn, a venue embedded in the psyche of those of us who have been in the club for many years.

Close to 1,000 competitors have a go these days and they certainly do it a lot faster than I did. Indeed they could go round twice in the time it took me: Just under two hours 30mins was the record before the route was altered last year.

I am not sure that records mean a great deal as comparing one year to the next is a bit unfair given weather and footing conditions can vary to dramatically.

## STORMY POT AND NETTLEBED CAVE

How many of us ever consider going down under down under?

Certainly when I visit my son on South Island New Zealand I have never given a thought to caving nor have I heard it mentioned. Perhaps I should have done as Limestone abounds in parts.

A series of pictures has now been released showing scenes never pictured before, taken by local man Neil Sherwood.

This January local cavers managed to find a link between Nettlebed and Stormy Pot. Nettlebed Cave is located in the Mount Arthur region in the north west of South Island, an area I have only visited briefly. Before 2010, it was thought to be the deepest cave system in the southern hemisphere. It drops 889 metres from its upper entrance, Blizzard Pot, to its exit at the Pearse River resurgence. It has 24 kilometres of cave passages but surprisingly it is only New Zealand's third longest cave.

In 2010 the nearby Ellis Basin cave system was found to be deeper.

Nettlebed was actually explored from the bottom up so to speak. It was first explored by cavers in the late 60s

through the overflow passage (when dry) of a large spring flowing into the Pearse River.

in 1979 after many attempts, a flowstone squeeze with an unforgettable, barely pronounceable and the unexplained name of Hinkle-horn-honking-holes was forced, making further explorations possible and eventually many additional kilometres were mapped.

In 1986 Blizzard Pot linked with Nettlebed Cave, providing an upper entrance to the system, and now Stormy Pot has also been linked. This cave was discovered by cavers sheltering from a storm in its small entrance. This turned out to be a very respectable cave in its own right found to be 2.5 kilometres long and 470 meters. It was later surveyed to a length of 3.5 kilometres and a depth of 575 meters and it is thought to be going to be the deepest cave in New Zealand when fully explored.

There are numerous waterfalls to contend with including one of 50 metres fall; there is a sizeable underground river they called the River of Clowns, and numerous shafts, galleries and large chambers. There were also rare formations of crystal and cave spiders.

These are all part of a larger system, the Ellis Basin which is still being explored but which is already known to go down 1024 metres and extends 33 kilometres.

In 2007, cave divers succeeded in reaching a depth of 177m (581 feet below ground level) in the Pearse resurgence and in 2011, divers reached 194 metres depth, by placing four decompression chambers throughout the cave but were still unable to trace the source.



## HEALTH CAUTION RE CAVING

Stephen Craven has published a serious health warning. The full treatise can be had from Stephen if you contact him at [sacraven@mweb.co.za](mailto:sacraven@mweb.co.za)

Global warming is having a number of unforeseen effects and caving members should be interested in this paper covered in a recent issue of *Cave and Karst Science* (Vol.40 No.3, 2013). It is dealing with pulmonary histoplasmosis.

Previously thought to be restricted to tropical and sub-tropical zones and most frequently contracted from bat guano, the article cites several instances in European caves, and notes that the usual suspect, *histoplasma capsulatum* has been recorded as far north as Alberta and as far south as Zapala in Argentina. Stephen suggests that global warming might mean the risk of infection, especially from our large pigeon populations, might be migrating into temperate regions which will include the UK in the near future.

Whilst many infections are relatively benign and lie dormant for years, if in any doubt it is worth telling your doctor you have been caving in an environment where the risk is higher. Unfortunately symptoms are frequently confused with run-of-the-mill chest infections, but fit and healthy cavers should throw off the disease in a few weeks but it can be more serious.

With members caving in remote places they will be at heightened risk and China may be a problem although any incidence of the problem there has not yet been identified as far as I can see.

## EVEREST DISASTER

In April 16 Sherpas were killed in an avalanche which occurred whilst they were on the Khumbu Icefall pre-roping routes for clients of their employing commercial guiding companies.

This incident has been well aired and we can add little but the climbing community has been shocked by the tragic events that have unfolded on a part of the route normally considered comparatively safe.

There has been a debate for some time about what is apparently going wrong on the mountain and much is put down to over commercialisation. Surviving Sherpas are now asserting their rights and they do have a case. The local authorities are happy to sell licences and reap the rewards but there is a strong case that the Sherpas who make it all possible are not properly rewarded and more importantly should things go wrong their dependants are not well served.

As we go to print what is to happen to this climbing season is unclear but many organisations and clubs are making efforts to raise money for the dependants of those who have lost their lives. Six members of a walking club affiliated to my own area of the Ramblers are to cycle to Paris from Leicester to raise funds for the children (they are not staying on their bikes riding round the decks of the ferry).

One of my lasting memories of trekking up to base camp was cresting a summit on the approach and seeing a row of cairns in memory of the Sherpas who had died on the mountain and this event brings that back into focus rather sharply.



# NATURAL HISTORY



**WILDLIFE, ECOLOGY AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

## **FUTURE OF ENGLISH CRICKET IN DOUBT**

Not performing very well, being out-competed and pushed to the absolute brink of extinction the strangely named Wart-biter Bush Cricket is one of the most endangered insects in the country. It is now found at only five sites in the UK, all of which are in the South of England. Despite 30 years of re-introductions this has not been enough to stop the unremitting decline of the species. The Wart-biter got its gruesome name from the age-old practice of using these crickets to chew off unwanted warts, indeed its Latin name verrucivorous come from the words for wart and devour. Strangely, this background might be its last hope of recovery. The maker of the UK's most popular verruca and wart treatment has linked up with the Species Recovery Trust to try to help to protect the cricket.

## **FLITTERBUGS**

After a run of poor summers our butterflies were sorely in need of a spell of dry, warm weather and last years summer was a godsend with many species recovering spectacularly. The late spring delayed the emergence of many garden butterflies, but this led to large peaks in activity later in the year than normal. Meadow Browns and Small Tortoiseshells more than 50% up on the previous year but the Peacock put them all to shame. This species over-winters as an adult but was very late emerging last year, with activity initially peaking about three weeks later than normal, but it did much better than in recent years in the end, nearly 70% up on the past year.

## **BRED TOUGH IN SCOTLAND**

Research has revealed that a Scottish bird no bigger than a starling, has migrated thousands of miles across the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, a first for a European breeding bird. In 2012, individual geolocators were fitted to ten red-necked phalaropes nesting on the island of Fetlar in Shetland. After recapturing one of these birds when it returned, experts discovered it had made an epic 16,000 mile round trip during its annual migration - flying from Shetland across the Atlantic, south down the eastern seaboard of the US, across the Caribbean, and Mexico, ending up off the coast of Peru.

The bird is one of the UK's rarest breeding birds, only found in Shetland and the Western Isles, and there are no more than 50 nesting pairs. I say pairs but the males have turned the tables on traditional gender roles, in summer, male birds can be found incubating eggs and raising young, whilst the female uses her brightly coloured plumage to attract new partners.

This is really a bird of the high Arctic and as our climate warms our surviving population must be at risk.

## **SCOTTISH REFERENDUM**

Whilst on the subject of our Scottish cousins, the forthcoming vote on independence looks interesting. Strange that as England underwrites a lot of their benefits the people south of Hadrian's wall do not have a say.

I love Scotland, my forebears came from their (hotfoot in front of the authorities) and I worked for a Scottish company for 36 years. I go back whenever I can but I really don't know what they think they can achieve separately that we do not do better together. I don't like to mention who I worked for given their recent history but suffice to mention that Alex Salmond worked for the same company and he does not mention it either.

There has recently been a series of consultations on what should be the Scottish national tree and I did make my views known. If the heated debate that followed is anything to go by then the referendum just make for good news print.

When it comes to independence; shall we, should we, can we, may be — sitting on a fence in a kilt is a painful experience and care is needed getting off.

A privately sponsored public petition was set up in November 2012 requesting the Government to proclaim the Scots pine as the National Tree of Scotland. In support of this petition, Woodland Trust Scotland ran a public poll to determine what species of tree would be the popular choice. Two thirds of respondents chose Scots pine so it was not only down to me and rowan was the only near, but still distant, runner-up with 20% of the vote.

## **LANDSCAPE PROTECTION**

Late last year, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) announced grants totalling £21m to conserve nine distinctive landscapes. This apparently good news was received with mixed feeling by yours truly as I am on the Board of Charnwood Forest Regional Park and we had a project for 3M rejected.

Those approved were spread around the UK with Coigach and Assynt in North West Scotland and Lough Neagh, in Ireland. The two closest to home were Ingleborough Dales and the North York Moors, with the others being; The New Forest; Humberhead Levels (spanning Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, a rare internationally important wetland landscape); Rusland Valley and Fells, in the South Lake District National Park; Derwent Valley (a coalfield area in North East England left behind by deindustrialisation); and East Wight, the eastern tip of the Isle of Wight and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

This scheme has been running for ten years and to date, over £160m has been invested in 91 different areas across the UK.

It is a competitive tendering scheme and one of the downsides is that you need to spend considerable sums of money preparing a detailed submission and expend a lot of officer time and if unsuccessful those resources could have been used to actually help the landscapes we are trying to protect and enhance.

## WHO IS AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD WOLF

Members enjoy wild places and amongst our aims as a Club is one to study and record the wildlife that is to be found there. We spend considerable sums of money to go to distant parts but should we not be trying to restore parts of Britain to something closer to the wild place it used to be.

Over the years we have covered ideas and projects to this end; introduced organisation pursuing these aims which have come and gone but the argument will not go away. The concept is accepted but scale and ambition is the problem. A rare butterfly or dormouse is worthy of much time and effort but re-introducing wolves to the upland areas, beavers to rivers, moose and lynx to forests not to mention bears seems to scare people off.

In reality large potentially dangerous animals do get into our ecosystem with no real downsides. Wild boars now live in many areas and apart from a few overly brave dogs being hurt and the occasional tent being damaged as they seek food they have not really been a problem.

If we were to try and accommodate these creatures it would mean replanting appropriate parts of the countryside with native species like oak, ash, willow and alder.

We all enjoy the 'natural' countryside of our uplands, but they are far from natural and we are going to see a reduction in hill farming as it is not viable without subsidy. Future subsidy will have to support access and human leisure activities and why not include re-introduction of species, removal of fences etc. and the restoration of whole eco-systems. Blocking up of drainage systems might even help stop run off and floods down stream.

We have caused a large amount of damage, so isn't it time we tried to undo some of our harm?

Deforestation, floods, poor agricultural practices, peat extraction, inappropriate drainage - they're all down to us. We can ensure decisions made today don't add to the problem and try and put right the errors of the past. Recent flooding in Somerset has caused waves (excuse the pun) but its very name means summer pastures because the people of the past knew to bring beasts down in the summer and move them uphill in the winter.

I would like to see a wilder, more natural future but I doubt

I will live long enough to see it. It will not stop me working to try and achieve this for our children and grandchildren. I think we should start restoring natural processes and allowing nature to take its course - interfering always has adverse knock on effects. We should start encouraging trees and rivers to do their own things and allowing predators and prey to go their own ways; predators always take the weak and old generally improving the health of the prey species.

Potential re-introductions of major species such as the lynx, beaver and wolf or even the bear is not as far fetched as seems at first glance. The reintroduction of the wolf is the most emotive and regularly discussed. A much repeated BBC documentary has shown that its reintroduction to Yellowstone National Park boosted the ecosystem there by an enormous amount. Strangely the knock on effect restored an ancient balance and almost every species in the area benefited.

Last January, studies published by researchers from round the world showed that the loss of top predators was causing an environmental threat every bit as serious as climate change.

Thankfully in Europe there has been a slow but definite tendency for re-wilding over the last few years. The beavers have been brought back in 25 countries, lynx have been introduced into seven and the wolf, having been reintroduced in a few locations has now spread under its own steam, to many countries including France, Belgium, Denmark and Netherlands.

Most people have welcomed them but you cannot please all the people all the time and there are dissenters. There are also people who will always try and take advantage.

When one wolf reintroduction scheme was carried out farmers were compensated for kills of their livestock. After one year it was apparent that wolves were eating their own body weight twice a day. Shades of olive oil production suggesting that several EU countries were twice their actual size.

As our climate changes and our agricultural practices alter some species re-establish themselves. Foot and Mouth allowed Choughs to re-colonise Cornwall.

There have been successful returns of species following official re-introductions, such as the red kite, bustards, beaver, and sea eagle. Others like ospreys and cranes have returned under their own steam with a little help from man

This is an overcrowded isle but there are still large swathes of comparatively wild land and we can afford areas where nature can take its course.

It will be a better place for it.

# OVERSEAS MEET - CALP, COSTA BLANCA

16 - 24TH MARCH

This meet provided a welcome break from Britain's winter weather for relaxing walking, canyoning, ridge walking and climbing in impressive warm, dry scenery with a refreshing wind on the hills. It gave a welcome and active start to the year after a couple of wild-weather meets in Scotland.

Initially it was all change for this meet: a shift of date to a day earlier to accommodate the employed and a move from a planned hotel base to a large villa so that we could self-cater and socialise more easily on an evening. The latter change reduced costs and the in-Spain costs for shared car hire, villa, food and drink totalled around £150. Flights cost around £100.

The villa was chosen to be close to the N-332 road for easy access to different locations. It was spacious with its own pool, tennis court, two-hole putting 'green' and airy atrium with large fountain. There were two sitting rooms we never got around to using. We could eat breakfast outside with a view of the Peñón de Ifach and later lounge in the evening light as the sun dipped behind Olta.

Each day groups went off in different directions with someone calling in at a supermarket to ensure we had sufficient provisions. The evenings were spent socially in the main room.

Rather than describe where each person went each day this report lists and briefly describes the main activities. The sources of information which helped us decide what to do are listed at the end of this report.

## Sport Climbing

Olta crag was just above the villa so was chosen for the first full day. Two parts of the south crag were visited and gave pleasant climbing.

Toix was visited yet again for a half day's climbing on easier routes on a cooler day after overnight rain. Even the west-facing crags were dry by 9am. We were soon joined by a larger party from Dresden with ages ranging from in the 60s to 86. A loud long cry of agony was heard and we saw the rope go tight on one of their number – thankfully he was only suffering from cramp in a leg.

## Ridge Walking

Our old favourite, the saw-toothed Bernia ridge, was again visited. One party traversed to ridge from the east col to the summit with a couple of abseils and the short crux climb at the fins. The scrambling is excellent and gives sustained interest. They arrived at the 'descent' col near the middle of the ridge at roughly the same time as the walking party who had passed through the natural tunnel through the ridge, slogged up the scree to the col and inadvertently

explored the cliffs beyond before returning to the steep scramble over a minor top towards the summit at 1,126m. The rough descent tested everyone's balance, especially the coarse scree through gorse to the ruined fort. The swing round a couple of shallow cols round right to the starting point went easily. Jonquils were seen high up and orchids lower down.

The Aitana ridge from Font Moli Ondara, near Guadalest, gave an entertaining round initially through terraces and over a small ridge with impressive nearby crag and on to the Font del la Mandas. The party then split taking either the direct way up to the highest point in the Costa Blanca at 1,558m via the Simas de Partagás or circling left via the Fat Man's Agony rock formations and back along the broad summit ridge to the radio installations by the summit. That listening station was originally built by the Americans to eavesdrop on Russian communications during the Cold War. That summit ridge gave the easiest part of the route, east towards the coast for a couple of miles with grand views. Well beyond the obvious track crossing a col, we took a clearly indicated narrow cut back left back to the start.

## Canyoning

Barranco del Infierno, Hell's Gorge, in Vall d'Ebo proved most entertaining but was at the end of a few miles of a rough track. The technical section of ten abseils and two roped traverses took two hours of movement though we were held up for 45 minutes by an under-equipped Cleveland MC party who we were able to help out with improvised cowstails and etrier. There was no flowing surface water in the gorge but several slowly drying pools were passed. Both the walks in and back out were easy enough though the latter involved hundreds of well-graded zig-zags. The route provided a thorough introduction to abseiling for one prospective member

## Hill Walking

From the Alta Olta campsite the tracks were taken to the hermitage and then paths up to the Sierra de Olta plateau's extensive limestone pavements. After visiting the summit, taking in the 360° views and lunching by a compound, the descent spot was located and the far side and northern pillars and old gabbro quarry passed to get back towards the southern side and Calp. Later in the week, almost the opposite round of Olta was completed anti-clockwise by a convalescent on crutches. Their views were best first over to the Peñón de Ifach and nearby Salinas, the Moraira headland then later the stunning Mascarat Gorge. Their return over Little Olta was via the gully just west of the crags. The bulk of these routes stays above 300m.

In the Bernia area, from the Jalon Valley the Mozabaric trail was followed to Alt de Ample, 598m. The route crossed abandoned olive growing terraces and passed many fincas in good repair, wells, vats, gin wheels and a well on a ridge presumably filled each winter. Flowers included iris and orchids.

A little to the north, the Lost Pinos, Marnes, Sella de Cau round was completed at a sedate pace by the convalescent and partner.

Further south, a threesome enjoyed a lovely scenic walk above Polop from a suburban area initially through woodland to a col with views of the prominent volcanic plug, Puig Campana. Then the circular route took them up the Barranc de la Canal and gradually over Mont Ponoig. The descent was to a pass then through the Collado del Lamp to good tracks following the Barranc de Gulabdar into Echo Valley where some had climbed on a previous visit.

Closer to Calp, the three-hour coastal circuit from Cumbre del Sol taking in Castell Granadella was surprisingly varied and interesting taking in an attractive inlet, rugged cliffs and the coastal defence tower ruined by the English in the Napoleonic wars.

The Peñón de Ifach's polished paths provided a sociable final afternoon walk for our largest party in the worst weather we endured – a few spots of rain and only intermittent sunshine.

### Jogging

Our prospective member jogged most mornings generally heading up towards Olta and finding adequate tracks once she had crossed the main road.

Besides the above, the tennis and the golf, there were other more relaxing activities. The south shore at Calp gave an acclimatisation stroll with archaeological remains, the fish market and a stop for coffee. There was bird watching by the Salinas inland from the north shore. Picturesque crag-top El Castell de Guadalest was visited though some only made it to the cafe by the car park. The castle in Denia and the sea front at Altea were explored. Less relaxing for the one-and-a-half brave people who tried it was swimming in the villa's unheated pool – too early in the season.

Self-catering was abandoned on the last evening and the seafront seafood restaurant, El Faro del Puerto, visited for a communal meal (30€ with wine) with orders of swordfish, paella, calamari, hake, salmon, mussels, whitebait, langoustine, prawns with banana and steak.

Our return to Britain with rain, hail and temperatures below 10°C was something of a shock.

### Attending were:

John and Ros (G) Brown  
Peter Chadwick  
Deena Jefferys (PM)  
Tim Josephy  
Alan and Angie (G) Linford

Tony and Valerie (G) Penny  
Michael and Helen (G) Smith  
Richard Smith and Laura (G)  
Kjetil and Ann-Karin (G) Tveranger

### Sources of information:

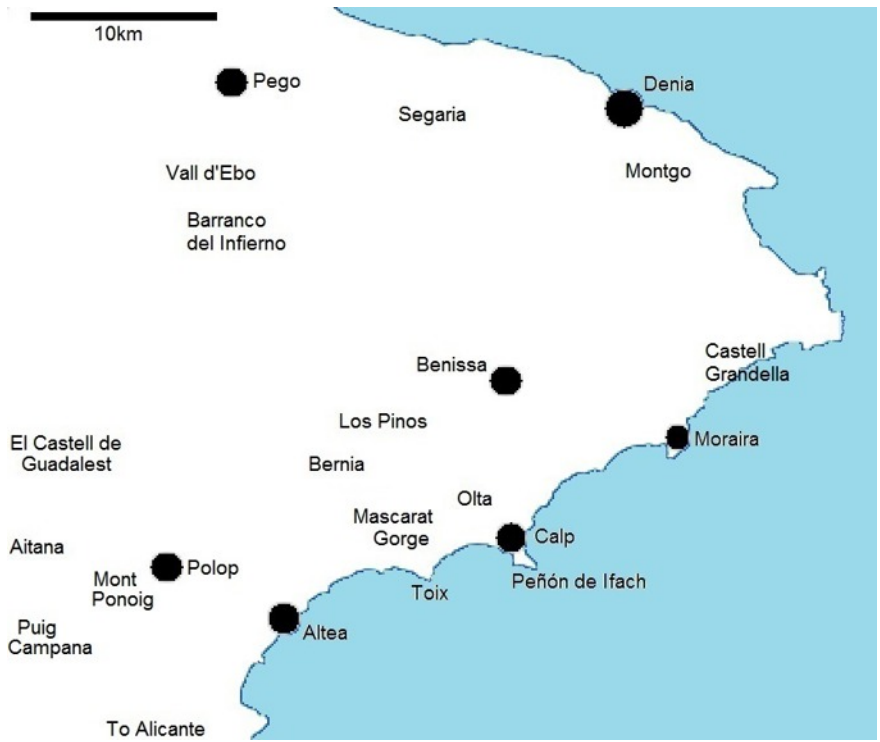
- Rockfax, Spain: Costa Blanca new climbing guidebook
- Sunflower, Costa Blanca car tours and walks, John and Christine Oldfield
- Cicerone, Costa Blanca mountain walks, volume 2: East, Bob Stansfield
- Costa Blanca Mountains 1:40,000 map, super-durable edition, Discovery Walking Guides Ltd
- Walk! the Costa Blanca Mountains, Charles Davis
- Route descriptions and maps from Jean and Bob Hall ([www.bobandjeanhall.com](http://www.bobandjeanhall.com))
- Gorge descriptions are available online (<http://theorangehouse.co.uk/online-topos/barranco-del-inferno>, <http://costablancaclimbing.com/canyoning.html>)

### Birds identified:

Alpine Accentor	Hoopoe
Andouin's gull	Kestrel
Black Wheatear	Mallard
Blackbird	Mediterranean Gull
Black-headed gull	Pochard
Black-winged Stilt	Redshank
Blue Tit	Sandwich Tern
Bonelli's eagle	Serin
Carrion Crow	Shelduck
Chaffinch	Shoveller
Chough	Skylark
Cormorant	Spanish Sparrow
Crested Tit	Whimbrel
Flamingo	White Wagtail
Green Sandpiper	Yellow Wagtail
Green Woodpecker	Yellow-legged Gull
Grey Wagtail	

### Butterflies Identified:

Brimstone	Provence Orange Tip
Cleopatra	Scarce Swallowtail (Iberian race)
Escher's Blue	Small Copper
Green Hairstreak	Spanish Apollo
Mallow Skipper	Swallowtail
Provence Hairstreak	Wall



1) Most of the party atop the Peñón de Ifach  
Photo Alan Linford

2) Richard, Peter, Kjetil, Tim and Deena scrambling the later part of the Bernia Ridge  
Photo Michael Smith

3) John safeguards Helen in the Barranco del Infierno watched by Richard  
Photo Michael Smith

4) Richard belays Kjetil on the crux fin of the Bernia Ridge  
Photo Tim Josephy



# MEETS REPORT

## LOW HALL GARTH, LANGDALE

10th -12th January

The tone for this excellent meet was set on Friday evening. Alan produced a very tasty stew while the discussion began on the siting of the new de-humidifier in the kitchen. The excellent food continued over into Saturday and also, a bit like persistent but not unpleasant rain, so did the discussion on the de-humidifier. It was a good reminder that this is a club where members like to do things right.

And doing things right was also reflected in the various activities of all those at the meet.

Arthur and Frank felt compelled to visit the iron mongers and plumbers in Ambleside, after which Frank caught up with Derek, Alan, John L and Mike who went to Coniston via Tilberthwaite and back below the quarry.

There are suggestions that some of the party had to struggle over a wall, hard to believe but apparently the case, and Derek lost his *soul* - to his boot rather than anything more spiritual. Frank avoided all this however by returning by Tarn Hows, Hodge Close and Stang End.

Ian and John J also decided to keep to the lower levels and drove to Torver and did a round walk from there to Coniston Lake. This is one of the routes in a very useful pocket size book called "The Southern Lakes: 40 shorter walks from the easy to the adventurous" by Dominic North (Pocket Mountains 2011). (There is also an equally useful Northern Lakes book).

Three groups decided to head for higher ground. Andy, Robert, Michael and Alistair tackled Jack's Rake, Pavey Ark, Harrison Stickle, Pike O'Stickle.

It was a great trip and afterwards Michael, according to his grandfather, was buzzing, while his father was pretty sure that he was ready to do it all again, straightaway. The rock was cold and damp and the wind chill on the tops marked, but evidently did nothing to quell the enthusiasm and pleasure that all the party reflected.

Michael, Peter, Richard and Nick went up Carrs, Swirl Howe, Old Man and Dow Crag, descending to the Coniston Quarries where they met up with Phil and Paul who had done the same route up but come down direct from Old Man. From there Richard and Peter went on to Coniston and back by the path through the woods. Michael, Phil, Paul and Nick went around the quarries to return by Hole Rake and Tilberthwaite.

Paul on Swirl Howe



Iain was somewhere in between. Having got up to Swirl Howe he descended to Three Shires Stone, Blea Tarn, contoured along Lingmoor Fell and back over Slaters Bridge.

Saturday evening was marked by another great meal from Alan, helped by John J. Alan was frustrated by one of the ovens, and maybe much else. The dialogue from the kitchen began to resemble a boisterous Brian Rix farce but like all good farces everyone was happy conclusion to the comings and goings. The food was excellent and plentiful - and the state of the ovens did give an alternative to the humidifier for serious discussion and consideration.

Sunday morning was superb and the morning light on Lingmoor Fell was stunning; the fell side bathed in sunlight to turn the bracken and rock into gold. Richard and Nick went up and along the Fell, down by Side Pike and back by Blea Tarn and Blea Moss. The Coniston Fells were clear of cloud and Bowfell, the Crinkle Crag and Great Langdale looked lovely.



A good walk before the drag down the M6.

Michael, Peter, Paul and Phil walked from Ambleside up the ridge to Red Screes over Snarker Pike and then descended to Scandale Pass from where Peter and Paul descended down Scandale valley in order for Paul to catch his train.



## Ascending



## Descending

Michael and Phil continued up over Scandale Head and over High and Low Pikes back to Ambleside via High Scandale Bridge. It was a pleasant day with good views.

And the de-humidifier?

When we left the hut Sunday lunchtime it was in place, the shelf was not bending and it was probably working; thought you'd be worried about it so I hope this puts your mind at rest.

Photographs - Phil Dover

Those attending:

Arthur Salmon Phil Dover Frank Wilkinson  
Paul Dover Richard Josephy Ian Crowther  
Nick Welch Robert Crowther Mike Godden  
Michael Crowther (G) Michael Smith  
Derek Clayton Andy Syme John Lloyd(G)  
Alistair Glasson (G) Peter Chadwick  
Iain Gilmour John Jenkin Harvey Lomas  
Alan Clare

## GLENCOE

31st Jan - 2nd Feb.

It was grim, really grim. Glorious Thursday weather, accompanied by cheerful media coverage of record snow on the ski slopes gave way to two days of atrocious gale force winds and continuous heavy snowfall above 1200 ft. Friday's achievements included circumnavigation of Buachaille Etive Beag and a party of 8 reaching about 3000 ft on StobCoire nan Lochan in blinding spindrift followed for some by a brief foray into the Hidden Valley and for others a longer foray into the Clachaig. Saturday was little better. Groups wandered around the south side of Beinna'Bheithir, the low hills and West Highland Way between Onich and the Mamores, Steall Falls, Glen Creran, and a few members made a valiant attempt on the Bridge of Orchy Hotel via thigh deep snow on Stob Gabhar.

The former Alpine Bunkhouse, now converted along with the rest of that site into an independent hostel, provided a comfortable abode. Compensation was via good company and outstanding catering. Fantasies of blue sky and crisp snow over Bidean remain for another year.

DL

Members attending.

Michael Smith David Hick Iain Gilmour Mick Borroff  
Adrian Dixon John Brown Chris Hilton Tim Josephy  
David Large Anca Pordea (Guest) Niall Buckley (Guest)  
Richard Taylor Peter Elliott Harvey Lomas

## RYDD DDU

21st Feb - 23rd Feb

Again in time honoured fashion Wales laid on a weekend of really interesting weather. We pretty much all arrived to heavy rain and forecasted strong winds but in spite of this some interesting excursions took place, other than just to the pub to watch the rugby (very expensive beer!).

### February 21st

The weekend was kicked off by an ascent of Craig Fawr and Craig y Dulyn in the the Carnedds by Michael, Richard and Peter. They found it very icy on the top and required their ice axe and crampons. They got down about 18:00 hrs in the dark to the car that was parked at the road head near Llyn Eigiau reservoir.

### February 22nd

The day dawned bright but very breezy, so high was felt not an option with one group including Richard J, Nick, Peter Chadwick, Tim Josephy, Michael Smith plus 2 dogs, Pip and Bramble were dropped on the A428 south of Bedgellert where they ascended Moel Hebog and crossed both Moel Ogof and Moel Lefn, descending through Bwlch-y-ddwy-elor and down through the northern end of Beddgelert forest.

## Struggling up Moel Hebog



Moel Hebog PRPC, MS, TJ and NW

Paul and Richard Dover with John Brown decided to see if Snowdon was an option they ascended up the Rhyd Ddu Path but to a detour toward Y Aran and went up the South ridge to the Summit, descending the Rhyd Ddu path.

The top 150 metres was very icy and crampons needed to be worn.

On top Paul decided to have an impromptu meeting with his local Cambridge MP much to our amusement!

It was a good day out and turned out that, although very windy on the top it was quite manageable.

Richard wanted a shorter walk so went part way along the Nantile ridge taking in the tops of Y Garn, Mynydd Drws-y-coed and Trum Ddysgl, before dropping down to the valley and back to Rydd Ddu. Harvey took a similar route but in the other direction so they both meet in the middle Harvey then went walking through the Beddgelert forest where he found a lot of trees down.

Ian C and John took a short walk around the valley whilst Dorothy spent an interesting time looking around Beddgelert finding the Welsh gravestones fascinating if somewhat difficult to understand.

Alan and Derrick had a short walk up to the Nantile Ridge and then back to the road.

As ever Richard gave us a fine meal in the evening which was appreciated by all and prior to being soundly thanked by the president, Alan gave us a lesson in Welsh pronunciation which due to the way it was needed to be said sprayed Peter with a fine stream of spit!

## February 23rd

All night the wind blew really hard and it was not a very entertaining sight that met us in the morning, nevertheless, some hardy souls decided come what may they would make the most of it. Paul and Richard Dover with John Brown decided on a low level walk through Beddgelert forest. This was made more entertaining by all the fallen trees across one rather narrow footpath where after much stumbling and squeezing through the debris they managed a good walk along a new bridleway back to Rydd Ddu past Llyn Gader.

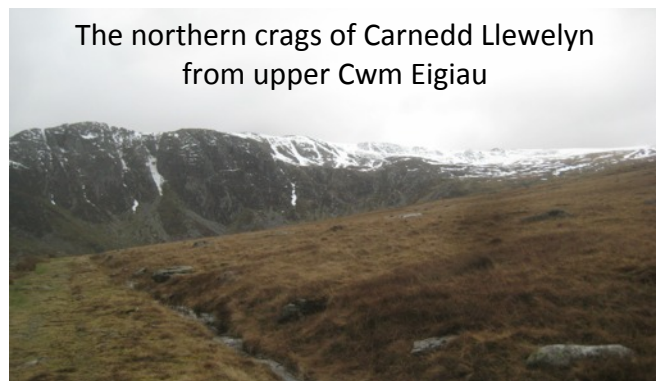
Richard J and Nick, before setting off home, walked down the river from Beddgelert and then back via Cwm Bychan and Grib Ddu. About 3 hours, with a nice valley and pass and some interesting mining remains.

Peter and Michael were heading over to the north coast and did a short walk around the Aber Falls.

So all in all despite the rather inclement weather the whole weekend was an enjoyable success

JB

## The northern crags of Carnedd Llewelyn from upper Cwm Eigiau



Photographs - Richard Taylor

Attending:

Peter Chadwick; Alan Clare; Derek Clayton; Ian Crowther; Dorothy Crowther(G) ; Paul Dover; Richard Dover; John Jenkin; Richard Josephy; Tim Josephy; Harvey Lomas Michael Smith; Richard Taylor; Nick Welch; John Brown.

## KIELDER WATER - CYCLING MEET

### 7-9 March 2014

The bike meet has had mixed fortunes in recent years but this one was a success in visiting a new area, with a range of prepared trails for all standards which attracted a variety of members and guests and left then all well satisfied and certainly tired.

On the Friday most of the ten attending met up in the Anglers Arms a short walk from the campsite and our two rented static caravans and the Lakes Dovers' campervan.

The early arriving Harrogate member completed the Round-the-Water 25-mile Lakeside Way trail (blue) in a few hours after heavy rain and hail. Very strong winds were gusting from the west blowing spray off the Water and over the dam wall. Meanwhile, the Sheffield two were walking along Hadrian's Wall and circling back a little to the north through Beukley. Passing the farm by the BBC mast Helen is nipped by a border collie which held on and tore her over-trousers which then required a half metre repair. The farmer promised to send compensation and £30 Has arrived. He reported that the dog had previously pulled down the tracksuit bottoms of a passing female jogger!

Saturday dawned a little damp while the radio announced that England was due to have a warm sunny day – the first of the year. Perhaps that was true for the south but in the borders we waited until the afternoon to see some sunshine. Four oldies took the Lakeside Way stopping at each art work and viewpoint to make it – and their legs - last all day. The Harrogate harrier took the strenuous Osprey (blue) trails including the recently added Osprey Chick and found them well worth the effort. He then added Lonesome Pine (red) finding its ascent a lot of effort for little enjoyment but was rewarded with an adrenalin-fuelled descent before moving on the Deadwater (red and black) for another slog up and thrilling descent to make 43 miles that day. Cambridge and York also tackled a couple of the Lakeside (blue) trails including a detour up to the Elk Viewpoint before, four miles from home, having a white rose chain failure requiring a dash by Cambridge to the bike shop for a new connecting chain link but before it was fitted York revised his plan and decided to fit a new chain.

They then retreated to the Anglers to watch the rugby. On higher things, the younger element went a third of the way round the Water to Leapish, took Lonesome Pine to Bloody Bush (red) and over the Scottish border's Border Trail back down to the lakeside – 55km, 1,500m ascent, 6 hours and 4 pints – making “a good chance to get out on the bike for the first time this year. A varied route with better weather than expected.”

Most again gathered in the Anglers before walking back for the evening meal.

Sunday's start was only slightly slower and most were out again for a ride. York fitted his new chain and then headed for the border. Cambridge completed the main Osprey trail and was caught up by the younger element. The uphill leg's slog is a combination of interesting single track and more tedious forest roads followed by a single track downhill routewith challenging sections. Unfortunately Cambridge had run out of 'steam' to tackle the Osprey Chick (Blue) which the Younger set went on to complete although even they pushed the bikes to the summit of this climb. The Steelers cycled the old railway line to the border, Deadwater Farm and into the forest before walking over Peel Fell. Mid Fell and Deadwater Fell where civilian aircraft are tracked and electricity cables tested. That last hill was also visited by the Lakes contingent on foot and by Harrogate on his bike who took in Superbown, Deadwater (red) then All Along the Watchtower (black) for more high speed descents before putting the bike away, getting changed and going for a 9 mile run along Lakeside. By mid-afternoon all were back, the place tidied up and we were heading back home.

Our site was under Kielder Castle which was built in 1775 as a hunting lodge for the Duke of Northumberland and rebuilt in the 1860s long before the Kielder Water construction work started in 1975. That was completed in 1981 ready for the opening by our Queen the next year and finally filled by nature the following year. As one of our members put it... “A chilly caravan with drips from the ceiling but good company made up for it.” Harrogate covered 77 miles on the bike and on cleaning his bike found the only damage was a broken spoke. For several others less-accustomed to cycling the lasting impression was far more fundamental.

Thanks to Richard Smith for finding this venue and catering for the weekend.

Attendance:

Adrian Dixon	Michael Smith
Paul Dover	Helen Smith (G)
Phil Dover	Richard Smith
Evelyn Dover (G)	Fiona Smith (G)
David Hick	Dave Booker (G)



## HARDRAW, NORTH YORKSHIRE

11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> April

Due to the Coverdale bunkhouse being unavailable, the meet was changed to the Green Dragon (the gateway to Hardraw Force) which offered bunkrooms and camping. Facilities were a bit primitive but it worked out OK

Michael Smith set off early on Friday in order to investigate the moors at the back of Penhill, between Wensleydale and Coverdale. On arrival at the Green Dragon we were surprised to be mixed up with Matt Baker and the "Country File" crew making a film about brass bands and interviewing the landlord. It was all about the 75 icons of Yorkshire voted for by readers of the Dalesman to celebrate 75 years of that publication. Apparently the landlord had been responsible for the pen drawings in the magazine for many years.



Hardraw Force - Photo Michael Smith

We were up early on Saturday morning - too early for Carol - but she persevered and presented club members with a magnificent spread of the following: Choice of cereals; Greek yoghurt; honey; cheese and ham; bread; croissants and fruit and nuts. Coffee and

choice of teas and many different fruit juices were also available. Unfortunately there was only one fridge, and the large party of bikers who were also staying got a little confused about what belonged to whom: including Martyn's sausage rolls! The area given over to taking breakfast was certainly big enough for two people.

As I was unable to participate in any 'uphill activity' due to my injury Carol will pick up the story: from here.

"We set off in high spirits: Roy Denney, Tim Josephy, Michael Smith, Martyn Trasler and myself.

The weather forecast was supposed to be mostly dry, bright and breezy with a possible shower. In reality it was extremely wet with torturous, icy cold winds and no chance of any respite.

We followed the well-trodden Pennine Way track which links Hawes to Thwaite in Swaledale. This wasn't too bad to begin with as it afforded a little shelter from the wind. Once out onto the moor it was a different story. We climbed up to Black Hill Moss and reached Crag End Beacon, which was more like a cairn in reality. The weather was atrocious and we were all feeling a bit miserable. Even with the best of gear you couldn't keep the driving rain out. I noticed Tim wringing his gloves out and I was doing the same. By the time we reached Hearne Edge the weather was even worse - I was worried about being blown over the edge as the wind was now very blustery.

By this point a lot of the uphill work had been done and the path flattened out to a gentle 'bog trot' on huge flagstones. Normally, from here you would be greeted by a magnificent panorama but we couldn't see anything: just mist. On doing the final climb we clambered over the fence and approached the summit of Great Shunner Fell where a chap was marshalling participants of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Our group intention was to follow the fence for a few miles to reach the Buttertubs, then to climb up to Lovely Seat, then finally back to Hardraw. Because the weather was so unattractive Martyn, Roy and I decided to head back down the way we came up.

Michael and Tim bravely forged through the deep ruts of the moorland and made it to the Buttertubs. From there Tim decided the road would be the best way back, as his dog was suffering, leaving Michael

to continue alone. Normally on your return route it seems much shorter than climbing up but not in this case. Even though we were walking at full speed it seemed to take an age to get down – our only bit of interest was when Roy pointed out a Black Grouse by the path. It looked as miserable as us and could not be bothered to move away”

Michael battled on to Lovely Seat before making his descent. Meanwhile, John Jenkin had taken pity on the walking wounded (JCW) to accompany me across the fields to Hawes.

On Sunday Michael went to the top of Pen Hill, Harvey crossed into Swaledale to visit Gunnerside Gill and Sir Francis Level and Carol and the two Johns went home after a walk on Otley Chevin. Alan and Derek made their way to Lowstern for the Sunday night before making their way home.

Roy and Martyn also ended up there after walking a stretch of the river Ure between showers on the Sunday (they were in their last dry clothes and did not want to be caught out).

Monday, with dry kit courtesy of the drying room at Lowstern they walked up Pen-y-gent before collecting Martyn’s daughter from Arncliffe where she was finishing her D of E silver.

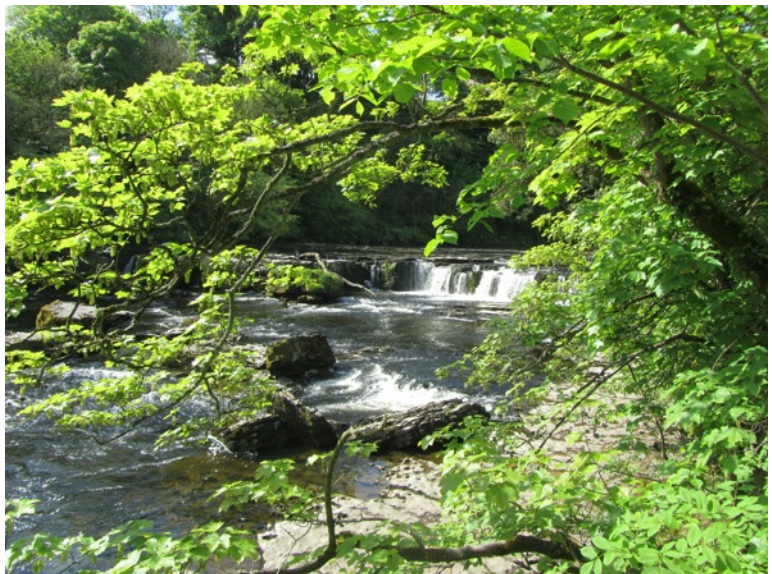
**Attendees**

Michael Smith-The President  
 Carol Whalley-Meet Leader  
 Roy Denney, Martyn Trasler, Tim Josephy (and dog)  
 Alan Clare, Derek Clayton, John Jenkin, John Whalley  
 Albert Chapman joined us for the evenings and  
 Arthur Salmon and Peter Elliot were also present for the committee meeting only.

*Editors note – Carol is too polite to mention it but the Teflon coating to my walking trousers was completely defeated by the elements and woollen trousers soaked through weigh a ton. I had to resort to each hand grabbing a handful of the offending item to keep them up. It may have been misty but the moon was much in evidence.*

*Two weeks after the meet the programme came out on the BBC and fleeting glimpses of a number of the members were seen but I was in full view for about a minute close up as they shot over my shoulder to show the band moving out. I have lost count of how many people say they saw me on the TV in a bar with a pint in my hand.*

*Good job I was not with another woman.*



Aysgarth Falls on River Ure  
 and below left Pen-y-Ghent  
 Photos Roy Denney

Below right, Roy on Pen-y-Ghent  
 Photo Martyn Trasler



# KNOYDART

11<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> May

On a warm Saturday afternoon nine people congregated at Mallaig to await the arrival of the boats to Inverie. Harvey Lomas was already there, having arrived on Friday. Richards Smith and Taylor had been dropped off in Glendessary and were planning to walk in. The remaining three were to arrive later in the week. The boat crews seemed unfazed by the mountain of supplies on the dockside and we were soon on our way across the calm seas on the half hour journey to Inverie.



We were met by Britta Bernard, the owner of the Old Byre Lodge. She ferried our gear up to the Lodge then started to prepare us an evening meal as we settled in to the excellent accommodation (comfortable small bunk rooms and underfloor heating in the showers!). That evening we dined on venison casserole and blueberry crumble. Things were looking good.

Sunday saw a large party set off for an introductory day on Beinn Buidhe. It was soon discovered that there are very few easy days to be had in Knoydart and this was not one of them. Wild rugged country, often trackless, long distances and the odd hailstorm, but a great day out. It came on to rain late afternoon and the return was a wade down a waterlogged track for hours. We thought we might encounter the Richards who had camped high and walked in over the beautiful Sgurr na Ciche but they didn't arrive till later.

Over the week parties were out on all three Munros, the highest of which, Ladhar Bheinn, is considered by many to be one of the finest of all.



Helen and Michael Smith on Ladhar Bheinn

Luinne Bheinn and Meall Buidhe are best done together as a long day. Chris Hilton bivied out one night and did all three. Three Corbetts saw YRC footprints, Beinn Buidhe, Beinn na Caillich and Sgurr Coire Choinnichean whilst several people did coastal and circular walks at lower levels ranging from a few miles up to 18 miles, including a river crossing that got progressively less intimidating as the generally dry week progressed.

We seem to be lucky with weather for this meet and although we did have rain, most days were fair and some days were spectacular. We had a number of mountain bikes in the party and those lucky enough to get hold of one were able to reduce the length of their days considerably. Anyone planning a visit here would be well advised to consider taking one.

Tony Dunford and Nicole Mainaud arrived on Monday, closely followed by Michael Smith, hot foot from Greenland. Some people are suckers for punishment. Sadly Nick Welch, who had been feeling unwell since we arrived was taken off to Fort William on Tuesday where he was diagnosed with pneumonia. Luckily Harvey was planning to return home next day so was able to give Nick a lift to Penrith station from where he got home safely.

Knoydart is a very special place and although a lot of walkers use the routes from Barrisdale and Glendessary, the hills themselves are not well trodden and we saw few people about. Local residents bought the peninsula some years ago and it is managed by the Foundation now. Looking around, one has to wonder if they are just losing their way a bit. Projects are started but many appear to have been abandoned, most of the wooden bridges, essential to maintain the trekking routes, are in a very poor state and the amount of abandoned machinery around the coast is a bit of an eyesore. Let's hope I'm wrong about all that. Inverie remains a charming spot; the pub has lost its claim to be a great seafood restaurant but it is still a convivial place. Not long after we left police raided the pub and confiscated a number of guns and ammunition so maybe it isn't so convivial after all. Personally I think it a bit of a coincidence that it happened just after our visit, I've never been entirely sure about some of our members from the deep South.

This meet continued the sequence of excellent Spring meets we've had in recent years; thanks to all those who made the effort and the long (for some, very long) journey.

- Michael Smith, Helen Smith (PM)
- Richard Smith, Richard Taylor
- Paul Dover , Nick Welch
- Tim Josephy, David Hick
- Ken Roberts, Tony Dunford
- Nicole Mainaud (G), Paul Latham (PM)
- Harvey Lomas, Chris Hilton
- Laurie Partington



- 1 Aonach Sgoilite
- 2 Ken Roberts on Ladhair Bheinn
- 3 Helen Smith, Ladhair Bheinn summit
- 4 Meall Buidhe from Luinne Bhein
- 5 View from Luinne Bhein
- 6 Loch Hourne from Luinne Bhein

Photos Tim Josephy (TJ) and Dave Hick (DH)

## DALEHEAD, EDALE, 13 - 15 JUNE

Members gathered during the Friday evening with several dining at an excellent local hostelry before making their way to this remote bunkhouse. Some had made slow progress avoiding the congestion for miles around a major rock festival and arrived too late to eat with the rest.

It was a modest turn out for various reasons not least holidays and other activities and mid-year is not a good time to get a lot of members out, but when contemplating a long walk meet the extra hours of daylight are essential.

Three members got a very early start to attempt the 30+ mile circuit of the Derwent Watershed. The route planned was a lift to the start at the foot of Ladybower for a six o'clock start then Whinstone Lee Tor, Dovestone Tor, Back Tor, Cut Gate top, Margery Hill, Outer Edge, Howden edge, Swains Head, Bleaklow Stones, Wainstones, Higher Shelf Stones, Snake Pass top, Mill Hill, Kinder Downfall, Edale Cross, Brown Knoll, Cowburn Moor and back to the bunkhouse at Edale's Dalehead over the Cowburn Tunnel

mouth. There were various shorter variations on offer which members took advantage of.

Two people took provisions into the first feeding point and two more went by car to the second stop. Dave and Fiona handled the first stop at Cut Gate having mountain biked up and down with hot drinks, fruit and home-made tiffin.

Michael completed the walk in about eleven and a half hours whilst Alan and Peter taking one of the alternatives, followed the main route as far as the first support stop (Ladybower to Cut Gate about 8 miles) They returned to their car via Alport Castles making their walk about 18 miles in total. Harvey being in need of an early finish for kitchen duties, elected to join the circuit above the first reservoir crossing below the second, following its east bank north to then make his way up to the Crow Stones on Outer Edge then the Horse Stone before dropping back down to the west side of the reservoirs and, eschewing the small service bus, walked back to regain his car, all in about a 17 mile walk.

Four other members nursing injuries of one kind or another, elected for another alternative by doing a circuit of the southern edge of Kinder. Richard set off along the lower

paths to climb up Jaggers Clough and walk back as far along the ridge as far as the top of Grindslow Knoll before dropping down into Edale and, after a short break there, back up the valley to the Bunkhouse. Unknown to either party this was the reverse of the circuit planned by Roy, Martyn and John and they met on the ridge walking towards each other in early afternoon. Richards walk was about 13 miles. The other group sensibly decided that descending Jaggers Clough was too tricky for bad knees and ankles etc., so they walked on as far as Crookstone Barn before dropping down to Edale End, in part via the Roman road; returning by the lower level paths to Edale and eventually Dalehead. This walk was about 16 miles.

Overall discounting the support parties the eight walking members totalled about 144 miles between them on the Saturday.

Whilst providing the second support stop at the top of Snake Pass, Christine and Helen walked over onto Kinder, almost as far as the Downfall, and back.

This National Trust bunkhouse is very well furnished and equipped and can sleep 20 in its three dormitories. Unfortunately the ovens did not work and Harvey's well made plans were to no avail. With some quick improvisation he turned out an







Perhaps this meet gave a more satisfying choice of routes for this visit to the Peak compared to when we were last there and tackled the Kinder Dozen.

**In attendance**

- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Michael Smith,    | Martyn Trasler,         |
| Alan Kay,         | Richard Josephy,        |
| Roy Denney,       | Peter Green,            |
| Helen Smith (PM), | Christine Marriott (G), |
| Fiona Smith (G),  | Dave Booker (G)         |

excellent meal for us, if not the one intended - perhaps best described as a de-constructed shepherds' pie.

Sunday saw Alan and Michael setting off to do a circuit taking in Mam Tor but most others set off for distant parts. Alan and Michael parked by Mam Tor, took Winnats to Castleton, peered into the Devil's Arse, gained Lose Hill via Crimea, got caught in a short heavy shower and walked back to Mam Tor with intermittent views from the ridge.

Richard wanted to visit the limestone dales on his way home. Three others wanted to get south of the rock festival before it started disgorging its customers and another had the calls of Fathers' Day to attend to. Another set off towards Coniston to meet up with his wife who was doing a walk there. Christine explored the delights of Buxton.

The weather was something a curate's egg. Recent heavy rainfall had ensured plenty of saturated peat in the hag bottoms though the wind and sunshine had started firming up the exposed surfaces. Early starters had good views and it was only on Bleaklow that it clouded over then short heavy shower set in. Up to that point only one other walker had been spotted. Decent weather later allowed clothing, but not boots, to be dry by the time of our return.

Those walking the Kinder Edge were only on the edge of this shower, some but not all electing for waterproofs for a short period.

As for wildlife, so many hares were seen that we stopped counting them. One was just a few metres away. Golden plovers, wheatears, curlews, dunlin and grouse were also seen in numbers. Grey wagtails flitted about the lower streams and a couple of hen harriers were spotted near Swains Head. Voles and lizards were seen scuttering away from trampling boots and by the bunkhouse car park caterpillars had stripped practically every leaf from a hawthorn leaving it draped in their wispy webbing.

Piplt's were ever present along the quieter end of the Kinder edge and again a curlew was seen.



# OBITUARIES

## DR. JOHN A. FARRER

We have to mark the passing of our landlord, Honorary Member and good friend.

Dr F died aged 92, on New Year's Day just a few weeks past the 60th anniversary of his arrival in the village to take over the Ingleborough family estate.



As a Club we recall his accession to the status of Lord of the Manor of Ingleborough. Back in 1952 John was enjoying a summer Christmas, the other side of the world when he received a telegram saying that his uncle in England had died and that he had inherited the family's ancestral estate 12,000 miles away, in a country known to him only from school books.

Not just any old estate, but one with strange responsibilities like managing holes in the ground. His first inkling as to what it was all about was when he allowed himself to be lowered into the depths of Gaping Gill, on rickety-looking winch gear, contemplating as he descended, the only three-eighths of an inch bolt holding the chair to the cable.

He later related his role as the owner of a number of potholes as being in a position somewhere between a referee at a football match and an air traffic controller at a busy airport.

John, the son of an engineer, was born in Sydney in 1921 but the family moved to Melbourne where he was educated at Geelong Grammar, one of Australia's oldest public schools. Medical school followed and he qualified as a family doctor. He married a hospital nurse in 1947 and joined a medical practice in Melbourne, with two children coming along, John (1948) and Annie (1950). John is now practising medicine in Canada and Annie is a botanical artist living in London attached to Kew Gardens. He had two sisters who have both pre-deceased him as indeed did his wife in 2008.

It must have been a considerable shock to have the choice of taking over the Yorkshire estate that had been in the

family since the 1700s but they accepted the challenge which they were ill equipped for. He had to learn a host of new skills from managing commercial woodlands and a grouse moors, to many caves and potholes with weird and mystical names.

The estate books were a mess but when fathomed they confirmed that the estate was anything but profitable, so he did much of the heavy work himself wielding chainsaws, planting trees or mending a roof or stone wall. He also did part-time medical work to keep the wolf from the door, including locum work for GPs, and A&E at Lancaster Infirmary.

There were farms and rented cottages to manage, all run down when he came over but he and Joan slowly turned things round despite having had a policy of providing homes at affordable rents mostly to younger families.

His involvement in and care for Clapham has kept the village thriving; no school closures here and no deserted homes during the week with them being used as holiday cottages. He was a benefactor of and heavily involved with the village primary education, the local playground, the church and the farming community. In his 60 years in Clapham he and his wife successfully modernised the 10,000 acre estate with its seven farms and 35 village houses.

He also became supportive of the caving fraternity and became President of the Cave Rescue Organisation and the CRO and the YRC were well represented at a celebration of his life at St James' Church, Clapham, on Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>.

## WILLIAM NOBLE TODD

Bill Todd was born in 1929, the oldest of five children, and son of a schoolmaster in a village school near to Lancaster.

He developed an early interest in mountains and his interest in rock climbing was furthered by a Royal Lancaster Grammar School master, Bob Fyldes who took groups of boys to the Lake District. He could see the Lake District from where he lived in Lancaster and his knowledge of the area was ultimately encyclopaedic,



Bill was a Certified Accountant and worked as an internal auditor for various concerns which took him initially to Brighton but it was not until he came back North again that he joined the YMC in the mid 1950s when his climbing life gained momentum and virtually all his leisure time was spent in the hills and on the crags of the Lake District, Wales, the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Scotland.

He joined the YRC in 1991, when retired, and had many active holidays and weekends with the club. He went on club expeditions to Majorca and the Picos de Europa as well as more local meets at Lowstern and Low Hall Garth. He had private expeditions with YRC friends to Ullapool, ascending Cul More, Cul Baig, Stac Polly and Ben Sheildaig and in 2007 ascended Harter Fell as part of the attack on the Lakeland 2000s. He was an enthusiastic musician, photographer and writer and sometime librarian and archivist for the YRC.

He married firstly Joan in 1960 with whom he had two daughters Jo and Tricia. Joan sadly died in 1988. In 1997, after a mountaineering courtship he married Juliet.

Bill died on the 4th January and is survived by his second wife and his two daughters.

John Schofield

## IAN MCNAUGHT-DAVIS

Ian McNaught-Davis, who died aged 84 on February 10<sup>th</sup>, had a passion for both climbing and computers.

In 1967 Mac became well known when he was one of the climbers on the BBC's stunning and mold-breaking live broadcast of the ascent of the Old Man of Hoy, in the Orkneys.

This programme attracted an astounding 15 million viewers in a time when TVs themselves were not as widespread as they are now. He and Dougal Haston, Chris Bonington, Tom Patey, Pete Crew and Joe Brown kept most of the country glued to their sets with commentary provided by Chris Brasher.

Later, he had a career with the BBC presenting amongst other things, the Computer Programme, attempting to explain the intricacies of home computers when they were just being introduced.

Ian was then at 37, general manager of a computer company in London, but a well established climber having previously been one of a team making the first ascent of Muztagh Tower in the Karakorum (7,276m).



His relaxed and natural ability to present a story brought him other climbing broadcasts, on the Eiffel Tower and on the Matterhorn .

He was born in in 1929 in Wakefield, the son of a First World War pilot. He went to Rothwell Grammar School before doing his National Service with the RAF, although his poor eyesight kept him out of the air. He studied Maths at Manchester University before working for BP in Africa.

He was honorary librarian of the Climbers' Club in 1961.

When he retired from business he took up several posts in mountaineering. He was president of the British Mountaineering Council (1991-94) and then president of the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation, the UIAA (from 1995 until 2004) and was a patron of the British Mountaineering Council

Still a passionate rock climber he still managed a technical rock climb only two years ago.

Mac had two sons with Mary Alderman, but that marriage was dissolved. He married again in 1981, and his wife Loreta survives him as do his two sons from his first marriage. A daughter from his first marriage predeceased him.

## HUBERT TRIMMEL

Hubert Trimmel, Austrian speleologist and one of the most eminent cave scientists in the world, died on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013. He was an internationally renowned and respected expert with an impressive portfolio of work. Born on October 12, 1924, in Vienna, his life-long enthusiasm for caves started when he joined the Speleo club of Vienna and Lower Austria whilst still at school. After the Second World War, he went to the University of Vienna and studied natural sciences and geography and geology. At the age of 26 Hubert became a high school teacher in Vienna. In 1951 he started working with the federal office for antiquities and monuments which included cave protection and in 1965 he quit his job as a teacher and became the head of cave protection at this institution in Vienna. This evolved into the Institute for cave research at the Museum of Natural History in Vienna. The main reason this institute was founded was the by then high international reputation of Hubert Trimmel. This institute is now the Division of Cave and Karst Science at the museum and Hubert was its first director and remained in this post until his retirement in 1989.

Hubert was also busy pursuing his interests around more distant parts of the world and was general secretary of the International Union of Speleology (IUS) from 1965

until 1989 when he became its President. He participated in numerous conferences in places as far afield as the former Soviet Union and USA; including Java, Mexico and China and most recently, the ISC in Brno, 2013. He loved exploring all karst regions and had visited South Africa, Brazil, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Belize.

He was granted honours and awards by many countries including the USA, Italy, Hungary, and Germany.

## EMLYN JONES

John Hubert Emlyn Jones was an experienced Alpine and Himalayan climber.

He died **February 4th 2014** aged 98,

He was born in the Gower and spent his formative years in Llandudno but left at the age of 14 to go to school in Dulwich.



During his childhood his schoolteacher father would often take him into the nearby mountains, progressing from walking to scrambling and simple climbs. He topped Snowdon at the age of 10.

His early career was as a chartered surveyor in Liverpool, and he spent most of his free time climbing in North Wales and the Lakes. He began taking climbing holidays in the Alps and just before the war, joined the Climbers Club.

Jones joined the Royal Engineers at the start of the war and had a very successful career as a bomb disposal officer but would continue to climb in Snowdonia when he was on leave until he was posted to Europe.

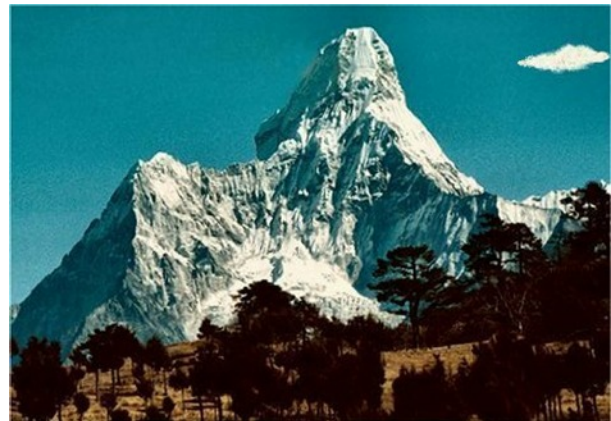
After the war he worked as a county valuer in Birmingham conveniently close to North Wales but he was soon going further afield. The Alps were calling and he made a number of noteworthy climbs including the Matterhorn, Rothorn, and the North ridge of the Dent Blanche (14,318ft). Jones joined the Alpine Club in 1944.

Six years later he went to work in London but hardly having got his feet under his desk he was asking for leave to go to the Himalayas, having been invited by Bill Tillman to explore the Annapurna II and IV area of Nepal. Up to this point westerners were not permitted to travel beyond the Kathmandu valley so there were virtually no facilities. Members of the team sought to climb Annapurna IV but Jones crossed the Thorong La to return via the Buri Gandaki valley.

In 1952 John Hunt was getting ready for his attempt on Everest and selected Jones for the reserve team.

Only 11 of the 18-strong team were chosen to make the assault on the summit, and Emlyn was named as first reserve and after the main party set off he was given the role of organising the back up endeavours to ensure that fresh climbers, clothing, main equipment and food were arranged.

In 1959 Jones took a small group on the British Sola Khumbu expedition, attempting the precipitous north-east spur of Ama Dablam.



Ama Dablam 22,494ft

They established a Camp 3 at 19,850ft on a far from level area having little choice. Exiting the tent was a careful process as it was no more than a yard from a vertical drop. George Fraser and Mike Harris set up final camp at 21,000ft and set off for the summit on May 1. They were seen crossing the fairly easy summit slopes until clouds obscured them but they were never seen again. They almost certainly perished on the way down.

Emlyn's love of the great outdoors never left him and he scaled the Eggishorn in the Alps in 1999, at the age of 84.

Jones was president of the Climbers Club (1968-69) and of the Alpine Club (1980-82) and became High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire in 1967-68. He was awarded the CBE.

## ARTHUR BIRTWISTLE

Arthur Birtwistle, who has died aged 95, was the last survivor of a group of pioneering 1930s British rock climbers. He is remembered as a great pioneer of Moneylender's Crack and Priscilla Ridge, Diagonal and Drainpipe Crack, and of Pulpit Ridge and Gomorrah. Looking back his achievements on the Peak District gritstone crags and in Snowdonia still elicit respect.

Birtwistle was born and schooled in Bury going on to take first-class honours in geology and anthropology at Manchester University. Obviously a fine athlete he was at home coming off a diving high-board and was also a top gymnast. He joined the University mountaineering club, becoming its secretary, and eventually a member of the Rucksack Club.

He had started his climbing in Holcombe Hill quarries, near Bury and by 1938 Birtwistle had made two leads on Welsh rock that were among the most outstanding prewar climbing achievements. 'Diagonal' when he did it was truly remarkable in its era and with the techniques of the time and was not repeated for ten years. Peak District gritstone challenges came and went; climbs which even today are not for the faint hearted: Pulpit Ridge on Ravenstones, Priscilla Ridge at Laddow Rocks and the Embarkation Parade in the amphitheatre of Kinder Downfall.

He always had a sense of mischief and towards the end of a successful military career during WW2 he nearly blew it when he caused a diplomatic incident by climbing the Giza pyramids.

After the war he taught Marines mountain craft in Scotland and started sailing small boats which became another love of his life; if not an obsession. Not a lot came between him and his sailing and climbing and the story goes that his wife spent her honeymoon cooking for his climbing companions.

Business took him all over the world but whenever home he was soon back on the crags. His wife died in 1995, but 9 years later at the age of 85, he married again.

He died 27th November 2013 in Altrincham.

## CHAD KELLOGG

Chad Kellogg, a highly competitive U.S. climber little known in the UK, was killed by falling rock while descending the Patagonian peak Fitz Roy on February 14th at the age of 42.



He was one of the breed of climbers who had begun to make speed a major priority. Fastest ascents were as interesting to him as establishing a first ascent or a new route. Speed was in his blood and he trained with the US luge Olympic team before seriously taking up climbing.

He worked as professional mountain guide, taking part in and often leading expeditions in the Americas and the Himalayas. In the late 90s he was a climbing ranger on Mount Rainier, the 14,410ft peak in Washington State, and must have attempted every possible route on that mountain. He held a variety of semi-official records for speed ascents, including the first under-five-hour ascent and descent, which takes many climbers two days.

He did very little work in Europe although he classed himself an 'Alpine Style' climber. He predominantly climbed throughout the Americas but had visited the Himalayas a number of times.

In 2003 he came first in the mountaineering race on 7000 metre Khan Tengri in Kazakhstan and tried for fast ascents of Everest at least two times without actually summiting. He attempted both the SE and SW ridges and as best I can find in the records his best effort was a solo attempt without oxygen on the SE ridge when he got to 28,370ft.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the drive for speed amongst Chad and his associates extracted a high price. A number of climbing friends were killed and then his wife died while descending an Alaskan climb. One of his closest climbing friends was killed in a cornice collapse in Tibet.

It seems his own death was just bad luck. He and his partner had reached the top in late afternoon and began their descent. One of the ropes got jammed, and while pulling to try to loosen it, rocks were dislodged which hit Chad and killed him instantly. Because of the remoteness and difficulties of the location, the body is being left there.

## JOHN TYSON OBE

John was a council member of the Royal Geographical Society and also of the Mount Everest Foundation.

He was a map maker. There are a fair number of them about, myself included.

When we look what is available to us today it is easy to forget just what a challenge this pastime (or obsession) was in earlier times. We have of course the example of our own George Spenceley and his efforts with the team which first mapped South Georgia. John was another of these stalwarts from a different age. Not for him the moorland and woodlands where I dabble. He tackled what is even today one of the most inaccessible areas of the Himalayas.

John died this March aged 85, having made it his personal mission to map the Kanjiroba Himal in Nepal. This lies in the Shey Phoksundo National Park, at its rarely mentioned and infrequently visited western extremity. It is a complete jumble of sheer mountainsides dropping into deep gorges amidst a maze of substantial and impressive mountain ranges.

Maps of Nepal were made in the early part of the twentieth century but this area was a blank on all maps, hence John's wish to fill it in.

John Baird Tyson was a Scot, born at Partick in 1928. He was brought up in London, where his father was a deputy headmaster.

He did National Service with the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders and was attached to the Seaforth Highlanders in Malaya when the troubles were on and he was awarded a Military Cross.

After service he studied geography at Oxford, and in 1952 having developed an interest in climbing since his school days, he led the first Oxford University scientific expedition to the Himalayas with the team making two first ascents of peaks over 20,000ft.

In The following year he went on an exploration of the remote north-west of Nepal, just opened up to foreigners. He had caught the bug which was to determine the course of his life.

He returned to Eskdale taking a post as an instructor at the Outward Bound School before moving to Rugby School.

He was beginning to move in high places in more ways than one. He went climbing in the Alps with Chris Brasher and Roger Bannister, not renowned as mountaineers it must be said.

He moved through a number of teaching posts before securing a teaching post in Nepal. That was even more challenging than it sounds as the school did not exist. He had to spend the first few years finding a suitable site near Kathmandu and then making plans for the school.

It never came to pass for him as he could not turn down

a senior position at Rugby although the school did eventually start.

He did eventually teach in Nepal when he was appointed head in 1975 of a school funded by British aid set up in Bhutan. He spent 3 years there before returning to teach in England before finally being made head at the school in Nepal that he had helped create.

He gained Nepali honours and an OBE for his efforts.

Returning to his mountain mapping, in the 60s he led several small surveying missions hoping to actually find the highest peak there Mt Kanjiroba (22,580ft). Along the way when seeking good vantage points for mapping they did make a number of first ascents at over 20,000ft., but struggled to find a way through to where the big one was thought to be.

Further expeditions tried different and very hairy routes in and they got tantalisingly close getting a view of the two highest summits of the Kanjiroba Himal but in the way was an impassible gorge.

In 1963 the Royal Geographical Society awarded him the Ness Award and in 1966 a map of the area was produced in the Geographical Journal. He was determined not to leave it incomplete and in 1969 he was back again trying to get in from the north but it was far too dangerous and they were lucky to survive when hit by an avalanche. He never did climb that mountain.

He made three films for the BBC about his expeditions



## RAY COLLEDGE

The Midlands climber, Ray Colledge from Spondon in the suburbs of Derby died in hospital last April aged 91.

Raymond Leslie Burrows Colledge was born in 1922 in Coventry and was raised on a farm just outside of the city. He started work as a clerk for a Coventry engineering company making rotary engines for aircraft and torpedoes.



After being demobbed from the RAF after WW2 he took to climbing whenever work commitments permitted and became a highly skilled Alpinist and went on Eric Shipton's 1952 Chu Oyo expedition, developing techniques which helped the 1953 Everest success. He was of course in illustrious company, sharing ropes with Ed Hillary and George Lowe.

He is perhaps best remembered for a great success which was very nearly a great disaster. In 1969 he completed the third British summiting of the North Face of the Eiger with his climbing partner Dan Boone (aka James Fullalove). On that trip to the Alps he had already done Walker Spur on the Grandes Jorasses and the Pear Buttress on Mont Blanc's Brenva Face.

His attempt on the North Face saw him partner up with Dan at the last minute. Dan was a very experienced rock climber but had limited experience on ice which was very nearly their downfall. Dan fell from a position well above Ray when trying a rock climbing move where he should have used ice technique and with no protection between they were incredibly lucky to survive. As it happens the rope snagged over a protruding rock allowing Ray to hold Dan. Perhaps surprisingly recovering and carrying on, in the 'Exit Cracks' they were caught by a violent storm on a very narrow ledge where they waited it out before finally making it to the summit.

Other successes to Ray's name include the Innominata, the first British ascent of the impressive north face of the Grosshorn in the Bernese Oberland, the north face of the Triolet, Red Sentinel, Cassin Route on the Piz Badile, South Ridge of the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey and Route Major. Ray also went on to make the first ascent of the 22,00ft peak of Pangbuk, to the south of Menlung La, with Tom Bourdillon. To many the Pear Route was his finest hour, so difficult and treacherous that it is infrequently attempted these days. With a highly respected and at times dramatic climbing career behind him he was a long time member of the Alpine Club.

Ray remained active well into his 80s, taking up skiing and wandering the Peak District. He was still making regular visits to the tops around Edale.

## CHARLIE PORTER

This little known American climber died in February aged 63. Not one to carry a camera or seek publicity it took a while for his exploits to become known but he has a number of first routes to his name including classics on El Capitan. He once spent 9 nights on a climb with only improvised sleeping bag and when not climbing tried his hand at other sports including going round Cape Horn in a kayak.



## YRC WIVES

It is with much regret we have to mark the passing of Dorothy Crowther and Gabrielle Ibberson. Both were married to active members of the Club and both had a son also a member.

Dorothy was born in 1936 and was brought up in the Manchester and Stockport area where she met and married Ian. She went to school at Levenshulme High School for Girls a few years before my sisters did and they moved to Yorkshire a few years before we followed them.



Derek Clayton and Ian were responsible for introducing me to the YRC when we all lived the other side of the Pennines. Before we moved away from Yorkshire we saw a fair amount of Ian and Dorothy and their two young children and indeed Dorothy, Ian and their son Robert aged 14 were part of a group that Doreen and I went to Crete with in 1978.

Dorothy was very active in her local community and a regular attendee at our ladies meets and was well known to many members and there was a large YRC presence at the crematorium service.

Roy Denney

Rob Ibberson is a much more recent recruit having joined in 2002 but immediately became heavily involved in club activities and Gabrielle became a regular on ladies meets and went on the recent YRC trek in the Quimsa Cruz, Bolivia. Her son Andy is also a member of the YRC.



Gabrielle was born in 1943 and was also very involved in her local community activities.

Members of the club were at the service at St Margaret's Church, Horsforth, just a few miles down the road from Rawden where Dorothy's service was held.

# MEMBER'S MEETS MONTAGE



Shooting Countryfile at Green Dragon Hardraw

Left - Two wheels in Knoydart

Richard Taylor with Ladhar Bheinn  
Paul Dover - where are those stepping stones?



Two ex-bankers

The Gnomes of Kinder?





## **Constitution**

**The Club's rules and bye-laws are printed in journal series 13 issue 11 Summer 2011**

**The aims of the Club are to organise walking, mountaineering and skiing excursions; to encourage the exploration of caves and pot-holes; to conduct expeditions to remote parts of the planet; the pursuit of other outdoor activities and the gathering and promoting of knowledge concerning natural history, archaeology, geology, folklore and other kindred subjects.**

Additional copies of this journal can be provided at a nominal cost whilst stocks last.

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Members can be contacted via the Secretary and other authors via the Editor.

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

Articles and items appearing in Chippings, Natural History and Obituaries are written and / or compiled by the Editor unless otherwise attributed.

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

**Deadlines for material for the journals are June 15th & December 15th**

# **THE YRC**

**www.yrc.org.uk**



**The Yorkshire Ramblers Club**

**Established 1892**

**The Mountaineering, Exploration and Caving Club**

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